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Newsletter #12 - November 2020

The editorial

Dear Friends of the Foundation,

We know that this period is difficult for everyone worldwide due to the pandemic. Many regions including France have imposed new lockdowns.

More than ever, the Foundation has an important role to play to achieve our mission which is to enhance diversity in business and specifically to promote the advancement of women in the workplace. Diversity is vital and our work, with both men and women together, is needed more than ever.

But our mission is also to help you to work, to lead and to move forward at this difficult time and in this new world.

That's why we're continuing our series of online classes across the three continents where we are present, in North America, with Canada and the USA, in Europe and in Asia. The programs that WIF has financed and created, in partnership with the world's best universities, are open to men and women as it is important that everyone adheres to our mission – and the programs are useful to all of us.

This week we're putting the finishing touches to our "Leaders in the New World" program, co-developed and sponsored by the WIF, in partnership with Asia's number one university, the National University of Singapore. Check out the overview of this truly exceptional program below.

We'll build another program with a prestigious American university in 2021, focusing on integration and also mentoring. I'll tell you more about this at the beginning of next year.

All of our classes will be planned so that two continents can attend. The Singapore classes were attended by participants in Europe and Asia.

We'll also follow up on the innovative MOOCs with CentraleSupélec and we hope to create a on-campus program with the new Paris-Saclay University dedicated to the youngest women entrepreneurs and employees.

Finally, we mustn't forget our Canadian friends whose program designed with McGill in Montreal is scheduled to run in the week of October 25, 2021. Our Canadian research on stereotypes and perceptions of gender equality in global companies, developed with Concordia, is now finalised and we're waiting for a good opportunity to present the findings in Paris and in Montreal.

Solidarity is more important than ever: our aim is, and always has been, to educate not only company leaders, but leaders for our whole society.

We're facing new challenges at the end of 2020. They will doubtless still be present in 2021, but we will set up our events and our inter-company mentoring programs as soon as possible. The launch of the Asian program in the new year gives us reason to be optimistic.

I'd like to thank the whole WIF team in France and abroad for staying so active, and I thank you all for your positive energy.

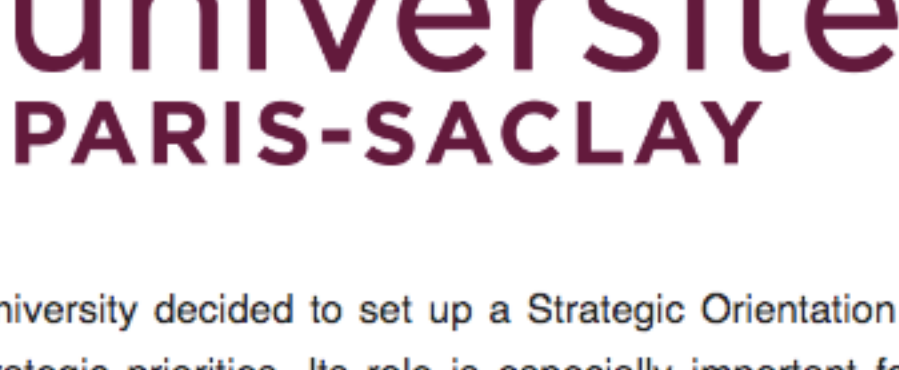
Warmest regards,

Martine Liautaud
Founder and Chair of the Women Initiative Foundation



Nomination

Martine Liautaud joins the Strategic Orientation Council at Paris-Saclay



Paris-Saclay University decided to set up a Strategic Orientation Council to advise and monitor strategic priorities. Its role is especially important for a university like Paris-Saclay, which after rethinking synergies between higher education and research, is considered one of the best international universities, and as such needs to contribute to taking on the world's challenges (climate, health, energy, digital, quantum...)

At the Board meeting on October 13th, Paris-Saclay' governing board appointed twelve leaders to the Strategic Orientation Council. Martine Liautaud was nominated alongside Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director-General from 2009 to 2017, Béatrice Kosowski, General Manager of IBM France and Benoît Potier, Chair and CEO of Air Liquide.

The Council will meet two or three times a year, the first meeting will be held in first half of 2021.

[Read the press release](#)

Partnership

WIF and the National University of Singapore roll out their "Leaders of the New World" program

We are proud to announce that we have partnered with the prestigious National University of Singapore to launch the executive "Leaders of the New World" program.



Click on the image above to view the video presenting WIF/ NUS' executive program.

On this occasion, 5 classes have been programmed until November:

- 29/10: Making Sense Out of Uncertainties
- 30/10: Leaders as Multipliers
- 03/11: People: The Make-or-Break in Any Transformation
- 05/11: Executive Presence: Your Personal Brand
- 06/11: Entrepreneurship Mindset in the New Normal

Participants will receive a joint WIF/ NUS digital certificate. We'd like to thank Virginia Cha, Adjunct Professor in management and organisation at NUS; Dr. Robyn Wilson, NUS mentor and specialist in leadership and organisation development; and Manas Mainrai, specialist in computer simulation, for leading these classes.

29 Oct 2020 SGT TIME: 4pm to 5pm CET TIME: 8am to 10am	30 Oct 2020 SGT TIME: 4pm to 5.30pm CET TIME: 8am to 10.30am	3 Nov 2020 SGT TIME: 4pm to 5pm CET TIME: 8am to 10am	5 Nov 2020 SGT TIME: 4pm to 5pm CET TIME: 8am to 10am	6 Nov 2020 SGT TIME: 4pm to 5pm CET TIME: 8am to 10am
Making Sense Out of Uncertainties If Scott Fitzgerald's famously said "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to take two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, to function." We will look at how to develop mental agility and agility to understand differing perspectives and redefine the boundaries of your thinking.	Leaders as Multipliers "Why do some leaders drain energy while others create it?" In this 1-hour virtual session, participants will identify their own multiplying behaviors. Discover how to best multiply the talent of your team and create functional patterns to create an effective long term business vision.	People: The Make-or-Break in Any Transformation Every successful digital transformation is based along with responses to critical commercial operating conditions (e.g. COVID, changing market places & stakeholder expectations). We will explore the different perspectives on the alignment with impact, significantly on the success of transformation & gain insight into the contextual consequences implementing AI on line and customer leaders & staff, & highlight the very human aspects of the workplace that strongly determine how engaged, compliant or resistant people are during transformation.	Executive Presence: Your Personal Brand We often think of executive presence as being the confident posture, strong projection of voice, and direct communication. These behaviours are combined by leaders who have overcome fear and risk aversion. We will explore how we can align our cognitive, affective, and emotion states to develop executive presence. Professor Virginia Cha will share her insights and discuss on to explore this topic.	Entrepreneurship Mindset in the New Normal We focus on leadership development with understanding the concept of mindset – the growth in time to be successful. To be successful, entrepreneurs have to embrace a growth mindset, which means to shift from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset, but even as a learning opportunity and other reflective thinking is critical to individual growth and self-discovery. In this one hour session, we will explore these concepts and to give everyone to explore our own theory of the future.

About Virginia Cha, Program Director and Adjunct Professor at NUS Business School



Virginia Cha teaches the MBA module on entrepreneurship and innovation, as well as the EMBA module on change management and disruption. She has led various executive programs on entrepreneurial spirit, focusing on planning action for company innovation programs. Her research on entrepreneurial reasoning is led to a chapter in a collection of papers entitled "Entrepreneurial Behaviour: Unveiling the Cognitive and Emotional Aspects of Entrepreneurship", published by Emerald.

Forum

"Inter-company mentoring: a weapon to break through the glass ceiling"

By Martine Liautaud, Chair and Founder of the Women Initiative Foundation.

The notion of a "glass ceiling", a metaphor for the impossibility for certain categories of people – notably women – to get promoted to a certain level of job, responsibility, or pay, due to tacit or systemic discrimination, is now well-known and widely documented. To break through it, there are only two options: either you wait for a rare opening through the invisible mesh, woven with prejudice, cronyism and power games; or you give yourself enough momentum to rip through it. It's not impossible. A lot of women have done it. But infinitely more numerous are those who, through lack of self-esteem, or ambition, or imagination, don't give it a go. To help these women free themselves from the stereotypes they've internalised, to get out of the pernicious pitfall of putting themselves down, and to muster all their energy to smash through the glass ceiling, there's one tool that keeps proving its effectiveness: mentoring.

An often misused term, mentoring is the selfless sharing of experience between a mentor, typically a professional towards the end of their career, and a mentee, who's starting out on theirs. For the pro bono mentor, the reward comes from the satisfaction of sharing your knowledge, of feeling a positive boost in energy, and the challenge of facing new, stimulating ideas. When the chemistry works, the mentee doesn't hesitate to talk frankly about their personal and professional difficulties – often closely linked – to their mentor who works hard to help them overcome their obstacles. It is the start of a mutually enriching relationship based on mutual esteem.

Mentoring is often offered to young entrepreneurs whose brief career hasn't given them the intellectual or soft skills needed to realise their ambitions, or, and above all, to entrepreneurs who need to step back and think after a few years and reassess their international development strategy. But companies are becoming more and more interested, as they see that despite all their efforts in promoting diversity, the glass ceiling is as solid as ever. In the war for talent, running mentoring programs helps employers woo the best graduates. But above all it is a means of unleashing untapped human potential for the good of the company. Thanks to mentoring, companies can awaken capabilities hidden under resignation, boost the demotivated and help original profiles thrive. This brings the company new ideas and perspectives, making firms more resilient without even needing to hire new talent.

Equally importantly, individual success stories help energize the whole organisation by signalling the end of the status quo to both those who suffered and those who gained.

For this to happen, the key lies in the personal and professional matching of mentors and mentees. However, problems met by the director of a start-up are different to those faced by a young manager in a global company. That's why inter-company mentoring is more appropriate for corporates. Coming from a similar organisation, a mentor who has already understood corporate codes and mechanisms can draw on their experience and give advice to help mentees move up a step, for example in communication skills, in managerial posture or in their ability to resolve conflicts. However, it is important that the two companies come from different industries, to ensure that technical or personal issues, or even conflicts of interest, do not interfere.

Matching mentors with mentees requires both human psychology and being free of any monetary considerations. Neither party should feel that they should get their money's worth and put pressure on the matchmakers. Like the mentoring relationship, the program organisers should be volunteers. The only aim matchmakers should have is to find the right balance between similarities that bring people together and differences that enrich them. And companies should support the program not as clients, but like donors, applying their CSR policies in the framework of an HR project.

As profound changes shake the workplace, mentoring can create a special relationship with the company, outside any reporting line, in addition to developing mentees' autonomy.

Finally, mentoring is not an end in itself. It is a tool to help individuals develop and thrive to the best of their potential. Mentoring should be offered as part of a wider development program including masterclasses, e-learning modules, networking sessions, ... All these opportunities help mentees discover themselves and realise that they have the strength in themselves to break through the glass ceiling.

The Newsstand



"In a crisis, it's the moment to re-invent yourself"



Women and the world afterwards: organisations working for an inclusive recovery



STEREOTYPES AND PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER EQUALITY IN GLOBAL CORPORATIONS IN EUROPE AND THE USA – SUMMARY OF RESULTS FROM EUROPEAN COMPANIES



Martine Liautaud, from investment banking to philanthropy

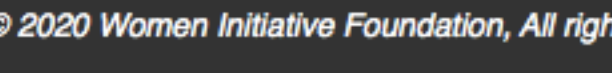


Women Initiative Foundation - Laurence Onfroy, a committed entrepreneur

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