Meet Inspiring EIT Community Women Leaders and Entrepreneurs

Mina Mirzadeh
Local CommUnity Manager, Leuven
EIT InnoEnergy

Tell us a bit about yourself and your connection to the EIT Community.
An electrical engineer by background, an Iranian by origin, and an advocate of sustainability by inspiration. The EIT InnoEnergy CommUnity is where I have found what I would call like-inspired souls with big dreams and even bigger motivations to make the dreams come true.

What is the most valuable skill you learned during your EIT InnoEnergy degree?
Communication skills, for sure. The ability to hear different opinions and still speak your mind. To put it differently, finding similarities (as objectives) in diversities (as methods).

Currently some people talk of there being a “gender gap” among entrepreneurs. Do you think this is true?
I fully think it’s true. The gap is undeniable, especially in more technology orientated entrepreneurship.

Have you had to overcome any obstacles as a woman leader?
I, personally, haven’t encountered an obstacle in the EIT InnoEnergy CommUnity. However, it seems there is some kind of inertia for women to attain leadership positions or entrepreneurial roles. That’s why I believe we should dedicate more opportunities to women, to overcome these invisible obstacles.

What has been the most rewarding moment in your career so far?
This actually happened earlier this March, when we were meeting with representatives organising an event. I witnessed my transition from manager to leader. I realised I no longer had to be as involved and the team were able to perform all the necessary tasks without me. It was truly rewarding to see my team functioning independently after months of working with them all individually.

Who are three inspirational women in your field?
When it comes to the tech world, particularly in the energy sector, there are unfortunately not many women entrepreneurs. This is why I would like to mention TIME magazine’s Person of the Moment; Debbie Sterling. She is the leading voice in the movement to encourage girls’ interest in technology and engineering. This is what her startup, Goldiebox, aims to do. Again, in the field of energy and sustainability I can point to Carlota Pi, entrepreneur and co-founder of a customer centric-utility in Spain, and Marie Powell, the President and CEO of Green Mountain Power in the USA.