



WOMEN CSOLEADERS FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE



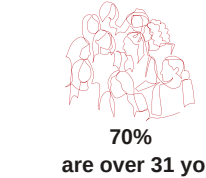
This infographic is inspired by the policy study from Céline Charveriat, Joanna Maycock, Eloïse Bodin and Angela Philp

Europe's social economy sector (encompassing CSO, associations and foundations), a highly feminised sector which employs 13.6 million people, representing 6.4% of the workforce, in 2023, is faced with increasingly impossible demands. It is expected to deliver essential services at scale in the face of rising societal challenges such as inequality, the climate crisis, and war. Moreover, it is expected to build societal cohesion while polarisation and loneliness increase. We need a paradigm shift in organising and leading to more inclusive and innovative workplaces to respond to these demands.

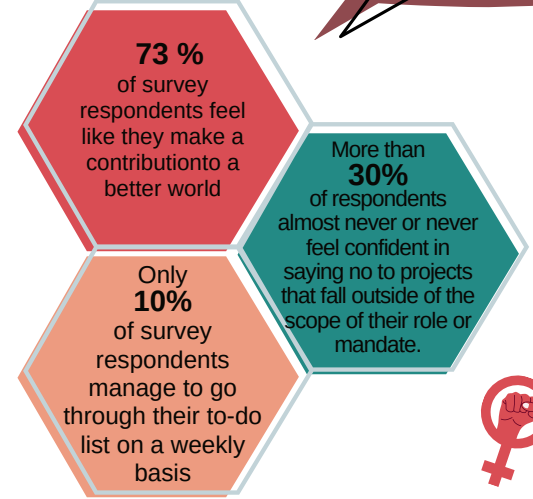
In this context, women from all over Europe have stepped up to the plate by taking on leadership positions in civil society organisations. However, these women leaders often experience outdated structures and working cultures that leave them severely overworked and overwhelmed by unreasonable demands while still facing inequality, misogyny and discrimination.

This 2023 study aimed to take stock of the last decade's progress and identify remaining barriers and new opportunities for women CSO leaders in achieving systemic change in Europe. The authors surveyed 148 women leaders's survey answers, structured interviews and focus groups to find out what more can be done by donors, organisations, and wider society to support and invest in transformative, feminist women's leadership.

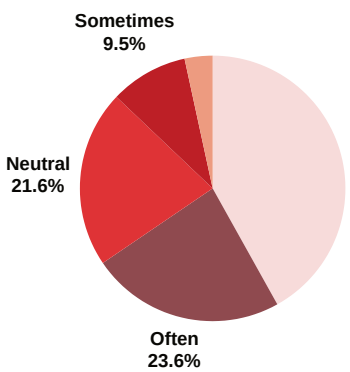
About our 148 respondents in the EU:



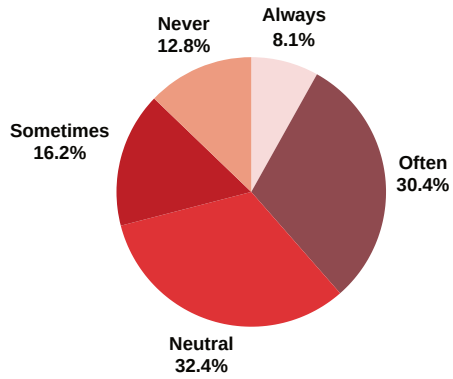
"Our big mistake as women leaders in NGOs is the failure to acknowledge that the challenges we are experiencing are not personal, they are systemic."
"There's no room for celebration of achievements, there's so much more to do. We don't deserve to celebrate when there's so much not done yet."
"We are overachievers. We believe we can make a difference."



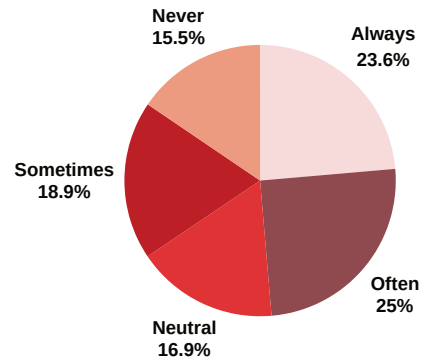
Feminist leadership is not only for women and can be practised by anyone committed to feminism. It is not about an essentialist idea of women as inherently better leaders.



MOST OF THE RESPONDENTS WORK OVERTIME TO FINISH WORK



25% OF THE SURVEYED WOMEN DO NOT STRIKE THE RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN WORK LIFE AND PERSONAL LIFE



MORE THAN HALF OF THE RESPONDENTS DO NOT TAKE SICK DAYS WHEN THEY NEED THEM



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) Radically reimagining power and leadership cultures, starting with space, time and resources to re-think and grow as leaders.
- (2) Building more caring working cultures and shifting societal norms around care, including new investments in redistributing and supporting care work.
- (3) Addressing the permanent financial insecurity within the CSO sector.
- (4) Investing in gender equality, diversity and inclusion, with non-governmental organisation boards taking direct responsibility.

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- Promote mental health in the workplace.
 - Guarantee fair and gender-neutral remuneration schemes.
 - Provide operating grants to organisations.
 - Offering more advanced training during onboarding processes.
 - Close the decisional-staff gap by ensuring greater diversity of opinion in boards.