



## Abstracts of results SOROPTIMIST: Reinventing the woman-friendly city

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In the face of the changes and challenges that are forcing cities to reinvent their environmental, economic, social and cultural models, and seizing the opportunities of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRP), **Sorooptimist** - a worldwide organisation of women committed to the social and economic enhancement of the female universe - launched in December 2021 the project: *The City I Want. Reinventing the city on a woman's scale*, aimed at listening to the voices of women for the construction of a new model of the City. To respond to this need, Sorooptimist relied on the research expertise of the market research company **Lexis Research**.

In particular, Lexis Research was commissioned to conduct a study aimed at measuring the level of satisfaction with respect to different areas concerning life in today's towns and villages. Secondly, the purpose of the research was to identify the main areas on which to focus interventions aimed at making Italian cities eco-sustainable, more liveable and *women-friendly*. To meet these objectives, 5038 quantitative online interviews were administered in April 2022, involving 2006 respondents as a representative sample of Italian women and 3032 women members of Sorooptimist and Young Women Network. 4961 responses were considered valid and used as the basis for the elaboration of the research results.

### ARE TODAY'S CITIES WOMAN-FRIENDLY?

In general, it emerges that the level of satisfaction with the **quality of life in one's** own city is barely sufficient, with an average of 6.05, on a scale of 1 to 10. In fact, 34% of the women surveyed say they do not feel satisfied with the quality of life in their city.

A much felt aspect concerns the **involvement of citizens** in the choices for the city itself: 62% of the sample complained that they did not feel involved in such decisions, a percentage that increases in Central/Southern Italy and the Islands (Calabria: 79%, Abruzzo: 79%, Sicily: 77%).

**In the area of employment**, women also point out some shortcomings: 62% are dissatisfied with the possibility of starting their own business, and 59% are very dissatisfied with the opportunities and quality of work and careers in their city. This dissatisfaction increases in the South (73%) and in small towns (61%).

From the point of view of **environmental sustainability**, several critical issues are highlighted: 57% are dissatisfied with the fight against pollution and air quality, a percentage that reaches 66% in large cities; women's dissatisfaction with the maintenance of green areas, gardens, flowerbeds and parks reaches 51%. Forty-four per cent also complain about noise pollution, which is more critical in larger provinces such as Rome (67%), Naples (64%) and Milan (60%). Even the quality of waste collection does not meet with high satisfaction (36% say they are strongly dissatisfied): this figure rises significantly in Lazio (63%), almost doubling in the capital (69%). In small towns, the percentage of dissatisfaction drops to 24%, and the situation is also better in Veneto (19%) and Friuli-Venezia Giulia (18%).

On the other hand, with regard to community services, the majority (53%) of the women interviewed consider themselves dissatisfied with the **frequency of public transport** in their city, a critical aspect especially in the South (65%). **Street cleanliness and maintenance** also appears problematic (55%), especially in the Centre-South and in large cities. Another noteworthy point, which also highlights economic and social disparities, concerns dissatisfaction with the **availability of good housing at reasonable prices**, which stands at 54%, reaching 71% in large cities. Finally, 43% perceive their city as **unsafe**, especially in certain regions such as Lazio (58%), Sicily (55%) and Campania (55%) and in large cities (57%).

**The educational and cultural offer and the quality and accessibility of health services** record less critical performances, although they can be improved. In fact, 41% of the women surveyed are dissatisfied with the cultural services on offer, 36% are dissatisfied with the health services (a percentage that rises much higher in the South, especially in Calabria - 69%). Finally, as regards the educational offer, only 33% declared themselves dissatisfied.

## CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the findings, it is clear that **today's cities are *not* women-friendly**, and that Women's choice is in the direction of a model of an eco-sustainable city, and one that involves them by recognising their role as active and responsible citizens. From the study's indications, therefore, emerges 'interest in the construction of a sustainable urban ecosystem composed of four categories of future models, presented below.

### 1. The city of citizens

Six out of ten women are interested in a city that is close to its citizens, involving them in processes of change, starting with women and young people. Moreover, 67% of the women involved in the research are interested in a city that invests in knowledge, training, education and digital innovation, starting with schools.

### 2. The attractive city of opportunities

Almost seven out of ten women are interested in a city that enhances its territories with innovation and sustainability, from cultural and environmental heritage to small businesses and crafts. Moreover, 66% would like a city that is open to change and innovation and that is able to attract talent, investment and create new opportunities.

### 3. The livable and resilient green city

66% of the sample surveyed are interested in a city that reduces land consumption, redevelops buildings and reclaims natural/agricultural areas, and that plans territorial interventions to tackle the new risks of climate change. Seven out of ten women would also like their cities to redevelop their built and cultural heritage, reduce resource consumption by investing in the circular economy, and recover biodiversity by increasing and enhancing green areas.

### 4. The inclusive and safe city

Interest in a safer city that strengthens lighting, cameras, and includes a neighbourhood policeman is 66 per cent, reaching 71 per cent in medium-sized towns. In addition, seven out of ten women are interested in a city that strengthens health services, social services, and solidarity and volunteer networks.

The construction of new women-friendly, eco-sustainable and liveable towns and cities is possible, starting with the available resources. First of all, it is clear that it is necessary to start with the citizens themselves, who are at *the* very centre of the city, involving them - starting with women and young people - in the choices for their city. In order to put the citizens back at the centre, there are several interventions to be implemented, such as enhancing talent, creating more economic and job opportunities; guaranteeing a qualified education that prepares students from both a civic-environmental and an academic-cultural point of view; enhancing the territory through the recovery of disused areas, the maintenance of streets and green areas, and the creation of new physical and cultural spaces. By focusing on these valuable economic, environmental, cultural and human resources, further value will be generated, acting in accordance with a circular economy - in the broadest sense of the term - and thus ensuring an all-round sustainable model.