



**CATHOLIC
SOCIAL TEACHING
IN ACTION**

More Women Leadership for a better World: Care as a driver for our Common Home

“More Women leadership for a better world: care as a driver for our Common Home” is a joint research project between the Strategic Alliance of Catholic Research Universities (SACRU) and Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation (CAPPF). This synergy comes from SACRU-CAPPF’s shared conviction that the role of the educational world in addressing the serious challenges of our time is essential.

The project aims to identify a new solidarity-based model of inclusion and sustainable development and, in particular, to tackle the inequalities affecting women, who are still subjected to discrimination and excluded from top positions. According to an international and multidisciplinary perspective, the research involves eleven academics from ten Universities in different countries (Italy, Japan, Spain, Portugal, US, Chile, Brazil, Australia).

Several aspects of overcoming inequalities are taken into consideration: obstacles, evidence of persistent inequalities and the positive effects of the presence of women in various contexts, the role of women in the world of science, technology, academia, the impact on sustainability provided by women’s presence in Board of Directors, care of families.

Starting from the awareness that the concept of power has penalized women and is still influencing the entire world of economics and work, the research calls for new leaders to address the current health, climate, social and digital crises. In this respect, women must be deeply involved in the process of the post-pandemic reconstruction, following the scheme of cooperative competition and the three T’s approach (Talent, Trust, and Team).

The research project highlights some inequalities linked with the job market and the education sector. As far as the former is concerned, unequal opportunities continue to exist. There are still shortcomings in social services and incentive systems for sharing care work, and organizational models in companies are not favourable to women (working hours, aggressiveness, reward systems, Etc.).

On the education side, the framework depends on which geographical area is considered. In some countries, women do not have the same access to education as men, while in many Western countries, the percentage of young women enrolled in universities exceeds that of men. There is, however, a typical pattern with substantial employment consequences: girls opt to enroll in

faculties considered feminine and tend to ignore the STEM disciplines. The aspects mentioned above lead to wonder about the causes of the persistent inequalities affecting women.

The research underlines that persistent gaps depend not only on economic development but also on cultural factors: the patriarchal culture and the cultural belief that gender inequalities do not exist or are an inevitable factor inherent in the 'natural' diversity of male-female roles.

The research addresses some possible strategies on the education, political, fiscal, economic, and social levels to face these issues. Practically speaking, these are: providing women with all the skills and knowledge they need to face the new challenges of the world of work; rethinking the school curricula assessing the role women have played in history, science and arts; introducing a gender impact assessment of policies and legislative initiatives; encouraging the promotion of an inclusive language by the media.

The key driver of the joint research project is the meaning of the term “care”. Care is not only meant as a female feature but understood in the broad sense of the ability to provide attention and love for someone or something. In the recent encyclicals, *Laudato Si'* (2015) and *Fratelli Tutti* (2020), the Holy Father Pope Francis has proposed care as a virtue to overcome divisions among human beings and the plagues of the human race such as poverty, sexism, racism, violence, and war.

However, the burden of care has been carried too long by women alone, and this trend has contributed to exclude them from many important opportunities. Women typically take on significant care responsibilities as wives, mothers, and domestic caregivers. Nevertheless, these activities are culturally and institutionally distorted in such a way as to deny women's rights to access the other areas of human flourishing.

Not only are women underrepresented in science, in politics, business, and education, but they also lack social support to realize their professional roles. To this extent, a shift from domination to care is needed.

It is important to recognize women's established contribution of care, both personal and political, without reinforcing stereotypes or excluding them from public roles. As the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* underlines, care is primarily intended as mutual care among “brother” and “sisters” in the human family. This meaning of care explicitly recognizes that women's access to positions in politics, business, and education is essential to a world able to rise in front of the challenges of this century.