

European Network for Women in Leadership (WIL)

London, May 15th & 16th, 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On the **15th and 16th of May 2017**, WIL Europe organized in London a **two-day gathering** for its members and the young women of its talent pool program.

On the first day, more than **60 “happy few”** met in the **offices of AVIVA** for a discussion dedicated to the topic of **“Diversity in the Workplace”**. The keynote speech was given by **Mark Wilson**, Group Chief Executive Officer at AVIVA, introduced by **Katherine Corich**, Chair at Sysdoc and Associate Fellow-University of Oxford.

The morning after, they were invited to the **Palace of Westminster** for a breakfast debate on **“Digital Transition”**, followed by a workshop on **“Career development”**, specifically designed for the young women of WIL’s Women Talent Pool program. **Helene Martin Gee**, Chief Adviser, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Entrepreneurship and President of Pink Shoe club introduced the event, before giving the floor to **Fiona Capstick**, Executive Director at EY Advisory, for the welcome remarks.



Keynote speech by Mark Wilson, Group Chief Executive Officer at AVIVA – London, May 15th



Welcome remarks by Fiona Capstick, Executive Director at EY Advisory – London, May 16th

May 15th: Cocktail – Dinner

Venue: Aviva's Office, St Helens, 1 Undershaft, London



Session on "Diversity in the Workplace: What does it mean for women in leadership?"

Moderator:

- **Katherine Corich**, Chair at Sysdoc, Associate Fellow at the University of Oxford

Speakers:

- **Sarah Morris**, Chief People Officer at AVIVA
- **Claudia Arney**, Non-Executive Director at AVIVA
- **Line Pélissier**, Diversity Director at Orange
- **Paulina Dejmek-Hack**, Member of Cabinet, Economic Advisor for the President of the European Commission, J-C. Juncker



From left to right: Sigrid Windmolders, Katherine Corich, Sarah Morris, Claudia Arney, Line Pélissier, Paulina Dejmek-Hack

Wrap up of the discussion:

Sigrid Windmolders, Legal and Corporate Affairs Attorney at Microsoft and WTP 3rd Edition Emerging Leader made the wrap-up remarks for the “Diversity in the Workplace” session, underlining the main ideas developed by the speakers.

“**Sarah Morris** mentioned two different programs promoting diversity in AVIVA. The first one is at the entry level point of the organization: a global graduate recruitment program, which just closed for 2017 with 4700 applicants for 52 places and a female-male ratio of 60-40. It promotes diversity at the entry level point of the organization, but it will certainly contribute to a shift in leadership representation in 10 years from now. AVIVA has also just launched the “Accelerating Leadership from the Inside Out” program for women. It is designed to develop future female talents “**by exploring purpose, authenticity, influence and confidence**”.

Line Pélissier talked about the policies of Orange on this issue. Whilst the gender balance at Orange is equal, the objective is to **increase the proportion of women in top positions of the group**. The group has strategic and dedicated programs for gender equality. This is a widespread program, not only in France but also in African countries, with global objectives at all management levels and various measures aimed to evaluate the improvements. Orange also implemented a global talent pool program designed for men and women, in order to prepare future top managers, with individual mentoring.

Paulina Dejmek-Hack informed us that there are 55% of women at the European commission, 35% at middle-management level and 32% at high-level positions. According to her, “**women should be empowered with individualized programs and monitoring in order to sustain this increase**”. Women should also be supported in finding a good balance between private and professional life, since 80% of part-time jobs are occupied by women, and 80% of parental leave is assumed by women. On that note, **Line Pélissier** added that younger men at Orange are very sensitive to this balance between work and private life and appreciate the measures implemented by the group.

According to **Line Pélissier**, “**the main challenge for women is participating to digital transition**”. For example, only few women are applying to computer sciences studies. “**Digitalization is about making sure that we are inclusive**” and thus is directly related to gender equality.

In the last part of the session, the panel speakers shared some advice to advance in a career: according to **Claudia Arney**, you have to be able to communicate your story, synthesize your skills set and emphasize what you can really bring. Women have to be more confident and ambitious. She also asserted that you need to have principles. **Sarah Morris** added that you need to have a great mental.

Thanks to this panel discussion, our knowledge was reinforced that **diversity can be achieved through many ways**, for example through quotas or programs at the start of one’s career. Everyone can benefit from coaching and mentoring programs. Here as well, the impact of digitalization is huge as access to life learning is so much easier today than compared to the past.

We may conclude this event with the awareness that values remain important and business needs diversity in all aspects. And **being in this digital revolution, we need to be diverse and inclusive!**”

May 16th: Breakfast – Debate

Venue: House of Parliament, Westminster, London



Digital Transition Breakfast Debate

Moderator:

- **Thaima Samman**, Partner, SAMMAN Law and Corporate Affairs & WIL President Panel

Speakers:

- **Emma Loisel**, Chief Operations Officer at The Exchange Lab
- **Amit Pau**, Venture Partner & Executive Director- advisor to corporations at Ariadne Capital
- **Kristin Schreiber**, Director for COSME Program and SME Policy, European Commission
- **Alison Rayner**, UK Digital's Risk and Compliance Director at AVIVA



From left to right: Amit Pau, Emma Loisel, Thaima Samman, Alison Rayner, Kristin Schreiber

Welcome remarks by Fiona Capstick:

Fiona Capstick started with an overview of the results from a recent study of the World Economic Forum. Most memorable was the finding that it would take **another 170 years until women have the same chances and wages as men**. Thus, objectives should be set in this regard. Fiona pointed that the Woman20 developed five recommendations containing the following objectives: advancing pay parity, encouraging entrepreneurship and bridging the technology divide. Adding to that, Fiona explained that technology is a key enabler for careers and she made a strong statement encouraging the participation of women in STEM studies and STEM-related jobs. According to her, the fact that a lot of typical white-collar jobs traditionally held by women will disappear due to digital transition is a serious issue to be addressed.

Wrap-up of the discussion:

Kirsten Perzi, Midmarket Leader Central Region (DACH) at Lenovo and WTP 3rd Edition Emerging Leader has accepted to do her own wrap-up remarks for the "Digital Transition" session, highlighting the key points developed by the panelists:

Amit Pau first raised the issue of **disruption impacting all industries** in every country: not only companies will disrupt established companies within a market or a continent but additional challenges will also come from Asia or Africa. Indeed, as there are no infrastructures in place on those continents, it makes it easier to innovate. The pace of innovation being very fast, **"if you blink you miss"**, as Amit puts it. He used the metaphor of David & Goliath standing for new companies which have the ability to innovate and the passion to create a better world. Established companies on the other hand have assets which the disruptors do not have, such as customer relations. If they are able to collaborate with innovators, they are able to "disrupt the disruptors". **"Innovation is all about risk taking and failure"** said Amit, taking the example of Thomas Edison who failed around 10 000 times before inventing the lightbulb. Agility, speed and fresh out of the box thinking are skills needed in order to cope with the new challenge represented by digital transition.

Emma Loisel stated very clearly that content is almost irrelevant, whereas **"what matters is the way of doing business"**. She sees digital transformation first as business transformation. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to **"get rid of the fear of technology"** and understand that this is the "shovel of today". The example of the media industry shows that even after moving to a digital platform, business is still the same. This shift in traditional business is more visible on customers' side as more people in the company now understand and do tasks that were carried out by agencies on their own before digital transition. Business and technology thus have to be seen in context.

Alison Rayner developed on the topic of the insurance industry as an example to study digital transition. The first move in this industry was from phones to internet sales. Disruption really began a few years later when the first price comparison websites appeared on the internet. This led to a shift in the market but the sales process itself has not really changed even if it was online. It is only at the end of last year that she noted that her former employer started to change perspectives and to get into the shoes of their customers. Aviva is different as disruption is actively searched by challenging business model and culture. This is done by **"bringing together different skills, working together in a non-hierarchical way while focusing on the satisfaction of the customer"**.

Kristin Schreiber focused on the importance of **bringing entrepreneurial spirit to the administration** and to civil servants. As for the SMEs, the atmosphere in a SME is a mix of opportunity and fear and a lot of work has to be done to convince people that **the will to grasp opportunities should prevail over this fear**. Kristin added that policy makers mainly have their focus on big disruptors with the objective to create sustainable jobs. They are looking for good, promising traditional companies, and the digital aspect is not necessarily the business core. Thus, policy makers need help from the outside to make traditional businesses disruptive. Kristin added that she is currently working on a platform where SMEs lacking behind in terms of digital transition can network with digital startups.

Women Talent Pool Workshop on “Career Development”

Facilitator:

- **Anne Houtman**, Lecturer at Sciences Po, former senior civil servant at the European Commission

Speakers:

- **Sarah de Carvalho**, CEO at Happy Child International Foundation
- **Thaima Samman**, Partner, SAMMAN Law and Corporate Affairs & WIL President



From left to right: Thaima Samman, Sarah de Carvalho, Anne Houtman

The objective of the session was to discuss the ways and means to successfully manage career changes in a constantly evolving world. **16 female talents** from WIL's Women Talent Pool program participated to the workshop, which was moderated by Anne Houtman.

Insisting on the importance of transmission, Thaima Samman, WIL President, reminded the audience that the WTP program is for its member the opportunity not only to network with peers and senior women but also to provide them with a **broad picture of various careers**. This way, they are encouraged to open their horizons on how to transform career changes into an opportunity.

Anne Houtman, Lecturer at Sciences Po and former senior civil servant at the European Commission, **Thaima Samman**, Partner, SAMMAN Law and Corporate Affairs and WIL President and **Sarah de Carvalho**, CEO at Happy Child International Foundation shared their own testimonials with great transparency and modesty. They also gave some useful advice on how to manage both expected and unavoidable career changes.



“Chance favors the prepared minds”

Anne Houtman holds a Graduate degree in Mathematics from the Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium and a PhD in Statistics from Princeton University, New Jersey. After teaching at the New York Polytechnic Institute and heading the Statistical Research Department of Nielsen Marketing in Belgium, she served in prominent positions of the European Commission for a large period in her professional career. Anne is now Lecturer at Sciences Po.

According to Anne, we need to be opened and see where are the opportunities, while keeping in mind that anything offered to us is the chance to have another experience that will enlarge our skills and make us more capable for the future. Not only diversity of our experience is an asset for our career by enabling to build the skills needed to be a leader, but it also brings freedom **“to innovate, be yourself, create, think out of the box”**. Anne went further saying that she was very lucky to fail many times since it brought her to places she would never have gone otherwise. Adding to that, she quoted Pasteur: **“chance favors the prepared minds”**. Indeed, you need not only to be prepared to be successful, unlike a lot of people who miss career opportunities because they think they don’t have the adequate skills, but also to be prepared to failures since we don’t have control over everything but still we can always rebound. While she was a mathematics statistics assistant in Louvain, she had to teach statistics and realized the importance of **pedagogy**, a key skill in a career according to her, both in the private and public sector. Indeed, it is important to **“know how to motivate your people”** because it gives meaning to work.

“Weaknesses can be turned into strengths”

Now founding partner of SAMMAN Law & Corporate Affairs Firm, Thaima Samman has a rich and diverse background. She went from the NGO sector, as a founding member of SOS Racisme, to the political world, as member of staff for MP Claude Bartolone; not mentioning her career in the business world. Thaima founded a startup before practicing in various firms and heading the Public and Regulatory Affairs Department of Philip Morris France, before joining Microsoft France as the Head of its Legal and Public Affairs Department. She was later appointed Associate General Counsel within Microsoft International.



Such as Anne, Thaima emphasized on the importance **“to be open to opportunities”** and the fact that each experience will provide you with valuable skills for your career. For example, she was chosen by Claude Bartolone to be his assistant although she did not have the adequate diploma nor was part of his political spectrum.

Another piece of advice she gave to the audience is the necessity **“to move out of your comfort zone to progress”**: for example, when she entered the corporate world to be a business lawyer, she was identified for skills she totally ignored and had no guarantee that she was doing the right thing. However, her past experiences enabled her **“to think differently and to bring a fresh perspective”** to her new employers.

Like Anne, Thaima occupied different positions in both the public and private sector: each of those experiences gave her knowledge and soft skills useful for what she is doing today. Breaking choices such as when she left Microsoft where she had a well-established position, to create her law firm, were not moments of pleasure. But they were necessary and were the cost for what she is today, the successful leader of a recognized public affairs and law firm. She concluded

asserting that **“Weaknesses can be your strengths once you identify them”** and that the key for success in life is finding **“a balance between being opened to opportunities but also having the right to make choices”**.



“If you want to be successful, get out of your comfort zone”

Sarah de Carvalho worked in film and TV production for 10 years in California, Sydney and London as a Film Publicist. She later joined the BBC TV in London eventually becoming Associate Producer in Light Entertainment, before moving to Sky TV. In 1993, she founded Happy Child International for street children in Brazil, where she lived for 10 years. In 2014, Sarah also spearheaded the global awareness campaign itsapenalty.com against the sexual exploitation of children around the 2014 World Cup Brazil. So far, It's a Penalty have completed their child protection campaigns around the 2014 World Cup and the Rio 2016 Olympics & Paralympics in Brazil and her foundation operates in Brazil but also in Africa.

Sarah explained the incredible work she carried out with her charity that rescued over 11000 children, and the lessons learnt from being a leader in both the corporate and the third sector. She first exposed her motivation for changing her career and working in the charity sector: having seen what it is like on the ground for children in Brazil is what motivated her to try to make a change.

She made a parallel between her leadership experience in the third sector and in the private sector: **“it is all about service delivery”**. As head of an NGO, Sarah is still a leader across geographical and cultural boundaries but this time the service delivery is targeted for vulnerable children and communities. The challenges of a CEO in a charity are the same as the ones in the public and private sector. She defines herself as a social entrepreneur. Leading her charity was challenging at first, but thanks to her MBA and experience in communication she gained confidence to go through. Digital disruption had a positive impact for her charity, by making a global impact possible: the campaign itsapenalty.com has so far delivered its key messages to over 519 million people worldwide. She gave the audience useful advice for career development: **“Advancing in your career is about creating and forging relationships.”** Mentors, role models, feedback providers and coaches can help us connect, gain support, develop and excel in our careers.

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