



## Who is Miina Sillanpää?

**Well, she was the first female minister in Finland. And she held many other posts as well. Miina Sillanpää was born on 4 June 1866, and her wonderful career is the story of a girl born to poor peasants during the famine.**

She was only 12 when she started working at the Forssa cotton mill and then at the nail factory in Jokioinen. She did not have much of an opportunity to attend school, only the village school and the school at the factory. She had a job as a maid in Porvoo and later moved to Helsinki to work as a domestic helper.

*"I would like to raise awareness among women, to make them understand their privileged position. I can't understand why women should be satisfied with being at mercy of others, why they need to tolerate being undervalued."*

Miina Sillanpää's career in the social sector includes working as the chair of the Servants' Association (1901–52), improving the rights and conditions of domestic workers. Miina Sillanpää was voted to the first Parliament in 1907 as one of the first of 19 female MPs in Finland. She remained a member of parliament for a total of 38 years, to this day holding the record for a female representative. She was Minister of Social Affairs in 1926-27. As a journalist, Miina Sillanpää took a strong stand on the social problems she observed.

Miina Sillanpää's key values, fairness and equality, motivated her work. She was active and made a real difference in Finnish society. She was not afraid to tackle social injustices and she fought to improve the conditions of those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. She improved the conditions of working women and their families, started shelters for single mothers and their children and advocated the improvement of the status of the elderly in society.

*"We have to ensure that every child has the best possible start in life"*



Miina Sillanpää, Minister

In addition to her political career, Miina Sillanpää was a significant thought leader, who left her mark in many sectors in society that are still visible. Miina Sillanpää was awarded the Finnish Cultural Foundation prize and the honorary title of talousneuvos for her achievements.

*"If I could start it all over again and someone asked me: "What would you do?" I would reply, without hesitation: "The same things."*

*"The everyday life is here and now, it cannot or must not be stopped."*

What would Miina Sillanpää do now? Think about this and do as Miina would do!

### **Miina Sillanpää in brief**

**Born in Jokioinen in 1866**

**Worked in a factory**

**Maid and servant**

**Chair of the Servants' Association**

**Employment services for servants**

**Inspector at Elanto restaurants**

**Member of the Parliament**

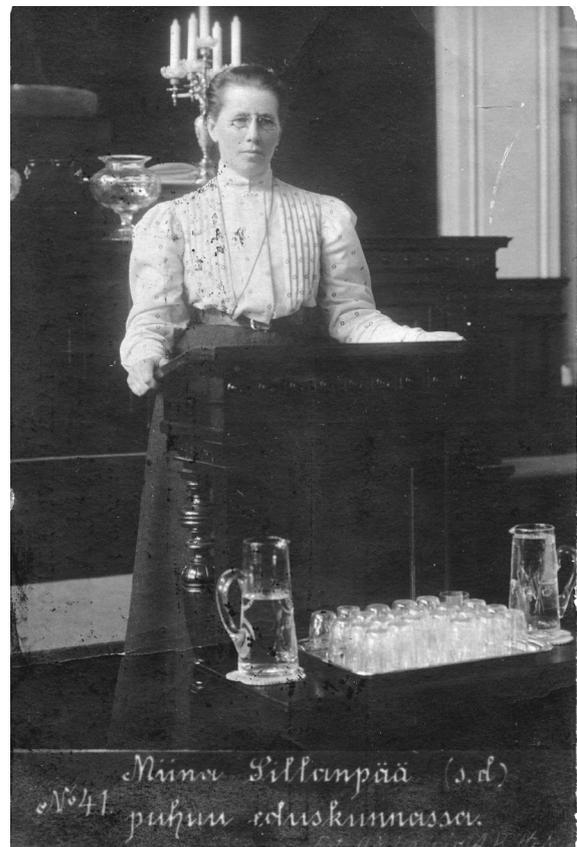
**The first female minister in Finland**

**Journalist**

**Honorary title of talousneuvos**

**The Finnish Cultural Foundation prize**

**Died in Helsinki in 1952**



Miina Sillanpää, MP

More information about Miina Sillanpää and her legacy:

[www.miinasillanpaaseura.fi](http://www.miinasillanpaaseura.fi)

Blog: <https://miinasillanpaa.wordpress.com/>

Facebook: Miina Sillanpää

Twitter: Miina150

Bearers of Miina's legacy:

The Miina Sillanpää Foundation

The Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters

The Union for Senior Services

[miinasillanpaa.fi](http://miinasillanpaa.fi)

[ensijaturvakotienliitto.fi](http://ensijaturvakotienliitto.fi)

[valli.fi](http://valli.fi)