

CASE STUDY: Women's leadership and community action: Virginia Carosielli, Italy

I am Virginia, I live in Celle di San Vito, the smallest town in Puglia (100 inhabitants) and I am the coordinator of the Franco-Provençal Language Desk.

I live in Celle because love brought me here, I have a 6-year-old daughter and I am a home educator. I have found a community here that has welcomed me, appreciates me and helps me. Living in such a small town, where there are no services or "comforts", triggers a mechanism of reaction and adaptation, and you always have the famous "lever" with you that manages to turn weaknesses into strengths



My motto? The engine of a woman leader is humanity.

Celle is a village with a French-Provençal linguistic minority (there are three in Italy): we speak a language from the 1200s that fights against globalisation, the internet and standardisation. I have been studying and protecting for about 20 years now.

My work group is made up of all women and is very heterogeneous: all different, nothing in common except the love for the country. Different ages and different dreams.

We inaugurated a beautiful inclusive playground thanks to one of our projects, and on the day of the inauguration there were many children from neighbouring countries. They ask us to organise events or meetings and they always participate.

Women have a world behind them. All you have to do is find the key. And to be told: let's go; let's do it; here we go; don't worry I'll keep an eye on Sveva, gives you something that pushes you beyond tiredness, beyond the fear of the famous flop. The environment I work in is a natural, non-authoritarian one where everyone is encouraged to cooperate.

I believe that being a leader is a natural thing, the result of a long alternative path. I am always very helpful and diplomatic. Often in small countries diplomacy is gold. Perhaps my gift is to be able to listen and always aim for a happy ending. My work as a home educator has made me even more empathetic and resilient. I get very emotional and this perhaps conveys my sincerity to others. I am a woman, a mother and an educator, I can deal with crisis situations and difficulties with passion and a lot of patience.