



Three Women Environmental Leaders Brave the Powers that Be

By: Michal Zimring

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BIANCA PITT



In 2020 environmentalists around the world were preparing to attend COP26 (November 2021)– a conference of global leaders and environmentalists that would lay out the risks of a destabilized climate and define the future with solutions to change course. Bianca Pitt, a cofounder of [SHECHANGESCLIMATE](#) and other women environmentalists were astounded when the leadership team of COP26 was announced and not a single woman was on it. They went directly to the organizers and pointed out that pledges of gender inclusion had been agreed upon in prior years, yet the organizers told them they didn't see the lack of women on the leadership team as a problem.

So Bianca along with Antoinette Vermilya and Elise Buckle began organizing a campaign called [#5050 Vision](#). Their ask was to have "a 50:50 balance of women in all their diversity at the top of all future climate negotiations, including the COPs". They gathered signatures from over 450 female environmental leaders and sent an open letter to the UK government. They also received powerful news media coverage and global contributions. Bianca explained in an [interview](#) that their biggest success was to rally women climate activists from around the world. And they were able to get one woman deputy lead for climate negotiations and 2 women on a team of 14 as UK representatives.

[SHECHANGESCLIMATE](#) continues to campaign for the next COP27 and their continued call to [action](#) is the representation and inclusion of women, who by the way make of 51% of the global population. Shouldn't decisions about addressing the climate crisis include a balanced representation of all humankind? We think so.

ANNE ROLFES



Anne is the founding director of the [Louisiana Bucket Brigade](#) created in collaboration with founding board members Margie Richard, Dorothy Jenkins and Shonda Lee and the women from [Cancer Alley](#). 'Cancer Alley' is the nickname given to an 85-mile stretch of land along the Mississippi River where there are over 150 petrochemical refineries whose residents are statistically proven to be at higher risks of cancer.

The "Bucket Brigade" uses community building and collaboration to come up with winning strategies, specifically using data to hold the petrochemical industry and the government accountable for the true human and environmental costs of pollution.

The 'bucket' is an easy-to-use tool that residents use to capture air samples and emissions. The data collected, shows that these emissions contain known cancer-causing chemicals with concentrations that often exceed the state safety guidelines.

Using collaboration, the gathering public support, and visibility at public meetings, the "Bucket Brigade" has been able to successfully activate 'stop expansion' plans against Formosa Plastics and Wanhua Chemicals.



DOMINIQUE BROWNING



Dominique Browning is the Director and Cofounder of [Mom's Clean Air Force](#), a nationwide organization of over one million moms and dads who are organizing to protect children from air pollution and the consequences climate change.

Why moms? "[Moms have passion and power – unbeatable combination.](#)" The one thing parents care about is their kids.

"Mom's Clean Air Force" operates through an active network of state-based community organizers. They put forth solutions-oriented policies and strategies to government lawmakers in order to address dangerous air quality issues and support accountability.

The injustices of air pollution and climate change are addressed through public action in collaboration with the community-based groups [Justice in Every Breath](#) and [EcoMadres](#).

Reducing methane pollution from oil and gas production is an extremely effective way to address climate change, bring down emissions and clean up the air. The Moms recently arrived at the doorstep of the EPA delivering petition-filled boxes totaling 400,000 signatures; urging the agency to finalize strong and comprehensive rules to cut methane emissions.



In honor of Women's History Month we celebrate the contributions of women environmental leaders who brave the powers that be and are making history at this very moment. Even though there are so many women working across all sectors on climate solutions, "[women remain a largely untapped resource](#) due to existing biases, including restricted land rights, lack of access to training, technology and financial resources, and limited access to political decision making due to under representation."

We know that creating sustainable and equitable solutions requires a collective effort, so let's get women the resources they need to bring their expertise to the table. Join us. ENVR.Earth is a publication of [Environmental Voices Rising](#). Our podcast [Women at the Mic](#) has more stories from women working on climate change solutions and is available at the usual podcast sites and on our website.