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Welcome to Professional Women International Brussels!

We are a truly multi-national network of professional women who help each other to grow and succeed and to accelerate gender balanced leadership. We are a non-profit association and all of our activities and programmes are designed to provide you with the tools and attitudes to be leaders, offer you a safe space to learn as well as perform, provide you with opportunities to contribute and create, and support female empowerment in general.

The values that guide us are those of respect, courage, collaboration, excellence, and inclusiveness.

Vision and mission

We want to be the premier English speaking network of professional women in Belgium and focus in all we do on helping professional women to grow and succeed! Together with our corporate members, we aim to accelerate gender balanced leadership.

To achieve OUR goals, we organise events such as social networking drinks or educational seminars and workshops and run dedicated programmes that allow you to make new contacts, meet inspiring women and learn from one another! Our programmes are dedicated spaces to meet like-minded women, discuss, and learn. They are our:

- Mentoring Programme
- STEAM Women Programme (Science Technology Engineering Arts Mathematics)
- Women Entrepreneurs Programme
- Your Path Programme.

Being a globally connected association, we are the Belgian chapter of the Professional Women's Network Global (3,500 members) and also affiliated with The International Alliance of Women (35,000 members worldwide).

In this Annual Report, let us summarise for you our work over the course of 2018. We are proud of the changes we introduced to continuously improve the association and help professional women succeed and the impact our programmes have had.

Letter from the President

Our aim as a Board is to fulfill the PWI Brussels and PWN Global missions:

- To help the individual women who are our members to grow and succeed and
- To accelerate gender balanced leadership in our corporate members and beyond.

Helping members to grow and succeed

Highlights over the past year have included:

- Events, webinars, networking, special events: International Women's Day with Alexander De Croo in 2018 and our 3 speakers in 2019
- Volunteer opportunities for learning
- Meeting the individuals in the Mentoring and other Programmes
- New Programme on Women & Money

The International Womens' Day dinner is going from strength to strength, from the initial 65 people under the leadership of Marie Terese Letorney and Clare Mahon to 125 in 2019.

We have developed a new initiative on Women & Money, having worked in financial regulation over many years and seen the statistics on savings and the difficulties for ordinary people, but especially women, to understand what is being discussed and why it matters. The financial industry is difficult to understand from the outside and has traditionally not really tried to be user friendly to consumers. With the advent of tech companies into the payments space, this is changing with some real competition. Let's hope that this leads to better outcomes.

Highlights in gender balanced leadership

I led a workshop in Lyon with the PWN Global city presidents, which led to various working groups: on changing the business culture, gender pay gap, promoting positive role models / avoiding negative stereotypes. These should report later in 2019 but the outcomes will enable us to work better across the Global network and avoid reinventing the wheel. We also developed a Code of Conduct for behaviour at our events.

Operational Excellence

We have looked at what we offer and how to improve how we are run as an association, how we measure member engagement and satisfaction, and where we can improve. Especially:

- Change in focus from events to membership value.
- Pricing for programmes and events to pay for themselves not be cross-subsidised
- Survey & interviews by MBA student to give us additional content and data
- Strategy Day with membership expert Sue Froggatt on association best practices
- Engagement with PWN Global to share best practices and improve processes.

Thank you to all our members and volunteers. It has been a privilege to work with you all.

With best wishes
Susannah Haan,

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President 2017-2019



Organisational structure

PWI Brussels is a Belgian non-profit membership association (association sans but lucratif). The association contains 2 categories of membership: *membres effectifs* (premium members) and *membres adherents* (associate members). Members gather once a year at the Annual General Meeting to:

- Nominate and dismiss Board members
- Approve the budget and the accounts
- Discharge members of the Board
- Deliberate any other points of the association on the agenda.

The bylaws are available on [our website](#).

Board of Directors

The association is governed by its Board of Directors. Board members are appointed for two years. In 2017, members elected a new Board into office. The Board of Directors sets the association strategy, maintains annual accounts and the budget, develops the membership strategy, maintains the relationship with partner networks such as PWN Global and drives the association strategy such as establishing new programmes that foster the overall association vision and mission. The Board of Directors meets monthly.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is made up of all PWI Brussels volunteers. It brings together the association's programme directors, events and communications teams and more.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board support the Board of Directors in their work through their experience, contacts and provide the institutional memory of the association. The members of the Advisory Board also form the Nomination Committee to screen potential candidates for the Board of Directors.

Membership

Our association exists thanks to our members. Our local focus and also the understanding of the global changing environment through our strong collaboration with PWN Global, positions us to not only serve our members with excellence today, but also to anticipate future opportunities and needs to grow together and succeed.

We align our activities, such as networking, programs and events to what members value and help to succeed.

2018 membership figures were:

- 56 new individual members
- 72 renewals by individual members
- 19 individuals from corporate members in total
- 4 individuals from PWN Global corporate members in total
- 17 lapsed members.

2017 membership figures were:

- 61 new individual members
- 39 renewals by individual members
- 19 individuals from corporate members in total
- 4 individuals from PWN Global corporate members in total
- 22 lapsed members.

So far in 2019, we have 22 new members.

Membership Strategy

The Board and the Executive team continuous to focus on membership and has undertaken different actions, like improving communication, increase relevance of required questions to become a member, improve the look and feel of our website, membership page, create an on-boarding video for our new members in order to get to know our association. All these efforts are made with the aim to improve the membership experience.

We invited the Membership guru, Sue Froggatt, for a workshop to PWI volunteers in order to learn about how we best can create value for our members. Creating a sense of belonging across our members is an imperative and we as PWI volunteers are committed to continue doing that and keep asking key questions: Why do members join, what do they expect, and how well do we deliver against those

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expectations?

Member

expectations

Last year, an MBA student from University of Durham with the support of a professor in employment relations, human resource management and corporate social responsibility made a case study and interviewed PWI members to find out where we stand and what we can improve: see https://www.pwi.be/resources/Documents/PWI_DUBS_MBA_Final_Report.pdf

Continued

Professional

Support

During 2018, we engaged Karolina as paid administrator to deal with the membership administration, dealing with payment problems and invoices.

Meeting member needs

We are always happy to receive suggestions from members for what you need, or for inspiring speakers, so we welcome your ideas!

Anaida Dibra,
VP Membership

Corporate Membership

Working with our **corporate members** to advance gender balanced leadership

Together with our corporate members, we aim to accelerate gender balanced leadership by helping individual employees grow and succeed. In 2018, two corporate members supported us as members: Stanley, Black & Decker and MasterCard.

PWI Brussels was happy to organise a group of over 50 people for the Think Pink run in September 2018, in collaboration with both of our corporate members.



MASTERCARD

Several PWI Brussels members attended an event organised by MasterCard on the topic of gender balance, with Rhonda Ocha, Valérie Nowak, Eimear Craven, Sylvie van den Eynde, Danielle Moens, and Katrien Goossens.

Key takeaways from the event were:

- Remind people WHY we need a balanced pipeline – diversity of thought, innovation, customer experience, etc
- We need to build more positive workplaces, with a better work/life balance. Gender balance is an enabler to a healthier workplace.
- Align resources and budgets with the culture you want to build. If you try to build culture on the cheap and continue to put the major resources into areas which do not support the new culture, don't be surprised if you fail.
- Start with data: measure what you do, measure actual progress against targets and also perceptions of progress. Then communicate, communicate, communicate.
- Executive search firms are too inclined to seek people like themselves and to focus on narrow criteria.
- Role models are important - we need to see visibility of senior women.
- Learn from men as the majority but don't lose yourself. We need supportive men in companies but also in our own networks.

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- Be soul sisters to each other; support other women.

In June 2018, Rhonda Ocha of Mastercard was appointed to PWI's Advisory Board, strengthening the relationship.



Rhonda has lived in Belgium for over 25 years, speaks French fluently and has over three decades of business experience with leading global companies, including 20 years with [Mastercard](#) Europe. She has extensive experience in leading cross-functional global and virtual teams to deliver innovative, complex, multi-market products, services and digital programs in the Benelux, Nordics and Baltics. Her career includes management roles in business development and key account sales in the US and Europe within the courier, internet, airline and technology industries.

She is a member of the Mastercard Women's Leadership Network steering committee since 2008, a corporate member of PWI Brussels and an active contributor to their STEAM Program.

Speaker, mentor and organizer, she is a passionate change agent to promote gender balance, diversity and inclusion.

STANLEY, BLACK & DECKER

Our collaboration with Stanley, Black & Decker in 2018 focused on the same objective as our cooperation with MasterCard: we want to help professional women in Stanley, Black & Decker grow and succeed and work with senior leadership to advance gender balanced leadership in the company. Maria Perdomo spoke at the PWI Brussels International Women's Day dinner in March 2018. The company is looking more for online membership rather than events for 2019.

PWN GLOBAL CORPORATE MEMBERS IN BRUSSELS

Additional corporate members of PWI Brussels via the PWN Global are: Europcar, Mercer and the international business school INSEAD.

We spoke with Mercer about creating greater connections in Brussels and the possibility that they could provide us with some salary data for Belgium. Europcar offers a discount to PWN Global members. INSEAD offers scholarships to professional women who are members of PWN Global (including members of PWI Brussels).

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TARGET

We have been working to revise our offer to Corporates, and have developed a new Corporate Deck to present our offer to companies, with the assistance of Rhonda Ocha and Marie Terese Letorney from the Advisory Board.

COMPANIES

Part of this involves making the benefits of membership more visible, as it became obvious to the Board that these are not always clear to corporate or individual members.

We have also been revising our fees to update them in line with changes to PWI's own costs, and also to allow companies to pick and mix more easily what they want rather than use fixed options.

Board Members, Susannah Haan, Anna Koj, Anaida Dibra

Advisory Board members, Marie Terese Letorney and Rhonda Ocha

Partnerships

PWI Brussels aims at amplifying its impact and value both to individual members, as well as broader society by high-level, meaningful partnerships with a variety of stakeholders from across a wide range of industries and sectors.

We have developed six new long-standing partnerships, offering our organisation and our members unique benefits, namely with EY, The Economist, Clarins, Centre for Balanced Leadership, The Fry Group, Association World, which has allowed us to more than double the number of our local partners.

The aim of PWI Brussels' partnerships is always to elevate our mission and share the work done by PWI Brussels with broader audience, bring additional added value to our Members through special offerings, unique access to events, initiatives, as well as to bring on board new organisations willing to step up their efforts, with support and/or collaboration with PWI Brussels, in striving for a more gender-balanced world.

Additionally, PWI Brussels has developed ad-hoc sponsorship/partnership relationships with a number of reputable international and local organisations on the occasion of our 2019 International Women's Day Gala. Some of the new long-standing partners have also supported our 2019 IWD Gala, while relationship with other partners started around the celebratory 8 March Gala event with the hope of developing a long-term partnership, as well.

New partners acquired on the occasion of the IWD Gala organised on 8 March 2019 are the following: Mattel, World Solidarity Forum, Maasmechelen Village, HQ - The Association Magazine, ASNDA.

Ad-hoc IWD Gala partners that supported the organisation of this special celebration last year, as well as this year: Desiree's Hairdressing Project, Aspria Arts-Loi.

Anna

Koj,

VP Partnerships

Marketing and communications activities

The PWI Brussels marketing and communications team has been busy over the year building solid foundations to ensure that our many great activities and programmes are communicated widely and that we have the right data to help the organisation thrive.

Marketing

Our volunteers have worked on materials for the International Women's Day dinner, a video and a volunteer brochure. We have also tried to ensure that the costs of the marketing materials are covered in the event budgets. Thanks to Valentina, Alix and Aisha for their support.

Communications

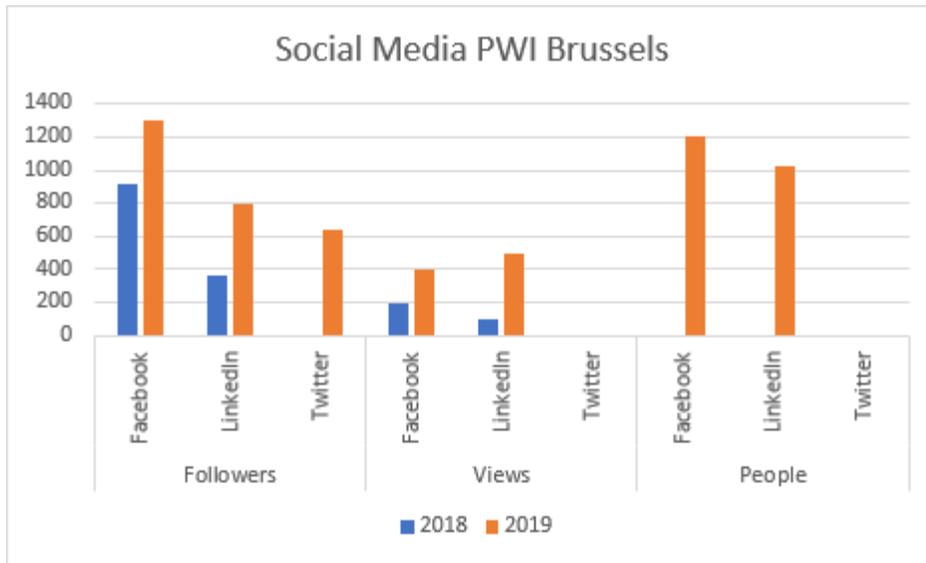
Our social media team has been busy posting details of our many events and other interesting developments. Thanks to Bev, Sabine and Anna for all their continued hard work. Thanks also to Valentina Ferrara for her work in 2018.

Our PWI LinkedIn Group now has 800 Members (up from 681 last May) and we encourage all our Members and friends to join <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/2434042/>

Our Facebook Group has 1.337 subscribers to date vs 919 in March 2018. Event posts reached 1.300 - 2.011 people through link clicks, likes or shares. Likes increased from 898 in March 2018 up to 1.249 in April 2019. Of the followers, 36% are between age 25-34, 29% between age 35-44, 14% between age 45-54.

Our Twitter account has 637 followers.

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We have produced a monthly newsletter, together with regular blogs on Medium at <https://medium.com/pwi-brussels>

We plan to publish a “New look and feel” to the website in 2019, thanks to work by Dorina Dibra.

Financial Summary

1. ACCOUNTS 2018

The result for 2018 is +4.657,02 EUR. See separate document (2018 Accounts & 2019 Budget) for breakdown.

NOTES ON THE 2018 ACCOUNTS:

Since PWI Brussels is operating under a cash-based accounting system:

a) Volunteer credits should not be taken into revenue as there is no underlying cash movement for PWI. Costs associated to these credits are already represented through their respective cash movement (cost for an event) and revenue is already part of each members' fee. (We offer volunteers 100 EUR credits each; in 2018 the total amount of credits spent was EUR 1485.) The same is true for corporate credits as these are included in the corporate member fees and in the event costs.

b) Partner network (PWN Global Corporate Members) should not be taken into revenue as there is no underlying cash movement. Instead, the income from Global (520 EUR for 2018) is netted off against expenses.

c) Paypal commission is not taken into account because it is already included in the event fees. However, we did actually pay 364 EUR fees in 2018.

d) Event breakdown: the accounts show only cashflow for the year whereas income and expenditure may fall into different years. For example, Mentoring income falls into 2018, so it appears in the accounts as a large profit for this year. However, most of this money will be needed to pay the costs of venues etc in 2019, so in reality the programme is nearer break even.

2. BUDGET 2019

The projected result for 2019 is 1651 EUR: see separate document (2018 Accounts & 2019 Budget) for breakdown.

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NOTES ON THE BUDGET:

We need to make provision to pay for legal advice in 2019-2020. Belgium passed a new companies and associations code in Q1 2019, which came into effect as of 1 May 2019 for new associations, and for existing associations from 1 January 2020 to 2024. However, any changes made as of 1 January mean that you need to change all of the articles of association at the same time. You cannot just change a few minor provisions next year and then the others in 2024. And you must comply from 2020 with any provisions in the new law, which may override your articles of association. For example, if the articles say that the agenda must be sent out 8 days before the AGM, but the law says that it must be sent 15 days before, then you have to comply with the new law and not what your current articles of association say. So it would make sense to prepare for the changes for the 2020 AGM, as there is not enough time to analyse the law, consult lawyers and redraft this year. Experts suggest to allow at least 6 months in order to prepare in an orderly fashion.

We would like to increase our marketing budget. In 2018-2019, we created a new brochure for the IWD Dinner and ordered a new roll-up banner with the PWN global logo to stand alongside the PWI Brussels one. We have prepared a Volunteer brochure in 2019 and would like to do more.

Membership of external associations: We have joined FAIB the Federation for EU & International Associations in Belgium, in order to benefit from their seminars and professional expertise on running an association under Belgian law. We have applied to join the European Women's Lobby also, in order to keep up to date with EU and national developments in gender equality policy.

Event costs: we hope to find more venues that will host us for free in 2019, but we are not yet far enough advanced to include this in the budget. However, if we can find companies or associations willing to host us for meetings or events, we could save the costs of meeting room hire and perhaps offer more free events to members (but still charge non-members).

3. AUDIT

The figures have been audited by L&S Auditors. The report will be made available to members.

4. OTHER

We have suffered this year from an absent Treasurer, but fortunately we have had support from our paid administrator, Karolina Vainilkaite, and from our auditors.

Susannah Haan

PWI Activities

In PWI Brussels we engage ourselves in three main activities: themed networking, core programmes and events. Here below you will find a description of the objective of each programme, feedback from our members and much more.

1. NETWORKING

PWI Brussels members have clearly shared that Networking is one of the main reasons they joined us. We organize themed networking evening with the aim to connect our members and non-members from public, private and corporate organizations among each other.

Networks have been seen to have several benefits.

Firstly, by providing networking opportunities (Donnellon & Langowitz, 2009), secondly, to provide mentorship, sponsorship and role models (O'Neil et al., 2011), thirdly, to allow for opportunities to gain skills and experience through connections (Donnellon & Langowitz, 2009), as for example our November 2018 networking event where we invited our guest Geert Maesmans, Technology Lead in Cargill to share with us insights on polarity management(see networking page under www.pwi.be, fourthly, to cultivate business opportunities (read Donnellon and Langowitz, 2009) and finally, to be able to collectively influence policies, procedures and legislation (Hersby et al., 2009).

We continue with our themed networking events for 2019.

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2. PROGRAMMES

PWI Brussels has established 4 core programmes in the last years i.e. Mentoring, STEAM, YourPath, Entrepreneurship.

MENTORING PROGRAMME

The mentoring programmes in PWI and other PWN chapters are cited in surveys as one of the top elements of satisfaction for members of the network. In Brussels, we organise one of the longest-running mentoring programmes, having launched our programme already back in 2011.

Mentors and mentees of the PWI Brussels Mentoring Programme have access to and connect with not just their concurrent mentoring wave, but also with like-minded individuals across the 28 PWN Global city networks worldwide. Our community is an experience and ready-built support network that helps professional women achieve their professional aspirations and helps them to adapt to a new cultural environment through a wealth of practical advice. Our established and effective mentoring structure ensures that mentees get the most out of their mentoring experience. We are able to call upon a wide range of mentors, both men and women, across borders and industries to ensure the best match.

PWI Brussels Mentoring Programme – not just for mentees!

Mentoring provides a huge benefit to mentees. They get a fresh perspective on their career status, and aspirations and goals from their mentor. But mentoring also provides a significant benefit to mentors! Many mentors have commented that their contribution and engagement in our programme also provided themselves with a positive new way of looking at their own career path and an incentive to reflect on where they themselves were going and how it aligns with their own aspirations and goals.

Benefits for mentees

- Improve professional skills and knowledge
- Increase their self-esteem and lead from their inner core
- Receive guidance on making career choices and on strategizing how best to achieve objectives
- Enjoy advice on unwritten rules and insights into the informal politics of organisations
- Enjoy a role model, inspiration
- Grow in self-confidence
- Boldness to build networks and embracing feminine leadership strengths in a minority work environment.

Benefits for mentors

- Leadership role in women's advancement
- Facilitating personal growth & development
- Self-reflection & acknowledgement of experience

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Mentoring truly is a win-win exchange for mentee and mentor.

What did we do in 2018

After closing the Mentoring wave of 2017-2018 with an overwhelmingly positive feedback from mentors and mentees achieving their key objectives through the mentoring journey. We started the Mentoring Wave of 2018 – 2019 with a kick-off session in November 2018. The mentoring leadership team went through a change, after Arsenia Corcoba Santamaria announced her resignation as Mentoring Programme Director in the beginning of 2019.

A new team composed of Mihaela Uricaru, Sabine Henning and Noelle Knox took over and are ensuring a smooth transition and successful delivery of the agreed objectives. During our 2018-2019 mentoring wave we had 16 mentors and 18 mentees from very diverse professional backgrounds.

Mentoring Program Strategy for 2019

The strategy for 2019 was twofold. First, we were focused in ensuring a smooth execution of the current mentoring wave. On top, we needed to prepare ourselves for the 2019-2020 Mentoring Wave. The new Wave is based on feedback received from the current wave. Two new initiatives were launched as of January 2019, namely the Mentoring Monthly Newsletter and the Leadership workshop.

The intention of the monthly Newsletter is to share interviews of our mentors and mentees, update on the next steps, and share inspiring readings about mentoring journey.

During the Leadership workshop, the focus was on the Values Based Leadership. During this inspiring workshop Emmanuelle Verhagen guided us to think about what is important to us as a leader, what motivates the leader in us, and identify areas where we may want to develop further.

We are slowly preparing ourselves for the new Wave of the Mentoring program, 2019-2020 and looking forward to the continuous support from our members.

Mihaela Uricaru, Mentoring Coordinator with the support from the members of the mentoring team, **Noelle Knox** and **Sabine Hennig**.

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STEAM PROGRAMME

STEAM is a program created in order to support professional women's career in Science, Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts (including Design), or Mathematics and with the mission to inform on the latest STEAM trends.

More specifically, the program assists STEAM women in their career choices (incl. managerial versus technical track) to strengthen soft and hard skills as enablers of their professional advancement.

In the STEAM field, creativity is essential. The program therefore focuses on enhancing women's creativity and circle of influence beyond their own functional area, enabling them to raise their visibility and value perception in our society.

STEAM relates the local events such as symposiums, STEAM related trainings and activities at EU policy level as well as connecting STEAM groups and platforms. The program meets the mission of PWI because it offers opportunities to contribute and create and strongly supports female empowerment.

What did we do in 2018

In 2018, we initiated a survey within PWI in order to understand the needs of our STEAM PWI members. It was further decided to organize one STEAM event in November 2018. In this respect, we connected with the Women in Tech Platform Brussels.

Women in Tech is a Brussels city initiative and the first platform to empower Women in Tech and Innovation. The objective of the venue was to give to our international membership a view on the current Women in STEAM status for Brussels. It was also an opportunity for our membership to network and to get to know Belgian STEAM women. This event took place in March 2019 due to PWI agenda venue conflicts.

PWI STEAM Strategy for 2019

The STEAM core team focused on the 2019 STEAM roadmap. This roadmap includes 3 pillars and their dedicated set of ad-hoc events.

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Pilar 1 Hard Enablers

- As per the STEAM mission, we aim at informing on the latest STEAM trends. Therefore, the program will invite experts and strategists to discuss about STEAM megatrends centered on the role of women in this field (e.g., autonomous driving, artificial intelligence...). It is as well an opportunity for professionals to network during this type of event.

Pilar 2 Soft Enablers

- Support STEAM women in their skills development (self-awareness, creativity, empathy) with a specific focus on the key soft skills of the future as laid down by the 2020 World Economic Forum vision.

Pilar 3 Transversal

- Create a pool of PWI STEAM role models in order to support the next generation of STEAM women leaders. In this respect connect with different organisations such as Women in Tech, International Schools and evaluate the synergy possibilities.

Planning for STEAM Program Roll-out in 2019

First STEAM event for 2019 - Time's up: STEM Women Wanted!

We organized our first event on March 21: Time's up: STEM Women Wanted! This event was part of Pillar 1. The objectives of the event:

- To inform our members about the current situation for women in STEM careers in Brussels and what the city is doing to support women in this field
- To give the opportunity to our members to meet two Brussels feminine role models (entrepreneurs in the STEM field), therefore connecting our international members with the Belgian community
- To open the floor for a live reflection on personal / company experiences and to share these thoughts with a government representative.

PWI invited three excellent guest speakers (Loubna Azghoud, Valérie Zapico and Amélie Alleman) to speak about the situation of professional women in STEM in Belgium. They placed a specific emphasis on the lack of women in coding. Valérie and Amélie gave a thrilling speech about their experience as entrepreneurs in the STEM field (i.e., business intelligence and recruitment sectors).

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In Belgium, only 25% of the STEM graduates are women and this number falls to 7% for ICT studies. This places our country at the very end of the tail in terms of STEM gender diversity in Europe. Loubna explained what Brussels city is doing to support Women in ICT in order to leverage this additional pool of resources to sustain the competitiveness of Brussels in ICT and to provide women with the digital tools to boost their career or their company success.

We captured some feedback from the participants who joined this event: a very inspiring event, great insights, learningful moments, loved the vision from the Women in Tech Platform to become the "Silicon Valley" of Brussels, we got to know other professional women who have their heart in a STEM career.. ect.

Other STEAM programme events planned for 2019:
**"Self-awareness improvement by realizing women and men biological brain differences
"How AI will resolve gender bias?"**. Please visit calendar at www.pwi.be

On top, our STEAM program director is in discussion with BEPS international secondary school to develop Transversal project working with BEPS – PWI STEAM role models.

The program could start for the academic year 2019/2020 and in order to support the 13-14 years old students.

Claire Mattelet
PWI Brussels STEAM Director

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YOUR PATH PROGRAMME

The PWI Your Path programme helps professional women grow, by supporting them in their career transition, helping them find inspiration for their next career move and providing a safe environment where experiences can be shared. As such, it particularly contributes to PWI mission to *provide a safe space to learn as well as perform and offer opportunities to contribute and create.*

YourPath Programme is made up of three interrelated elements.



Sharing Circles are a new initiative that we kicked off recently building on extensive planning in 2017. Circles are monthly, closed group sessions that focus on peer-to-peer coaching and the co-development approach. At each session, a personal case from one of the participants is discussed and participants help address this case through open questions and bringing different perspectives on how to approach it to circle. The Circle is a safe environment where participation is equal and all attendees benefit from the supportive and authentic nature of the Circle itself.

Sharing Bubbles are monthly, open discussion groups where participants help each other affect proactive change in their careers. A short exercise gets participants to think and discuss their next steps in a safe environment.

Your Path Programme organises individual events to help members navigate their career transitions and providing them with the tools to do so.

"I felt not only that I could be given advice but also that I could help too, just because I was there to listen. That must have been the meaning of Sharing Bubble, and I totally felt like I belong there."

PWI Brussels member and volunteer Valentina Ferrara experiences a Sharing Bubble meeting

"I started attending the Sharing Bubble meetings in autumn 2016 while I was in career transition and looking for new opportunities. I found the support provided by PWI and the Your Path programme extremely valuable in terms of networking, sharing and comparing experiences, and helping me realise that I was not alone in dealing with a transition phase. I subsequently enrolled in the Mentoring programme, which greatly helped me address the job interviews process and eventually get started successfully in a new job. I then decided to volunteer with the Your Path and Events teams in order to give back and offer my support to the organisation."

Annalisa Monaco, PWI Member and volunteer

What did we do in 2018

In 2018 YourPath programme carried out few activities.

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In January 2018, we started with the **Sharing Bubble** gatherings on “How has PWI helped you?” session. Furthermore, eleven “Sharing Bubble” sessions took place (**Regular activity**) - Monthly, open discussion group where participants help each other affect pro-active change in their careers. A short exercise gets participants to think and discuss their next steps in a safe environment. In average, 13-15 participants attend these sessions.

“The Sharing Circle” (**Regular activity**) – New initiative that kicked off in February 2018: monthly, closed group focused on “peer-to-peer” coaching and the “co-development” approach, where for each session a personal case from one of the participants is discussed and participants help getting into its depth by open questioning and bringing different perspective on how to approach it. The Circle is a safe environment where participation is equal and all attendees will benefit from the supportive and authentic nature of the Circle itself. Around 6 people in average participate to these closed sessions.

Feedback from participants of Sharing Bubble meeting on 10 January 2018 on “How has PWI helped you?”: to get advice; to network; to get inspiration and encouragement and to gain confidence.

Barbara Bernardi, PWI member and a regular participant to the Sharing Bubble, refers to herself as the “Sharing Bubble Ambassador”, a sign of how highly she regards this programme and of the trust she has in the safe environment it provides. Over time, Barbara invited four non-members to the meetings. One of them has since become a Member and then enrolled in the Mentoring Programme. Commenting on the Sharing Bubble, in which she has been participating since its launch, Barbara said: The meetings always provide me some positive energy to kick off what can be a busy working month. They are always very fruitful “happenings” where participants’ needs and concerns are shared, discussed and addressed. The Sharing Bubble is for me a fixed appointment which I miss only if I am away from Brussels for personal or professional reasons. Long term this has become my monthly appointment to check where I stand in my working life: am I still following the path that makes me happy? Are there any other options which I did not consider and which I should to attain my goals? Are my professional goals in line with my personal life? I would not say that The Sharing Bubble coincides with a point in time change but it has become the safe support I always look for in Brussels.

PWI Brussels YourPath Strategy for 2019

For 2019, given the overwhelming positive feedback that we received in 2018, we are focusing on continuing our key programs and events we set up in 2018 while preparing ourselves for potential additional programs/events for the coming years.

Feedback from the participant from YourPath event in February 2019: in the thank you very very much !! I have no words how amazing it was for me today... I loved it !!! It's really important for me having a place where I can share and learn so much... I already had a few insights about what I want in my life during the session ... and I also had the feeling that there are so many interesting women there that I wanna know their story... it fascinates me !!! Thank you a thousand times.

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It is a pleasure to organize YourPath events for PWIBrussels and its community of women, women with open will, heart, mind and spirit. In our last event, almost half of the participants mentioned they are in a career transition or considering one. Amazingly, the majority had done or are still actively involved in some kind of volunteering. This allowed for a very rich exchange of experiences and inspirational stories for those thinking about offering some of their time, knowledge, connections and/or skills to a cause. Together we uncovered the different criteria (link to doc) that characterize a #volunteering experience, the little requirements (link) and the many benefits (link) of such an experience. I certainly recommend it to everyone once in a life time (at least!). And remember: Volunteering is becoming a 'must' in a cv!

**Ana Escarpenter,
PWI Brussels Your Path Director**

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ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAMME

2017 has been a transition year for the team behind the Entrepreneurship Programme. The team developed a new strategy that it launched in early 2018 with the objective to empower entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs as well as to support and inspire starters by developing and nurturing a platform for exchange of experiences and offering new insights.

The programme takes the “PAX approach”:



The PWI Brussels Entrepreneurship Programme aims to specifically:

- Connects international entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs leveraging the presence of countless international institutions in Brussels
- Focuses on growth, and
- Focuses on diversity.

What did we do in 2018

In 2018, lunches were conducted on those dates and by those keynote speakers:

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- **23 February 2018** with Véronique Bockstal, Former CEO at Be Central. Véronique shared with us key elements to keep going as an Entrepreneur, to make sure we find the right partners and founders, as well as the internal force to thrive through difficulties.
- **30 March 2018** with Cheryl Miller Van Dyck. Cheryl shared with us her experience as an entrepreneur in the digital (mostly male) world and coached the lunch participants on how to take your business from the early stage of prototype or idea to thriving activity.
- **29 June 2018** with Victoria Hernandez. Victoria has worked for several funding organization and has developed a fund for initiatives by female entrepreneurs. She shared with us insights on how to apply for funding and avoid being rejected.

With this revamped Belgian Entrepreneurship Program, we experienced in 2018 a significant positive impact on PWI Members. We received positive feedback, and furthermore PWI Members expressed their eagerness on having follow-up sessions after the Growth Club Lunches to share progress, doubts or simply keep up with the positive and dynamic vibes that the lunches have instilled in them.

PWI Brussels Entrepreneurship Strategy for 2019

We are aiming to create opportunities for our Members who are entrepreneurs or aspiring to:

- Learn more about the challenges and pitfalls of the Entrepreneurial life,
- To exchange best practices, as well as to get a new motivation to launch their idea into a business or
- To scale up their existing business.

We started the Growth Club lunch on a bi-monthly basis with a lunch on 22 February 2019 conducted by Michel Peruch. Michel has an extended career as CEO and Entrepreneur and shared with the lunch participants key insights on pricing and positioning businesses in the market. The Growth club allows PWI Members and Non-Members to connect with peers and leaders, while at the same time learning something new. Each lunch features the presentation of a keynote speaker on one of the hot topics in Entrepreneurship. The Growth Club Lunch focuses on the essence of entrepreneurship: generating serendipity. Successful entrepreneurs

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intuitively understand that increasing the potential for unplanned fortunate coincidences is what sparks above average growth.

Christine
Director Entrepreneurship Program

Masure

3. EVENTS

Aside from programme-related events, over the past year we have continued providing to our members a wealth of diverse types of events and activities that help them to grow and be successful and that support them both by providing opportunities to meaningfully network with one another but also develop new skills, drive their potential further, as well as achieve and maintain a healthy balance between their professional and personal life.

These included targeted workshops (e.g. the Stress Prevention Workshop), webinars (e.g. the Happiness Webinar), well-being events (e.g. Yoga on the Rooftop session), and casual social gatherings (e.g. the Come and Get to Know Us Drink or the Summer PicNic), and much more. More cultural events are also planned for the coming months.

We have been in touch with our individual and corporate members in a personalised manner to understand better their needs and how PWI Brussels can provide an even greater value to them. We started exploring innovative and more engaging ways to collect feedback on our events. This resulted in a series of events that were addressing aspects raised by our members.

We, additionally, worked towards ensuring that PWI Brussels members get full visibility as to PWN Global run webinars by promoting these on our PWI Brussels website.

In the autumn of 2018, Marion Pantel has taken over as our new Events Team Director. She has led the Events Team since, supporting the smooth organisation of our PWI Brussels activities and ensuring that we provide varied events offering to our members.

Celebrations

On International Women's Day 2018, we organised our first Gala Dinner with Belgian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander de Croo leading the keynote. We welcomed over 80 attendees and celebrated women

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in a beautiful atmosphere of conviviality and glamour. In line with the global IWD theme, we pressed for progress on gender parity hearing from women talking about their experiences in a minority work environment, discussing the gender pay gap, and making connections. We brought well-known sponsors on board who supported the Gala by contributing to the goody bags and prizes for the raffle. They included Aspria Arts-Loi sports club; The Art of Cookies; L'Occitane; Waterstones bookstore in Brussels; Desiree Hairdressing Project, a boutique hair salon in Brussels; Anne-Sophie boutique; and Le Chatelain Boutique Hotel.

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BENEFIT for MEMBERS

In order to empower our members, we have also started providing them with an opportunity to share with us the skills and expertise they have during brief sessions at our PWI Brussels networking when they can facilitate a session or exercise or deliver a brief presentation to the attendees. Members can actively contribute to the success of a networking event, by providing benefits to other attendees while gaining exposure and possibly promoting their specific skills. The pin board of offers and needs or alternative versions of this exercise allows us to be more directly in touch with the members whose opinions and ideas, as well as skills are being taken into consideration in a proactive manner.

We have a stable and growing Events Team in place to ensure that our events are an even greater success in the years to come. In addition, we are putting processes in place that will allow appropriate advance planning and continuity.

Building on these successes, we are putting practices in place to further improve our event follow-up and visibility for members and non-members to share learnings and contacts.

Marion
Event Director

Pantel,

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PWI BRUSSELS – PART OF A GLOBAL NETWORK

In 2005, PWI Brussels was one of the founding members of what was then the European Professional Women's Network and later PWN Global. PWN Global's mission is to accelerate gender balanced leadership in business and society. Our PWI Brussels members are also automatically members of PWN Global benefitting from access to webinars and the opportunity to attend PWN events in other city networks on the same terms as local members.

In 2018, PWN Global ran a series of webinars on subjects such as emotional freedom techniques, building your network, resilience, values-based decision making, culture, wellness, holding difficult conversations, the gender pensions gap and more. These webinars are free for PWI Brussels members. Past webinars can be accessed via <https://pwnglobal.net/resources/pwn-publications/webinars.html>

PWN Global now has some **30 city networks** worldwide, and the number continues to increase! Keep an eye out for PWN events if you are visiting one of the following cities: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Bilbao, Bucharest, Copenhagen, Dublin, Frankfurt, Geneva-Lausanne, Istanbul, Lisbon, London, Lyon, Madrid, Marseille-Provence, Milan, Munich, Nice Cote d'Azur, Oslo, Paris, Rome, Sao Paolo, Stockholm, Vienna, Warsaw, Zagreb, Zug & Zurich.



PWI Brussels volunteers participated in various Programmes and Expert Group calls to stay updated with trends in association management and exchange best practices. Susannah participates in the Presidents' Council calls, while Anaida participates in the Membership calls and Anna in the Corporate Partner calls.

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NEXT STEPS – STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE

We plan to continue the work above and to build further to become more professional as an association and more responsive to member needs. Key upcoming factors will be:

NEW BOARD 2019-2021

We will elect a new board with new ideas in 2019. I hope that the new board will build on the work of the old; developing plans for becoming a better managed association, with written strategies and budgets for each area, working more closely with our international partners to learn from best practices elsewhere, and connecting the theory around the policies of gender equality more closely to the solutions needed in the real world by both individuals and companies, so that we can help our members to grow and succeed in a world with more gender balanced leadership.

LEGAL CHANGES

In 2017, the PWI Brussels Board decided to change the organisation's mission statement to include the goal of accelerating gender balanced leadership to align more closely with our sister networks across the globe. Last year, we discussed changing our name to PWN Brussels as part of the changes to come with the new city network contract and platform and decided to try to discuss and make all changes together. However, the latter are still undergoing work: the city network contract is still in near final draft as the Secretary General deals with final comments from 30 city networks, while there are plans for new development of the platform which are not yet clear. So we still do not have the final proposals to share with the members (although there is a draft that we can share with those interested).

In addition, there is a new Associations and Companies Code in Belgium which will mean changes to our bylaws, so we plan a major review for the 2020 AGM.

ACCELERATING GENDER BALANCED LEADERSHIP

PWN Global has been looking at the top 3 United Nation's 7 Drivers of Women's Economic Empowerment: what are the issues and what can we as a membership association do about them: what are the practical tools and solutions out there for both individual and corporate members. We plan to continue our engagement with our sister city networks. If anyone has the relevant expertise and would like to be more involved, please let us know.

Driver 1: Tackling adverse norms (stereotypes) and promoting positive role models

Driver 4: Build Assets, including Financial – reduce the Gender Pay Gap

Driver 5: Changing business culture and practice

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30TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2021

And finally, 2021 will be the 30th anniversary of PWI Brussels so we will need to start planning soon! If you have ideas or would like to be involved, please get in touch!

Thank you to everyone for your support and encouragement over the last year.

PWI Brussels Board

2017-2019