

WOMEN ON THE ULMA GOVERNING COUNCILS

The activity of the ULMA Group companies has always been technical and industrial. Women, in general, have been less present, as they also have on the management and representation bodies. However, since the 1980s, many women have been members of the Governing Councils of our Cooperatives, and some have been president. This issue contains the first of two reports that we have produced on this subject, with the testimonies of two women who have had major roles on this journey.

The ULMA Group's businesses are industrial and, therefore, we usually say that they are typically male cooperatives. Only 20% of the people who work in the different cooperatives are women.

Since the 1980s, women have also participated in the Governing Councils of the business and, throughout these years, numerous women have held presidential positions. The experience of women at ULMA in leadership positions is nothing new and, with a view to the future, they are a useful point of reference for enhancing and encouraging female participation.

WOMEN WHO HAVE OCCUPIED THE POSITION OF PRESIDENT AT ULMA

LOURDES ANDUAGA

1989-1993 - ULMA Packaging

MARILU ORUETA

1990-1994 - ULMA Advanced Forged Solutions

NEREA VILLAR

2002-2006 - ULMA Advanced Forged Solutions

ALAZNE GURIDI

2007-2010 - ULMA Maintenance Services

IRENE ALBERDI

2010-2014 - ULMA Handling Systems
2011-2014 - President of the General Council of the ULMA Group

MAIXABEL KORTABARRIA

2011-2015 - ULMA Agricola

MONSE MOROTE

2013-2014 - ULMA Conveyor Components



IRENE ALBERDI

President of
ULMA HANDLING SYSTEMS
2010-2014

ULMA GROUP
President of the General
Council
2011-2014

In addition to being the president of a business, you have also been the only woman president of the ULMA Group. What was that like for you?

It was an enriching experience and I will always be thankful, both to the members of my cooperative and the representatives of the General Council and the Assembly of the ULMA Group, for trusting me at the time.

Being president of your own cooperative enables you to understand in-depth how the company operates. You lift your vision from your own workstation and start to work, with other members of the Governing Council, on finding better answers to the needs of the business and of your colleagues. If we transfer this to the ULMA Group, the perspective is vastly broader - in collaboration with all the businesses, participation in university and corporate bodies... These were very enriching years, with difficult times, marked above all by the crisis; but we have shown, as a cooperative group, that solidarity is one of our main foundations.

Do you think that we, as women, adapt well to leadership positions?

There is no doubt about it. I believe that, beyond gender, the uniqueness of each individual determines what type of leader they can become (abilities, experience, etc.). Likewise, we have to remember that opportunities must also be guaranteed for women to access or take on leadership positions. We need to work on building appropriate contexts, especially in male-dominated companies and bodies.

We also need to work hard in society to make positions of responsibility compatible with home life. I think we need to be able to put aside the dilemma between having a career and issues in your personal life.

ELISABETH IGARTUA

ULMA CONSTRUCTION
Member of the Governing
Council
2005-2009

Technical Secretary
since 2009



You were a member of the Governing Council for 4 years and since then, for the last 12 years, you have held the post of technical secretary. How do you see the progress made for women in this body?

If we look back, the first women began to serve on the Governing Council in the mid 1980s. For the next four decades, one, two, three, or four women have served as councillors at the same time. There are currently 3 women on the council and, although we have never established a quota in the appointment of male and female candidates, I can say that gender has been taken into account.

How do you see the future? What would you say to women at ULMA?

We still have a long way to go, but I think that in our cooperatives we have better conditions for progress compared to other types of companies or environments. I think we should reinforce that idea among ourselves. The principle of equality that sustains the ULMA cooperatives is reflected in our day-to-day life. Among other things, we have implemented equality plans, we are adapting the conditions to facilitate the participation of women and we have the opportunity to participate in spaces of empowerment and reflection ...

Although there are women in the governance bodies, I believe that, with a view to the future, we women need to make a leap to the front line. For holding presidential positions, obviously, the skills and capacities of each person have their specific relevance. But women have a handicap, because we have to overcome some obstacles that are often not seen: Our self-limitations on working in public, the fact that women bear the responsibility for most care tasks ... We women must empower ourselves to have more courage and I believe that cooperatives must provide us with the necessary confidence to do those jobs.

