

Workshop Summary

Optimising Women's Networks and Mentoring

International Women's Day Corporate Partnership
Board Event

8th March, 2021



March on Gender
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AT
THE HEART OF THE **RECOVERY**

Background – Corporate Partnership Board Workstream on Gender

The ITF Corporate Partnership Board (CPB) is the International Transport Forum's platform for engaging with the private sector and enriching global transport policy discussion with a business perspective. Corporate Partners provide input to policy discussions by suggesting topics for different workstreams and participating in concrete projects.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are integral to achieving the United Nations SDGs.

With nearly 3 million employees worldwide, the approximately 30 companies belonging to the ITF's Corporate Partnership Board play an important role in helping achieve these objectives.



As part of its commitment to diversity and inclusion, the Corporate Partnership Board launched its Workstream on Gender on International Women's Day, 8 March, 2019. The aims of the gender workstream are to create a platform to discuss and share best practice on different aspects of women in transport, to build a network of companies in the transport and related sectors committed to contributing to gender policy discussions and to seek to make the transport sector more attractive to women.

Work so far in the CPB's Gender Workstream:

- Workshop on '[Hiring and retaining a diverse workforce](#)' (2019) held as part of a series of OECD 'March on Gender' events.
- [Video](#) attracting women to the transport workforce
- [Compilation of Company Initiatives](#) (2nd edition)

Workshop on Optimising Women's Networks and Mentoring

Objectives and Main Points of Discussion

The aims of the workshop were twofold: (1) hearing from Corporate Partnership Board members and guest speakers about their experiences building or being part of women's networks; (2) setting the floor for an open discussion on ways to move forward regarding challenges that are currently being faced in the private sector.

The workshop was divided into three different sessions. A first 30-minute session was devoted to hearing from an academic guest speaker, who shared her research and experience in working with companies to build women's networks. A second 60-minute session provided testimonials from four members of the Corporate Partnership Board and a guest speaker. A third and final 25-minute session divided participants into breakout groups, to engage in more focused conversations.

Key Findings

- ***If designed properly, women's networks can contribute to company's overall performance and support company strategies;***
- ***Employees and management should be made aware of the benefits of women's networks as platforms for achieving their goals;***
- ***With women as half of the population, and as key users of transport systems, women's networks can be used to gain insights into future product and services aimed at this market segment;***
- ***Companies must create the conditions in which their male workers understand that without their engagement in women's networks, gender equality will not happen.***

Workshop Summary

Introductory Remarks

ITF Secretary-General, Young Tae Kim, welcomed all participants at the beginning of the event. Sharon Masterson, Manager of the Corporate Partnership Board, introduced the International Transport Forum and the Corporate Partnership Board, outlined the plan for the event, and opened the floor to hear from speakers.

Presentation from Guest Speaker Maria Giuseppina Bruna, Full Professor in Management at IPAG Business School, Paris.

Maria Giuseppina shared several results from the international, multi-level action-research programme that she directs, titled **Women and Networks**. It analyses the impact of women's and gender equality networks in the workplace as catalysers of agility, inclusiveness and innovation. (Links to this work can be found in the annex of this document).

This research has shown that companies can use women's networks to:

- contribute to the company's efficiency if aligned with corporate strategies;
- contribute and support inclusion and social cohesion at work;
- enable talent detection and talent development and empowerment, and heighten their visibility;
- benefit the promotion of and spread of company agility.

In order to ensure that women's networks are drivers of change in a company, two things are necessary. Firstly, it is important to assess that the network's values and mission are coherent with the company's initiatives and practices. Secondly, it would be important to identify what drives members' engagement and disengagement motivations.

"Employees see women's networks as innovative platforms to practice reflexivity, resilience and flexibility, where there is room for trying a more democratic way to lead a company. They have also proved to reduce information asymmetry".



Maria Giuseppina Bruna, Full Professor in Management at IPAG Business School, Paris

Companies use women's networks to help achieve other company goals, such as to:

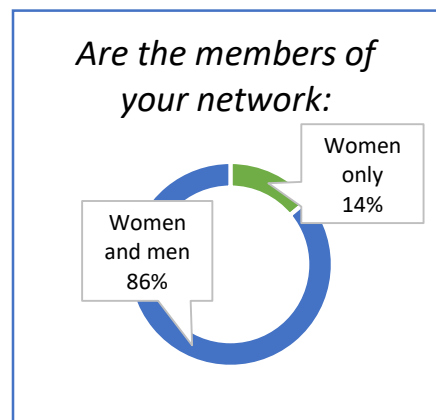
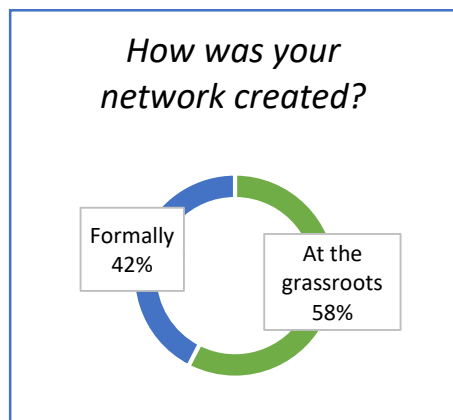
- 1) Help prevent sexism, sexual harassment and discrimination
- 2) Promote gender equality
- 3) Improve the quality of work life
- 4) Seek to have a positive social impact
- 5) And improve the global functioning of the company, given that they (a) enrich the company's CSR Policy; (b) support the optimisation of HRM and Team Management; (c) and enhance the firm reputation

Women's networks can be considered 'labs for inclusion', because they endorse an advocacy mission that is larger than the affinity criteria of its membership, and they support non-traditional role models (i.e. campaigning for a more horizontal and cooperative leadership than traditional role models). Moreover, women's networks foster increased social dialogue between employers and employees, and cooperation across different departments or geographical zones within the company.

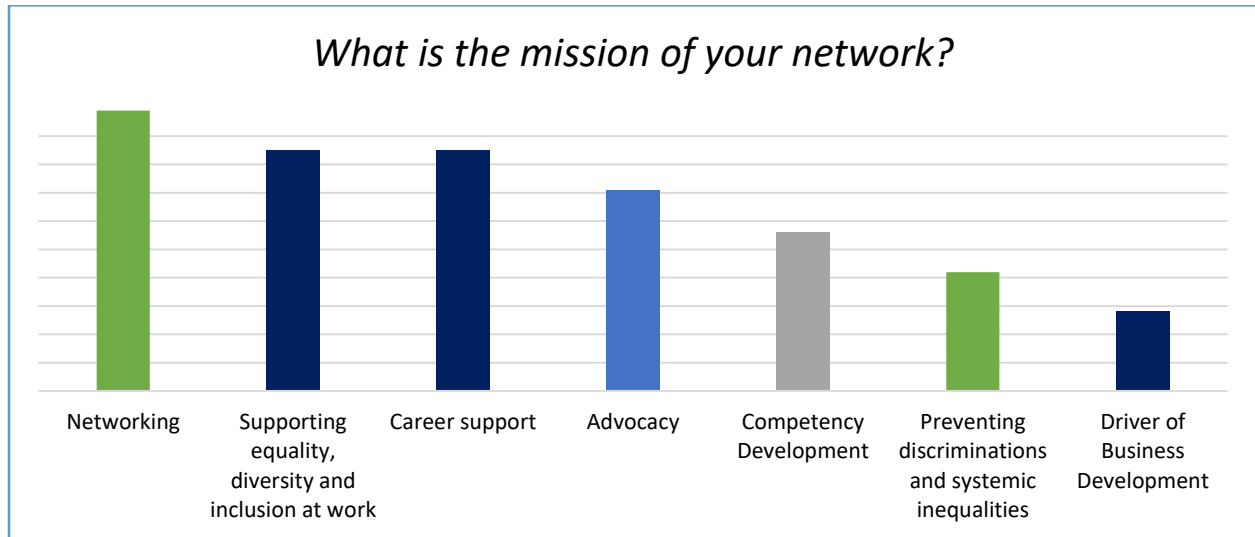
Results of the Survey

In order to prepare for this event, Corporate Partnership Board members completed a survey about their women's networks and mentoring programmes. María Santos Alfageme, of the International Transport Forum, gave a brief summary of the results of the survey.

- With regard to how these networks were created, it was found that just over half (58%) of the respondents worked at companies where women's networks had been created at the grassroots, rather than formally at management level (42%).
- The vast majority of respondents (86%) said that their networks are open to both men and women, with members coming from all levels (managers and employees).



- Other than networking, respondents noted supporting equality, diversity and inclusion at work; and a tool for career support and for advocacy as key functions of the women's networks.
- Respondents felt that the potential of women's networks as a driver of business development, had not been fully explored.



- All respondents agreed that the aims of the company's networks aligned with the company's strategy. Most respondents said that there had been several changes since the creation of the women's network in their companies, with increased management support, involvement of male co-workers, etc.
- Most respondents were aware of external cooperation from their companies' networks with other women's groups. Examples of this cooperation were organisation of joint events or training sessions.

Sharing Best Practices: Corporate Insights

Four Corporate Partnership Board members and one guest speaker gave a presentation on their experiences, achievements, and challenges with regard to Women's Networks and Mentoring on the path towards achieving increased diversity and inclusion in their companies.

Anna Mascolo, President of Global Aviation, Shell

Anna Mascolo showed some of Shell's facts and figures, highlighting the evolution of women's employment integration in the company over the last century. She stated that Shell strives to be one of the most diverse places to work at.

She also explained how women's networks and mentoring programmes at Shell fit into the broader company's gender initiatives. There are currently 96 Diversity and Inclusion networks operating in 31 countries. Out of these, 30 are active networks focusing on gender balance. Other than mentoring programmes, there are also leadership programmes for women at Shell, such as the Women's Career Development Programme (WCDP) or Senior Women Connect (SWC).



"One of the main barriers of networks and mentoring groups is that people think they are time-consuming, whereas in reality they have proved to be a great help in solving internal problems."

Anna Mascolo, President of Global Aviation, Shell

Siham Revel, Co-President – WoMen Forward, Michelin

"We have been talking about gender equality for some time. I think it is time we move forward. We cannot wait to see gender equality as a sustainable reality in our company."



**Siham Revel, Co-President –
WoMen Forward, Michelin**

Siham Revel shared the story and mission of WoMen Forward, the independent¹ women's network at Michelin. Continuously growing since its creation in 2014, WoMen Forward has always been aligned with Michelin's corporate strategy on diversity. The network is a driver to accelerate systemic change in the company.

As of 2021, the network has over 650 members. It has just launched a study on network value creation and life cycles

to see how it can best continue to grow and have a greater impact. Among other ambitions, it is currently encouraging the creation of network branches in Europe, promoting talents and developing leadership, and working to boost male participation in the network.

¹ The WoMen Forward network at Michelin is not a corporate network.

Diego Diaz, President of SNCF International, SNCF

After showing figures regarding gender inequality in the transport sector, Diego Diaz highlighted some of the work that SNCF is doing to bridge inequality gaps.

SNCF au Féminin is the in-house network to help overcome these challenges in the company. Founded in 2012, it has over 9,300 members, out of which 18% are men.

"It is very important that women are represented in all areas of the company, so that other women can have role models when thinking of their future career."



Diego Diaz, President of SNCF International, SNCF

The network seeks to change the management culture into a more inclusive, personal and considerate one. In order to do that, a series of measures are being taken, such as nominations of ambassadors to organise events and workshops, set up of mentorships to train both men and women, etc. Moreover, apart from trying to bring change into the company, SNCF au Féminin is also looking at women as transport users.

Cécile Texier, VP Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility, Alstom

Gender balance has become a very strategic challenge of Alstom and women's networks are part of a list of employee resource groups that are being created to work on this internally. Alstom's women's network is called Alstom Women of Excellence, with branches in several countries. The network in the Saint-Ouen headquarters is called Together in Motion, and it was created in 2020.

"If representation of women is low in the transport sector, it is even lower in our industry. We have long realised that we need to do something about it. We want to give visibility to the challenges that we are facing to attract more women to work at Alstom, both internally and externally."

Cécile Texier, Vice-President Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility, Alstom



As well as increasing the overall female representation in the company, there is a great focus on bringing women into the designing teams and leadership roles in the belief that this will make the final products manufactured by Alstom more inclusive and mindful of the needs of women as transport users. Women's networks at Alstom support Alstom's Diversity and Inclusion ambitions by being a sparring partner on a number of important company focus areas such as cultural change within the company, HR processes, etc.

Marita Lintener, Skyguide Head of International Affairs, Member of IAWA Board – VP Europe and Africa

Marita Lintener gave an overview of three cross-company networks: the International Aviation Women's Association (henceforth IAWA), the EU Platform for Change, and the Women in Aviation and Aerospace Charter.

IAWA was created 30 years ago by a group of women working as lawyers in the aviation and aerospace industries. Initially, the network was for senior women in aviation but has recently opened up for all women and men. Apart from an association serving as a network, IAWA also gives scholarships for girls undertaking studies in the aviation sector.

The European Commission's 'Platform for Change' is a multimodal network launched in 2017 by the European Commission Directorate on Mobility and Transport. Its main goal is to strengthen women's employment in the transport sector in order to provide equal opportunities for both women and men. It has an online, open-source platform, to which anyone can contribute.

Finally, the Women in Aviation and Aerospace Charter is a UK-based network reflecting on the aspiration of the industry to see gender balance across all levels. Members of the Charter include aerospace manufacturers, airlines, airports, trade bodies and others.

"I am convinced we need role models. We need successful women to lead by example and to show the next generation the significant impact they are making and have made, in the aviation industry and beyond."



**Marita Lintener,
Skyguide Head of
International
Affairs, Member of
IAWA Board – VP
Europe and Africa**

Preview of the CPB ONE Communities Portal

Dominique Bouquet, Project Assistant at the CPB, briefly showed the new CPB ONE Communities Portal, which will host interesting publications, past and on-going discussions and projects, and will keep Corporate Partners updated with upcoming events.

In case of not having followed a project entirely or of having just joined the CPB, this portal will also be an opportunity for CPB members to quickly access to understand at what stage the yearly projects are at, have access to documents such as agendas or summaries of past events within the two workstreams, etc. This portal will be launched before this year's ITF Summit, in May.

Breakout Group Discussions

After the presentations, participants were divided into two groups to discuss specific ways in which (1) women's networks and mentoring programmes can enhance the participation of women at all levels of the organisation, and (2) men can campaign for gender equality. Both groups reported back in plenary after the discussions.

Group 1. Digital & Technology

Women are underrepresented in the STEM sector since university, and a relevant number of women with a STEM academic background opt for a career in a different sector. This makes the STEM workplace heavily male-dominated. Moreover, retaining women in STEM for a life career is still very challenging.

Participants discussed ways to increase the representation of women in both STEM education and professions, and actions that women's networks at a company could take to ensure a pipeline of women at all levels of the organisation, in particular in STEM positions. With regards to this, participants shared challenges that their companies are currently facing linked to underrepresentation of women in technical and leadership roles, such as changing people's mindsets and defying unconscious biases. Participants also shared some of the aspects that have worked for them (i.e. having role models at all levels within the firm or counting on key leaders in the company pushing their peers to understand the benefits of diversity). Some participants mentioned that women's networks are at the core of these structural changes in their companies.

Group 2. Engagement of Men in Gender Initiatives

Despite the opportunity to engage men as allies to help advance gender equality, there's little guidance on how to effectively do so. Participants in this group discussed the potential role that men can have in women's networking and mentoring, the challenges that exclusiveness could bring, as well as the opportunities that these initiatives can bring for both women and men.

Participants agreed that gender equality is a matter of equity and therefore a question that is important to society as a whole, and that a company must create the proper conditions to make men feel welcome at engaging at women's networks and mentoring. Suggestions for this were, for instance, communicating figures and facts of gender inequalities within the organisation (i.e. unequal pay, underrepresentation). Companies must help incentivise the participation of male staff in women's networks and mentoring too. Participants suggested that both men and women in senior positions should mentor and sponsor talent.

Other topic that was raised was that some men may see gender equality as a problem for them (potential loss of status, fears about making mistakes or other men's disapproval) if they are not welcome to be part of the change and they do not have a right sense of fair play. It is therefore crucial that all staff are well informed and that companies think ahead about difficulties that all parties may experience in the behavioural transition towards equality.

Appendix

During the meeting, participants were welcome to share links of different studies relevant to the discussion. These were the links shared in the chat:

EU Platform for Change: https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/social/women-transport-eu-platform-change_en

ITF Work on Gender in Transport: <https://www.itf-oecd.org/itf-work-gender-transport>

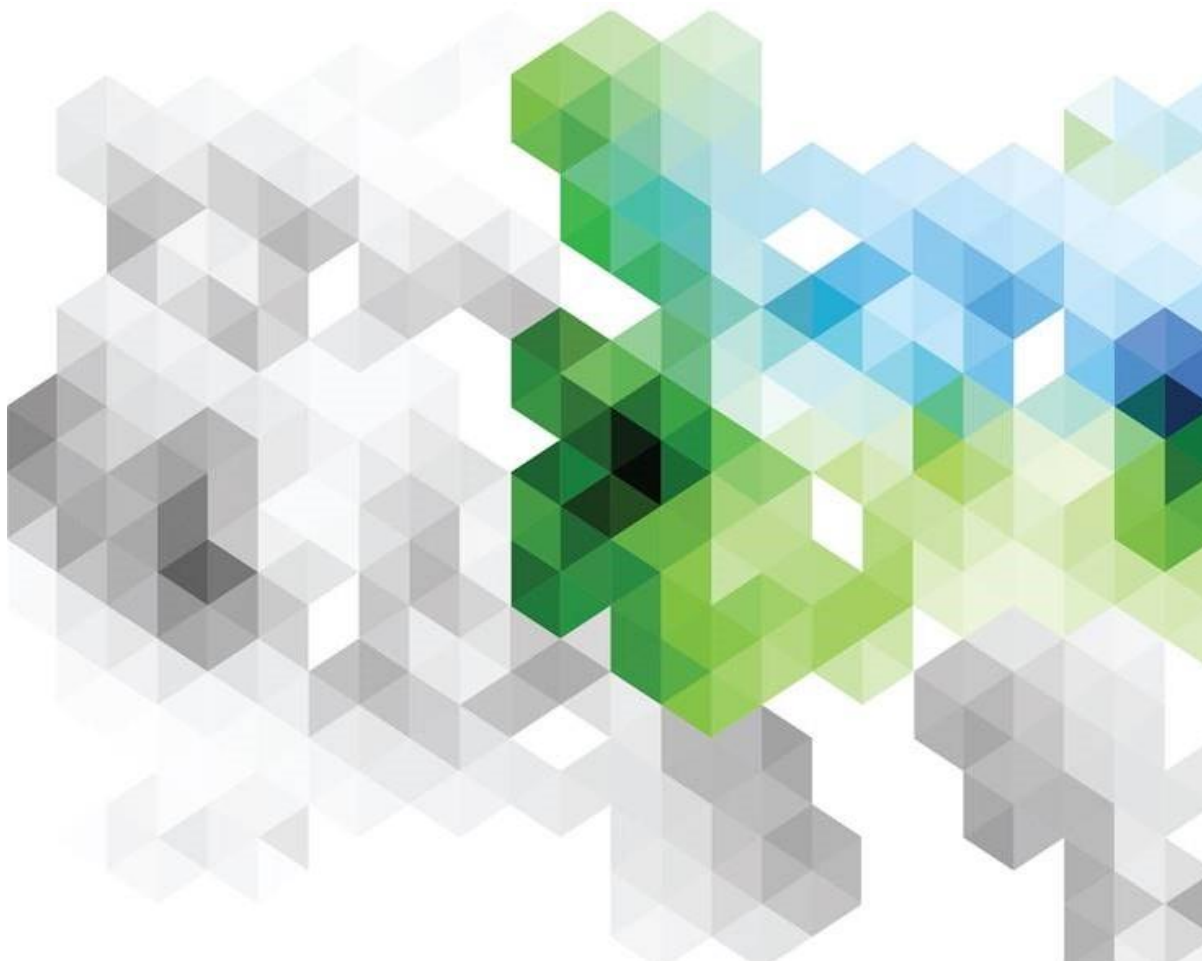
World Bank Online Course on Managing Gender Equality in Transportation (free and self-paced): <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/03/05/world-bank-and-un-women-launch-course-on-managing-gender-equality-in-transportation>

The Week in Mobility - International Women's Day 2021, by Imogen Pierce, Head of City Engagement and Integration at Arrival: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/week-mobility-international-womens-day-2021-imogen-pierce/?trackingId=Fif2VUWyQkGrUdR261RU8Q%3D%3D>

Objective or Biased – On the questionable use of Artificial Intelligence for job applications: <https://web.br.de/interaktiv/ki-bewerbung/en/>

Professor Maria Giuseppina Bruna's, research:

- The effect of board gender diversity on corporate social performance: An instrumental variable quantile regression approach: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343855530_The_effect_of_board_gender_diversity_on_corporate_social_performance_An_instrumental_variable_quantile_regression_approach
- Des femmes et des réseaux : mentoring et réseaux affinitaires au service de l'égalité : <https://www.cairn.info/revue-regards-croises-sur-l-economie-2014-2-page-166.htm>
- Board gender diversity and ESG disclosure: Evidence from the US: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324100422_Board_gender_diversity_and_ESG_disclosure_Evidence_from_the_US
- Réseau de femmes et nouveau territoire de féminisation : le secteur de la sécurité : https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348323188_Reseau_de_femmes_et_nouveau_territoire_de_feminisation_le_secteur_de_la_securite
- Décrypter les ambiguïtés de la société post-moderne pour penser la morphologie de l'entreprise de demain. Une illustration réticulaire : https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326891965_Decrypter_les_ambiguites_de_la_societe_post-moderne_pour_penser_la_morphologie_de_l'entreprise_de_demain_Une_illustration_reticulaire



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