

August 2022



Dear colleagues and friends of the WOMENVAI platform,

On the 22nd of April 2022, WOMENVAI held its **General Assembly at the EPF campus in Montpellier**. It was an opportunity to meet some of you and spend an enjoyable moment together, as well as to make progress on the WOMENVAI project.

First, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to be your new VP, as a successor to Asma - who did a great job for our organization. I am glad to represent WOMENVAI both outside and within my institution, EPF.

The past year saw WOMENVAI participate in several different projects and events, including **COP 26**, **WSIS 2022**, the **July 2022 Ocean Conference** and the **WOMENVAI Academy**, to name but a few. And we also had the opportunity to support EPF in developing its strategic plan for diversity and gender equality. Institutions like EPF need to lead the way in terms of education for future managers.

All over the world, women are asserting their determination to change the world through their actions on societal and environmental issues. **However, in the face of the reduction in women's rights in various countries, we must intensify our actions on education, awareness-raising on gender biases and support for female entrepreneurship.** WOMENVAI will continue its commitment through its projects, and I will give it my all as VP of this amazing NGO.

Liliane Dorveaux, Co-founder and Vice President of WOMENVAI

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WOMENVAI 5th General Assembly, April 22nd, Montpellier, France

Voting members, honorary members and partners were invited to the 5th General Assembly held 22nd April, 2022 in hybrid mode, both in presence at EPF Montpellier, France and via Zoom.



Agenda included, after the welcome note by the president who recalled the NGO's goals, an introduction of the newcomers and their projects, the statutory part with the presentation of the 2021 activities and financial reports, and budgeted project proposals for 2 board members, with replacement of Vice-President by Professor Liliane Dorveaux, Deputy Director of EPF School of Engineering in France.

All items were unanimously voted by the active members, including some of the projects presented for 2022.

(to be Cont'd on page 2)

(Cont'd from page 1)

Projects presented and voted for 2022 include:

- **Contribution to different United Nations events with a delegation at the WSIS (Switzerland), UN Ocean Conference (Portugal), UN Science Summit at the occasion of the 77th General Assembly of the UN (USA) and UNFCCC COP27 (Egypt)**
- **Facilitation of workshops for "Children Aged 10-12: the KIDsvAI Programme" (Geneva, Switzerland)**
- **Training on the Gender Equality Plan in 2 or 3 different Faculties in STEM (France, UK, Italy)**
- **Organization of a WOMENVAI Academy with women entrepreneurs (Cotonou, Bénin)**



Executive Board elected at the 5th GA

Back to the World Summit of Information Society May 22nd, Geneva

At the occasion of the WSIS taking place virtually in May 2022 and ending by a full week of events and celebrations on the first week of June, WOMENVAI and its partners were invited to present on Thursday, June 2nd 2022, in the famous Popov Room, at the ITU Tower (and online) a session during 90 minutes entitled "ICTs, Women Entrepreneurs and Climate Change Adaptation: a Path to Sustainability". The session was opened by WOMENVAI president Yvette Ramos, and moderated by Denisse Salas, member of the Geneva Committee of Swiss Engineering. It was subdivided in two parts:

- **Part 1: Disruptive Technologies at the Service of CC Adaptation and Mitigation**
With presentations by Marise Almeida (Portugal) on last IPCC report and the urgent need for circular economy and new tools in scientific projects, Prof. Lilliane Dorveaux (France) and the team of students from EPF Engineering, namely Alexandra Mille Egea, Zachary Gagnou, Karen Vianey Kenmoe on showcasing a tool developed on "Ethics and AI/ICTs tools", and Johanna Jeukendrup, Founder of Sustainable beekeeping Trust (Israel), on bees and effective communication.
- **Part 2: Women in STEM at the Heart of the Modernization of Our Societies**
With presentations by Prof. Lidia Zakowska, SG WOMENVAI, Prof., PK (CUT), (Poland) on the importance of women empowerment in the STEM arena (from Education to higher decision-making level), Prof. Elisabetta Venezia, Professor at the University of Bari (Italy) on the economics of mobility and the keys to achieve sustainability with gendered approach and Vijaya Khader, Former Dean, Acharya N G Ranga Agricultural University, Hyderabad (India) and Member of the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World, on the needs for Socio Economic Empowerment of Rural/ Farm/ Tribal/ Fisher Women.

WOMENVAI and its partners present at the occasion of the WSIS FORUM 2022
Thursday, 2 June 2022 ** 11:00–12:45 CET at the Popov Room, ITU Tower **

ICTs, women entrepreneurs and climate change adaptation: a path to sustainability
Part 1: Disruptive Technologies at the service of CC adaptation and mitigation
Part 2: Women in STEM at the heart of modernization of our societies

 Marise Almeida	 Lilliane Dorveaux	 Alexandra Mille Egea	 Zachary Gagnou	 Karen Vianey Kenmoe	 Yvette Ramos
 Johanna Jeukendrup	 Lidia Zakowska	 Vijaya Khader	 Samira Achour	 Elisabetta Venezia	 Denisse Salas
					 Moderator

** online available **

Congratulations to Guillaume Pahud, Co-founder of WOMENVAI and Member of the Gender Advisory Board of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development of the UNCTAD



As a Co-founder of WOMENVAI, convinced European, Guillaume Pahud grew up in Switzerland, France, Spain, Italy and Belgium.

“I was fascinated by the way science can elaborate models that predict a number of behaviours. I therefore decided to take an engineering degree, and started working in civil engineering, where I strove to build better bridges and foundations. I am now active in digital, where I try to build better customer experience, and using way more advanced technologies such as AI and Blockchain. Science is the most relevant and accurate way to model how our activities impact our environment and our society. Science, Technology and Innovation will help us build a more sustainable and more equitable world.”

Why are women so poorly represented in those critical activities? What are the odds that gender bias are built into digital tools? The United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) is taking gender neutrality very seriously and established a Gender Working Group in 1993. The Gender Advisory Board follows up the work done and supports CSTD with the following objectives: (1) To explore the gender dimensions of STI, by contributing with inputs on gender-related STI matters in documents of the CSTD; (2) To facilitate, as appropriate, sharing of country experiences, highlighting best practices, and suggesting policy recommendations that support the work of the CSTD on gender mainstreaming; (3) To provide up-to-date information on opportunities and challenges women and girls in STI are facing, and to explore and suggest ways and means of cooperation to best address them, within the mandate of CSTD.

“I am very honored to be a member of the GAB, representing Womenvai. My objective will be to contribute actively by bringing my experience of science applied in the industry, but also to promote and support concrete actions and projects for inclusion, education and sustainability. I am convinced that action, projects or pilots, contribute effectively to the establishment of a pragmatic and constructive strategy. I really look forward to our first boards and will keep you informed!”



United Nations Ocean Conference WOMENVAI & Partners Side Event, June 29th, ICS, Lisbon University, Portugal

At the occasion of the UNOC 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference held at the ALTICE Lisboa in late June, WOMENVAI and its partners, namely ACEF Africa, Business As Nature, Swiss Engineering Geneva and others, have been selected to organize this side-event on a major topic: **“Implementing Disruptive innovation while preserving Ocean biodiversity”** at ICS - Institute of Social Sciences- University of Lisbon, on the 29th of June 2022.

WOMENVAI and its partners present at the occasion of the UNOC 2022 at ICS Lisbon a Side Event on Wednesday the 29th June 2022

Implementing Disruptive innovation while preserving Ocean biodiversity

6pm-8pm (UTC+1)

at ICS - Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon
Auditório Sedas Nunes

Av. Prof. Aníbal Bettencourt 9,
1600-189
Lisboa, Portugal

Drinks and pastéis offered on site!

CONNECT on ZOOM => <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86263455351>



By Prof. Luisa Schmidt, ICS-Ulisboa

The PhD in Climate Change and Sustainable Development Policies (PDACPD^S) is an advanced inter-institutional and interdisciplinary training course combining the physical, natural, social and human sciences and became the most applied for PhD programme in Portugal, attracting an increasingly international audience.

The aims of this PhD Program are to **provide scientific knowledge and tools, relevant for climate change (CC) mitigation and adaptation**, as CC vulnerabilities become increasingly relevant. The capacity to address those has become crucial. It also provides the tools to develop research across multiple disciplines - this interdisciplinary interaction is a requisite to contribute to sustainability, environmental conservation and adequate solutions for CC on local, national, regional and global levels. The Programme is hosted here by ICS, who is in charge of the social science component, in constant cross-fertilisation with the other scientific areas. We have been exploring the interdisciplinarity in both teaching and research – and with regard to research, it has been important to underline the social and human dimension - especially the involvement and participation of Citizens and communities.

Also, the Ocean Conference was the opportunity for me to show projects specifically dedicated to the impact of sea level rise and its impact on coastal communities - specifically the relationship between the resident populations and the sea, in the face of serious scenarios of climate change. This started with a series of studies on the articulation between natural sciences and the social sciences - which highlighted the relevance of participatory processes. Because all these systemic problems – including serious damage to the oceans – started, as we know, from a rupture in the balance between society and Nature (ie the impact of human action), there is no solution that does not involve people.

Social and human action is at both the bottom and top of the pyramid in terms of sustainability issues- their solution or aggravation. And so it all comes down to 2 fundamental aspects : first, preventive, proactive and effective public policies. Second, committed citizenship and involvement of society. Which leads us to the importance of social mobilization – starting with the most attentive and sensitive social groups, such as young people and women, as we see in our surveys, as we will see today with the examples shown here.

The oceans' critical situation today means the involvement of coastal populations is essential. With most of the world's population now living on coastal areas and likely to be severely impacted by CA, the need for local community involvement is greater than ever. **This warrants strong participation and commitment from stakeholders together with cross-sectoral/transdisciplinary action, to:**

- **Increase knowledge/reduce informational and normative uncertainty**
- **Clarify priorities**
- **Empower stakeholders to influence adaptation and participate in decision making processes**

United Nations Ocean Conference WOMENVAI and partners side event 29th June, at ICS, Lisbon University, Portugal (cont'd from page 4)

By Johanna Jeukendrup Rothman (Israël), PhD candidate at ICS Lisbon

The Ocean conference in Lisbon was a great opportunity to understand the needs of the different countries in relation to coastal zones, fisheries, global networks and research. The need for better and continuous budgets was obvious.

Problems like the rise in ocean acidity, oxygen depleted zones, overfishing, loss of biodiversity, were mentioned by all countries. The conference demonstrated that we have neither the need nor the time anymore to develop global databases on any of the subjects. That is now optional.

The priority is now knowing how to give guidance to solve local problems.

Youth want to be included in long term decision-making.

On a governance level, it is time to stop discussing priorities and take action.

Deep sea mining and ocean depletion needs to stop immediately. Free zones seem to be failing to recover biodiversity loss.

The most urgent action to be taken is to stop producing CO₂ on a global level. Seaweed farms are the next best thing to requester carbon. Another action to be taken simultaneously is to declare 100 % of all coastal zones to be protected zones, and guide all in sustainability. To be effective in this, decisions need to be taken together including the local existing knowledge. The fisheries know the sea and the situation, they need to be included and helped to reach the sustainability goals. And yes, there is great awareness on the urgency of the situation. So let's move!



By Aura Bustillo (Colombia), PhD candidate at ICS Lisbon

Rather than focusing on “what to do”, I would like to focus on “how to do it a little better”.

The idea is to **draw attention to the need for the interaction of different types of policy instruments and the integral use of the tools in different degrees** (i.e., the operation of tools in a multi-agency, multi-sectoral, multi-level, and network governance) for more effective and disruptive policies.

It is important to mention that **no fixed institutional models** can be adopted by any country. **Rather, alternative institutional options should be adapted to the circumstances, institutional arrangements, and the specifics of each country.** It is well known that traditional

institutional arrangements did have limitations in handling the complex policy and management requirements involved in the integrated development of ocean and coastal resources - and the protection of the marine environment.

Instead, **each country must find the institutional options that it will see fir for itself** (see: New structures for decision-making in integrated ocean policy, Stella Maris Vallejo, Ocean governance: sustainable development of the Seas, 1994).

My disruptive dissertation will concentrate on tools- focusing on tool selection in environmental policies. One central element is the use of two approaches in the analysis of instruments throughout environmental policies: first, the essential operation of different types of policy tools. Second, the institutional arrangements of tools to create an improved range of environmental policy mixes.



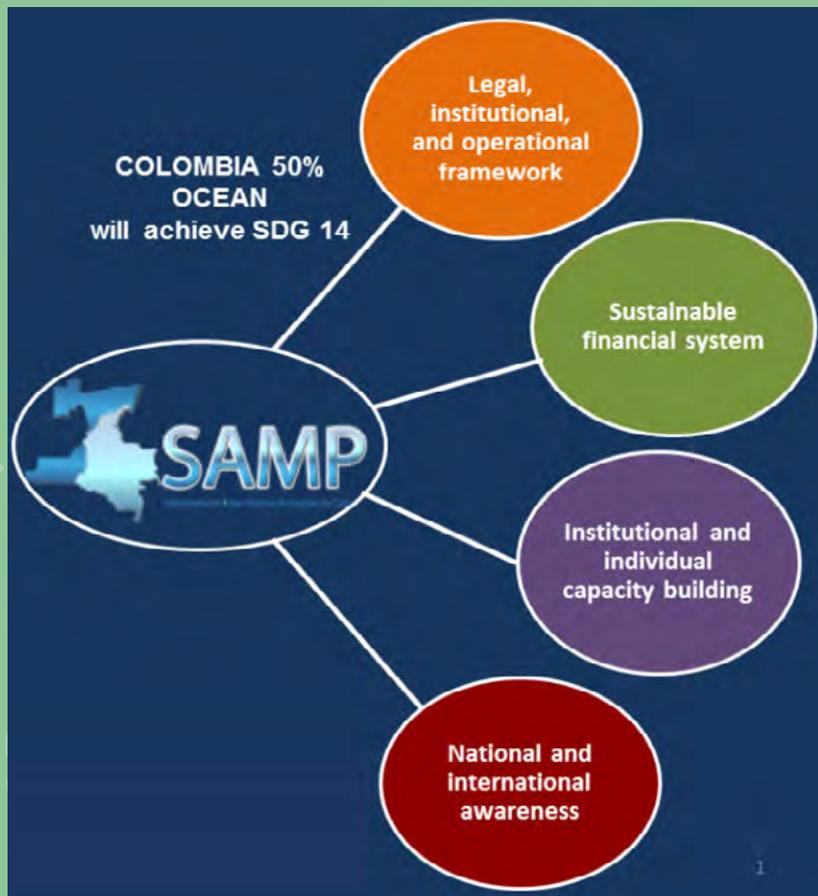
United Nations Ocean Conference WOMENVAI and partners side event 29th June, at ICS, Lisbon University, Portugal (cont'd from page 5)

June 29th, ICS, Lisbon University, Portugal Columbia as a Case Study (continued from Aura's article)

Columbia is a megadiverse country, has territory in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, for the conservation, protection and sustainable development of the oceans has implemented policies, plans and programs.

An example of this is the **Subsystem of Marine Protected Areas (SAMP)** which is made up of 35 marine and coastal protected areas of a national and subnational nature.

Designed and implemented to promote the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine biodiversity in the Caribbean, Insular and Pacific regions of Colombia. (Marine and Coastal Research Institute - INVEMAR). Its objective besides conservation is to increase awareness of oceans, improve institutional capabilities and well-being for local communities.



Legal, institutional and operational framework is the base of interactions between horizontal and vertical governance scheme, established by public national policy of coastal and island areas.

Under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and SDG14, Colombia committed to the 30×30 target to protect 30% of its land and marine territory by 2022, eight years earlier than agreed, with an historical investment in marine research in the country's history.

Institutional and individual capacity building to enhance INVEMAR

Sharing information with various actors at transnational and international level

New active members from around the world: Portraits

Sharon Mabengwa Musonda, Zambia

Engineer Sharon Mabengwa Musonda is a Fellow member of the Engineering Institute of Zambia and recently won elections to be on the EIZ council as Vice President responsible for Membership and Continuous Professional Development MCPD on the 61st Engineering Council at the just concluded EIZ AGM.

Eng Sharon is an environmental and chemical engineering expert who has successfully transitioned from hands-on roles at Technologist category working her way up very hard into an accomplished entrepreneur, passionate about environmental conservation and empowering local girls and women in providing domesticated solutions to environmental challenges and threats.

Sharon is currently in her final year pursuing an **Msc in Environmental Management at University of Lusaka**. She also holds a BEng in Environmental Engineering obtained from CBU. She is an Isotope Fellow of the Waterloo University, Canada and Founder & CEO of Dichem Consultancy and Engineering services, which firm has handled multimillion dollar projects across sectors both in private and public sectors. **Sharon has received a number of awards among them female Engineer of the year 2020 by the PUSH women's network**, awarded a USD 25,000 grant by the USAID Academy for Women Entrepreneurs to develop a hazardous waste site in Zambia, among others.

She has great passion for promoting private practice and startups of small and medium scale enterprises with increased participation of all Engineering practitioners from baseline artisanal Craftspersons, technicians to technologists and professional engineers in the Environmental sector. Sharon emphasises practicality and implementation of ideas for the general benefit of the cross spectrum of the WOMENVAI as what she brings to the table.



Celina Velayos, Argentina

A native from Buenos Aires, Argentina, Celina Velayos is shareholder and Vice President of Yitos S.A., a third-generation family-owned urban transportation company, dedicated to public transportation by bus. Unlike other countries, public transportation in Argentina is operated by private companies via concessions.

"It was an honor for me to attend the last General Assembly in Montpellier, France. I am very grateful for the opportunity to be part of your great organization. I was able to meet other members, learn about their projects, share information, and plan new ideas. Over the years, Argentina has become a country with high levels of poverty, inflation, and crime. Children are among the most affected. To give back to our community, we have been involved for the past few years with social assistance and educational projects for children.

We work together with the NGO Empujar to give high school students in their final year the chance to learn about different jobs by working with us and other companies, to encourage them to study at university and to teach them how to do a job interview or write a C.V. One of my main motivations for joining WOMENVAI is to be inspired by and contribute to all the great projects within the organization, especially those regarding environmental issues, either using new or adapting existing technologies. **I believe that we have an obligation to take care of the environment in order to ensure a better quality of life, both now and for future generations."**

Marise Almeida, Portugal

Marise Almeida, Vice President of the Portuguese NGO "Business as Nature" has joined WOMENVAI as an active member. In recent years Marise has been interested in the role of Women in STEM, the promotion of women as agents of change towards a more sustainable and innovative society. Mostly she is very motivated to bring her expertise in circular economy as a tool to bridge climate mitigation and adaptation, showcasing a few innovative examples from Portugal.



Back to the United Nations Framework for Climate Change Preparatory Meetings on the Road to COP27: WOMENVAI at the SB56 last June in Bonn, Germany

WOMENVAI delegates were present at the Climate Conference held in Bonn, Germany in June. Here are a few photos while we wait for COP27 to lead us to Egypt in November.



With Patricia Espinosa, SG of the UNFCCC



Association DÉCOUVRIR : Helping qualified migrant women to enter the workforce for 15 years

In Switzerland, most legal immigrants are women. Many of them have undertaken advanced studies and are highly qualified. However, they often find themselves disadvantaged on the Swiss job market and encounter numerous difficulties in entering the workforce.

The main obstacles when looking for a job in their host country include the complex procedures for recognizing their diplomas, limited knowledge of the language, job market and professional conduct, the inadequacy of their applications and the lack of a professional network.

NGO Découvrir helps qualified immigrant women find their place in Switzerland and thereby prevents deskilling and skill waste, while raising awareness among employers and creating links with the economic market. For the past 15 years, Découvrir has been offering qualified immigrant women a range of different services to help them overcome the obstacles that keep them from finding employment. It also opens the door to a large support network of the more than 4,000 people who have benefited from its support.

In addition, découvrir works with more than 60 partner companies that are committed to ensuring diversity and gender equality within their teams.

From engineers and architects to biologists, accountants and computer scientists. Among its alumni, découvrir today boasts more than 140 different professions and 160 nationalities – a major source of skills and resources for Switzerland, which has been suffering from a shortage of talent for several years.

More information [here](#).



découvrir

Last Minute News

Science Summit UNGA 77 (General Assembly of the United Nations)

WOMENVAI will be presenting a paper at the 77th General Assembly of the United Nations to be held in NYC, USA on 13-30 September 2022, at the occasion of the Science Summit on the “status of women in STEM, with a focus on ecological economics in Europe”.

More information [here](#).



Call for projects for our next WOMENVAI Academy

Call for projects for our next WOMENVAI Academy in 2023.. Please fill in the Form [here](#).

Wish to donate to the WOMENVAI Academy?

If you also want to contribute to our great projects, don't hesitate to make your donations kicked-off at the occasion of our next mission to Cotonou, Bénin: thanks in advance for helping energize the network of women entrepreneurs in ICTs and the environment!



Want to join as a NGO Partner, Sponsor or Ambassador ? Feel free to contact us at contact@womenvai.org

Who we are: the co-founding members

Executive Committee

Yvette Ramos, President, France/Switzerland
Liliane Dorveaux, Vice-President, France
Inès Aivazian, Deputy-Treasurer, France
Sophie Magner, Treasurer, Belgium/France
Lidia Zakowska, Secretary General, Poland

Honorary cofounding members

Asma Brini, Tunisia
Camille Coq, France
Nadia Souissi, Tunisia
Sangeeta Wij, India

Ethics Committee

Soizic Vangrevelinghe, France
Denis Aivazian, France

Other cofounders and active members

Ariane Barbier, France
Betty Bonnardel-Azzarelli, UK/ France
Lylian Coelho, Brazil/ France
Guillaume Pahud, Switzerland
Denisse Salas, Bolivia/ Switzerland
Lidia Santiago, Portugal
Marwa Zaghbib, Tunisia

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