

Women in the Mediterranean Conference 2025 – Group Discussions

Summary

Across the workshops, participants explored how true change begins when we embrace femininity and what is natural to women: shaping the next generation through role modelling, empathy, and authentic presence. It was recognised that breaking cycles of exclusion requires investment in education, especially since cultural norms continue to persist across different contexts and generations.

A strong theme that emerged was the cost of silence. In a world saturated with visuals and communication, many still remain invisible and unheard. Participants reflected on the idea that "no one should be left behind." Invisibility and silence, however, must not be misconstrued as simply a matter of choice but as the result of systemic structures that silence certain voices and dictate how experiences are reported. Special attention was drawn to the experiences of women with dual vulnerabilities, such as migrant women or women with intellectual disabilities, who are frequently overlooked.

The workshops highlighted the importance of overcoming barriers and building bridges. Digital platforms were seen as a tool for exposing hidden narratives, not through sensationalism, but through humanisation. Participants shared that the digital space, when used with integrity, can witness to realities that formal systems often disregard.

Spirituality was also discussed as a bridge across cultural divides. It was agreed that while people are shaped by their histories, they are not defined by them, and spirituality can remind us of the deeper dignity shared across cultures.

A key takeaway was that progress often happens through everyday acts: being present, valuing vulnerability as strength, and nurturing the potential of others.

Participants also spoke about the importance of developing the capacity to remain in uncomfortable spaces and accompanying those who are often silent or silenced, especially by men to stand who are required to alongside women as allies.

Proposed Ways Forward

The workshops agreed that accountability must be shared by everyone — not only men.

A major antidote to systemic exclusion is the intentional cultivation of healthy, life-giving relationships. The Church's role was seen as critical, especially in fostering spaces of dialogue that listen to the unspoken experiences often carried silently in bodies and behaviours.

Participants stressed the need to move from the language of ideals to the concrete realisation of equality, fraternity, and mutuality within communities — with women leading these efforts.

Creative arts were identified as a powerful means of liberation, offering new pathways for healing and expression.

The group also called for the amplification of positive leadership models, such as Pope Francis's ongoing efforts to promote women in leadership within the Church.

Finally, participants stressed the importance of involving critical academic voices in policy-making spaces to guard against societal silence and groupthink. Policies should be shaped through inclusive processes that actively engage community voices and critical thinkers, ensuring that real change is possible.