

Let's talk about women at driving with Alessia Munari

My name is Alessia Munari. I am driving instructor and teacher and I'm based in the north of Italy.

And my work is working in a driving school, but beside this beside my work I founded and run a project that a comprehensive driving license project addresses at all aspects of obtaining and maintaining a driving license including the psychological dimension of driving.

So, for instance, I work with a traffic psychologist, which is a new figure of psychologists. And together, we try to help and support people, mostly women, 90% women, I think, dealing with anxiety and fears while they're driving.

Can you briefly tell us about the sexism directed at women drivers?

Um, I think that sexism against women drivers is deeply rooted in stereotypes that portrays women as less competent behind the wheels.

So, we constantly hear jokes about women driving and these jokes, first of all, are not funny and they can create problems in driving, fear in driving, and they can undermine confidence, women confidence while they're driving.

So in my work, I see how these stereotypes affect women in their practical driving. So for instance, I see younger woman that have the belief that they are worse drivers because they're woman or I see middle-aged woman that um were mocked for years and so they develop genuine fear and anxiety while driving and I see also all the women that never learn to drive because age ago it was considered a male thing just a man thing.

WE Frame: Collective Views for equality is a project by:



Dipartimento
di Giurisprudenza



TRACES® DREAMS



Co-funded by
the European Union

CERV-2024- CITIZENS-REM-EUINTEGRATION | CERV-AG-LS 101196808
WE Frame | Project No. 101196808

What data tell us about the difference between men and women at driving?

In Italy we know that for young people so men and women at the age of 18 when you can take your driving licence men are the most and women are less.

There are some regions of Italy some places in Italy in which we are more or less equal, but it's not the same in in all the country.

If we look at older people, so maybe at the age of from 25 to 35 more or less, we see that this gap is bigger. So we have a lot of men that have the driving license and less women that have the drive have taken the driving license.

Why do you decide to create a specific project about women at driving?

I created this project because I think that traditional driving instruction often ignores these gender-specific barriers.

So, we try to give women a space in which their problems and their fears are taken seriously. And um by integrating the psychological support, we address not just the technical skills, but also this emotional baggage that sexism has created. We try too.

And why are you so passionate about it?

I'm passionate about it Because, um, I think that driving license it's not just, uh, learning a technical skill, learning to drive a car or something like that, but it's a little bit of, independence for women and it's, uh, autonomy.

Things that, I think, should be, uh, accessible to everyone regardless of gender. And for me it's important also because when I took my driving license at the age of 18. I lived in a small country on the mountains with 300 people.

WE Frame: Collective Views for equality is a project by:



Dipartimento
di Giurisprudenza



TRACES® DREAMS



Co-funded by
the European Union

CERV-2024- CITIZENS-REM-EUINTEGRATION | CERV-AG-LS 101196808
WE Frame | Project No. 101196808

So, I was alone and my driving license gave me the possibility to go to university, for instance, or the possibility to have new friends or the possibility to have work. So, for me it represented really freedom and independence.

So when I help a woman take her driving license, I think that this can literally change her life. So for the job, for because she feels empowered, so I think that's it's like feminism in action, like a feminism that we can see in everyday life. So for me it's a small thing, but it's very important.

What is the biggest challenge facing feminist today?

I think that one of the biggest challenges is the backlash against feminist progress especially online and among younger generations younger people are exposed to anti-feminist content. And another challenge is the one of intersectionality.

So, we need to recognize that discrimination are intersects with sex with the age, race, class, disability, and other factors. So, for my work, for instance, um an older woman, immigrant woman faces very different barriers than a young middle-class woman.

What will be the next challenge maybe in 10 years?

I think that the most important challenge in next years will be adapting feminism to changes and technological changes and society changes I think about, for example, the AI or changes in work structures or maybe climate challenges.

So we need to not to leave behind women in all of these processes. And we need also to, I think, bridge the generational divide within feminism.

So I think that that it's useful and it's important that younger feminists, younger women talk to all the women and they need to talk to each other and work together instead of work against each other. It's important that they talk. Yeah.

WE Frame: Collective Views for equality is a project by:



Dipartimento
di Giurisprudenza



TRACES® DREAMS



Co-funded by
the European Union

CERV-2024- CITIZENS-REM-EUINTEGRATION | CERV-AG-LS 101196808
WE Frame | Project No. 101196808

Can you tell me three names of women who in your opinion have made feminist history?

The first woman I choose is Simone de Beauvoir because in her writings she maybe for the first time I don't know but she talked about how women are socially constructed rather than biologically determined.

So it's also a connection with the driving license because women As we said before, women think that they are worse in driving because they are women, but obviously it's not true. So I think Simone de Beauvoir is the philosophical foundation of feminism, the modern feminism.

Then the second woman I choose is Manal Al-Sharif. I hope the pronunciation is correct, which is Saudi activist. In she dared to drive in 2011 in Saudi Arabia.

In this year it was forbidden to women to They don't have the right to have the driving license and she did to drive and feel herself and she was arrested for this. But her courage inspired a lot of women and they try to defy this ban.

From 2018 they for the first time in the history of Saudi Arabia they can drive so a few years ago. And this is, I think that it's a symbol of driving and freedom, especially when driving is forbidden like in this case.

Then the third, the third woman I choose is Annie Ernaux. Because in her, in all her writings, but especially in the book A Girl's Story, she wrote about there's a little chapter um speaking about the driving license. So she spoke about herself when she was 18 in 1958 and she saw herself with the driving license as a free woman.

So she saw for the first time the driving license as a freedom through little acts something small but freedom in everyday life and independence in the everyday life.

WE Frame: Collective Views for equality is a project by:



Dipartimento
di Giurisprudenza



TRACES® DREAMS



Co-funded by
the European Union

CERV-2024- CITIZENS-REM-EUINTEGRATION | CERV-AG-LS 101196808
WE Frame | Project No. 101196808

Is there anything that you would like to say that we haven't asked you about?

No, I just want to emphasize that feminist work doesn't always look radical or political on the surface, but for me, for example, feminism is saying to a young lady that her fear to drive is not because she's a woman, but it's the proof that sexism and stereotypes affected their life or maybe feminism could be helping a grandmother take her driving license maybe in her 50s or in her 60s or in her 70s why not?

In order to visit her grandchildren with independence, without having anyone with her. So, I see these little changes in everyday moments very important.

So, we need for sure big politic movements, but together with this politic movement We need also small projects or small changes working together across all generations.

WE Frame: Collective Views for equality is a project by:



Dipartimento
di Giurisprudenza



TRACES® DREAMS



Co-funded by
the European Union

CERV-2024- CITIZENS-REM-EUINTEGRATION | CERV-AG-LS 101196808
WE Frame | Project No. 101196808