The Power of Women to Preserve Nature

By Jessica Sheffield Zamora November 29, 2019



Women play an essential role in the conservation of our natural resources. We are leaders with the potential to achieve a critical transformation in the protection of nature, ensuring the wellbeing of our communities and the planet.

In Costa Rica, a large number of women are leading initiatives that are transforming society. Christiana Figueres promoted the Paris agreement on climate change; Karla Chavez leads the Latin American recycling program ecoins; Alejandra Monge directs the Corcovado Foundation, which protects the Osa Peninsula, one of the most biodiverse places on the planet; Zdenka Piskulich is the force behind Costa Rica Forever, one of the most consolidated conservation NGOs in the country. There are many other prominent Costa Ricans achieving change through their leadership initiatives.

Our formal education, especially during the early childhood years, is mostly led by women. During my three years directing Guardians of Nature, I have noticed **the extraordinary power that teachers have, inspiring and educating a new generation of children**, the guardians of our natural resources. Given the necessary tools and resources, teachers will educate present and future generations about the need to live in peace with nature.

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Costa Rican women have leadership roles in our homes as well. Even though times have changed, many of us still take care of our children's food, select products that benefit their health and the environment, and educate the family about the proper use of resources. Above all, we are an essential force and engine in the marketplace with the ability to influence the supply of products and services through our own consumption.

A large number of women are also inspiring global change. Among them, the primatologist and conservationist Jane Goodall; Gretta Thumberg, the girl who has moved the world with her strikes for climate change; and Berta Cáceres, a Honduran indigenous leader who lost her life in the defense of water and the environment.

In terms of nature conservation, there is no doubt that we are in a race against time. Both men and women have to be part of the solution. We must redouble and accelerate our efforts in public policies, education and conservation for the very survival of human beings.

It is gratifying to know that women are leading this transformation. I am confident that, little by little, there will be many more guardians of nature, women who exert great influence from their homes, jobs and social circles. Thank you to all the girls, moms, and professionals who make this difference every day.