

Factsheet

Why are women underrepresented in citizen's renewable energy initiatives?

Research findings show that the participation of women in renewable energy cooperatives and similar citizen initiatives in most countries is much lower than of men. In some countries, women's share in these initiatives is even lower than in the energy industry which is less than 30 per cent in Europe, with most of women's jobs being in non-technical fields.

The reasons for these inequalities have been analysed to a certain degree, but are not yet sufficiently clarified. Our project 'DIALOGUES' will shed further light on this issue, as well as explore solutions to address the underrepresentation of women in citizen's renewable energy initiatives.

Relevant factors impeding women's participation in these initiatives:

Factor 1: Gender norms and stereotypes

The societal perception of women's and men's characteristics attributes competence in technical issues and occupations to men, and incompetence to women. Even with the best intentions, boys and girls are treated differently, and confronted with expectations as what society is expecting from them. For example, girls are discouraged to play with technical toys. 'Doing gender' is a term that describes how girls and women unconsciously seek to adapt to these expectations, resulting in a self-perception aligning with the stereotypes provided by society. Therefore, women, on average, show a lack of interest and perceived knowledge on technologies, in particular energy technologies, even if research shows that their talent is the same as that of men.



Source: thebrickblogger.com



Source: www.meusjogos.pt

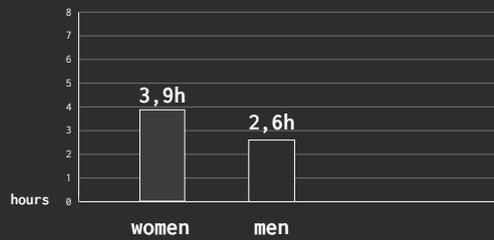


Factor 2: Care work

Even in the most advanced countries in terms of gender equality, women still bear the brunt of care work. As a consequence, women's time scarcity keeps them dedicating time to participating in voluntary initiatives.

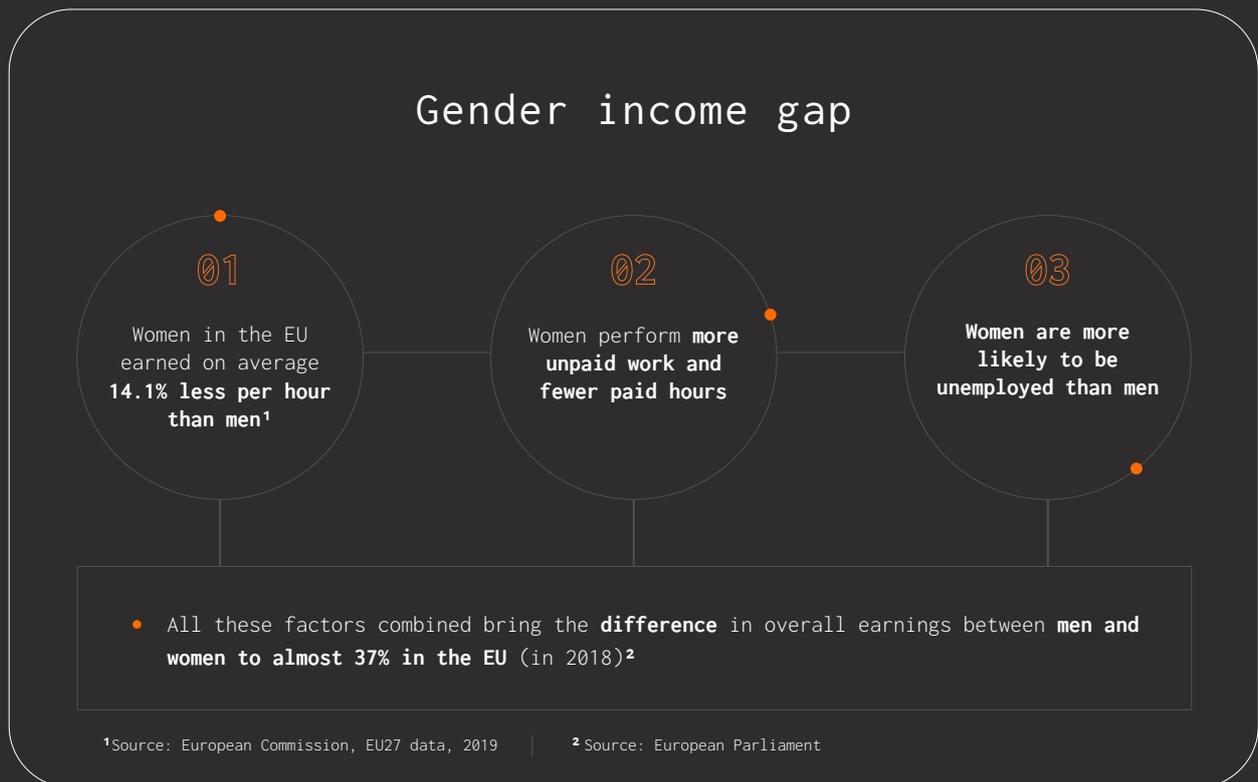
Gender care gap

Time spent by employed women & men in the EU on unpaid care



Factor 3: Gender income and wealth gap

Due to the gender wage and gender pension gap, as well as intra-household dynamics, women have substantially less financial resources. As a consequence, women often lack of investment capital for renewable projects.



Factor 4: Gender blindness

A lack of awareness of gender imbalances and inequalities is often termed as 'gender blindness'. Research showed that many renewable energy initiatives suffer from this gender blindness. For example, their shared values often do not include gender equality. Moreover, the male domination of such groups is leading to a male-dominated setting and conversation, for example discussions are mainly revolving around technological or economic aspects. A lack of inclusive recruitment strategies are perpetuating the gender gap, with new members being recruited through personal contacts to like-minded people.





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