

ANICA ZAVRL BOGATAJ

ROLE MODEL IN FORESTRY SECTOR

ABOUT ANICA

Anica Zavrl Bogataj is a university graduate forestry engineer. She defended her thesis in 1977. Her first job was at Biotechnical Faculty in the forestry department. This was followed by several appointments in different areas of forestry: Gozdno gospodarstvo Kranj - silviculture and forest management planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food - forest management planning, Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia - responsible for state forests, Inspectorate for Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting and Fisheries - forest inspection and finally in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, as director of the Directorate of Forestry. She retired in 2013 but remains active. Together with relatives, she takes care of a larger forest estate, which is about 65 ha. She is also president of the Gorenjska Forest Owners' Association and still likes to share her knowledge in lectures, especially to forest owners.

Anica Zavrl Bogataj began her forestry career at Biotechnical Faculty, Department of Forestry. While still a student, she assisted the professor in conducting exercises for students, and her first task was to continue this. After one year, she made the decision to do a master's degree. At that time, one year of practical experience was a prerequisite for a master's degree, so she got a job at Gozdno gospodarstvo Kranj (before 1991, Gozdno gospodarstvo was the state forest service, which carried out public forest service and did forestry work). Already on her first day at her new workplace, she already had the feeling that she wanted to work there. She got an excellent mentor with whom she spent a lot of time in the field, doing field work to prepare a forest management plan and learning how to apply the knowledge she had acquired at the faculty.

Despite her original desire to get a master's degree, she stayed at Gozdno gospodarstvo Kranj for almost eight years. There she was also responsible for taking the forest management plans to Ljubljana, to the ministry responsible for forestry, for approval. At the ministry, the plans were taken over by Dr. Živko Košir, who asked her during one of her visits if she wanted to join them. So she got a job at the Ministry and approved forest management plans for about 7 years. With the new Forest Act, the Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia was established, where she was then employed. She became head of the forestry sector and responsible for the state forests. Especially the first years were interesting, because the Fund wanted the state forests to be an example for the private owners. When the work was no longer challenging for her, she decided to go to the Inspectorate for Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting and Fisheries and became a forest inspector. At that time she was one of two female inspectors. When she left the agency almost nine years later, seven of the total of fourteen forest inspectors were already female and worked in the field. She liked the work very much; many offenders were grateful to her for her advice on how to comply with the regulations. She also led the project to create electronic control of inspection procedures. Then there was an advertisement in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food for the director of the Directorate of Forestry, to which she applied and got the job. She stayed for two and a half years, until her retirement in 2013.



PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE ROLE OF FEMALE IN THE FOREST SECTOR

According to Anica Zavrl Bogataj, women are equal to men. In her generation there were two female forestry students at the faculty, in the generation before and after her only one each. At the faculty, she even felt that her fellow students carried her in their arms. Later, however, apart from the fact that the men paid for the drink several times, there were no other differences. There are perhaps fewer women than men who want to go into the forest alone. Also, from the point of view of mentors or role models, it is not important whether you are a woman or a man, but what kind of character you have. Extremely important for her and also for her career was mentoring. She was lucky that her older colleagues wanted to pass on their knowledge to her.

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE SUCCESS FACTORS FOR A CAREER IN FOREST SECTOR, AND CRITICAL FACTORS IMPEDING THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Anica Zavrl Bogataj's experience with women in forestry is very positive. She sees them as very involved and also happy in forestry. Especially the older generations, when it was easier to get a suitable job, are very happy. This is also because in the past, new employees worked under mentorship for at least a while and learned from the more experienced ones, she says. Indeed, a good leader and a good boss who gives good instructions are very important. Good work also leads to promotion. Additional training and sharing experiences also contribute. Most importantly, choose a job that suits you.

An important critical point for a woman is family or childcare. If you do not have guaranteed care and a partner to support you, you can not afford a job that does not end at a certain point.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON MEASURES NEEDED, AT WHICH LEVEL, AND FOR WHAT EXPECTED EFFECT

Introduce a mentoring system so that young people at the beginning of their careers always have someone by their side to advise them, pass on experience and with whom the newcomer can apply the knowledge acquired at the faculty.

Offer young people a decent salary at the beginning of their career so that the employer finds capable and suitable employees. This is especially important for ministries where experienced staff do not come because they would have a lower salary than in the economic sector.

Introduce fair rewards so that the leader can incentivise rewarding the one who is really good. Praise is a lot, but money is worth more to most.

NARRATIVES/ EVALUATIONS ABOUT REPRESENT SUCCESSFUL STORIES

Anica Zavrl Bogataj cannot recall any initiatives that would help women in their careers. Today, in most professions, the newcomer has to look for solutions himself, new people are hired when their predecessor leaves, and therefore there is no transfer of knowledge. The forest grows slowly and in a few years it is not possible to gain experience in forestry.

COGNITIVE/ MOTIVATIONAL DISCOURSES

"Keep looking for a suitable place for yourself until you find what you like to do. It is worth changing and searching to find your happiness and be able to grow. When I reached the point where I did not see the challenge anymore, I moved on, to a new job."

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