

RUŽICA BELJO LUČIĆ

ROLE MODEL
IN FORESTRY SECTOR

ABOUT RUŽICA

Ružica is a full time professor at the Faculty of Forestry and Wood technology in Zagreb, Croatia. She is the head of the Department of Process Techniques at the Department of Wood Technology and the head of the doctoral study. She is a wife and a mother of 3. Her family is her biggest supporter and motivator in her career and personal development.

HER CAREER

After graduating from the Department of Wood Technology at the Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology in Zagreb she started working as a Junior Research Assistant at the Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology. Since 2008 she is a full-time professor, teaching classes at the undergraduate study Wood Technology and the graduate study of Wood Technology Processes.

Her engagement in the qualifications framework, the development of a new educational curriculum, and the implementation of the Bologna Process led her to the position of Assistant Minister of Higher Education in the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia. She obtained that position in the time period from 2012-2016 after what she returned to the Faculty of forestry and wood technology as a full-time professor and the head of the doctoral study.

PERCEPTION ABOUT THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN FORESTRY

Looking from a traditional point of view, forestry in Croatia isn't a women's usual career path.

As a full-time professor at the Faculty of forestry and wood technology, she is starting to see a change in the numbers of female students enrolling in the faculty. She thinks that the reason for this is that more people acknowledge that forestry is a beautiful profession, both for men and women. The stereotype about forestry being a "male profession" is slowly starting to decompose and women are more and more present in the sector. Even though there are more and more women in the sector, male dominance still exists. Women are often given administration work in the office and are not given the chance to learn all of the different areas of their work.

EXPERIENCES WITH WOMEN WORKING IN THE FORESTRY SECTOR

"Women have great work ethic. What is appointed to them, they will accomplish successfully, without any complaints"

Women working in the forestry sector work mostly as individuals. They are dedicated to their work and can handle their work on their own. In that regard, sometimes it is important for women to learn to rely on other people and ask for help when needed.



WHAT SHOULD BE DONE FOR BETTER INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN THE FORESTRY SECTOR?

“Women can do anything. By being a woman, I don’t feel deprived to do any job that men can do as well”

The supportive surroundings should start from a young age and upbringing. Starting by not making difference between male and female children and giving them support to pursue their dreams and goals.

Women are natural caretakers so in every decision they make, as well regarding their career, they take into consideration their family. It is one of the reasons why maybe there are not as many women in leadership positions. It is partly their choice not to give so much time and effort to a certain job position and use that time for their family.

For that reason, society has to take efforts to improve the caretaking system. Starting with kindergarten. There should be enough places in kindergartens for all children. For a woman to obtain a certain position that is time-consuming there should be options where the educational system can take care of children while she can't. **It is crucial to offer that kind of help to women if we want to see more of them in leadership positions.**



INTERESTING INITIATIVES WHICH HELPED WOMEN WITH THEIR CAREER AND WHAT COULD HELP IN THE FUTURE

A positive example from Croatia is the **National Scholarship Program "For Women in Science"** where, for the last 15 years, every year four young Croatian scientists are awarded scholarships worth € 5,000.

Another example is grants awarded to **women entrepreneurs** implemented by Administrative Department for Economy, EU Funds, and Agriculture.

Media and other exposure of successful women scientists, such as Gordana Tesla, Iva Tolić, entrepreneurs, women in leadership positions, is a very important element, so society, men, and women see that women are very successful, smart, and capable. That will create a new, more ambitious, confident generation of women, and men, who will not see gender as an obstacle to achieving their goal or a reason to make a prejudice.

KEY MESSAGES FOR YOUNG FEMALE IN EARLY CAREER

*Your personal life doesn't have to limit your career. **Feeling accomplished in your personal life can only make you better in your professional development.***

*Fear and doubt are limiting factors and **women should be fearless in accepting new challenges and take the opportunity that arises in front of them.***

The ambitions though, have to be intertwined with professionalism. The way forward is by doing, and ambition should be shown in your actions and reflected in the quality of your accomplished tasks.

Continuous learning and widening your area of expertise is a key to success.

What is maybe of the greatest importance are the people surrounding you. Their support and motivation can uplift your confidence and guide you to success.



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