



Closing gender gaps in the strategic sectors of the city of Barcelona





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Publishing

Barcelona Activa

November 2022

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Introduction

Women and the economy in Barcelona

Barcelona women: more active than Spanish women, but still below male participation

Women's participation is a key element of both economic growth and a society's development index, as it increases female empowerment. Barcelona women stand out thanks to their high level of participation in the economy. 58.8% of women in Barcelona over the age of 16 are economically active¹, a figure that is at a higher level than the national average (53.73%²) and they are only equalled by Madrid, where 58.54% participate in the labour market³.

Thanks to this high activity rate, although it is still lower than the male activity rate (64% in 2021),⁴ the gender gap in this area has narrowed significantly and dropped from 20% in 2008 to 8% in 2021.

In the same way, it has been pointed out that the employment level of women over 16 years old in Barcelona (54.6% in 2021)⁵ is higher than the national female average (45.82%)⁶ and than that of other cities such as Madrid (51.96%)⁷ and Valencia (46.3%)⁸. In addition, it also has a positive effect on the closing of the gender gap in this area, where it can be seen that it fell from 26.5% in 2008 to 9% in 2021.

This high level of participation of women in Barcelona's economy is reflected in a low level of female unemployment. The data indicates that the unemployment rate in Barcelona in 2021 was 7.2%⁹, values lower than the national average (16.71%)¹⁰ and also than the female unemployment rate in other cities such as Madrid (12.59%)¹¹ and Valencia (13.5%)¹².

1 Barcelona City Council (2022). Active Population Survey.

2 National Institute of Statistics, (2022). Active Population Survey.

3 Madrid City Council (2022). Active Population Survey.

4 Barcelona City Council (2022). Active Population Survey.

5 Idem.

6 National Institute of Statistics, (2022). Active Population Survey

7 Madrid City Council (2022). Active Population Survey.

8 City Council of Valencia (2022). Active Population Survey.

9 Idem.

10 National Institute of Statistics, (2022). Active Population Survey.

11 Madrid City Council (2022). Active Population Survey.

12 City Council of Valencia (2022). Active Population Survey.

2019 saw a historic drop in unemployment in Barcelona, with the lowest percentage since the 2008 crisis. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a direct effect on significant job losses. Although in the first phase of the pandemic men lost more work than women (respectively 13% and 12.3%), in 2021 men recovered more quickly from the fall in employment (5.9% in 2021) than women (7.3% in 2021)¹³. In this way, despite the fact that female unemployment fell to figures not seen since 2008, the gender gap in unemployment is still high, standing at 23.7%.

Women's participation in the economy continues to be mostly in the care sectors

One of the most important gaps is horizontal segregation. If the different strategic sectors of the city are analysed, it is detected that the most feminised sectors are the sectors traditionally related to care, such as health care (70%) or residences (84%), and the trade sector is also feminised (53.5%)¹⁴, especially in the retail trade. All of them are characterised by being more precarious and having more informal work.

This fact has had a clear negative impact during the pandemic, as women working in these sectors represented 65% of people on the front line against Covid-19. With these being sectors that require more physical attendance, remote work could not be used as was the case in other work areas. In addition, the impossibility of remote working led to an increase in unemployment in these professional groups.

It should also be noted that women who were able to work remotely suffered inequalities in terms of hours worked. Indeed, they were the ones who assumed most of the burden of work at home and care¹⁵. Consequently, women experienced more exhaustion and stress¹⁶.

On the other hand, sectors traditionally considered as male-orientated stand out due to the scarcity of women. Both the ICT sector and the manufacturing industry show a significant lack of women, with a female presence of 32.6% and 32.7%¹⁷, respectively, in March 2022. In addition, during the pandemic, the ICT sector has grown the most and, on the other hand, women have not benefited from this growth.

In addition to this fact, women's lack of financial education limits their ability to make decisions regarding their professional future¹⁸. Finally, the lack of

¹³ Barcelona City Council (2022). Active Population Survey.

¹⁴ Compiled by the Department of Studies at the Management Office for Economy, Resources and Economic Promotion of Barcelona City Council, based on data from Barcelona City Council's Statistics and Data Dissemination Department (2022).

¹⁵ Centre for Opinion Studies (2020). The Time Use and Confinement Survey. 2020.

¹⁶ Union for the Mediterranean (2022): 2021 Regional Progress Report on Gender Equality.

¹⁷ Idem.

¹⁸ OECD (2013), Women and Financial Education: Evidence, Policy Responses and Guidance, OECD Publishing.

visibility of female leaders both in the public sphere and in the private sector prevents girls from seeing women who would push them to follow in their footsteps.

Due to the influence of stereotypes that assign women and men to predetermined professions, the gap in education in the sector known as STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) materialises itself both in Vocational Training and in university studies.

Women are present in companies, but they do not lead them

Another challenge to address is the persistent absence of women in leadership positions. There are a number of reasons why women do not reach positions of power in companies. Women experience difficulties in reaching the Boards of Directors of companies. For example, none of the 15 companies that make up the BCN Indexcat has a female CEO. Women make up 17.2% of the Boards of Directors of Catalan companies with more than 250 employees. The same happens in the management positions of Catalan companies, where they represent only 22.8%¹⁹. In this way, it can be seen that Barcelona and Catalan companies still do not comply with the objective of achieving the balance (40%-60%) provided for in Organic Law 3/2007 of 22 March, for the effective equality of women and men.

Although it can be seen how the glass ceiling is gradually breaking, women also have to face the “sticky ground” effect and come up against different difficulties that delay their arrival in leadership positions, which means that their promotion ladder is shorter.

The difficulty of work-life balance is one of the obvious reasons, since women tend to carry the “concrete slab”²⁰ of household and care work. According to a report prepared by the Instituto de la Mujer²¹, in Spain women take on most of the domestic work and 70% of care work. In addition, according to data from the Labour Observatory and the Productive Model of the Government of Catalonia, 54.7% of Catalan working women do half or more of the housework, while only 14.4% of men do housework²². This concrete slab increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. During lockdown, Catalan women took on 14.2% more than men in domestic work and 9.9% more than men in caring for their sons and daughters²³.

19 Barcelona Chamber of Commerce (2021). “Presence of women in Boards of Directors and management positions in companies in Catalonia”.

20 Sagnier L. (2021). “Why do they call it a glass ceiling when it's a concrete slab?” https://elpais.com/elpais/2021/05/12/mujeres/1620843631_740228.html

21 Women's Institute (2020). “The gender perspective, essential in the response to Covid-19”. 22 Labour Observatory and the Productive Model of the Government of Catalonia (2021). “Survey of quality and working conditions”.

23 Catalan Women's Institute (2020). “The Gender Impact of Covid-19 in Data”.

The direct consequence of assuming these domestic responsibilities is that women, faced with the difficulty of balancing their personal life with their professional life, may be more susceptible to suffering deterioration in their professional career. Women are mostly those who take advantage of reduced working hours (26% for childcare compared to 3% of men)²⁴ and part-time employment (18.3% in 2021)²⁵ compared to men (4.9%)²⁶, a fact that has a negative impact on their professional career.

Another difficulty women face is the visibility and recognition of their leadership and expertise. Visibility is one of the essential elements of leadership, being a symbol of power and an element of representation and identification. The traditional model of leadership is based on the characteristics traditionally assigned to men, such as competitiveness or forcefulness. Women find it difficult to face this biased perspective. Those who continue to demonstrate characteristics traditionally associated with femininity are seen as less prepared to lead. At the same time, those who adopt a masculine leadership style are also punished for not fulfilling their assigned gender role as a woman. This has a negative effect on their professional advancement²⁷.

Thus, an element that slows down the arrival of women in management positions is the weakness of their professional networks. With less access to high-level networks, women are excluded from knowledge sharing²⁸ and are more likely to face the glass cliff when offered a high-level position, which actually hides a risk of imminent failure²⁹.

The wage gap: an inequality that persists

The wage disparity between men and women is one of the indicators that shows the imbalance of power in the workplace between men and women in the world.

In Barcelona, if you analyse the data, you can see that the wage gap has been reducing progressively, but slowly, in recent years. Currently, the wage disparity, calculated from gross annual income, (17.5% in 2020)³⁰ has been reduced by more than one percentage point compared to 2019 (18.7%)³¹.

24 UGT (2017). "Work-life balance, still a matter of gender. The role of work permits, in Europe and Catalonia".

25 Barcelona City Council (2022). "Women in the labour market, 2021".

26 Idem.

27 Widlak E. & García L. (2019). "Tell and tell of it. Visibility strategies for equality".

28 Lord, M., Warren-Smith, G. (2018). "Unseen and unheard? Women managers and organisational learning". *The Learning Organisation*. 25(1): 40-50.

29 Ryan, M. & Haslam, A. (2004). "The Glass Cliff: Evidence that Women are over-represented in precarious leadership positions". *British Journal of Management*, 16(2): 81-90.

30 Barcelona City Council (2022). "Women in the labour market, 2021".

31 Barcelona City Council (2021). "Women in the labour market, 2020".

Closing gender gaps in the strategic sectors of the city of Barcelona

The wage gap in Barcelona is slightly below the rest of Spain (18.4% in 2020)³², but still above the European average (13% in 2020, gross income per hour)³³. This indicates that, while there is progress in reducing inequality, it is still not enough to close it.

Analysing the 2020 data, it can be seen that the greatest gap in the sectoral level occurred in the finance and insurance sector, where it reached 42.7%³⁴. This is a male dominated sector, in which gender stereotypes still exert a significant influence. On the other hand, the narrowest gap is found in the hospitality sector (3.1%)³⁵, one of the most precarious sectors and with the lowest wages, for both men and women.

In the same way, in relation to the professional categories, the large difference in remuneration between graduates, engineers and senior managers (27.4%)³⁶ stands out, a fact that indicates that the higher the job position, the greater the wage gap.

It is also observed that age is a factor that favours the growth of the wage gap. In this sense, the greatest gap is found in the age group between 60 and 64 years old, where it reaches 28.7%³⁷. On the other hand, in the age range between 25 and 29 years old (7.4%)³⁸ is when the gap is lowest.

For this reason, in recent years a series of measures have been adopted with the aim of closing wage inequality, which, little by little, have been reinforced with new instruments. In 2007, with the approval of Organic Law 3/2007, of 22 March, for the effective equality of women and men, the obligation to create equality plans for companies was established. Equality plans have been strengthened by the creation of innovative measures, such as remuneration registers and audits, which impose the obligation to register the remuneration of the entire workforce, including managerial staff and senior positions, and oblige the companies to create corrective policies if the gap exceeds 25%. In any case, these measures are still difficult to evaluate due to the recent mandatory nature of their application.

The female entrepreneur in Barcelona: young, educated, more precarious, but more resilient

In 2020, the majority of entrepreneurial people were still men, with 58.4% compared to 41.6% of women. In any case, the existing imbalance between

32 Barcelona City Council (2021). "Women in the labour market, 2020".

33 Eurostat (2022). Gender pay gap statistics.

34 Compiled by the Department of Studies at the Management Office for Economy, Resources and Economic Promotion of Barcelona City Council, based on data from Barcelona City Council's Statistics and Data Dissemination Department (2022).

35 Idem.

36 Idem.

37 Idem.

38 Idem.

the number of male and female entrepreneurs has been reduced during the Covid-19 pandemic. This has suffered a slight fall (-2.8%) in female entrepreneurs and, in comparison, the number of entrepreneurs has suffered a greater decline (-8.1%)³⁹. This fact indicates that women's desire and interest in entrepreneurship exists, but that there are a number of circumstances that limit their ability to increase the same.

Entrepreneurship is one of the engines of economic growth and, for this reason, it is essential that women also form part of the entrepreneurial fabric of the city. Thus, the Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA)⁴⁰ rate of Barcelona's women shows us that they are much more integrated in the city's economy. The female TEA in Barcelona is higher than the national average (2.74%), and that of the other Spanish cities, with the exception of Valencia (3.24%)⁴¹.

Currently, there is a positive evolution, as it has gone from a TEA of 2.40% in 2010 to that of 3.08% in 2020. Although growth has been continuous throughout the decade, it still falls short of the male TEA, which stood at 4.47%⁴² in 2020.

If you analyse the profile of female Barcelona entrepreneurs, you can see that they are young women. According to data from Barcelona City Council, in 2020, the 40 to 44-year-old group concentrated the largest number of entrepreneurial people with 18.1% of the total, followed by the 35 to 39-year-old group (17.4%). Thus, the weight of men was higher than that of women in all age groups, but in the band where the gap was narrowest is in the 30 to 34-year-old group, where female participation represented 47.4%, and in the 35 to 39-year-old group, where it was 46.6%⁴³, almost reaching equality.

Female entrepreneurs from Barcelona are also more educated. Regarding the level of education of the total number of entrepreneurs in 2020, almost 70% have a Bachelor's degree or higher qualifications. Thus, it is observed that, within the range of education equal to or higher than the Baccalaureate, the percentage of female participation (45.6%) is quite a bit higher than that of women with a lower level of education (35.2%), that is, with School Graduation or equivalent. However, in the case of men, the opposite phenomenon occurs. In the School Graduate category, the percentage is 64.8% and, on the other hand, in the Baccalaureate or higher education level, male participation is 54.4%⁴⁴.

Although this data may favour women entrepreneurs by being more educated, in reality no correlation is seen. The horizontal segregation in educational matters

39 Compiled by the Department of Studies at the Management Office for Economy, Resources and Economic Promotion of Barcelona City Council, based on data from Barcelona City Council's Statistics and Data Dissemination Department (2022).

40 The Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) rate measures all the entrepreneurial activities that have been on the market for less than three and a half years.

41 Compiled by the Department of Studies at the Management Office for Economy, Resources and Economic Promotion of Barcelona City Council, based on data from Barcelona City Council's Statistics and Data Dissemination Department (2022).

42 Ídem.

43 Barcelona City Council (2021). "Entrepreneurship in Barcelona 2020".

44 Ídem.

means that women entrepreneurs concentrate their activity in feminised sectors, as is the case of the “educational, health, social services and people”⁴⁵ sectors, with lower turnover and fewer prospects for growth.

Gender stereotypes are obstacles that women have to face. They already hinder their ability to take their businesses forward because of the damage it causes to self-confidence and doubts about their abilities. Among these stereotypes, we highlight that, traditionally, entrepreneurship is considered a male area, that women do not have the necessary skills and they have to face biases in tax matters, as in the case of motherhood⁴⁶. In addition, these stereotypes make it difficult to obtain financing and access to loans⁴⁷.

The difficulty of work-life balance is also a major brake on the growth of companies created by women. While it is true that many of them decide to be self-employed for greater work flexibility, this fact can become a double-edged sword. The main reason is that the fact that they have more flexibility means that they often have to prioritise household tasks or those related to taking care of their children, instead of being able to devote time to their businesses⁴⁸.

The difficulty of creating powerful networks of informal contacts is another phenomenon that limits the development of women’s businesses. They participate in the same way as men in formal networks, as is the case with Chambers of Commerce. However, when establishing informal networks, these include not only contacts, but also family and friends, and they also give importance to other areas not exclusively related to the world of business or entrepreneurship. The result of not being exclusively focused on business is that they are networks of lower quality, that is to say, with less power and impact⁴⁹.

Despite these difficulties, companies created by women are more resilient and sustainable. Women tend to create companies of a smaller size which are also less oriented towards rapid growth, which means that their structures are more resilient and resistant to economic changes than those of men, which are indeed more oriented towards economic growth⁵⁰. Thus, another factor in this resilience is that companies created by women focus on sectors that are less susceptible to economic crises⁵¹. The data shows that women entrepreneurs in Barcelona have a much lower dropout rate (36% in 2020) than that of men (64%)⁵². Since 2010, when the female dropout rate dropped from 69% in 2008 to 37%⁵³, it has remained stable.

45 Barcelona City Council (2021). “Entrepreneurship in Barcelona 2020”.

46 Idem.

47 OECD (2017). “Policy Brief on Women’s Entrepreneurship”.

48 Widlak, E. (2019). “Where are the women? The internationalisation of women-owned companies in the European Union”.

49 OECD (2017). “Policy Brief on Women’s Entrepreneurship”.

50 Idem.

51 Idem.

52 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2021). “GEM Report Catalonia, 2020-2021”.

53 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2011). “GEM Report Catalonia, 2010”.

The benefits of studying the situation of women in the labour market

Women have never been as present in the economy as they are today. Their presence and leadership are growing. However, it is a very complex phenomenon, conditioned by different economic and social dynamics, still relatively little known and analysed.

This situation is particularly harmful because it makes invisible the fact that women and men suffer from different difficulties in the labour market and when starting a business. The lack of data broken down by sex and from a gender perspective reinforces the androgynous view of the economy and prevents the closing of existing gender gaps. Consequently, women continue to encounter barriers that prevent them from fully participating in the labour market.

However, quality employment for both women and men is a human right and a matter of social justice. Beyond that, it is also a wise decision on an economic level, both macroeconomic and microeconomic.

On a macroeconomic level, a high rate of economic activity for women allows the welfare state and the pension system to be maintained thanks to greater tax collection. This increase in women's financial independence also translates into a lesser need to resort to public aid and, therefore, reduces the pressure on the State.

In its ten-year report, the World Bank announced that the increase in income obtained by women implies a change in spending patterns, a fact that benefits their sons and daughters⁵⁴. This confirmation was supported by the World Economic Forum, which, in its annual report on gender gaps, found that *“people and their talent are one of the main cores of sustainable and long-term economic growth. If half the talent is underdeveloped or underutilised, growth and sustainability will be in jeopardy”*.⁵⁵

There is then a connection between fairer societies and more resilient economies. On a European level, improving gender equality between now and 2050 would mean an increase of 6.1% to 9.6% in GDP per capita, which is equivalent to between 1.95 and 3.15 trillion euros. This would also have a positive effect on job creation, with 10.5 million new jobs, accessible to both women and men (EIGE, 2017)⁵⁶.

54 The World Bank (2012). “World Development Report 2012: Gender equality and development” <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/4391/WDR%202012%20Overview-Sp.pdf?sequence=16&isAllowed=y>

55 World Economic Forum (2018). Global Gender Gap Report

56 EIGE (2017). Economic Benefits of Gender Equality in the European Union. Report on the empirical application of the model.

Beyond the benefits on a macroeconomic level, equality also benefits businesses.

More egalitarian companies tend to have better organisational ethics. As Larrieta-Rubís de Celís (2014) has shown, an increase in women in managerial positions promotes progress in corporate social responsibility⁵⁷. This translates, at the same time, into a greater commitment of employees⁵⁸ and a better retention of talent, especially female, but also male, in companies. According to studies, the average cost of replacing an employee represents on average between 6 and 9 times their monthly salary. Furthermore, a high rate of employee turnover as a negative effect in the work environment.

According to Bloomberg (2019), more egalitarian, more diverse and inclusive companies improve their corporate image, which seems particularly important given that currently 80% of a brand's value is based on intangible aspects⁵⁹.

According to a Catalyst study, companies with more women on their boards have a 42% higher return on sales than their competitors in the same industry, a 66% higher return on capital and a 53% higher returns on own funds⁶⁰. Also, companies with more diverse leadership tend to anticipate risk better.

In the most diverse companies, an increase in innovation has also been observed, a key factor for their development and resilience. As Accenture shows in one of its studies, innovation is six times higher in more egalitarian companies compared to less egalitarian companies. This is explained, above all, by the fact that people who operate in a more egalitarian environment also feel more empowered and are less afraid to take the risk of innovating⁶¹.

Methodology

This report was prepared on the basis of quantitative-qualitative methodology, based on gender statistics, meta-analysis and analysis of documentary sources, focus groups and in-depth semi-structured interviews.

The study was carried out between April and June 2022, taking as a reference data from the years 2020 and 2021. 2008-2019 were used as starting years to analyse the evolution of the situation of women in Barcelona.

57 Larrieta, I., et al. (2014). "Social responsibility as an instrument for the promotion of gender equality in the company: Gender Social Responsibility". *Journal of Business Management and Administration*. 181-202.

58 Mercer (2017). *Inside Employees' Minds*.

59 Eccles, R., Newquist, S. and Schatz, R. (2007). "Reputation and its risks" *Harvard Business Review*.

60 Catalyst (2007). "The Bottom Line: Corporate performance and women's representation on boards".

61 Accenture (2019). "Getting to Equal 2019: Creating a culture that drives innovation".

The focus groups and in-depth interviews were organised according to the strategic sectors for the city (digital sector, creative industries, Public Administration, health and life, trade and tourism, and hospitality). In order to ensure the representativeness of each sector, the participants represented different subsectors, categories, sexes and ages. In total, 48 people were interviewed.

The project was directed by Dr Ewa Widlak with the support of Margarita Guitart and, in the institutional part, by Arantxa Calvera and Montse Basora, with the support of the gender equality team of Barcelona Activa, the Municipal Data Office of the City Council and the team of the Cabinet of Studies of the Management of Economy, Resources and Economic Promotion.

The main limitations of the study

The role of women in the economy is a topic of interest and, nevertheless, relatively little known. Apart from its complexity related to the multiplicity of factors that influence it, the analysis of gender in the economy is little studied.

The main impediment comes from the scarcity of data and studies on the presence of women in the economy. Despite the efforts of different organisations to generate this kind of data, the information is still partial, irregular and often defined differently, which hinders a comparative analysis. The difficulty in obtaining quality data, on the one hand, creates a lack of representation of women and, on the other, makes the problems of this group invisible.

This lack of data also shows the invisibility of phenomena such as sexual harassment in the workplace or harassment based on sex. Since data is not available, the adoption of efficient measures to fight against both becomes complicated, as getting an X-ray of the real situation becomes complicated.

Another major challenge is the inclusion of groups of women who work informally. Although informal work is a global phenomenon, its reality and impacts are understudied, which hinders the process of understanding its situation and the provision of effective and efficient solutions. However, as the OECD has recognised, informal work is also marked by gender inequalities, with women present in the least valued and paid positions, with less visibility and with less social protection than men⁶².

62 OIT (2017). Employment Working Paper nr. 236. Gender and the informal economy: key challenges and policy response.

The digital sector

Context

The digital economy follows an upward growth trend

The digital economy is an indispensable element of Barcelona's business fabric in providing competitiveness and resilience, but at the same time it poses a challenge, since the digital transformation is profoundly changing the content and nature of jobs and the skills needed to perform them.

Barcelona, whose digital sector represented 6% of its gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019, has seen how after the pandemic its weight has grown to reach 8.7% in 2021⁶³. If the data relating to digital professionals is analysed, a slight increasing trend is observed, since in 2020 the Barcelona digital sector represented 5.37% of all professionals in the entire business ecosystem in Barcelona, compared to 5.42% in 2021.⁶⁴

In 2020, 16,711 companies were created in Catalonia in this area. The upward trend in recent years in the creation of companies, including during the pandemic, confirms not only the importance of the digital economy in Catalonia and, particularly in Barcelona (in 2020, 4% of the total number of companies were from the ICT sector⁶⁵), but also that its behaviour has been much better than that of the vast majority of sectors.⁶⁶

The Decoding Global Talent 2020 Report⁶⁷ points out that Barcelona is the ninth most attractive city in the world for working abroad, just behind Sydney, Paris and Los Angeles. In addition, the report also indicates that Barcelona is the 10th most attractive city in the world for digital experts who want to work abroad, ahead of Los Angeles, Vancouver and Paris, but behind London and Singapore which lead the classification.

63 Department of Statistics and data dissemination, Municipal Data Office (2022).

64 Barcelona Digital Talent (2022). "Digital Talent Overview 2022".

65 Department of Statistics and data dissemination, Municipal Data Office (2022).

66 CTECNO (2021). 2021 Barometer.

67 Boston Consulting Group (2021). "Decoding the Digital Talent Challenge".

Women in the digital economy and their importance

Where are women in companies in the digital sector? The under-representation of women as a loss of talent and vision.

In 2021, women were only 29.23% of the total number of people in the sector compared to 70.77% of men. However, the data indicate that this percentage is among the average of other large European cities, such as Madrid (30.61%), London (27.12%) and Paris (27.81%)⁶⁸.

If we analyse the profile of women from Barcelona who participate in the digital economy, it is observed that the percentage of women working in companies in the digital sector is close to a third of the total number of workers. In fact, in 2019 they represented 27.53% of all female workers in companies and in 2021 31.35%⁶⁹, so there has been a slight improvement. However, the presence of women in this sector has traditionally been linked to positions or tasks not directly related to technology itself, but to the administrative, financial, human resources, marketing and communication fields.

The digital sector is a much more stable sector in terms of recruitment. Thus, the low percentage of female temporary employment (43.4% in 2021) is particularly noteworthy compared to other sectors such as health and life, where this reaches 92.1% of all contracts. However, there is still a slight difference with regard to male temporary employment (38.2% in 2021).⁷⁰

This sector is no stranger to the wage gap. According to 2020 data, in the information and communication sector the average salary was €39,803 per year. But when breaking it down by sex, men stand at €42,657 per year and women at €34,524.⁷¹

In ICT positions within companies, the female presence is still very low, especially in what refers to operations or systems. Thus, only 8.6% of ICT positions in Catalan technology companies in 2021 are occupied by women. A slight improvement is observed compared to 7.9% in 2019, but far from remarkable progress.⁷²

68 CTECNO (2021). 2021 Barometer.

69 Barcelona Digital Talent (2022). "Digital Talent Overview 2022".

70 Department of Statistics and data dissemination, Municipal Data Office (2022).

71 Barcelona City Council (2022). "Wages in Barcelona, 2020".

72 CTECNO (2021). 2021 Barometer

Where are the managers and women in executive positions?

The presence of female leaders in companies in the digital sector is still small. This fact represents a weakness when it comes to fighting gender inequalities, since their presence is essential to be able to face the gender stereotypes and biases that occur from the lowest level to the highest level within a company.

The data show that only 16% of companies in Catalonia have at least one woman as a senior manager and, of these, only 6% have only women in management. Of this percentage, 64% are concentrated in Barcelona⁷³.

Thus, of the 907 Catalan companies with information on managerial positions, only 143 have a female manager compared to the 764 that only have male managers. In addition, of the 1,545 managerial positions reported, only 163 are held by women compared to the 1,386 positions held by men. In addition, the areas in which Catalan companies with women in management positions are mainly dedicated are cyber security (22%), the Internet of Things (IoT, 17%) and Artificial Intelligence (15%)⁷⁴.

Where are the female entrepreneurs?

The entrepreneurial world is no stranger to the dynamics of the business world, which is why there are also significant gender gaps in this area.

According to ACCIÓ data from 2021, in 2020 there were 1,902 start-ups in the Barcelona & Catalonia Startup Hub. Of these, around 19.6% have been founded by women and 20% of the total have teams with female managers. This data shows that the situation of women entrepreneurs in the technology sector is also within the European average (17%) and above cities such as Madrid (16.6%), Paris (17.3%) and Amsterdam (18.1%)⁷⁵.

Also, the areas to which emerging companies with at least one woman in the management team are dedicated are the biotech and pharma sector (24%), the travel and entertainment sector (7%), and the business and productivity sector (7%). However, the sectors where there is a percentage of less than 2% of start-ups with women in the management team are sports, e-commerce and digital transformation⁷⁶.

If we study the technological areas in which start-up companies have at least one female manager in their team, the areas with the most female presence are information and communication technologies (ICT, 25%), big data

73 ACCIÓ (2021). "X-ray of companies with female directors in Catalonia".

74 Idem.

75 ACCIÓ (2022). "Barcelona & Catalonia Startup Hub, Analysis 2021".

76 ACCIÓ (2021). "X-ray of companies with female directors in Catalonia".

(13%) and artificial intelligence (11%), compared to the areas of quantum computing, connectivity and 5G, and cyber security, where the percentage is less than 2%⁷⁷.

Achievements

Gradual awareness and visibility of women in the digital sector

A series of elements are starting to be seen that can help increase the number of women participating in the digital sector, despite the fact that the data on women's participation in the digital economy shows that it is still low.

Awareness of the gender gap

In recent years, there has been an increase in awareness around the low participation of women in the technology sector, and this is manifested in a series of decisions adopted in both the public and private sectors.

Thanks to this progressive awareness of the importance of women in the digital sector, initiatives have been launched to promote women's participation in this sector. On the institutional level, initiatives such as the BCN Fem Tech Awards stand out, within the framework of the Government Measure "BCN Fem Tech, 2021-2023"⁷⁸, which recognise technology projects led by women and their impact on the community.

In the private sector, more and more companies are adopting inclusive policies. In addition, events have been held, such as the Mobile World Congress, which since 2018 has held activities with the aim of promoting the participation of women in this sector, or such as Women in Tech and Women4Tech. Training academies and training programmes in companies aimed especially at women have also been created.

Creation of formal and informal women's networks

Networking is a step towards strengthening the female presence in this sector. In recent years, and thanks to the efforts of public institutions and the private sector itself, contact networks have been created, both exclusively female and mixed, which promote women's entrepreneurship in the digital sector and have become an indispensable element of support for women entrepreneurs.

⁷⁷ ACCIÓ (2021). "X-ray of companies with female directors in Catalonia".

⁷⁸ Barcelona City Council (2021):

<https://bcnroc.ajuntament.barcelona.cat/jspui/handle/11703/121770>

The increase in networking makes it possible to build not only contact networks, but also support communities in which experiences and advice are shared, and which give special importance to mentoring, which, at the same time, increases the visibility of reference women.

Recently, two initiatives have been created to promote professional networks. On the one hand, between 2021 and 2022 the Gender Equality Tech Hub (GETHub) has been formed. It is a network of technological companies in Barcelona, promoted by the City Council and the technological school allWomen.tech, which wants to get more women to work in technical and leadership positions.

Greater flexibility of the working day can increase female employment in the sector

It is in the technological sector that greater implementation of programmes to promote flexible hours⁷⁹ is observed, although these programmes are applicable to almost all sectors.

Thanks to the advancement of technology and digitisation, in the last decade there have been changes in the way of working, which have been accelerated by the pandemic. This has meant the widespread implementation of teleworking and the growth of hybrid work models, but it is still too early to assess its impact and its possible long-term effects⁸⁰.

Gradually more women appear as references.

The gradual emergence of leaders in the digital sector, despite the scarcity of women in it, has led to an improvement in their visibility and, thanks to this, we are starting to see a slight change in the general trend of lack of interest in the sector. For this reason, it is necessary to continue with the task of supporting the visibility of women at all levels.

The importance of the visibility of references that can inspire the younger generations is essential, since what is not seen does not exist. Therefore, the empowering effect of fictional characters, for example, superheroines such as Wonder Woman, has been the subject of study. In 2018, the Women's Media Centre and the BBC published a study showing that 90% of the girls who participated felt that superheroines provide positive role models and make them feel strong, brave, confident and that they can achieve anything they set their mind to⁸¹.



“As for women in the digital sector, there has been an evolution in the last five years, thanks to the fact that there is more disclosure. This makes women see that it is possible for everyone, by seeing other women who are already in this sector”.

*Laura Fernández,
CEO and co-founder,
AllWomen.*

79 BCG Platinion (2021). Technology needs women

80 Adigital y Boston Consulting Group (2022). “Digital economy in Spain”.

81 Women's Media Centre/BBC (2018). “Superpowering girls. Female Representation in the Sci-Fi/Superhero genre”. https://womensmediacenter.com/assets/site/reports/bbca-wmc-superpowering-girls-infographic/Superpowering_Girls_BBCA_Womens_Media_Center.pdf



“In 1997, there were many more women enrolled in Mathematics. It is a career that seems equal, but a few years ago the percentage of enrolled women dropped from 37%. Before we thought about a teaching career and when the focus on companies began to be applied, the number of women fell”.

*Míriam Blanc,
managing partner,
Iterem.*

The presence of female leaders in the digital sector and their visibility is a fundamental element in the process of eliminating gender stereotypes. For this reason, public institutions, thanks to greater awareness, have started several projects to promote the visibility of women in the digital sphere, as in the case of campaigns during the International Day of Girls and ICTs or the creation of the BCN Fem Tech Awards.

This trend is also seen in the private sector, where this greater awareness of the need to promote talent has led to the creation of programmes for the visibility of women in leadership positions, with the aim of getting their work recognised and enabling the rest of the company’s workers to see that a vertical progression in their professional career is possible. In this way, it is possible to retain and promote female talent.

In 2022, Women in Tech-Barcelona was also created, the result of an agreement between the Government of Catalonia and the Tech Barcelona association, to give visibility to Catalan female digital and technological talent⁸².

Gaps to be eliminated

Digital transformation can be a missed opportunity for greater integration of women in the economy.

The data shows that the digitisation of the economy means that women are being left behind and either do not directly enter the digital labour market or leave it to redirect themselves to other sectors. Barcelona is no stranger to the general European trend, as the data shows that it is within the average of other Spanish and European cities⁸³. To eliminate the gender gap in this sector it is essential to know the reasons why it occurs and how it can be closed.

The impact of stereotypes and social expectations on the choice of educational programmes

In Barcelona, in 2021 only 10% of women enrolled in Professional Technological Training. This percentage has improved compared to 2018, when Catalan women represented 4.2%⁸⁴ of the total number of students in Vocational Training in the ICT field. Women opt for this level of studies by categories such as “personal image, textiles, clothing and leather, and socio-cultural services”.

⁸² Women in Tech Barcelona (2022).

https://techbarcelona.com/wp-content/uploads/NdP_WomenInTechBarcelona-2.pdf

⁸³ Idem.

⁸⁴ Gender Equality Observatory (2020). “Women in ICT”.

Within the percentage that study in the ICT field, women are concentrated in the development of web applications (15.71%), while in other sectors such as the development of IT applied to logistics, their presence is non-existent⁸⁵.

The lack of a gender perspective in the creation of technology is directly related to the shortage of women in Vocational Training and, therefore, the lack of the necessary skills to be able to participate in its creation and development. The same trend is observed in university studies, where in the 2017-2018 academic year only 8% of students with degrees in engineering or architecture were women compared to 27.8% of men. This data has remained stable since the 2011-2012 school year with only slight variations⁸⁶.

This situation follows the trend seen in Western countries where, contrary to emerging economy countries such as China or India, the presence of women in the STEM sector is much lower than in less egalitarian countries⁸⁷. This gender imbalance when making an educational programme and a lower predilection for women to choose scientific careers is based on the combination of stereotypes and social expectations.

The belief that men are better than women at mathematics, that is, the popular belief about ability that associates not only specific cognitive processes (e.g. mathematical reasoning) with a certain gender but also the general amount of cognitive ability is one of the stereotypes that undermine girls' confidence in their own abilities and causes them to lose interest in the STEM field, regardless of performance in Mathematics. A study found that, at the age of six, girls already feel less capable than boys in technical and scientific matters, and for this reason they begin to avoid activities that are considered for "bright" children such as Physics or Mathematics. Ultimately, this leads to girls' self-censorship and less commitment to science and ICT⁸⁸.

A recent study identified the lack of scientific capital⁸⁹ of fathers and mothers as the main factor that prevents young women from dedicating themselves to technology⁹⁰. The lack of role models or push from the same family or close circle reinforces this belief that girls are not intelligent enough to do these types of studies. For this reason, it is so important that the study of STEM careers is promoted and encouraged from the families themselves and close circles.



“Although all the boys and girls do robotics, all the teachers are men. This generates unconscious biases from childhood, as scientific careers belong to men”

***Míriam Blanc,
managing partner,
Iterem.***

85 Barcelona Digital Talent, (2022). “Digital Talent Overview 2022”.

86 Secretariat of Universities and Research of the Government of Catalonia (2021).

87 Ibáñez, Dr. M.; Arroyo, L.; Collado, C. (2020). “Women and digitisation. From gaps to algorithms”. Women's Institute, Ministry of Equality.

88 Bian, L., Leslie, S., Cimpian, A. (2017). “Gender stereotypes about intellectual ability emerge early”. Science.

89 Generally, someone in the family who already works or is present professionally in science or technology.

90 Adigital and Boston Consulting Group (2022). “Digital economy in Spain”.

The lack of women in STEM higher education as a direct result of the impact of gender stereotypes in the lower educational levels.



“There are courses open to everyone, but not everyone has 400 hours and €4,000. There is a cap that prevents women from entering, because they are the ones who have less time available and fewer financial resources. Women would like to participate, but they don’t know how to do it”.

*Laura Fernández,
CEO and co-founder,
AllWomen.*

This trend, if it continues, will have very negative consequences in the growth of the gender gap in the medium and long term, since according to what the studies point out, 85% of the jobs of 2030 still do not exist. Currently, in Spain there are at least 10,000 vacant jobs that cannot be filled due to a lack of professional qualifications⁹¹. This lack of female presence in the sector means that women miss out on the opportunities offered by the digital transition or, even, are more disadvantaged, as they are also left out of decision-making in the sector.

In addition, this lack of women will be reflected in the appearance of algorithmic biases. These biases arise both during the collection of data when they are either not representative of society or reflect prejudices that already exist, and during their creation, when the attributes to be applied to them are decided. For example, you get the rejection of female candidates because the algorithm of the selection programme is based on hiring decisions that favour men, as happened with Amazon⁹².

The broken step in the professional career of women in technical positions

One consequence of the lack of women in STEM careers and programmes is that it is difficult to find women who can become role models. The lower presence of women in leadership positions makes it difficult for other women to be promoted, particularly in the first promotions.

In technical professions, the first promotions do not occur at the same rate as those of men, since companies have unequal early promotion processes and this fact perpetuates this broken rung on the professional ladder. The consequences are, on the one hand, the loss of talent because women leave companies and, on the other, that women are less prepared later to assume managerial positions of responsibility.

This has a negative impact on the results of companies, as it has been shown that those companies that have women on their management bodies obtain up to 50% more returns⁹³.

91 DigitalEs Survey (2018). <https://www.digitales.es/nota-de-prensa/10-000-empleos-en-el-sector-tecnologico-estan-vacantes-en-espana-por-falta-de-cualificacion/>

92 MIT Technology Review (2019). “How algorithmic bias occurs and why it is so difficult to stop it”.

93 Kanze, D., Huang, L., Conley, M. A., & Higgins, E. T. (2018). “We ask men to win and women not to lose: Closing the gender gap in startup funding”. *Academy of Management Journal*, 61(2), 586-614.

Women have more difficulties in professional reconversion

To avoid this broken step in the professional career, as well as to close the gender gap, both reskilling and upskilling, that is to say, retraining and additional professional training towards the digital sector, gain relevance.

Intra-company reskilling and upskilling programmes are one of the ways to retain and enhance talent, thus adjusting your workforce to your needs. Women are increasingly the focus of such programmes to avoid the loss of talent after, for example, maternity leave⁹⁴.

In addition, in recent years there has been an increase in the offer of training programmes, which has given impetus to professional conversion, although there is still a high level of ignorance among women of their existence, their importance and about the opportunities that taking a course of these characteristics can offer in terms of a better professional career and a salary increase⁹⁵.

The two main barriers that women have to face in order to be able to study this kind of programme are, on the one hand, the difficulty of balancing working life with professional and educational life; and on the other hand, the financial expense it entails, since these programmes are too great an expense for the women who most need this professional retraining, given the average salary in Barcelona.

Horizontal segregation also impacts the wage gap

The gender gap is also observed in horizontal segregation. If the presence of women in technological positions in companies is studied, the largest percentage of women is found in UX/UI design, where parity is almost reached (50.68%), and in 3D printing (40.52%). And the sectors where the percentage of women in the workforce is lower are blockchain (10.79%) and cyber security (16.51%)⁹⁶.

This labour gap has a clear impact on the digital wage gap. According to recent data, the difference between the different technological specialities can reach €10,000 per year. The least paid subsectors are user interface design (UX/UI), where the average salary is €30,000 per year and in which women have a greater presence, and among the best paid are printing 3D and cyber security, with an approximate salary of €45,000 per year, and in which the presence of

94 EY España & Future for Work Institute (2020). "Spanish companies facing the reskilling revolution".

95 Expansión (2019): "Fever for bootcamps: Can you learn to program in weeks?"

<https://www.expansion.com/economia-digital/innovacion/2019/11/17/5dcd7202468aeb9d2a8b468c.html>

96 Barcelona Digital Talent, (2022). "Digital Talent Overview 2022".

women is much smaller. This wage gap will be reduced as more women access these technological fields⁹⁷.

The persistence of gender biases and stereotypes in access to financing

Women face more difficulties in accessing funding due to the persistence of gender biases and stereotypes.

According to data from 2021, in the digital sector 66% of active female entrepreneurs and 76.5% of potential female entrepreneurs indicated that financial support is the key element for the promotion of female entrepreneurship, but only 5% of women entrepreneurs in Catalonia received funding from investors. The rest comes from personal funds and savings⁹⁸. In the digital sector, it is observed that both venture capital investments and business angels are masculinised sectors, where, in addition, men have 60% more chance of receiving funding than women, although the content of the presentation is the same⁹⁹.

However, 61% of start-ups with women founders or in the management team in Catalonia are in an initial phase of financing, compared to 55% of those with teams made up solely of men¹⁰⁰.

In addition, in the funding rounds, female entrepreneurs face both questions and selection criteria that are different from entrepreneurs, which means that there are significant differences in terms of the amount of funding that is granted¹⁰¹. Men are asked promotion-focused questions, which tend to receive more funding, and women are asked prevention-focused questions¹⁰².

Women also receive less funding because, in general, female entrepreneurs apply for fair and necessary funding based on the first business plan they make, rather than including possible contingencies and complications.



“It affects me when I see that the team of a start-up run by women is not trusted. If they see a young woman, their ability to lead and finance a start-up is questioned. And honestly, I have that bias too. Sometimes, I notice that I have not questioned men as harshly as women”.

*Astghik Zakharyan,
co-founder, Startup
Investor Accelerator*

97 Barcelona Digital Talent, (2022). “Digital Talent Overview 2022”.

98 Creápolis (2022). “Female entrepreneurship in Catalonia. Realities and challenges from an innovative and technological perspective”.

99 OECD (2017). “The pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill battle”, OECD Publishing, Paris.

100 ACCIÓ (2021). “X-ray of companies with female directors in Catalonia”.

101 Harvard Business Review (2017). “Male and female entrepreneurs get asked different questions by VCs — and it affects how much funding they get”.

102 Kanze, D., Huang, L., Conley, M. A., & Higgins, E. T. (2018). “We ask men to win and women not to lose: Closing the gender gap in startup funding”. *Academy of Management Journal*, 61(2), 586-614

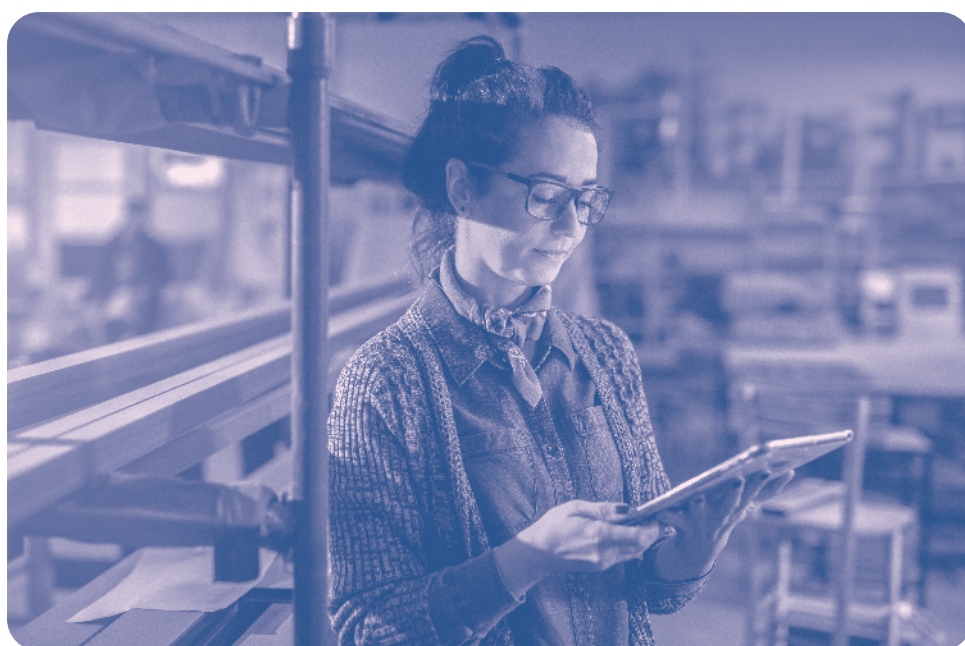
Recommendations

Education is the first step in changing mentality to increase the presence of women in the digital sector.

- Give visibility to reskilling and upskilling programmes, essential for women to access the technological labour market and facilitate access through grants and credits, and strengthen agreements with companies and organisations and educational institutions on all levels.
- Spark girls' interest in STEM careers from a very early age.
 - Support and train teachers and provide them with the necessary skills to deliver a curriculum on digital skills, which allows girls to be attracted and integrated into the digital sector, and to avoid gender biases, such as the lack of visibility of female scientists in school materials.
 - Involve mothers and fathers, given the important role they play in shaping the expectations and aspirations of their daughters to support the choice of STEM careers.
 - Link girls with local educational associations that promote the importance of the STEM/ICT sector and help provide scholarships for studies in these areas.
 - Promote STEAM, not just STEM, emphasising the importance of art and design, given the massive growth of design areas in technology, such as UX design.
- Promote Vocational Training programmes in STEM/ICT and develop exchange programmes with educational institutions in twinned cities and promote knowledge of Erasmus+ scholarships.
- Mentoring programmes for university students to encourage the choice and completion of STEAM careers.
- Create digital skills certifications based on the digital skills test developed by Barcelona Activa together with other public institutions.
- Strengthen the role of companies as agents of change by encouraging public-private collaborations. Companies play a fundamental role in achieving this goal.

Support for the development of digital companies led or owned by women

- Facilitate the access of companies led by women to business incubators.
- Ensure institutional financial support through subsidies for women, creation of events, rounds of investments and creation of agreements with banking and investment institutions.
- Give more visibility to support initiatives (incubators) and specific pre-acceleration programmes for women entrepreneurs, which offer selected start-up mentorships, launching of training and workshops, together with grants or credits to get their projects off the ground.
- Support the efforts made in the integration and participation of women in digital sector clusters.
- Encourage panels at conferences, events and seminars to systematically include women by creating directories of women specialists in the digital sector.



The creative sector

Context

The creative sector stands out for its importance in Barcelona's business fabric. The city is one of the most important cultural and artistic centres in Spain and enjoys a powerful brand, both nationally and internationally. Its strength also lies in its high educational offer in the subject and in the existence of a strong educational fabric. In the diversity of this sector, it is clear that it encompasses a set of economic activities related to artistic production and exhibition, craftsmanship, design, the audiovisual and multimedia job market, the cultural industry and the communications media.

This sector is made up of 4,675 companies, which represents 6.2% of the city's companies and generates 143,461 jobs, 13.7% of total employment in Barcelona.¹⁰³

The creative sector stands out for having a percentage of self-employed workers 6.5 points above the Barcelona average (10.9%). 17.4% of workers in the sector are self-employed. In the traditional creative sector (art, culture and design) this percentage is particularly high, as it reaches 26.9% and, on the other hand, in the non-traditional sector (information technologies, R&D and advertising) it is only 9.7%.¹⁰⁴

As one of the most important sources of income for the city, the creative sector annually invoices €10.158 M, 6.3% of the total turnover. There are significant differences in this area between the companies that make it up: 50% of the turnover is generated by only 78 companies, and of these, half are from the cultural industries sector (cinema and video, TV and radio, books and press, music and video game publishing).¹⁰⁵

These disparities have grown during the Covid-19 pandemic. While the world of entertainment suffered significant losses during lockdown and is now on a slow path to recovery, less traditional sectors related to the digital world have resisted or even grown since 2020.¹⁰⁶

103 Barcelona City Council (2022), "Labour indicators of the creative sectors in Barcelona 2020".

104 Idem.

105 Barcelona City Council (2022). "Map of creative industries".

106 Idem.

Women in Barcelona's creative sector and their importance

In March 2022, female employment in the creative sector accounted for 43% of the total. This data shows that parity between men and women has been achieved in this sector, despite the fact that women are subjected to a series of difficulties that affect men to a lesser extent, such as temporary employment. In 2021, of all contracts in the sector, 40.7% were signed by women. Of these, 39.5% were in the traditional creative sector and 43.7% in the non-traditional creative sector. In the latter, parity has been achieved.¹⁰⁷

The creative sector stands out for its high instability, which mainly affects women. 80% of the contracts in the sector are for temporary employment for women. In this sense, in the traditional sector, of the total number of contracts signed by women, 90.8% were temporary contracts. However, in non-traditional creative sectors, this percentage dropped to 54.9%.¹⁰⁸

The presence of women in leadership positions is still lower than that of men, but an increase in parity is observed. Thus, in 2021, in the field of festivals, 14 of them were directed exclusively by women compared to the 9 that were directed by men, exclusively. However, 25 of these had joint management.¹⁰⁹

Regarding the direction of shows, parity was achieved in 2021, as 40% of these were directed by women. In the management of cultural institutions, on the other hand, there is a greater female representation in sectors such as the management of libraries (83%), civic centres (72%) and factories (55%). Parity is achieved in the management of exhibition centres and archives, and there is a minority of female directors in auditoriums (0%), theatres (33%) and museums (29%).¹¹⁰

The video game industry, however, suffers from the same difficulties that are observed in the digital sector, mainly due to the survival of gender stereotypes and biases, since they are traditionally very masculinised sectors. According to 2022 data, in Catalonia the presence of women does not exceed 25%.¹¹¹

The creative sector as a vehicle for the values of equality and diversity

The creative sector is of crucial importance for the promotion of gender equality as a societal value. Culture conveys socio-cultural norms and patterns, but

¹⁰⁷ Compiled by the Department of Studies at the Management Office for Economy, Resources and Economic Promotion of Barcelona City Council, based on data from Barcelona City Council's Statistics and Data Dissemination Department (2022).

¹⁰⁸ Idem.

¹⁰⁹ Cultural Data Observatory of Barcelona (2022). "Some data on gender and culture 2021".

¹¹⁰ Idem.

¹¹¹ Europa Press (2022). "The turnover of the Catalan video game sector grows by 73% and companies double in 5 years": <https://www.europapress.es/catalunya/noticia-facturacion-sector-videojuego-catalan-crece-73-empresas-doblan-anos-20220616154256.html>

beyond that, it also has a force of coercive persuasion to transform individual and collective perceptions. The visibility it gives to a group allows it to transmit its ideas to wider audiences and thus exercise its influence and power¹¹². Consequently, the creative sector can reinforce a stereotypical view of society or be an important ally in the fight against these stereotypes, while giving voice to people and stories often invisible to society. Promoting gender equality in the creative sector also means strengthening gender equality in society as a whole.

Achievements

The growing visibility of women in the creative sector

Women have always been present in the creative sector, but their work has been little visible or valued. In recent years, this situation has begun to change, since this iniquity has begun to be recognised and the role of women in this sector has been highlighted. This has been accompanied by its progressive arrival in places of relevance and greater visibility in this sector. These women, upon arrival, have become references for other women and have normalised the female presence in leadership positions, traditionally assigned to men.

In parallel, an external change has also been observed, in line with transformations on a European level. Modern artistic representations have become more diverse, conveying a more complete image of society and breaking with the stereotypes that relegated women to the background. Without yet reaching a sufficient representation of diversity, in recent years it is already perceived that the representation of women and minorities, both gender and age or sexual diversity has been enhanced.¹¹³

In the same way, in the last two decades the percentage of women as a source or subject of information in the media has also increased, today globally representing 25%¹¹⁴. It stands out, however, that this figure does not reach the critical mass of 30%. In fact, in Europe it is 28% and is still behind North America, which with 33% has already exceeded this threshold.

Finally, this growing understanding of the role of women in the creative sector has been accompanied by the establishment of several initiatives to support the presence of women in the creative industry. Based on studies of the main challenges faced by creative women, networks, both informal and formal, have been created to break down these barriers and give women the recognition



“We know there are women, but let’s think of the photo of the eight gentlemen who all dress the same”.

*Judith Colell,
president, Catalan
Film Academy.*

112 McLuhan, M (2001). Understanding Media.


113 Marcos Ramos, M, González-de-Garay, B., Arcila Calderón, C. (2020). Notebooks; Minority groups in Spanish television fiction: analysis of content and citizen perceptions for the creation of a diversity index. e.g. 307-341.

114 GMMP (2020). “Who makes the news? 6th Global Media Monitoring Project”.

they deserve. In addition, several programmes have been created, both on local, national and European levels, to alleviate the difficulties faced by women in accessing financing.

BOX 1. Examples of good practices in the matter of diversity

The Catalan Film Academy is the first European academy to apply a diversity questionnaire to the films presented at the Gaudí Awards.



“In the world of video games, passion is necessary. This passion develops from adolescence, which is when the gap appears. From the moment we buy the first computer for boys, but we don’t do the same for girls”.

Simón Lee, founder, GamesBCN.

Gaps to be eliminated

Invisibility as the basic problem

One of the most worrying problems is the invisibility of women in the creative sector, a historical fact that, on the one hand, results in a lack of recognition of their leadership and competence.

On the other hand, the invisibility of women also leads to their absence in leadership positions. Although women represent 44% of the sector, this quantitative presence does not translate into quality impact. In all areas, from the media to video games, a very pronounced vertical segregation is observed. In the creative industry, while the content is in the hands of women, the positions of power and decision-making are occupied by men. Therefore, they are the ones who have the mastery over the production of cultural stories.¹¹⁵ This monopoly of power reinforces a stereotypical view of the submissive woman, but also as a sexual object.¹¹⁶

In the more public-facing sectors, the problem of women’s invisibility goes hand in hand with another kind of discrimination: age discrimination. In Spain, in 2015, 100% of female news presenters were between 35 and 49 years old, while men outnumbered them in age, with an exaggerated majority (97%) between 50 and 64 years old¹¹⁷. A look at the current staff of the news set of the Catalan channel TV3¹¹⁸ confirms that in seven years the age imbalance persists and that presenters over 50 are absent from news programmes.

This invisibility of women generates the problem of the visibility of passion. This passion develops from adolescence, which is when women appear in the sector who can serve as models for other women and girls interested in the creative world.

¹¹⁵ Amorós, C. (2001). “Feminism: equality and difference”.

¹¹⁶ Bourdieu, P. (2000). “Male domination”.

¹¹⁷ GMMP (2015). “Who makes the news? 5th Global Media Monitoring Project”.

¹¹⁸ <https://www.ccma.cat/tv3/telenoticies/mes-info/>

At the same time, this fact decreases the aspiration level of other women to develop their professional career in this sector. According to one study, women exposed to typically male products, such as video games, showed less aspiration to pursue a career in technology than women in neutral environments¹¹⁹.

Finally, this invisibility is part of a vicious circle in which it translates into an absence of quality data on women in the creative sector, a fact that hides difficulties and challenges that women have to face in this sector and, at the same time, hides real problems.

However, data disaggregated by sex and gender is essential in order to fully understand and make visible the challenges women face in the creative sector. The data is also necessary to generate powerful and effective solutions that adapt to the reality of the field.

The creative sector is the least known and studied strategic sector of the city of Barcelona from a gender perspective, due to a general lack of data broken down by sex and gender. This represents an important obstacle when studying and a limitation at a methodological level, since it does not allow a more accurate picture to be obtained of the differences between creative women and men, and it represents a difficulty in detecting the challenges and opportunities for a better gender equality.

The difficulties of obtaining financing that allows full compliance

“A woman must have money and a room of her own to be able to write novels”. Already in 1929, Virginia Wolf, in her book *“A room of one’s own”*, emphasised the importance of material conditions in the development of women’s cultural capacities.

However, today women in the industry continue to face financial difficulties, which limits the complete fulfilment of their professional skills.

In cinema, few women have access to high-budget productions. It is also observed that, despite more diversification of the festivals and that there is parity in the juries, women appear less in the competitions.

This reluctance of women to participate in competitions, widespread in all areas, has its roots in gender stereotypes, since from a very young age girls are less educated in independent work and more in collective work. This results in a difference in the perception of the usefulness of competitions: while men think



“With exceptions such as Isabel Coixet or Carla Simón, women do not direct big-budget productions. Usually, it is their first or second film with low budgets or means, which implies less competitiveness, visibility and the possibility of going abroad”.

*Judith Colell,
president, Catalan
Film Academy.*

119 Cheryan, S. et al. (2009). “Ambient belonging: how stereotypical cues impact gender participation in computer science”. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 97(6): 1045-60

that competition increases performance, strengthens character and increases innovation, 63% of women are less convinced of this¹²⁰.

Beyond having to face the gender stereotypes that limit their access to financing, creative women do not have, for the most part, financial and entrepreneurial education, a fact that has a negative impact on development and sustainability of their projects. This gap is very visible in cinema and series: while men dominate in large productions, women focus on independent productions, with less visibility.



“A lot of empowerment is needed on the business side. Between women we don’t talk about how to manage our projects”.

*Julia de Balle,
director,
Broadcard Films.*

The wage gap, an invisible problem

The creative sector in Barcelona also does not escape the problem of the persistence of the wage gap, to which it is added that it is the third sector with the lowest wages, since in 2020 it was, on average, €19,579 per year¹²¹. In this way, when breaking it down by sex, it is observed that while men earn an average of €20,975 per year, women only receive €18,429 per year¹²². This puts the annual wage gap at 18.4%¹²³. In addition, women suffer an added difficulty, such as a greater fragility of employment. In the total recruitment of the sector in Barcelona, men make up 57.5% of the contracts, while women only 42.5%¹²⁴.

Interviews with actors in the creative sector have shown an interesting trend. There is a widespread opinion about the non-existence of the wage gap in the cultural field. Although the reasons for this perception should be studied more deeply, it should be noted that everyone has agreed that it is a sector characterised by relatively low salaries and a precarious professional situation.

Consequently, it can be seen that the unattractive financial conditions seem so typical for this sector that they seem to hide the existence of the wage gap. In addition, creative women tend not to talk so much about financial matters, and focus more on artistic and creative issues or problems arising from work-life balance. Not openly discussing the economic side of the creative sector can limit the ability to observe and identify gender gaps.

Difficulty creating powerful networks and asserting their expertise

The absence of women in leadership positions in the creative sector translates into another gap, this time in inequality in access to quality networks. This creates, on the one hand, difficulties in promotion and visibility, and on the

¹²⁰ Kesebir, S. et al (2019) Motivation and Emotion 43: 719-739. “Lay beliefs about competition: Scale development and gender differences.”

¹²¹ Barcelona City Council (2022). “Wages in Barcelona, 2020”.

¹²² Idem.

¹²³ Barcelona Activa (2022). “Women and the labour market”.

¹²⁴ Idem.

other, in reaching the projects, since the usual method of work in this sector is that the projects are obtained in the vast majority by networks or by self-nominations¹²⁵.

The few women in positions of reference have to face, consequently, an environment built by and for men. This homogeneous environment also consolidates the presence of gender stereotypes. One of the most common is questioning women's expertise.

Although women have always been artists, it wasn't until 2007 that the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC) opened a solo exhibition on a female artist¹²⁶.

This biased view is also very well reflected in the literary world, where, historically, women adopted masculine nicknames in order to publish without being given any recognition¹²⁷. Although hiding behind a pseudonym for being a woman seems like a bastion of history, it is also observed that the successful authors of the era disappear from bookstores because their works are no longer republished.

Difficulty of work-life balance

As in other sectors, the greater burden of domestic tasks negatively impacts the careers of creative women. In the Advertising Industry Report¹²⁸, it is indicated that 60% of women are between 25 and 34 years old and only 18% of women continue in the sector after turning 45 (compared with 33% of men). One of the main reasons is the gender difference when it comes to work-life balance, especially after the arrival of children.

To the question "Has being a father/mother damaged your professional career?", 81% of men declared that their fatherhood had no impact, while 51% of women did see their careers being damaged after becoming mothers.

Even in a part of the creative sector, with unregulated working hours and the predominance of freelance work, women tend to suffer more when it comes to balancing. Although the possibility of adapting their schedules is universally seen as a great advantage¹²⁹, balance can represent a barrier to professional growth, especially in the case of female entrepreneurs.



“References are needed: Lilly Reich is described as a ‘designer’ rather than an architect, and Mies van der Rohe, on the other hand, is considered an architect, even though he was not one”.

*Anna Ramos,
director,
Mies Barcelona
Foundation.*

125 Barcelona City Council (2022). Map of creative industries.

126 Baygual, J., Brugat, R., Cabrés, M. (2016). Exhibitions of women in the art centres of Barcelona, 4 report of the Gender Cultural Observatory, with the Collaboration of MAV (Women in Visual Arts). <https://mav.org.es/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/INFORME-MAV-15.3-descargar.pdf>

127 De la Guardia, C. (2007). The violence of numbers. Women, pseudonyms and silences. <https://cdsa.academica.org/000-108/63.pdf>

128 <https://cloud.clubdecreativos.com/index.php/s/Fvh4jE1KpefmWd3>

129 According to data from the Eurostat Labour Force Survey (2019), 13% of self-employed workers in the European Union have decided to adapt this work model in order to gain work-life balance.



“In public tenders, access is equitable, but the fees are very low, which often means that offices that are often used by couples of freelancers cannot create a ‘family of freelancers’. And, as a general rule, they are the ones who resign and do not lead the office, in addition to giving up professional social life”.

*Anna Ramos,
director,
Mies Barcelona
Foundation.*

Indeed, professional progression requires an investment of many hours and women, who tend to carry out most of the work at home, cannot be involved in the same way in the development of their professional activity. Equally, their ability to create and expand their networks is compromised, because they often cannot participate in meetings as they often coincide with the times of caring for their children.

A strong horizontal segregation with the risk of amplifying gender gaps in the future

As in many other sectors, the creative sector is also characterised by a strong horizontal segregation of work. Women stay in support positions, or in professions that are not recognised, paid less and are more precarious.

This fact also creates difficulties in attracting talent, because in sectors with a strong presence of women, such as fashion, they are also considered to have fewer opportunities for growth in terms of a professional career. This is currently leading to a situation in which the shortage of labour is beginning to be noticed.

However, it should be noted that the gap occurs and worsens especially in technical positions. The analysis of data from the 145 companies in GamesBCN has shown that women only represent 13% of the workforce. Only 11% of companies have women in their founding teams. In addition, only two women are programmers. This fact reveals a pressing problem, as women face particular difficulties in accessing digital tools for artistic creation and distribution.

The future of this sector is digital¹³⁰, as the Covid-19 pandemic has already shown. While the more traditional branches suffered significant losses caused by the quarantine, the less traditional sectors, such as video games or digital publishing, have resisted, even growing since 2020.

¹³⁰ Barcelona City Council (2022). Map of creative industries.

Recommendations

Strengthen the gender perspective in institutional policies

- Introduce the gender perspective in all regulatory policies of the creative sector, especially those related to working conditions.
- Create alliances with actors in the creative sector based on regular exchanges for improved coordination and exchange of information and best practices.
- Create reliable and systematic data collection and analysis methods on the institutional level and promote scientific research in this environment.
- Given the importance of the impact of gender stereotypes, strengthen alliances to measure the impact of these stereotypes in the cultural sector.



“If we’re talking about salaries and hours, we’re still in the 19th century. Because sewing is a women’s thing. However, the great names belong to men”.

Laia Moret, assistant director, School of Women.



Communication

- Make female talent visible in order to build the confidence of future generations and demonstrate the validity of women in the sector.

Finances

- Facilitate access to funding for women's projects for greater visibility.
- Strengthen the activity of women in the creative sector through their assistance in the creation of more resilient structures, such as companies or cooperatives.
- Include a gender perspective in post-Covid recovery policies.

Strengthen women's access to leadership positions

- Closing the digital divide to ensure women's full access to the creative sector.
- Strengthen existing support networks for women and create projects to promote female entrepreneurship.
- Strengthen work-life balance measures for self-employed women.

Fight against gender stereotypes

- Promote a more diverse representation in the press and culture, which reflects today's society.

The Public Administration

Context

The Public Administration, an important sector in the labour market of Barcelona

Barcelona City Council is the fundamental part of the city's organisational structure. In a reality as complex as the current one, the presence of a municipal administration representative of society has never been so relevant or so necessary.

The weight of the Public Administration in the gross domestic product (GDP) of Barcelona was 7.4% in 2020¹³¹. In fact, its importance is such that, in 2021, the number of municipal workers amounted to 14,837 people¹³². The main sectors within the municipal public sector by weight of employment are the special administration scale and the City Police.

The year 2021 has had one of the economic sectors with the greatest employment growth, creating 11,323 new jobs, which represents 8.2% of the city's total employment¹³³.

Women in the Public Administration of Barcelona and their importance

The Public Administration as a catalyst for gender equality

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises equality as a human right, although it is still difficult to achieve equal participation in decision-making, particularly in Public Administration. The participation of women in the public sector is essential in order to have a critical mass within them, which allows them to contribute the female perspective in the adoption and execution of public policies. Without this critical mass, the City Council cannot access the full potential of Barcelona's talent and workforce. The Civil Service is one of the few areas where women can find available and acceptable job opportunities. In

131 Compiled by the Department of Studies at the Management Office for Economy, Resources and Economic Promotion of Barcelona City Council, based on data from Barcelona City Council's Statistics and Data Dissemination Department (2022).

132 Idem.

133 Barcelona City Council (2021). "Explanatory memorandum. Budget for 2022".

addition, by being subject to the principles of merit and ability, it allows women to compete on equal terms.

On the other hand, gender equality should be a cornerstone in the public sector, which acts as a governance model for society. Public Administration is a reflection of the composition of society and ensuring truly inclusive development and governance helps foster trust in public institutions, improves the responsiveness of public policies and is an example of how by removing barriers and gender impediments, benefits are generated for the whole of society, because it leads the way towards full gender equality.



“We also put a lot of effort into raising awareness. A generational change is also observed. Many agents have retired and young people have been promoted”.

Àngels Vila, director of Prevention Services, City Police.

Women in the Public Administration of Barcelona

If the data from 2021 is analysed, it can be seen how parity has been achieved within the Public Administration, with 54% women and 46% men.

However, there is an important horizontal segregation in the municipal workforce in two important areas. On the one hand, in subgroup C2, which represents 43.39% of the staff, there is a notable inequality, as men represent 72.58% and women 27.42%. This difference is particularly materialised in a masculinisation of the City Police, where there are 403 women (12.4% of the total) and 2,632 men (87.78% of the total), and in the Prevention, Fire Extinguishing and Rescue Service (Firefighters), where women represent 1.1% (28 women) and men 99% of the total (712 men). And although measures are being taken to attract women, their impact is still limited¹³⁴.

In fact, in 2020, there were 1,109 women against 479 men on the general administration scale. This difference remains in the general categories and, nevertheless, the opposite phenomenon occurs in the case of the specific bodies of the Administration, where there are 1,163 women compared with 3,841 men¹³⁵.

In addition, there is a significant vertical segregation within the Public Administration, since the upper levels are dominated by men. These represent 81.2% compared to 18.8% of women at level 30 of the Administration. In contrast, level 12 is made up of 85.7% women and 14.3% men¹³⁶. And within the management positions of Barcelona City Council, in 2021 there were 147 management positions, of which 66 corresponded to women and 87 to men¹³⁷. However, the Executive Committee of Barcelona City Council in 2022 is equal, demonstrating a will to move towards parity within the Public Service.

¹³⁴ Barcelona City Council (2019). Result of the Diagnosis “Situation of women and men in relation to equal treatment and opportunities in Barcelona City Council”.

¹³⁵ Compiled by the Department of Studies at the Management Office for Economy, Resources and Economic Promotion of Barcelona City Council, based on data from Barcelona City Council’s Statistics and Data Dissemination Department (2022).

¹³⁶ Idem.

¹³⁷ Barcelona City Council (2022). “Barcelona City Council workforce data 2021”.

Achievements

Awareness of the gender gap

In recent years, there has been a change in the perception of gender equality within the Public Administration, thanks to the increased awareness of the existence of gender gaps. This change in trend has been produced in particular by a greater awareness of society in general about the existence of gender inequalities and the need to eliminate them, and by a generational change. The younger generations are more aware of gender equality and are more open to changes in this matter.

In addition, this awareness has also been fostered by a series of measures and policies adopted by the Consistory, with the aim of not only promoting awareness of the issue, but also of reducing the gaps.

Among the measures established, the equality plans drawn up by the City Council and mandatory compliance by all attached bodies, as well as local instrumental bodies linked to Barcelona City Council, stand out. So far, three plans have been drawn up to achieve equal opportunities, the current plan being the III Plan for equal opportunities between women and men 2020-2023.

Thus, other instruments have been adopted by the Consistory to reduce the gender gap within it and in the rest of the Administration, with the aim of also becoming an example for the private sector.

Among the municipal measures, the Agreement regulating the working conditions of municipal public employees (civil and labour personnel, City Police, Fire Prevention and Extinction and Rescue staff) for the years 2017-2020, the various training sessions stand out that are carried out for civil servants and workers in matters of gender equality and the visibility campaigns of the City Police.



“Communication campaigns have been carried out by the City Council to establish references for all kinds of specialities”.

*Javier Pascual,
Human Resources
manager, Barcelona
City Council.*



Greater inclusion of men in highly feminised positions and increased visibility of role models



“All social work is eminently feminine. Most women are in education or in the medical environment. The more female doctors, the more the profession is impoverished”.

Sònia Ruiz, director of Gender Services and Time Policies, Barcelona City Council.

In this line, two elements are perceived. On the one hand, a greater visibility of women also has a positive impact on the attraction of other women towards careers in the Public Administration. This visibility shows that it is possible to progress in a professional career towards leadership positions, which is why the desire to reach managerial positions here is promoted. This implies an increase in the number of women who apply for higher positions or who prepare the access tests for higher groups of the Administration (A1).

On the other hand, changes are taking place in some of the traditionally more feminised positions, such as the secretariat, where there are beginning to be men. Although they are still few, it is evidence that the changes that occur in society have a clear reflection in the Civil Service itself, where the change is slowly becoming normalised.

Measures have also been adopted to achieve greater flexibility. In this sense, the Covid-19 pandemic has been a setback for the implementation of teleworking and some work-life balance measures at the City Council. In fact, 41% of women took advantage of these work-life balance measures, compared to 17% of men. Of particular note is the decision to increase the possibility of teleworking and the study of improvements regarding the working hours¹³⁸.

BOX 2. Good practices

The Department of Safety and Prevention has created a communication campaign to encourage more women to apply for the Guàrdia Urbana City Police calls: “We are women. We are urban”.

It organises informative talks aimed especially at women to explain the career options of the City Police. The idea is to give details on the career paths and itineraries without gender differences that can be followed, as well as the free access competition system.

Gaps to be eliminated

In 2021, there are 7,083 women and 7,754 men in the workforce of Barcelona City Council and dependent or affiliated entities, representing respectively 47.7% and 52.3%¹³⁹. This data indicates that parity has been achieved in the municipal Civil Service. However, it does not mean the disappearance of the

¹³⁸ El Periódico (2021). “Barcelona establishes female quotas to access the City Police and Firefighters”. <https://www.elperiodico.com/es/barcelona/20210411/barcelona-cuotas-guardia-urbana-bomberos-11648583>

¹³⁹ Transparency, Barcelona City Council (2022). Composition of the workforce by gender 2021.

gender gap because, although in absolute numbers equality has been achieved, when the data is analysed it is observed that there is significant segregation both horizontally and vertically and this is manifested, at the same time, in the survival of the wage gap.

Horizontal segregation: preeminence of women in social areas and of men in the City Police and Fire Department

In the last decade, the data shows that horizontal segregation has remained stable in the City Council's staff, and despite the adoption of measures such as equality plans, none of the City Council's scales has achieved parity.

Now, although there are still significant inequalities in specific sectors such as the City Police and Fire Department, there is a slight improvement in the participation of women. In the case of the City Police, there has been an increase from 196 women in 2000 to the current 403, and in the fire department there have been no women in the corps in 2000 to the current 28¹⁴⁰.

This horizontal segregation is also manifested in the different departments, where women predominate mostly in social areas, such as the Department of Citizenship Rights, Participation and Transparency, where they comprise 78.4%. On the other hand, men predominantly occupy the Prevention and Safety Management, where they represent 82.2% of the total. But of the total of the City Council's managements, parity has been achieved in four, as is the case, for example, in the Municipal Management.

Regarding autonomous bodies and affiliated bodies, parity has been achieved in three of them, as is the case of the Barcelona Sports Institute, and in the rest a trend towards feminisation is being experienced or they are already feminising, as in the Municipal Institute of Education, where women represent 91.3%¹⁴¹.

Vertical segregation: parity in the presence in the Public Administration, but managerial positions continue to be male

Data from 2018 shows how significant vertical segregation persists, as the number of women in high positions in the municipal administration is very small. Thus, within the general scale of the Administration, in the last level or level 30 there are 27.3% of women, placing us far from parity¹⁴².

At lower levels, there is an increase in parity, as the number of women in levels 26 and 28 represented, respectively, 59.7% and 45.5% in 2018. However, this data



“The segregation that occurs the most is vertical because women are in administrative positions, with little chance of moving up and, therefore, their careers slow down while men’s progress”.

Sònia Ruiz, director of Gender Services and Time Policies, Barcelona City Council.

140 Barcelona City Council (2022). “Municipal staff”.

141 Idem.

142 Idem.

must be nuanced because, while it is true that results have improved in levels 26 and 28, women continue to be the majority in jobs of lesser responsibility.

In 2020, when analysing the data, it can be seen that within the general scale of the Administration, the vast majority of women are in administrative positions (354 women) and assistants (538 women). Regarding the special level of the Administration, women are concentrated in the senior technical staff (512 women) and, in contrast, men in the City Police (2,632 men)¹⁴³.

This segregation is also observed in the groups by academic qualification. In 2018, women were the majority in all professional groups. In group A1, parity stands out in its composition with 56.6% women. This data must also be qualified, since of the total workforce, only 31.2% of women belong to the A1 group. In addition, they represented 43.9% of managerial positions, where parity has also been achieved. However, the situation of groups A1 and A2 is reversed in the others. In group C1, women make up 71.5% of the total workforce, but they represent only 20.2% of the female workforce¹⁴⁴.

There are different motivations for this segregation, both horizontal and vertical.

Glass walls make it difficult to achieve gender equality

Traditionally, women and men have been subject to a series of stereotypes and social expectations that affect the private sector, but which are also manifested in the public sector.

Over the years, women's participation in the public sector has been associated with administrative and secretarial positions. This has shown generations of women that the jobs they can aspire to in the Administration are limited to the administrative or technical field.

Currently, there is an over-representation of women in two areas traditionally associated with women, such as women's affairs and health and particularly in care. They are also highly employed in other areas that are also very feminised, such as education and social affairs, as well as administrative tasks.

On the other hand, women are underrepresented in areas considered masculine, such as prevention and security, public works and transport and telecommunications. This shows that the Public Administration is not alien to the traditional attribution of gender roles, which persists in society.

According to the studies, these 'glass walls' limit the participation of women in the Public Administration and their professional progress, since the skills and



“I think it is necessary to have more men in the secretariat, to break with gender stereotypes, and show that everyone can do the same job. We think that it is not only about increasing the number of women in the Administration, but also the number of men in more feminised sectors”.

*Cristina Garrido,
secretary, Barcelona
City Council.*

¹⁴³ Barcelona City Council, Statistics and Data Dissemination (2022), City Council staff by category and sex.

¹⁴⁴ Barcelona City Council (2019). Result of the Diagnosis “Situation of women and men in relation to equal treatment and opportunities in Barcelona City Council”.

the training required in these areas are considered less transferable to other sectors¹⁴⁵.

Therefore, the elimination of horizontal segregation or 'glass walls' is essential in order to achieve full participation of women in Public Administration and to incorporate their perspective into the development of public policies.

However, the evolution of society also materialises in the public sector, where we can already see how, still with difficulty and slowly, some of these stereotypes are being modified. From the participation of women in masculinised sectors, such as the City Police, or the incorporation of men into more feminised sectors, such as the secretariat or administration.

The continued invisibility of women impacts the change in masculinised bodies

The election of the first female mayor in the history of Barcelona, Ada Colau in 2015 and her re-election in 2020, has meant the greater visibility of women in the City Council, a greater effort in the inclusion of women in the municipal Government Commission, as well as an increase in the gender perspective and the implementation of feminist policies such as the continuation of the City Council's Equality Plans (Plan I 2011-2013, Plan II 2015-2019 and Plan III 2020-2023) and the creation of the Ministry of Feminism and LGBTI.

However, despite this progress, the lack of references and visibility of women is a transversal issue in different sectors, but in the case of the Public Administration it is of particular interest due, fundamentally, to the fact that it should be a sample of social reality and the lack of women gives rise to the survival of gender stereotypes and biases.

The visibility of role models is especially necessary in two key sectors.

On the one hand, in the field of prevention and security, that is to say, the City Police and the Fire Extinguishing and Rescue Service. In this case, the presence of women has proven indispensable in matters related to gender violence or minors, among others.

For this reason, a greater presence of women in the most masculinised areas and the visibility of women belonging to the security forces is necessary, and essential to attracting female talent. Usually, and due to gender stereotypes, girls are less interested in being a police officer, as they consider it a male profession¹⁴⁶.



“In the security sector, women are under-represented. It’s a running theme. This sector has been understood as something for men, and women have seen it as very masculine as they have no role models”.

Àngels Vila, director of Prevention Services, City Police.

145 United Nations Development Programme (2021), “Gender equality in public administration”.

146 Adecco (2021). XV Survey “What do you want to be when you grow up?”

On the other hand, greater female participation in managerial and executive positions is also essential. In this case, the promotion and visibility of the role model women must be done internally, for the Administration staff itself. The aim is to raise awareness within the City Council of the work carried out by women who have reached managerial and executive positions to encourage other women to also aspire to progress in their professional careers within the municipal Public Service.

The lack of work-life balance and co-responsibility limits the professional progression of women

The City Council has made an effort to facilitate work-life balance measures thanks to a greater awareness of the importance of this type of measures to reduce gender inequalities. For this reason, work-life balance measures are offered for male and female employees, such as the possibility of taking 60 quarterly hours for parents/guardians of children under 12 years of age and 20 quarterly hours for personal matters.

These work-life balance measures were adopted in 2018 mostly by women (71.6%), compared to 54.4% of men, despite being offered to both genders without distinction¹⁴⁷. The Covid-19 pandemic has led to an increase in teleworking and the emergence of new work models. However, the persistence of gender stereotypes in the work and domestic spheres continue to be perpetuated, with women bearing the most family-type obligations and, therefore, they are the ones who usually resort to work-life balance measures.

In addition, the City Council also offers the possibility of reduced working hours for parents/guardians of children under 12 years of age. As is the case with flexibility, it is women who most welcome this work-life balance measure.

If the data is analysed, it can be seen that 7% of the female workforce in the general scale of the Administration has adopted this measure. Men, by comparison, accounted for only 1.1% of the workforce. Paradoxically, these percentages increase in the City Police, where they represent 10.8% and 6.3% respectively.

In a professional career as presentist as Public Administration still is and where telework is slowly being imposed, the fact that women are the ones who mostly take advantage of these measures and, therefore, are not visible has a negative impact in their professional career. This feminisation of the use of measures of flexibility and work-life balance not only does not help to reduce the gap, but makes it worse, since women can come to be considered as unreliable.

¹⁴⁷ Barcelona City Council (2019), Result of the Diagnosis "Situation of women and men in relation to equal treatment and opportunities in Barcelona City Council".

The glass ceiling or vertical segregation also affects the Public Administration

In the case of the Public Administration, horizontal segregation has a clear effect on the possibility of professional advancement and of reaching managerial positions. The fact that an important part of the positions held by women are in the A2 category in subsectors with little professional experience, such as work in nurseries or in the social sector, limits their own promotion.

The lesser presence of women in positions at A1 is also a reason for being able to ascend to managerial and executive positions, traditionally occupied by men. If we add to this the consequences of the 'sticky ground' at the lower levels, we see the difficulties for women in terms of advancing in their professional careers.

The persistence of the wage gap

The existence of horizontal and vertical segregation has a clear impact on the wage gap.

In 2020, the average salary in the Public Administration was €37,692. However, when this data is broken down, it is observed that the average salary for men was €41,268 compared to €35,412 for women, showing the persistence of the gender wage gap in the municipal administration¹⁴⁸. In 2017, the global structural gender pay gap stood at 13.23%¹⁴⁹.

According to data from 2020, the average annual salary in the Public Administration was €37,692, but when disaggregated by sex, the existing inequality is observed, since men, on average, receive an annual salary of €41,268 and women €35,412¹⁵⁰.

This salary gap in the Public Administration is clearly linked to the fact that women predominantly occupy positions lower on the ladder. Now, although the largest percentage of the workforce, both male and female, is at level 22, it should be noted that women occupy a greater percentage of levels 12 to 26 of the Administration, with a lower salary, while men predominate in levels 28 and 30, with a higher salary¹⁵¹.

Added to this is the fact that, within the same professional group, women generally occupy the lowest paid positions. In the Public Administration, the salary is usually linked to the mission of the department. In many cases, sectors that are less valued or paid are those that are more masculinised, such as the City Police, compared to more feminised areas, such as kindergartens.

148 Barcelona City Council (2022). "Salaries in Barcelona, 2020".

149 Barcelona City Council (2019). Result of the Diagnosis "Situation of women and men in relation to equal treatment and opportunities in Barcelona City Council".

150 Barcelona City Council (2022). "Salaries in Barcelona, 2020".

151 Idem.

Another essential element in the existence of wage inequality in the Public Administration is also due to work-life balance measures, since women are predominantly welcomed, both in work-life balance measures and in part-time work, a fact that has a direct impact on their remuneration¹⁵².

Recommendations

Career access

- Review the entrance exams applying the gender perspective.
- Establish quotas for areas or professions in which one of the sexes is under-represented.
- Bring young talent and foster ambition through communication campaigns about the professions of the Public Service based not only on job security, but also on opportunities for professional development and impact on the city.



¹⁵² Barcelona City Council (2019). Result of the Diagnosis "Situation of women and men in relation to equal treatment and opportunities in Barcelona City Council".

Internal promotion

- Propose training or education funding to people stuck in careers with limited growth probabilities to offer them an evolution within the Public Administration.
- Create a programme to detect female talent within the Administration. Regulate the criteria linked to age and length of service, which put women at a disadvantage. In addition, include in the annual evaluation personal events, such as maternity or paternity.

Legal framework

- Ensure that the legal obligations are not only fulfilled, but that they correspond to 100% of the requirements. The aim is for Barcelona City Council to become an example to follow in terms of equality for other bodies in the city, the autonomous community and Spain.
- Guarantee that programmes and policies in the field of gender equality have sufficient financial resources for their full implementation.
- Make these efforts visible to improve the organisational culture and to encourage positive change and the reduction of gender stereotypes of male and female employees.

Work-life balance and co-responsibility measures

- Promote an organisation of work by objectives linked to the rationalisation of schedules.
- Establish mechanisms to facilitate hybrid work.
- Create the necessary infrastructure, such as nurseries, to facilitate work-life balance and co-responsibility.

The health and life sector

Context

The importance of the health and life sector in Barcelona's economy

The health and life sector is of primary importance for the city, as it strongly influences the quality of life of its inhabitants. This sector, made up of 3,090 companies and which generated 90,000 jobs at the end of 2017, is both diverse and strongly marked by the weight of healthcare, which concentrates 75% of jobs and 87.2% of companies with salaried staff¹⁵³.

Another very important branch of this sector, the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry, has found in the city a favourable environment to foster its ability to research and innovate.

Catalonia is the Spanish leader in biotechnological R&D investment in Spain, and Barcelona has 15 hospitals, 9,000 research institutes and more than 6,000 researchers¹⁵⁴.

The importance of the health and life sector in promoting gender equality

Promoting gender equality in the health and life sector is key to improving and protecting women's lives. The inclusion of the gender perspective in medicine is necessary to respond to the specific needs of women in this field, something traditionally ignored.

Universally, the greatest diagnosis or therapeutic effort has been made with men. This has dire consequences for women's health, as differences in diseases and symptoms between women and men have become invisible¹⁵⁵.

¹⁵³ Barcelona City Council (2018) Strategic sectors in Barcelona. 2018 data. <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/economiatreball/sites/default/files/documents/WEB-Sectors-Estrategics-2018-CAST.PDF>

¹⁵⁴ Barcelona City Council (2018) Strategic sectors in Barcelona. 2018 data. <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/economiatreball/sites/default/files/documents/WEB-Sectors-Estrategics-2018-CAST.PDF>

¹⁵⁵ Valls, C. (2021) Invisible women for medicine. Revealing our health.

According to a study by the Hospital Clínic team led by Gemma Martínez-Nadal, there is a gender gap in the diagnosis of chest pain. Consequently, the risk of underestimating a heart attack is greater in women than in men¹⁵⁶.

In the same way, the under-representation of women in clinical trials results in the generalisation of the results of studies carried out mostly in men. This fact can have after-effects on women's health, as demonstrated by an American study, according to which women are 34% more likely to experience after-effects after immunotherapy¹⁵⁷.

On the one hand, the health sector is of paramount importance in detecting and responding to gender violence¹⁵⁸. In Barcelona, between January and September 2021 alone, 2,522 reports of partner or domestic violence¹⁵⁹ were registered, the most widespread form of gender-based violence, although these figures only represent part of the problem. UN Women estimates that in 2020, worldwide, 18% of women were victims of different forms of domestic violence¹⁶⁰.

Efforts to train medical staff and medical students in gender equality and the fight against gender-based violence are essential to improving the fight against gender-based violence¹⁶¹.

Women in the health and life sector in Barcelona

The health and life sector has always had a female presence, strongly reinforced in recent decades. There is a significant feminisation of the sector, both in the number of women practising this profession and in the number of women studying it.

In the labour market, women represent 70% of the health and pharmaceutical sector in Barcelona and 84% of the nursing staff¹⁶². The analysis of the data of the last seven years shows a growing interest of women in careers related to this sector. While the participation of women in this time frame has risen, that

156 Martínez-Nadal, G. et al. (2021) *European Heart Journal: Acute Cardiovascular Care*. An analysis based on sex&gender in the chest pain unit of an emergency department during the last 12 years.

157 Unger, J. et al (2022) *Journal of Clinical Oncology*; Sex Differences in Risk of Severe Adverse Events in Patients Receiving Immunotherapy, Targeted Therapy, or Chemotherapy in Cancer Clinical Trials. <https://ascopubs.org/doi/full/10.1200/JCO.21.02377>

158 Martín-de-las-Heras, S., Khan, K. (2017) *BJOG. An International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*. *Healthcare professionals should be actively involved in gender violence reduction: political consensus emerge in Spain*.

159 The Gender Equality Observatory (2021) *Male violence 2021*. Statistical file.

160 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures#notes>

161 Maquibar, A. et al (2019) *Nurse Education Today*. *Analysing training in gender-based violence for undergraduate nursing students in Spain: A mixed-methods study*. Vol. 77, pp. 71-77.

162 Catalan Women's Institute (2021) *Women in Catalonia 2021*.

of men has remained stable. In total, the participation of women in the health and life sector in Barcelona has risen from 71% to 74%¹⁶³.

This growing trend is likely to continue in the coming years, as health science majors were the third most popular category of university study for women, accounting for 22.9% of all women enrolled in universities in Barcelona in the 2018-2019 academic year. In addition, in vocational training in health, women represent 77.1% of all people enrolled in Catalonia¹⁶⁴.

The historical role of the University of Barcelona and its Department of Medicine in the inclusion of women in medical careers should be highlighted. This department hosted Maria Elena Maseras, the first woman in Spain to enrol in the Faculty of Medicine; Dolors Aleu i Riera, the first woman with a degree in Spain; and Martina Castells i Ballespí, the first woman to obtain a doctorate in Spain.

It should be noted that this strong presence of women in the health and life sector is also reflected in the number of female inventors. Although, in general, women tend to file fewer patent applications than men, they proportionally exceed them in the number of patents related to pharmaceutical products and processed organic products¹⁶⁵.

Achievements

Steps towards gender equality

The massive arrival of women in the health and life sector has generated a debate about the role of women and has made visible the need to push for change towards more equality, especially in decision-making positions. Although in qualitative terms the change is slower, there is a gradual improvement in the employment situation of women in the sector.

Interviews with representatives of the sector have shown that the change that has occurred is the result of cultural changes in the institutions and companies that make it up, but also in the efforts of public institutions to promote legislation and measures to promote gender equality in the work environment.

Despite the slowness of the process, women are beginning to occupy an increasing percentage of leadership positions in the sector. A significant example is the change that can be observed in the nursing departments of Barcelona's hospitals. Despite being made up in the vast majority by women, these departments have traditionally been led by men.



“At Mutual Médica, we have been able to see very significant progress. My colleague, with 50 years of experience in the company, explained to me that when she started working women had to wear a gown and stockings. Today, these discriminatory measures no longer exist, but we have gone one step further. There is absolute parity, not only in the management team but also in administration.”

Marta Portabella, human resources technician, Mutual Médica.

¹⁶³ Catalan Women's Institute (2021) Women in Catalonia 2021.

¹⁶⁴ Catalan Women's Institute (2021). “Women in Catalonia 2021”.

¹⁶⁵ Galletto, V., Aguilera, S., Fíguls, M. (2019). “Gender differences in innovative activity”.

In any case, today, the five best-rated hospitals in Barcelona¹⁶⁶ all have women as nursing directors and in two of them it is women who occupy the managerial positions.

Work-life balance as a measure to encourage the presence of women in decision-making positions

The difficulty of work-life balance is nowadays one of the main challenges in the full professional development of women in all sectors. However, in terms of health and life, healthcare, the most numerous branch in this sector, is particularly vulnerable when it comes to work-life balance. The need to offer a health service open to the entire population and very intensive work schedules, especially in the case of guards, have a very strong impact on women when making decisions about their professional future and reinforces the imbalance in internal promotions.

In this aspect, there is an important difference between primary health care and hospital care. In general, primary care is deeply feminised in almost all its areas and thanks to the limit on professional promotion, the impact of work-life balance is limited. However, the shift system, with some ending at 9 p.m., does put a brake on work-life balance. With regard to hospital care, the difficulties in work-life balance do involve setbacks in terms of professional promotion.

To alleviate this problem, in 2021 the Clinical Hospital implemented the Professional Promotion System for medical staff, which includes in its assessment personal aspects to minimise their impact on professional development, such as maternity, paternity and adoption, temporary incapacity due to pregnancy, care for dependent people or serious illnesses between 3 months and 1 year old. The analysis of promotions in the hospital made it possible to show that there are factors that slow down or block progression under equal conditions and this applies above all to women.

Visibility of the intense nature of healthcare work

Women have been on the front lines of Covid-19, representing the majority of employees in cleaning (86%), care homes (84%), social services (80%) health and pharmaceutical staff (70%), teachers (65%), food sales (64%) and mandatory postal services (56%). In the health and pharmaceutical sector, their incorporation has grown exponentially, including 18,200 women in the third quarter of 2020.



“Education and stereotypes steer girls into healthcare careers, rather than STEM careers, and boys don’t want to be doctors anymore because it’s now seen as a women’s career”.

*Marie Laurent,
director of
Development and
Market Access,
GENinCode
Predictive Genetics.*

¹⁶⁶ Segons el Monitor de Reputación Sanitaria de 2020 (<https://www.merco.info/es/monitor-reputacion-sanitaria-hospitales>), the Barcelona public hospitals best rated in Spain are the Hospital Clínic (2nd position in the national ranking), Vall d’Hebron University Hospital (5th position), Bellvitge University Hospital (13th position), Santa Creu i Sant Pau Hospital (position 17) and Hospital del Mar (position 36)

During the pandemic, both the essential nature of healthcare work and the precariousness of their positions became visible at the same time. Consequently, this made it possible to highlight differences in position and working conditions based on gender.



“The health system does not cover what women need; there is a lack of gender perspective both in terms of study and teaching and in medical trials. Obstetric violence is also a sad reality”.

*Laura Solé,
managing partner,
Owings.*

The lack of references in some areas of the health and life sector implies a reduction in participation, also in the academic world. In the case of the nursing sector, until the implementation of the Bologna university system, the possibility of obtaining doctorates was very limited. On the other hand, the increase in accessibility to doctoral training has meant an increase in academic production in the field of nursing sciences¹⁶⁷.

Gaps to be eliminated

Gender stereotypes that maintain the glass ceiling

The health and life sector has become feminised, but this fact has not been accompanied by feminisation in managerial positions. Women reach management positions at a slower pace, as demonstrated by the Hospital Clínic study which points out that women’s access to leadership positions was less stable for a decade.

According to a study by the College of Doctors of Barcelona (COMB), only 4% of active female doctors hold positions of responsibility compared to 14.5% of male doctors, who assume command positions. Two main factors generate this situation. First of all, age is an element that has an obvious link, since women are younger and their careers are still short. Second, the male-dominated organisational culture still weighs heavily.

The origin of this comes from gender stereotypes that are perpetuated from education. Although the health and life sector may attract ‘traditionally’ because it is related to care, there is a lack of references in the medical sector to encourage women’s ambition. Historically, women have always been invisible in the private sphere. Instead, men have always been in the public sphere. The fact that women are the ones who have the reproductive function has meant that they have assumed exclusive care of children and the family. Despite the progress made in terms of gender equality, the care responsibility continues to fall on women.

Professional life is no stranger to this situation. In fact, and as Concha Germán Bés points out, the role of a nurse “is the professionalised continuation of domestic care”.

¹⁶⁷ Ministry of Universities (2022), “Data and figures of the Spanish University System Publication 2020-2021”.

This feminisation of the sector is also accompanied by a perception of a loss of prestige for medical careers. The undervaluation of the profession is universal, both geographically and sectorally. As a North American study shows, professions associated with women are more easily devalued and there is a greater loss of interest in them¹⁶⁸.

This situation dynamizes the women's process, since there is a widespread perception that they "punish themselves". The impostor syndrome of women in the health and life sector is considered by many professionals as one of the main barriers for women to access leadership positions¹⁶⁹.

The COMB study shows that women and men value responsibility differently. Thus, 57% of men consider it important to reach a managerial position; in women this figure drops to 45%.

A big problem is the persistence of difficulty in work-life balance. Although work-life balance seems to be a main cause for both women and men in the health sector not to aspire to promotion, women are still the main ones responsible for carrying out the unpaid work and this impacts their ability to reach decision-making positions.

This difficulty for women to reach leadership positions translates into differences in average salaries. While the average salary of women in 2020 was €36,829 per year, that of men rose to €45,518, representing a difference of 19.09%¹⁷⁰.

Another effect of the lack of women in leadership positions is the lack of response to women's needs and the persistence of obstetric violence. There is a lack of training in women's systematology, which has a negative impact on the quality of their access to health care.

Lack of professional recognition

Women are on the front lines of health care in the city of Barcelona. In 2018, primary care services had 3,386 women, compared to 1,000 men. Within this group, women represented 87% of nursing assistants¹⁷¹. Despite its importance, there are stereotypes that devalue women's work.



“Women carry a certain inferiority complex. It is a bit of a proposition for them to move upwards. The origin of it is in education”.

***Núria Borrell,
founder and director,
Owings.***

168 Crowley, D. (2014) Sage Open". Gender and Perceptions of Occupational Prestige: Changes Over 20 Years" doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013518923>

169 <https://www.cgcom.es/noticias/dra-montserrat-g-estecha-cuando-las-medicas-alcanzan-puestos-de-relevancia-o-peso-nivel>

170 Barcelona City Council (2022). "Salaries in Barcelona 2020".

171 Catalan Health Institute (2018). Territorial management of Barcelona.



“Pregnancy and motherhood continue to be obstacles in the professional career, particularly from the age of 35-40, which is a key moment. For this reason, it is essential that companies offer work-life balance measures in an equal way”.

Marta Portabella, human resources technician, Mutual Médica.

Although they already make up 55% of doctors under 65 and 65% of residents¹⁷² – a trend that will continue to grow given that women dominate medical careers – the natural hierarchy that grants the title persists in university (doctor-nurse), a fact that worsens inequality and makes women invisible in this sector.

In addition, this lack of recognition joins other elements that affect women more negatively than men. In this way, studies on the impact of Covid-19 among health personnel on the front line show that women have suffered more stress, although of varying intensity. They have also suffered more anxiety, depression, sleep disturbance and exhaustion than men^{173, 174}.

But this mental discomfort has not only been during the pandemic, but occurs every day among healthcare personnel. A study published in the *Revista de Calidad Asistencial* indicates that the profile of a person mostly susceptible to this mental discomfort is that of a woman between 26-50 years old, a nursing assistant in a hospital, with a fixed contract and rotating shift, and who has been working for between 11 and 15 years¹⁷⁵.

In this way, another gap is observed, in this case, in terms of mental health, since it disproportionately affects more women than men. For this reason, a reevaluation of the health professions is necessary, increasing the weight of the idea of “taking care of the caregiver”.

Underdeveloped female entrepreneurship

Barcelona has become the third European hub and sixth worldwide in the number of Femtech start-ups¹⁷⁶. The BioRegió, Catalonia’s life sciences cluster, currently has 11 FemTechs. However, it is perceived that companies run and founded by women suffer from difficulties in growing. Despite receiving public funding, since 2020 the number of companies run by women has not been exceeded.

As Eva Rosell, director general of the Barcelona Health Hub, says, in the start-ups established in Barcelona in the health sector it is observed that while an equal participation of foreigners is perceived, in the group of local people there is a difference in the participation between women and men. This difference, at the moment, has not been analysed. Similarly, in the Barcelona Health Hub there are only two start-ups led by women and no unicorn company with female CEOs.

¹⁷² https://elpais.com/ccaa/2018/07/13/catalunya/1531493826_129477.html

¹⁷³ Danet Danet A. Psychological impact of Covid-19 pandemic in Western frontline healthcare professionals. A systematic review. *Med Clin (Barc)*. 2021 May 7;156(9):449-458.

¹⁷⁴ *Clínica y Salud* vol.32 no.3 (2021). “Care for the mental health needs of healthcare professionals during Covid-19”.

¹⁷⁵ *Revista de Calidad Asistencial* (2006), “Do we know the psychological well-being of our healthcare staff?”

¹⁷⁶ <https://www.biocat.cat/es/actualidad/blog/boom-femtech-startups-al-servicio-salud-mujer>

Recommendations

Make the leadership and expertise of women visible in the health and life sector

- Work on the visibility of reference women, empowerment programmes, grants and subsidies, and evaluation of training actions broken down by gender.

Promote the professional advancement of women

- Incorporate transversal digital subjects in all careers in the health and life sector, and especially in medicine and nursing careers.
- Support health centres to apply the gender perspective in their internal evaluation processes.
- Promote more regular working hours.

Take care of women's health

- Create occupational health protocols with a gender perspective.
- Include psychosocial questionnaires to take the necessary measures in terms of mental health.
- Support pharmaceutical and biotechnological innovation projects that include a gender perspective and analyse the impact of gender on medical tests.



“The stereotypes within hospitals are very marked. There is a significant lack of recognition of the work of nurses, who have to be continuously demonstrating their value”.

*Núria Borrell,
founder and director,
Owings.*

The commerce sector

Context

Trade is a fundamental pillar of Barcelona's economy, because it represents around 11.6% of GDP in the last decade¹⁷⁷, standing above hospitality and ICT. This percentage has decreased slightly during the pandemic, but in 2021 the path to recovery has begun¹⁷⁸.

The importance of trade is also reflected in employment, since in 2021 it employed 158,300 people¹⁷⁹, around 14% of jobs in Barcelona¹⁸⁰. In fact, commerce is the sector with the largest number of companies with male and female employees, 20.7% of the total number of companies.

The drop in employment in the trade sector during the pandemic has been less than expected thanks to the temporary employment regulation files (ERTO). But small businesses, as indicated by data from PIMEComerç, have suffered particularly, as 35% of establishments in Catalonia were inactive and empty in 2020.

The lockdown measures led companies to adopt teleworking in a generalised way, but in the trade sector teleworking has not been able to be adopted in many cases due to the need for presence in retail trade. Women, who make up the majority of workers in this sector, have been more affected than men.

The pandemic has also boosted e-commerce, as it has accelerated changes in the consumption habits of Barcelona residents. In this case, it stands out that 63.8% of these residents prefer to buy leisure and culture products online, and 41.1% prefer it to buy electronic and IT products. In any case, the preference for buying in physical stores is still maintained in the rest of the areas, particularly in that of fresh products¹⁸¹.

177 Barcelona Activa (2021). Infographics: Key data for the Trade Sector, 2020.

178 Barcelona City Council, Statistics and Data Dissemination (2022). Gross Domestic Product.

179 Barcelona City Council, Statistics and Data Dissemination (2022). Population employed by branches of activity.

180 Idem.

181 Barcelona City Council (2021), "Barcelona Commercial Sector Activity Survey".

182 McKinsey Global Institute (2015), The power of parity: How advancing women's equality can add \$12 trillion to global growth

The importance of trade for gender equality

McKinsey calculated in 2015 that achieving gender equality would increase global GDP by around \$28 trillion over 10 years¹⁸². Trade is a key sector of the economy and the presence of women in it generates benefits for the entire economy.

In general, a greater participation of women in the economy means maximising their full potential, which at the same time positively affects competitiveness. According to the OECD, globally, trade jobs are better paid and more productive. Consequently, supporting women in the trade sector has the result of reducing inequality¹⁸³.

In this sense, women play an indispensable role in trade, as they bring a gender perspective by creating a more diverse and open sector, more adaptable to more diverse and global markets, which at the same time makes companies more productive, more competitive and increases its social responsibility. All this results in the reduction of inequality, economic growth and a better use of the workforce¹⁸⁴.



183 OECD Trade Policy Brief (2021). "Trade and Gender".

184 Idem.

Women in the trade sector of Barcelona

If you analyse the profile of people working in this sector in 2021, the fact that the vast majority are women (59% of the total) stands out. In addition, the main age groups are people between 45 and 54 years old (25.9%), and between 35 and 44 years old (25.69%)¹⁸⁵.

This percentage is reversed in the case of establishment ownership, because even though parity has been reached, there are still more men (52.4%) than women (47.4%). With reference to managers of commercial establishments, there is a greater presence of women (56.7%) than men. The same is true for male and female employees, there are also more women (64.9%) than men¹⁸⁶.

In the case of people hired in the sector, the profile is that of a woman (55.1% of the total), under 30 years old (53.4%), with a temporary contract (73.9%) in the retail trade subsector (71.3%)¹⁸⁷.

In addition, women hold only one in five positions of president in the city's commercial axes and sector associations¹⁸⁸. Finally, they also hold positions of responsibility in the Department of Trade and Restoration of the City Council, where 62% of the staff are women¹⁸⁹.

Entrepreneurial activity is also a fundamental pillar of Barcelona's economic fabric. If the data is analysed, it can be seen that in 2020, 15.6% of all entrepreneurs did so in the commercial sector. Of this percentage, 42% were women, compared to 58% of men. This indicates that trade is a sector where parity has been reached in the number of entrepreneurs, although this trend must be strengthened¹⁹⁰.

Regarding catering, more men (58.4%) than women (40.6%) work in this subsector and two out of three owners are men¹⁹¹.

Thus, it is necessary to point out the importance of the informal sector in commerce and its gender impact. In the absence of sufficient data, it is difficult to X-ray the situation, but despite this, as it is a global phenomenon, its existence is assumed.

¹⁸⁵ Barcelona City Council (2021), "Barcelona Commercial Sector Activity Survey".

¹⁸⁶ Idem.

¹⁸⁷ Idem.

¹⁸⁸ Barcelona City Council (2021). "[Una jornada sobre el paper de les dones al comerç enceta un cicle de xerrades sobre lideratge femení en sectors estratègics](#)".

¹⁸⁹ Barcelona City Council (2021). "[8M: el comerç de proximitat de Barcelona té nom de dona.](#)".

¹⁹⁰ Barcelona City Council (2022). "Entrepreneurship in Barcelona 2020".

¹⁹¹ Barcelona City Council (2020), "Trade in Barcelona 2019".

Achievements

Greater entrepreneurial spirit for a social change of mentality

72% of start-ups in Barcelona arise in the business services, trade and consumer services sectors, and it has an international profile that, despite the fall during the pandemic, is slowly recovering the level of the previous years¹⁹².

In the city of Barcelona, there has been a positive change in recent years in the traditional view of entrepreneurship as an unattractive activity with little growth potential. However, this assessment of entrepreneurship still does not reach the positive European perspective. Thus, according to 2020 data, 61% of Barcelona citizens associate entrepreneurship with a high level of economic and social status, compared to 74% of the European average¹⁹³.

This more positive perception of entrepreneurship occurs in both women and men and, as a result, has a positive impact on reducing the gap in entrepreneurship. In fact, parity has been obtained between established entrepreneurs and new ones¹⁹⁴.

BOX 3. Examples of the effort to give visibility to women's projects are in the "Women and commerce" project promoted by the Commercial Axis of Poblenuu.

This initiative, created in 2019, aims to publicise and recognise the projects created by women in the neighbourhood through interviews, colloquiums, exhibitions with photographs..., since 60% of the stores associated with Poblenuu Commercial Centre are run by women.



"Women establish closer relationships with their customers, especially in neighbourhood stores, and this makes them adapt to their needs".

*Mireia Trinquell,
shop assistant,
Al agua patos.*

Reduction of gender stereotypes

In recent years, the Public Administration has made a significant effort to increase the visibility of leading women in the trade sector, with the holding of events such as the Barcelona Woman Acceleration Week or the International Logistics and Maintenance Show (SIL). This greater visibility allows some of the stereotypes that mark women in the sector to be reduced, such as the fact that women can only be behind a counter, and not run a business¹⁹⁵.

192 Barcelona City Council (2022). "Entrepreneurship in Barcelona 2020".

193 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2021), "Catalonia Report 2020-2021".

194 Idem.

195 Barcelona City Council (2021), "[Una jornada sobre el paper de les dones al comerç enceta un cicle de xerrades sobre lideratge femení en sectors estratègics.](#)"

Entrepreneurial projects are more resistant and resilient

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Catalonia (GEM) 2020-2021 report, the abandonment rate of women entrepreneurs' projects is 36%, which indicates that projects led by women are much more persistent than those led by men, which have a drop-out rate of 64%.

In general, shops led by women seem to have more ingrained the value of empathy and communication, which are key to customer loyalty. In fact, it is precisely these values that allow women, the vast majority of staff in customer service and behind a counter, to know and develop a personal relationship with their clientèle, which, at the same time, facilitates their loyalty¹⁹⁶.

By knowing the habits of customers and consumers, this knowledge and personal relationship facilitates a better adaptation to the new habits of consumers, a fact that occurs particularly in sectors with more female workers or entrepreneurs, such as the retail sale of products foodstuffs, equipment for people or for the home.

Digitisation as a factor of change in the situation of women in the trade sector

The development of e-commerce implies the need to incorporate more staff in traditionally masculine sectors such as logistics and transport. Thanks to technological advances, many of the barriers that hindered women's access to these professions are gradually disappearing, which is why more and more women are joining these areas¹⁹⁷.

Digitisation is essential when it comes to reducing the gender gap in commerce, since the new jobs and new roles that are created in companies favour the incorporation of women in all areas of the company, from the commercial, operational, security and, including, logistics and transport aspects.

E-commerce also allows for an increase in entrepreneurship, as costs decrease exponentially and access to new markets is facilitated. In addition, it allows work flexibility that traditional commerce does not allow, which is why it attracts more women¹⁹⁸.



“Women are at the bottom of the business, with all the burden that this entails, but they also do not see themselves able to get out of here because they do not believe in their abilities”.

*Mireia Trinquell,
shop assistant,
Al agua patos.*

196 Barcelona City Council (2021), “A day on the role of women in commerce starts a cycle of talks on female leadership in strategic sectors”.

197 Barcelona City Council (2022). “Entrepreneurship in Barcelona 2020”.

198 World Trade Organisation (2020). “ITC Delivering on the Buenos Aires Declaration on trade and women's economic empowerment”.

Gaps to be eliminated

The commercial sector is not alien to the trends of other sectors and which, in fact, are reproduced both in the world of work and in the entrepreneurial world. Thus, the inequalities that affect women in the corporate world are similar to those that occur in the entrepreneurial world. However, given the nature of both areas, there are specific gaps in each of them.

Glass walls live on in highly masculinised sectors

When analysing the data, horizontal segregation can be seen in the areas of specialisation of women, both in the activity sector and in the type of work.

Horizontal segregation stands out when it comes to workplaces. There is a significant feminisation of low-skilled jobs in the trade sector, which are focused, fundamentally, on those dedicated to customer service and clerks in shops and cashiers¹⁹⁹, especially in small trade or the fashion and perfumery sector. This feminisation has a direct influence on working conditions, especially with regard to wages and working hours, in which makes work-life balance complicated.

As for the sectors of activity, women are concentrated in the areas of personal equipment and fashion, the latter being the most feminised. There is also a greater presence of women in sectors with high commercial intensity, such as financial and business services. In contrast, the most masculinised sectors are automotive and repair, hardware stores and catering services²⁰⁰.

However, slight changes are seen in highly masculinised sectors such as logistics and transport. According to data from 2019, men occupy around 75% of jobs in this field. In comparison, women represent less than 25% of the total²⁰¹. The main reason for the lack of women in this area is that, traditionally, it has been considered a physical job and, if you study the type of job, it is perceived that in positions such as driver/machine operator or warehouse technician, the presence of men is the majority. Women, on the other hand, occupy administrative or operational positions²⁰². But technological advances have reduced the need for physical work due to automation and robotisation, slowly increasing the presence of women in these sectors, given the high growth forecast in the coming years.



“Although there is everything, there are sectors with more women and sectors with more men. There are many women in small projects, in the fashion or craft sector, and there are more men in the technology solutions sector and they are also bigger”.

*Eva Martínez,
founder and CEO,
Bellirium.*

199 Barcelona City Council (2021). https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/comerc/es/noticias/8m-el-comercio-de-proximidad-de-barcelona-tiene-nombre-de-mujer_1047256

200 Barcelona Chamber of Commerce (2011). “The situation of women in commerce”.

201 Barcelona City Council (2019). “Gender in numbers. Women’s living conditions and gender inequalities in Barcelona”.

202 Mas Container (2022). [“8M: ¿Por qué deberían trabajar las mujeres en logística?”](#)

In the field of entrepreneurship, women, in general, tend to undertake business in the service sector and, within this, in retail trade. Women's projects usually have little added value as they have a lower percentage of innovation and require a greater human cost. Consequently, their capacity for growth is lower and women's projects have a smaller size and lower levels of capitalisation²⁰³.



“I think that, as women, all the problems that exist in the working world are transferred to the business world”.

Juliana Montaña, co-founder, Minima Organics.

Internal brakes for a full deployment of ambition

Unconscious gender stereotypes and biases deeply affect women working in the commercial sector, both as employees and as entrepreneurs.

In the workplace, the lack of confidence in their abilities leads women in the commercial sector not to assume leadership positions and also not to acquire the necessary skills to change sectors or to move up in the company, from a public service position to one of a management or director position. The lack of references also means the perpetuation of masculine values in the sector, which means that stereotypes and biases are still valid today. These masculine values have the result that some competencies that women possess to a greater extent, such as empathy or having a greater disposition for communication, are not considered as recognised skills in female workers.

In addition, there is a belief quite rooted in the collective socio-cultural imagination that considers that women are not sufficiently qualified for entrepreneurship, since women are less able to lead teams, to take risks or to acquire the necessary knowledge for the challenges of entrepreneurship.

According to data from the Women's Observatory²⁰⁴, it is perceived that women have fewer digital skills than men, especially those who have no education or only have primary education and, in addition, there is a lower presence in the technological field. In this way, if we take into account that businesses on digital platforms are a growing phenomenon, this lack of capabilities reduces opportunities and reduces the potential of women to generate profits from these new opportunities compared to men²⁰⁵.

On the other hand, this lack of self-confidence or lack of ambition also results in women-led companies being, in general, smaller in size than men's companies, as they tend to be more cautious in assuming economic and personal risks²⁰⁶.

These stereotypes have a negative effect on the credibility of companies owned or managed by women and, as a consequence, their ability to attract financing or potential clientele is reduced²⁰⁷.

203 Barcelona City Council (2019). “Portrait of Barcelona's Women Entrepreneurs”.

204 Gender Equality Observatory (2020). “Women in information and communication technologies (ICT)”.

205 World Bank and World Trade Organisation (2020). “Women and commerce: the role of commerce in the promotion of gender equality”.

206 Barcelona Activa (2019). “Portrait of Barcelona's Women Entrepreneurs”.

207 Barcelona Activa (2019). “Portrait of Barcelona's Women Entrepreneurs”.

The difficulty of work-life balance as key in the limited professional growth of women

The difficulty of work-life balance, as happens in other sectors, is a fundamental factor in the growth of women, both in the workplace and in entrepreneurship. The liberalisation of the trade sector, particularly in terms of the timetables, makes it difficult to balance working life with personal life. In addition, it is a sector in which the majority work six days a week (69.7%) and, a minority, every day (20%). To this fact, we must add that the longest working hours are the shift from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. (99.7%) and from 4 to 8 pm (98.1%)²⁰⁸.

According to data from 2019, 70.5% of the participants were against the opening of businesses on Sundays and this percentage has remained stable since 2016. Among the different commercial establishments, the ones that opened the most on Sundays were food establishments (not markets). In any case, although the benefits of opening on a Sunday may outweigh the costs, there are compelling reasons why businesses do not want to open, among which include the need to rest (49.8%) and the insufficient number of staff (7.8%)²⁰⁹.

The latter is a factor to be taken into account because in small businesses it is women who are responsible for most of the work, a fact which, at the same time, generates staff fatigue which also affects work-life balance.

Vertical segregation pushes women into entrepreneurship

Although more women (59%) than men (40.7%) have always worked in the commercial sector, there is significant vertical segregation on all levels.

First of all, it stands out that in the retail trade the vast majority of people in the public service are women, especially in small and medium-sized shops, dedicated to personal equipment. Thus, there is a greater number of women in charge (56.7%) and employees (64.9%) than men. The presence of men is observed mainly in large areas.

In this area, and despite the majority of women present, there are barriers that do not allow women to achieve more positions of responsibility within these establishments. Even though they perform the same responsibility, they are not recognised for it.

Secondly, this limitation in professional growth also occurs in the corporate sphere, where women, after seeing limited possibilities for promotion, opt for entrepreneurship to be able to satisfy their professional ambitions, both in terms of promotions and development.



“Most businesses are led by women and men are in large establishments or are in charge”.

*Mireia Trinquell,
shop assistant,
Al agua patos.*

208 Barcelona City Council (2020). “Trade in Barcelona”.

209 Idem.



“Many women fall into entrepreneurship not because they want to, but because they are rejected in the world of work and that doesn’t help”.

Juliana Montaña, co-founder, Minima Organics.

The wage gap lives on as a result of the glass walls and ceiling

According to data from Barcelona City Council, when analysing the average wages in the trade sector, significant differences are observed between the subsectors. Thus, the average salary in the retail trade was €19,778 per year in 2020, more than €10,000 below the city average (€30,593 per year). In comparison, the average salary in the wholesale trade is €38,570 per year.

The gender pay gap is particularly noticeable in the retail trade (23.2%), where it exceeds the city average (17.2%), and this contrasts with wholesale trade (7.6%), where it is below the city average²¹⁰.

The difficulty in accessing financing makes entrepreneurship impossible for women

In line with what happens in other sectors, access to financing is an obstacle for women entrepreneurs in the commercial sector.

Gender stereotypes and biases mark the difficulty of accessing financing indirectly through deep-rooted socio-cultural practices. These have a negative impact on financing possibilities in those cases where the ability to self-finance is not sufficient. Examples of these gender biases are the differences in the questions men and women are asked in order to grant loans. These biases also affect the amounts granted which, from the start, are already lower than those of men because women request less capital²¹¹.

There are other factors that limit the financing of female entrepreneurs from Barcelona. According to a 2019 study, among the causes is, on the one hand, the lower ambition that women have regarding the growth of their business and the belief that women’s contribution to the family economy is secondary to that of men. This implies that they need a smaller amount and, in this way, request fewer resources²¹².

On the other hand, when Barcelona women manage their projects from savings and not from investment, they outsource fewer services and do so at more affordable prices, which requires less financing²¹³.

The lack of powerful professional networks as a brake on growth

Women have more difficulties than men in accessing professional networks that can serve as a catalyst for their growth. This lack of access means that

210 Barcelona City Council (2022), “Wages in Barcelona, 2020”.

211 World Bank and World Trade Organisation (2020), “Women and trade: the role of trade in promoting gender equality”.

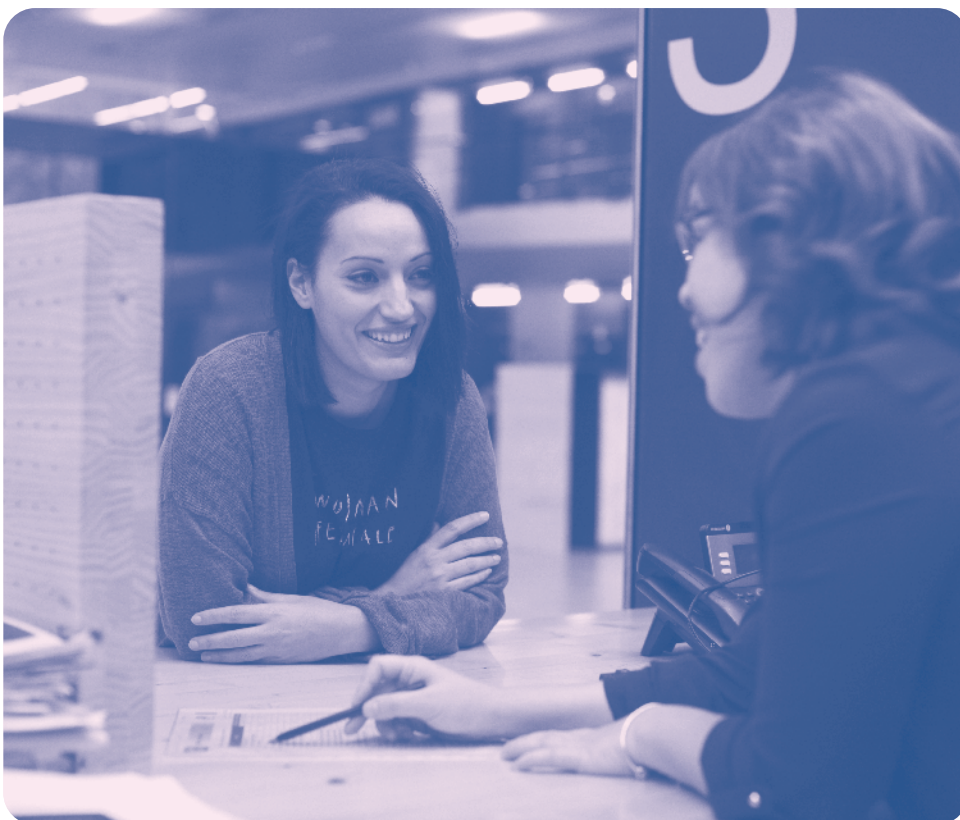
212 Barcelona City Council (2019), “Portrait of women entrepreneurs in Barcelona”.

213 Idem.

women tend to be left out of the more traditional distribution networks, which are dominated by men. As a recent study points out, women have to find clients through other means due to this lack of networks, where men do find their clients or new jobs²¹⁴.

On the other hand, the use of professional networks is also different from the traditional use made by men. Generally, the professional networks in which women participate tend to be made up solely of women and tend to be smaller in size. Consequently, the contacts that are made are much less useful in creating new business opportunities.

In addition, participation and attendance at these kinds of networks and at the events they organise to encourage the creation of contacts require time that women, due to family responsibilities, do not have enough of to participate in.



“Women entrepreneurs tend to finance themselves more with their own financial resources or turn to the nearby environment to receive the necessary financial support, before resorting to bank loans. In this case, they limit what they request to the maximum”.

*Juliana Montaña,
co-founder, Minima
Organics.*

214 Barcelona City Council (2019), “Portrait of women entrepreneurs in Barcelona”.

Recommendations

Protect women in more vulnerable situations

- Strengthen the legal framework to guarantee decent working conditions for all people working in trade, especially those in low positions, where women are particularly numerous.
- Strengthen measures to control compliance with legal obligations, especially relating to equality plans, with a particular focus on the application of the gender perspective in occupational health, working time management and job evaluation.

Break gender stereotypes to support female empowerment in companies

- Offer support programmes to companies in the trade sector, especially those with less than 50 employees, to change the organisational culture of the company. A particular focus should be placed on raising awareness of workplace harassment.
- Create public-private partnerships to provide a mixed mentoring programme aimed at prospective women.

Strengthen female entrepreneurship

- Include private companies in support programmes for entrepreneurship projects led by women in the commercial sector.
- Support the growth and internationalisation of companies led or owned by women through advice on financial aid available on a local, national and European level.
- Create digital tools available to companies led or owned by women to help them grow and face the new challenges of the digital world.

The tourism sector

Context

Tourism, one of the biggest employers in the city, with more precarious financial conditions than other sectors

Barcelona is one of the most attractive tourist destinations in the world²¹⁵. Despite being heavily affected by the Covid-19 crisis and the emergence of new destinations, the sector generates a significant part of its wealth and is one of the largest employers in the city.

According to the Tourism Observatory, *“In 2019, before the crisis, tourism in hotels stood at 8.5 million visitors and overnight stays at 21.3 million. In terms of what is referred to as homes for tourist use, the number of tourists accommodated is 3.5 million and 11.4 million overnight stays.”*²¹⁶ Regarding conferences, during the three consecutive years prior to the pandemic, Barcelona was the fourth city that hosted the most conferences in the world²¹⁷.

Before the crisis, tourism provided 12.2% of jobs in Barcelona²¹⁸. Despite the importance of their wage bill, their salaries have always been below the city average. The crisis caused by Covid-19 in 2020 has caused an even more significant fall. The percentage of people in the tourism sector with a salary that does not reach €1,000 is significantly higher than in other sectors and in the Barcelona region it represents 54.5% of people, almost 25 points more than in the rest of activities²¹⁹.

The tourism sector is marked by strong salary variations between the different activities that make it up. On the one hand, the average salary for food and drink services, which represent almost half of the jobs in this sector, is €16,137 per year. This implies that they are the lowest salaries, both in the tourist activity and in the economy of the city as a whole. On the other hand, tourism transport registers an average salary of €34,213, doubling that of services and food²²⁰.

215 According to The European Cities Marketing Benchmarking Report 2018/2019, Barcelona is placed in fourth European position.

216 Tourism Observatory in Barcelona (2021). Labour market and wages in tourism activity in the Barcelona 2019 destination. Results report.

217 International Congress and Convention Association (2021). Destination Performance Index (DPI) 2021.

218 Tourism Observatory in Barcelona (2021). Labour market and wages in tourism activity in the Barcelona 2019 destination. Results report.

219 Idem.

220 Idem.

It is important to underline the young nature of the workers in this sector, 68.9% of whom are under 45 years of age. It is also a sector with a lower educational level than the rest of the activities. 53.5% of people working in the tourism sector have a high school diploma or higher, below the average of 68.8% for all sectors. In addition, it is a sector that has a particularly high proportion of foreign people. These make up 30% of the working group in the tourism sector, compared with 12.3% for the rest of the economic activities²²¹.

Finally, the tourism sector stands out due to the relatively small size of its companies. More than half of these (54.3%) have fewer than 50 employees. This, at the same time, has an impact on the possibilities of professional promotion. Tourist activity concentrates 3% of jobs with high-rank positions, five times more than in other sectors. In the same way, almost 70% of tourism workers are administrative assistants, a much higher percentage than in the rest.

“We are in a generation that cannot be seen, because it is transitional”.

*Oriol Bonet,
coordinator
of the Futurism
Programme,
BCN Activa.*



²²¹ Tourism Observatory in Barcelona (2021). Labour market and wages in tourism activity in the Barcelona 2019 destination. Results report.

The importance of tourism for gender equality

It is necessary to promote gender equality in the tourism sector, as it is one of the largest employers, not only in Barcelona and Spain, but throughout the world²²².

It is a sector that also offers various opportunities for development, both for men and for women. According to UN Women, “Tourism opens up spaces for participation in decision-making, with women at the head of one in five tourism ministries in the world, more than in any other governmental sphere”.²²³

In addition, jobs in tourism are characterised by their flexibility, both time and geographically, which can represent an advantage when it comes to the professional inclusion of women²²⁴.

Women in Barcelona’s tourism sector

Women are a very important group in the tourism sector. Despite its difficulties, tourism is considered an interesting career for them, as demonstrated, for example, by the number of women enrolled in vocational training courses dedicated to this area. In Catalonia, 42.8% of students in these courses are women²²⁵.

Despite this numerical balance, women tend to find themselves in less relevant positions, representing two thirds of the less important positions, with more precarious working conditions and lower salaries²²⁶.

Added to this fact is the gap by origin, since the salaries of people of foreign origin are usually in the lower ranges and they receive around €4,000 less per year than Spanish people²²⁷.

In addition, the existence of horizontal segregation is observed, because women represent 52% of accommodation workers and 49% of catering workers²²⁸.



“I am shocked by the difference in perception between men and women about inequality”.

*Xavier Martín,
founder and
managing director,
Turijobs.*

222 WTTC (2019). “Travel & Tourism: Driving Women’s Success”.

223 <https://www.unwomen.org/es/news/stories/2011/3/tourism-a-vehicle-for-gender-equality-and-women-s-empowerment>

224 UNWTO (2021). UNWTO Inclusive Recovery Guide. Sociocultural Impact of Covid-19. Issue 3: Women in tourism.

225 Government of Catalonia (2021). “Women in Catalonia 2021”.

226 Tourism Observatory in Barcelona (2021). Labour market and wages in tourism activity in the Barcelona 2019 destination. Results report.

227 Idem.

228 Barcelona City Council (2022). “Women in the labour market, 2021”.

They are places strongly connected to gender stereotypes and they tend to be less professional. They are also jobs that are more exposed to sexual harassment, an invisible problem, in any case, in this sector²²⁹.

While there are no significant gaps in indefinite contracts, there are differences in the types of working days. Thus, women tend to have part-time jobs more often (33.2% compared with 20% for men).

The specific characteristics of the sector and the position occupied by women generate a wage gap, but it is lower than in other sectors. Before the Covid-19 crisis, the wage gap stood at 6.63%, with an average annual salary of €16,935 for women and €18,139 for men²³⁰.

Covid-19 caused a reduction in this gap, for the sole fact that the tourism sector noticed very strong losses due to the lockdown and health restrictions, as it is the only sector with an average salary below €10,000 per year (€9,920). Thus, in 2020 the average salary of women fell to €9,739 and that of men to €10,050²³¹.

It is observed that, with seniority and professional promotion, the salary increase is accompanied by an increase in the salary gap²³², a phenomenon universally shared by all economic sectors. In this way, while assistants earn 12% less than their male counterparts and heads of administration 20.6%, this gap increases to 34.4% in the case of women in high positions.

Added to this fact is another, albeit less important, inequality related to educational level. While the wage gap stands at 10.2% for workers with basic training, in the case of people with a school graduate certificate or equivalent it rises to 21.9% and 15.4% for people with higher education²³³.

An issue currently unknown, but no less important, is the existence of the informal economy in tourism and its gender impact. Although there is still no data on this part of the activity in Barcelona, its existence is assumed because it is a global phenomenon²³⁴. The tourism sector, as it has small companies, is more exposed to the existence of informal or deregulated work, as is the case of the “Kellys”. These jobs, outside or on the verge of the legal framework, are more vulnerable, without coverage and social protection. From a gender perspective, there is a correlation between being a woman in the informal sector (especially as unpaid family workers) and the risk of poverty²³⁵.



“The presence of women in managerial positions is a matter of talent, but the evolution in human resources is still meager, because there is an old mentality”.

*Anna Verdú,
operations manager,
Barter.*

229 UNWTO (2019). Global Report on Women in Tourism, Second Edition.

230 Barcelona City Council (2021). “Wages in Barcelona, 2019”.

231 Barcelona City Council (2022). “Wages in Barcelona, 2012”.

232 Tourism Observatory in Barcelona (2021). Labour market and wages in tourism activity in the Barcelona 2019 destination. Results report.

233 Tourism Observatory in Barcelona (2021). Labour market and wages in tourism activity in the Barcelona 2019 destination. Results report.

234 UNWTO (2019). Global Report on Women in Tourism, Second Edition.

235 Cañada, E. and Alarcón, D. (2018). “Gender dimensions in tourism work”.

On the one hand, tourism entrepreneurship has a masculinised profile. In Barcelona, the transport and hospitality sector is the third generator of entrepreneurs, with a total of 7,175 people, although only 33% of this number are women²³⁶.

They also tend to have a more mature professional profile. While the men who start up tend to be younger and inexperienced, the women already have a previous professional career and in many cases opt for entrepreneurship because the world of work seemed too limiting to them.

Achievements

An awareness of the need to promote gender equality

In the tourism sector, as in other sectors, an awakening of awareness of the need to increase gender equality can be observed.

This is perceived, above all, with the appearance of associations of women in tourism in Catalonia, which act as agents of change for gender equality in this sector²³⁷. It should be noted that these associations mainly bring together women in more precarious positions, such as the Kellys Association²³⁸.

Initiatives are emerging from the companies themselves, driven by the legal framework or by the companies' own initiatives to equalise the presence of women and men, especially in the lowest categories.



“Women are more afraid. If they are offered a promotion, they hesitate. I’ve only had one case of a man asking to discuss it with his partner, and in the end he turned down the promotion because his wife earns more than him”.

*Anna Albuixech,
general manager,
Ohla Hotels.*

236 Barcelona City Council (2020). “Entrepreneurship in Barcelona 2020”.

237 Freund D. & Hernandez-Maskivker G. (2021) “Women managers in tourism: Associations for building a sustainable world”. Tourism Management Perspectives

238 <https://laskellys.wordpress.com/barcelona/>

Gaps to be eliminated

Making inequalities visible is still complicated

Despite the voices that are being raised, giving visibility to the existing gender gaps in the tourism sector is still an unfinished task.

According to Turijobs survey data (2021), 70% of women compared to only half of men believe that women do not have the same opportunities, and 80% of them believe that there is inequality.

Also, more than half of the participants (55%) think that women are discriminated against. This data clearly shows the problem of the visibility and credibility of women's work in the tourism sector.

According to the testimonies of women who work in this sector, there are two main problems. On the one hand, and despite the existence of a legal framework that obliges companies to introduce gender equality measures, these are not always complied with by all the companies in the sector. And on the other hand, gender stereotypes persist that undervalue the participation and role of women in tourism. These stereotypes play an important role in the advancement of women, as leadership models traditionally associated with men continue to prevail.

The lack of co-responsibility as one of the biggest obstacles to female advancement

Despite offering relatively favourable conditions for work-life balance, the tourism sector is guilty of not developing an important adherence to co-responsibility. This represents, at the same time, a barrier to the promotion of women, since many times a promotion is accompanied by an increase in responsibilities, a burden that many women do not want or cannot assume, according to professionals in the sector.

A lack of progress, even retrogression, for some groups of women

Although there are slow changes for women in the tourism sector, there are groups that feel they are not making progress. This is the case of women over 40, who do not manage to achieve gender equality, especially in terms of salary and professional promotion.



“There is a change, but it is not visible in women over 40-50 years old. There are hotel managers who earn less than the staff”.

*Anna Albuixech,
general manager,
Ohla Hotels.*

239 Barcelona City Council (2021). Barcelona Green Deal. A new economic agenda for the Barcelona of 2030.

240 UNWTO (2021) UNWTO Inclusive Recovery Guide. Sociocultural Impact of Covid-19. Issue 3: Women in tourism.

Another group that has seen their working conditions worsen is the group of housemaids, who in some cases refer to themselves as “kellys”.

Indispensable people in the maintenance of the hotel sector, housekeepers have traditionally lived in precarious working conditions caused by the heavy workload. This has an impact on health problems, difficult financial conditions and little chance of moving up in their professional career. These working conditions, which were initially difficult, have deteriorated in recent years due to the impact of the Covid-19 crisis and the liberalisation of the tourism market.

In 2020, on the one hand, the Covid-19 crisis hit the entire economy very hard, but the tourism sector was the one that took the hardest hit. The unemployment record in this sector has shot up by more than 50% compared to the previous year, and the fall in employment has been the strongest of all strategic sectors²³⁹.

Women in this sector, concentrated in less qualified jobs and with more precarious conditions, were less able to withstand the financial hit and saw their living conditions worsen. Often unable to find a job that would allow them to telework, these women have suffered a slower return to the labour market and in more precarious conditions²⁴⁰.

On the other hand, the arrival of much less regulated external cleaning companies, has been another factor in the worsening of the conditions of this group. According to Patricia Vela, from Hotel Housekeeping: “Before the pandemic, hotel maids were paid €9 an hour and had to clean two rooms. Now, the women charge the external companies at €2 per room, even though the hotel pays the company €15 an hour. In other words, outsourcing companies get rich at the expense of women”.



“House maids are not given opportunities, nor are they promoted, but they are the heart of hotels. It is a strongly feminised group, although there are some men. In this case, I have seen professional promotion, as they have even become hotel managers”.

*Patricia Vela,
founder, Hotel
Housekeeping.*

Recommendations

Ensure decent work

- Strengthen the social protection mechanisms for vulnerable jobs through a more regular and coordinated control of the compliance of tourist companies with the regulation of work and the obligations in the matter of gender equality.
- Establish alliances between public administrations, companies and unions to improve working conditions.
- Ensure that the gender perspective is applied to occupational health.

Professionalise work

- Create public certifications once a new professional category has been created for housekeepers, which allows them to work in a qualified manner, with a decent salary and in accordance with current legislation and with work-life balance measures.
- Offer vocational training to people in positions with little chance of promotion.

Analyse existing problems

- Encourage dialogue with the associations of women in tourism to obtain testimonies and information about their situation in the tourism sector, especially everything related to problems that are not studied on a municipal level at the moment, such as sexual harassment or informal work in tourism.

Encourage companies to develop gender equality policies

- Reinforce the discourse that sustainable tourism is based on decent working conditions and gender equality.
- Include gender equality in the high standing framework of tourist establishments in Barcelona.

Support the development and growth of women-led and owned businesses

- Support the digitisation process of these companies to help them attract more customers from outside Barcelona and Spain and to face the new challenges of the digital world.

Strategic axes of action: a multi-stakeholder collaboration for a global impact

To move towards gender equality, both the private and public sectors and other professional and third sector institutions need to intervene. For this reason, from Barcelona Activa we call on all the people involved to close the gaps that prevent the full empowerment and participation of women in the labour market.

There is no single solution to closing gaps with strategic sectors. Therefore, a holistic approach based on a common effort of all actors must be adopted, but above all it is necessary to encourage the change of mentality from childhood, and this requires a generalised effort of society as a whole.

For this reason, a series of strategic axes of action are proposed in order to respond to the biggest challenges that currently exist.



Measure for greater effectiveness

Today, more than ever, it is understood that in order to move towards effective equality, it is necessary to have more gender and gender-broken down, quality data, collected regularly and in compliance with national and international standards. Therefore, it is recommended to:

- Create and/or strengthen methodologies for the establishment of indicators, the collection and strategic use of data related to gender equality in the analysed economic sectors.
- Work with institutions responsible for data collection to ensure the inclusion of a gender perspective in all data collection processes and the use of definitions according to national and international standards.
- Focus on the hidden aspects of gender inequalities, such as informal work or workplace harassment. To strengthen the knowledge of these subjects, it is recommended to strengthen alliances with universities and other research centres, as well as with professional associations.
- Establish public-private “alliances” to increase the collection of data on gender and to help organisations create mechanisms to collect this data within themselves.

Data is a necessary tool to achieve a greater effect in the preparation and implementation of public policies. Along these lines, it is vital to:

- Allocate sufficient budgets for data collection, management and administration.
- Train or integrate people who are experts in gender equality to ensure the inclusion of the gender perspective in all policies and actions.
- Plan the role of data in the design of public policies, including their application, monitoring and evaluation.
- Use the data obtained to enhance citizen engagement through an improvement in publication, communication and access to data. In this sense, create a virtual portal with access to all the data collected by Barcelona City Council on gender equality in strategic sectors.

Promote the integration of women in the labour market

Companies play a fundamental role in the empowerment of women and must show clear support for the cause:

- Advances in the field of gender equality in companies must be consolidated through the recognition of biases and discrimination that still exist, and a systematised, professionalised action registered as a priority for the organisation.
- Flexibility, really focused on the needs of each person in terms of work-life balance and co-responsibility, allows more women to be retained in the labour market. It is then necessary for companies to evaluate and implement measures in this area.
- Recognising that the visibility of women in leadership positions has a positive impact on attracting female talent, companies are encouraged to focus on women who could be an inspiration to other women.

It is crucial that public institutions become fully involved in the commitment to gender equality:

- Create mechanisms with a gender focus to encourage leading companies and institutions in the field of equality. Thus, establish a greater demand for compliance with the clauses regarding gender equality in public procurement or create networking forums that comply with these conditions.
- To strengthen the spirit of change and provide companies with the tools to generate it, it is recommended to create a training programme, best practice guides and toolboxes aimed at people in positions of responsibility, especially in SMEs, where access to training is more limited, on topics related to gender equality.
- Women tend to occupy lower positions, with much more precarious working conditions. Ensuring decent work and workers' rights is promoting gender equality. In addition, the current legal framework offers comprehensive regulation of the issue, but full implementation has not yet been achieved. This is why it is necessary to create a monitoring and evaluation system for equality plans and other legal obligations in the field of gender equality.

Promote collaboration with other actors (unions, women's associations, professional associations, academics, etc.) to encourage dialogue.

The digitisation of all aspects of life is already a process that cannot be stopped and women cannot be left behind. It is necessary to reduce the digital divide, which has an impact on the labour market through digital skills development

programmes that allow women to improve their professional position and adapt to new ways of working and undertaking.

The advancement of women in their professional career cannot be realised if inequalities in the distribution of tasks in the private sector are not limited. Co-responsibility must be an effort shared by everyone. For change to happen, it is necessary to promote it through campaigns to promote positive masculinity and fatherhood, and to establish measures that promote co-responsibility in the legal framework. These actions should be reflected in the companies through the amplification of work-life balance measures and co-responsibility.

Support female leadership

Female leadership is not just a matter of numbers, it is also a sign and a generator of profound change. It is also one of the best ways to counter gender stereotypes.

- It is essential to give a voice to and make visible female talent. Create a database that collects the names of women leaders in the strategic sectors of Barcelona and, according to needs, share them with other strategic actors who so require.
- Foster the credibility of women by guaranteeing half the places at the debate and discussion tables, ensuring that their presence is not limited to issues related to gender equality, but also to professional issues.

Strengthen female entrepreneurship

Gender stereotypes constitute an important barrier when deciding to start a business. There is a tendency among women to choose entrepreneurship due to the lack of alternatives in the traditional labour market. It is essential to reverse this trend and encourage female motivation and ambition towards entrepreneurship through school programmes and training, visibility and promotion of successful female entrepreneurs and their companies.

Closing the gap in financial education is a pending task, but its importance is particularly great for empowering female entrepreneurship. On the one hand, it is vital to propel change by introducing training in a gender perspective in business schools and other training aimed at promoting entrepreneurship.

Networks of contacts have a particularly positive impact, because they allow access to information and knowledge, and make women's projects visible. In this area, it is necessary, on the one hand, to support women's contact networks and, on the other hand, to encourage the introduction and implementation of the gender perspective in professional associations in strategic sectors.

Thus, it is essential to facilitate access to funds for companies led or owned by women. For this reason, it is necessary to break gender stereotypes in the field of investments through training programmes for investors or the monitoring of indicators that measure progress in this field.

Education

Education is the first element to take into account to fight for gender equality, since it will not be possible to achieve real change in this matter if society itself does not evolve. The only way to achieve this is through education, at all levels, from early childhood education to tertiary education and intra-business training, and in the entrepreneurial field, which allows overcoming the stereotypes of gender and the unconscious biases that affect all our decisions.

The urgent work today is to continue efforts to increase the number of girls and women in STEM careers. After a first diagnosis, programmes should be developed that include all actors to promote girls' interest in scientific careers and facilitate their access through scholarship programmes.

It is necessary to continue with the cultural and organisational transformation of the educational system itself through the inclusion of the gender perspective in education and training related to the sectors studied and the promotion of synergies between educational institutions and representatives of strategic sectors.

Partnerships

The creation of a more egalitarian society cannot be done solely by the public authorities. The participation of all interested parties, including the private sector, public bodies, trade unions, business organisations and civil society, through cooperation to achieve the objectives set out in the strategies and action plans, is essential. It is essential to create a forum that, at the level of Barcelona, allows these actors to be brought together and be an engine of change for the city.

The role of Barcelona Activa

Barcelona Activa is the municipal development agency of the city of Barcelona. Its mission is to contribute to the improvement of people's quality of life, promoting the economic competitiveness of the city and the rebalancing of the territories, through the promotion of quality employment, the impetus to entrepreneurship and the support for a plural, diverse and sustainable business fabric, from an economic, social and environmental perspective.

Working to eliminate gender inequalities in the workplace is a key element of Barcelona Activa's action strategy. In this area, the organisation launches different programmes to promote equal opportunities between women and men in the labour market as a whole and in all economic sectors, and works to integrate gender mainstreaming in all its policies. The main actions in this regard are detailed below.



1 For three decades, Barcelona Activa has promoted the **inclusion of women in the business world** through the School of Women Entrepreneurs. Its objective has been to launch several initiatives to support women's entrepreneurship and strengthen their role in the labour market as women entrepreneurs and businesswomen, and to be able to access managerial and power positions traditionally occupied by men.

In 2018, Barcelona Activa gave the School a new boost and created **LIDERA, the new support and networking environment for professional women, managers and entrepreneurs**, creating a new training offer. The general objective is to support the creation and growth of companies promoted by women, boost the presence of women in managerial positions and support the professional promotion of women in the labour market. Its specific objectives are to:

- Promote equal opportunities between men and women as they advance in their professional careers within companies and in the creation of companies.
- Encourage women's entrepreneurship with programmes such as *Inicia* and provide the necessary tools to start and grow companies, with programmes such as the Women Mentoring Programme and the Finanwomen Programme, for mentoring and training for access to finance respectively.
- Become a meeting point between economic agents, women entrepreneurs and start-ups promoted by women. In 2022, the new Espai Lidera was inaugurated, with the aim of providing a meeting space for entities that value the talent of women and/or promote entrepreneurship and female intrapreneurship in the city, work and meeting where they can co-create groups.
- Break through the glass ceiling and encourage the presence of women in managerial or higher responsibility positions in organisations, with specific programmes such as *PD3- Fes el canvi*.

In 2021 as a whole, LIDERA served 1,044 women and 33 men.

LIDERA has also integrated the field of Social and Solidarity Economy, diversifying the profile of users to reach a new audience and be able to continue promoting the competitiveness of the local fabric in a female aspect. In this way, *Construïm en femení les Altres Economies* and *Camí de la Solidesa* have also been launched, two programmes aimed at socio-economic initiatives led by women to support the start-up and strengthening process, respectively, and the generation of companies in the sector with female leaders.

In the 2019-2022 period, Barcelona Activa has participated, through LIDERA, in the European **Genderedlandscape** programme financed with **URBACT** funds. Different European cities have participated in this programme with the general objective of introducing gender mainstreaming in public policies. The political challenge that Barcelona Activa has faced within the framework of this programme has been to

address gender mainstreaming, specifically in those local policies designed and implemented to deal with the existing inequality between women and men in the entrepreneurial fabric and business of the city of Barcelona. The result has been the realisation of a comprehensive Action Plan that develops a political strategy to overcome the existing gender inequalities in the business sector and whose main objective is to place Barcelona as a reference city in Europe for entrepreneurship as a woman.

2. Working against job insecurity, the detection of situations of violation of the rights of working people, **and the promotion of the quality of employment and decent work, with special attention to women**, is also one of the objectives of Barcelona Activa in through the Labour Rights Defence Points (PDDL), a free municipal service that offers individualised advice on aspects related to rights, duties and labour regulations. It is aimed at both working and unemployed people as well as self-employed people and entrepreneurs, regardless of their administrative situation. In 2021, two lines of specialisation were launched: consultations related to discrimination on the basis of gender and sexual harassment and on the basis of sex at work and in the field of care. In 2021, 2,128 people were served (62% women).

3. **Working towards the elimination of horizontal segregation** and promoting the employment of women and men in all sectors, breaking with the masculinisation and feminisation of certain occupations, is another of the objectives developed by Barcelona Activa. For example, programmes like *Bombera, per què no?* and *Som dones. Som Urbanes* promoted by the Barcelona City Council, with the collaboration of Barcelona Activa, have resulted in the insertion of women in the two municipal bodies, the Fire Brigade and the City Police, where the total number of women remains lower than that of men. Another example is the training programme launched in 2022 aimed at women: Installer of photovoltaic roofs and downspouts, whose objective is the insertion of women in this sector, where they are also under-represented. In the field of training and awareness, a round table is also held annually with the title "Occupations have no gender".

With regard to **the most feminised sectors in the labour market**, Barcelona Activa is also promoting two programmes aimed at the business strengthening and growth of Social and Solidarity Economy organisations in the textile sector and in the field of the care, with programmes such as *Revestim el textile* and *Activim les cures*.

Actions aimed at **promoting STEAM vocations** have also been developed. Programmes such as Impulse for scientific-technological vocations or actions within the framework of the Barcelona STEAM Plan, are aimed at the educational community and, above all, at girls with the aim of promoting STEAM vocations among girls and young people, and eliminate the gender gap that manifests itself in the limited access of young women to these disciplines.

With regard to projects aimed at **eliminating the digital gender gap** and promoting technological-digital vocations, positive action measures have been adopted in the training in technological and digital training and digital

literacy carried out by Barcelona Activa aimed at achieving the participation of women in all these training sessions, with particular interest in those of Advanced Technological and Digital Training, taking into account aspects such as the incorporation of the gender perspective in all content, as well as making women technologists visible. These training actions are carried out through the Antenes Cibernarium and the IT Academy.

4. **Empowering women in the labour market** is another of the actions promoted by Barcelona Activa with specific programmes such as Skills development for professional women or Coaching for women.

5. In the field of job placement and employment improvement, recruitment aid programmes such as *Crea Feina Plus* have made it possible to promote the recruitment of unemployed people, with a positive action aimed at women given the higher unemployment rate compared to men. During 2021, 642 grants were awarded (56% women).

Taking care of and paying special attention to people who are in situations of greater vulnerability is another of the fundamental axes of action. Programmes such as *Pròxim*, Gateways for Employment and inclusion, Devices in the neighbourhoods or the Comprehensive Plans with Contracting (PIC) have the majority of women participating. The latter incorporates a specific line aimed at the employment of women in situations of gender-based violence, among others. Programmes are also carried out to improve employability and job placement with specific groups such as *Transocupació* (aimed at trans people, with a greater incidence in women) and the *Àbits* labour programme, aimed at people who exercise or have performed sex work in the city, the vast majority being women.

6. Barcelona Activa's Advice Service for Equality and the organisation of time aims at personalised advice and support **to improve management and operation in relation to equality between women and men in companies**, and is aimed at avoiding any kind of employment discrimination, as well as inclusion in the internal management of measures that **promote a healthier, more equal and efficient organisation of time**. This service supports all companies, regardless of size, legal form (SL, SA, cooperative, etc.) or sector of activity.

In addition, Barcelona Activa also offers companies face-to-face, online or asynchronous **training actions** specialised in the field (equality plans, protocols for the prevention of sexual and gender-based harassment, new time organisations, etc.).

7. Barcelona Activa also intends to be a **source of knowledge**, analysis and resources to eliminate gender gaps in the labour market. It has carried out different specific studies to study and eliminate the glass ceiling, to deepen the knowledge of women entrepreneurs in the city of Barcelona and to analyse the phenomenon of the sticky floor and to improve the professional promotion of women in the less recognised and less paid occupations. It has also collaborated in other studies with the City Council to analyse the ICT sector and improve the

job placement and professional promotion of women technologists, one of the most masculinised sectors. Finally, it also generates annual statistical reports on the situation of women in the labour market in Barcelona and the analysis of gender inequalities.

Thus, it has participated in the creation of guides for improving the employability and maintenance of trans people in companies and a guide for the management of sexual and gender diversity in organisations.

8. Finally, Barcelona Activa is part of the network of **Gender Mainstreaming Units** of the Barcelona City Council through the figure of *Agent for equal opportunities* as an expert in the field, with the functions of integration of gender transversality in organisation and the incorporation of the gender perspective in the implementation of all policies and actions aimed at citizens and the business ecosystem.



Participants in the round tables and interviews

Creative industries

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Laura González, Centre for contemporary art and creation
Judith Colell, Catalan Cinema Academy
Simon Lee, GameBCN
Silvia Viudas, LCI Barcelona
Mireia Escobar, Director of Design Hub Barcelona and Design Promotion
Julia de Balle, Broadcard Films
Laia Moret, Women/Fashion School
Eugenia Tusquets
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Digital sector

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Laura Fernández, Allwomen
Astghik Zakharyan, Startup Investor Accelerator
Nivida Mannicks, 5thhub

Public Administration

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Javier Pascual, Barcelona City Council
Sonia Ruiz, Barcelona City Council
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Health and life

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Marie Laurent, GenInCode
Marta Portella, Medical Mutual
Míriam Bayes, Consultant / Mentor in the medical scientific field
Núria Bayo, Barcelona Institute of Sciences and Technology (BIST)
Núria Sáez, Association of Catalan Body Image Nurses (ACICDDI)
Núria Borrell, Owings
Laura Solé, Owings

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Eva Martínez, Belliriun
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