

## Agne Milukaite, Sweden



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### Agne Milukaite’s professional background

- Agne Milukaite is the founder of a global platform for peer-to-peer bike sharing, called Cycle.land.

### Agne Milukaite’s story

Agne Milukaite’s story began at Oxford University where she obtained her MSc in Migration Studies. Here she developed an interest in start-ups and innovation.

To pursue this interest, she first moved to California, gaining experience working for a start-up company in home robotics, then some time later returned to Oxford and started her own company.

Since it began in 2016, the company has evolved and developed other products. These range from a peer-to-peer product, to providing a booking system service for community bikes, such as pool bikes for students or employees.

#### What was the reason you started your company?

In a nutshell, it was the desire to trust that urban mobilities, specifically for cities, can do better and reduce congestion, make cities healthier, and also improve the air quality.

A few years leading up to 2016 there was this

overwhelming idea that cars were going to solve all mobility needs. The idea was that autonomous cars were going to drive us everywhere and solve all our problems, and yes, they will solve some, which I am excited and positive about. However, in urban spaces in particular, where there are limited spaces for driving and parking, cars cannot be a solution for every journey we take, it has to be different and diverse means of transport.

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While car innovation is amazing, it will not solve all problems. We need something else in addition to that. We have this old-school way of getting around that is great for your health, for exercise, and for congestion.

## How can your innovation contribute to diversity in cycling, in your opinion?

The whole company is thinking of the lifetime of a person and what kind of transport they need. For example, when you are a baby you need someone to push you while you are in a pram, when you are a student you might want a fast bike, if you become a parent you need to be able to transport a child, and when you are older you might not be able to walk so much anymore and then you need a safe means of transportation. One bike cannot address all your needs during a lifetime, even within the same day you have different mobility needs. In fact, we need bikes that address all the different users' needs, however, it does not have to be one company that provides it all.

With peer-to-peer sharing, you can basically address any bike that someone is sharing, and the more traditional sharing consists of regular bikes and student sharing. But we also have a charity that hosts and shares tandem bikes specifically made for children with disabilities. With the community bikes, the idea is that in a workplace it is more comfortable and convenient to use them if you need to make short journeys. And finally, the one-size model bike that does not fit everyone, is still very important because it makes these companies financially sustainable and helps them survive in the long term.

If we look at e-scooters or bikes that are easily available and accessible you might get users that never thought they would use that type of transportation. I think that, in terms of gender, it is pretty equal, around 50/50 per cent.

## What are your experiences as a female entrepreneur in the area of cycling and mobility? Have you experienced any difficulties?

Similar to being an entrepreneur in any new field, there are some positive aspects. The pros are that there are some inspiring women, the cons are that we definitely need more, and we need the community to invest more in women because right now there is not much investment going to women. Without large investments, it is more difficult to grow fast. It is very inspiring when you are closing deals and there is a woman on the other side. At the same time, we do not see a lot of mixed teams in which men and women work together. This is where we could do better! I hope more women will innovate in mobility.

## Do you have any advice for other female entrepreneurs in the area of cycling and mobility?

While statistically the progress we have made is not good enough, either in terms of sustainable transport or gender equality in entrepreneurship, there is still a lot to be optimistic about today. Not only are more people cycling than ever, but there have also been more women entrepreneurs starting a business than ever. But we need more women innovating in cycling and mobility. In the beginning, when you start a business, your passion, enthusiasm and energy will be moving you forward. Stay positive because you are being the change that you want to see in the world.



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