

Report

First Online Discussion Group on Soil Protection and Gender Equality

Executive Summary

The first online discussion group, held on February 27, 2025, gathered young experts and researchers to explore the intersection of soil protection and gender equality.

Participants engaged in insightful exchanges about the critical role of soil conservation in agriculture, biodiversity, climate resilience, and disaster mitigation, as well as gender disparities in land ownership, access to resources, and decision-making.

Discussions highlighted the lack of public awareness of soil protection as a critical issue, as well as the cultural and social biases that impact women's participation in agriculture and environmental management.

Participants acknowledged the need for practical, hands-on approaches to engage youth and promote gender equity in soil conservation efforts.

Key strategies proposed

- Educational initiatives that integrate gender equality into soil protection.
- Women-led agricultural projects to enhance economic empowerment and visibility.
- Gender-inclusive land policies ensuring equitable access to resources.
- Community engagement through participatory approaches and storytelling.

Proposed activities

- Interactive exhibitions such as The Soil Keepers, showcasing the contributions of women in soil protection.
- Summer camps focused on youth engagement in soil conservation and gender inclusion.
- Digital storytelling and mentorship programs to inspire young people and connect them with female leaders in agriculture.
- Field-based soil awareness programs, including hands-on experiences with soil profiling and restoration techniques.

Challenges in engaging rural youth

- Limited awareness and soil blindness – soil is often overlooked as a critical environmental issue.
- Cultural and social norms – traditional inheritance structures and biases limit women's agency in agriculture.
- Economic pressures – financial constraints often take precedence over sustainability efforts.
- Lack of visible career pathways – young people are often unaware of opportunities in soil-related fields

To address these barriers, participants suggested:

- Gamification and hands-on learning to make soil conservation more engaging.
- Youth experts programs to foster peer-driven advocacy.
- Interdisciplinary collaboration linking soil protection with broader environmental and social themes, such as climate resilience and disaster management.
- Policy engagement to push for systemic change and equal opportunities in land access and agricultural leadership.

Report

First Online Discussion Group on Soil Protection and Gender Equality

Conclusion

The session concluded with a commitment to actionable solutions, emphasizing the need to integrate soil protection into educational systems and public discourse, while ensuring that gender equality remains a central pillar in environmental sustainability efforts

Participants

The discussion group included experts in sustainable agriculture, environmental scientists, youth representatives, policy analysts, activists, educators, and social innovators from Poland, Austria, Slovenia, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Bulgaria, and Spain.

Participants brought diverse expertise, including environmental scientists researching soil health and climate change impacts, youth advocates promoting sustainable agricultural practices and gender equity, policy analysts developing gender-inclusive conservation strategies, and soil conservation experts working on erosion prevention and fertility improvement.

