Kicking off the Pilot

The WILA PMP was initiated by WILA Co-Chairs Pam Cox (LES USA/Canada) and Sonja London (LES Scandinavia) following WILA’s launch at the LESI Annual Meeting in Yokohama 2019. Chaired by WILA Vice-chair Eszter Szakács (LES Hungary), the PMP started by the recruitment of mentors and proteges. As a great sign of interest in sharing experience, LESI’s following prominent female leaders signed up as mentors to the program:

Patricia Bunye, Philippines
Cândida Caffé, Brasil
Sonja London, Finland
Gabriele Mohsler, Germany
Richa Pandey, India
Clara Pombo, LL.M., M.B.A., Spain
Natalie Raffoul, Canada
Ningling Wang, China (Shanghai)
Dr. Samantha Williams, Ireland

All mentors were paired with volunteering protégés. The pairs were made based mostly on a geographical basis to avoid time zone problems, but each pair was international. The originally planned term of the PMP was to last until the LESI Annual Meeting in Berlin 2020.

However, following a survey among the participants in May 2020, the term of the Pilot program has been extended until the 2021 Annual meeting with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic.
WILA Mentoring Webinar 17. September, 2020

To mark the continuation of the pilot program WILA had a successful webinar where mentor Mrs. Cândida Caffé (Danneman Siemsen, BR) and protégé Anna Giedke (Bardehle Pagenberg, DE), interviewed by Sonja London (Nokia FI), shared their experiences regarding mentoring. The interview sparked a lively discussion which in fact inspired the topic of an informal round table discussion to take place at the 2021 Annual Meeting (virtual) titled “Top 5 Challenges in Early Female Careers” led by Cândida Caffé. The key takeaways of the webinar have been posted on the website.

Closing Survey April 2021

Nearing the end of the extended term of the Pilot program another survey has been circulated among the participants which highlighted the key takeaways.

Summary of the survey results (interim and closing survey combined):

- Several pairs had 3 or even more sessions during the program;
- Contact keeping through phone or e-mails, video calls or a combination of those (WhatsApp also mentioned);
- Various mentoring methods used:
  - mentor gives assignments as homework to the protégé,
  - protégé prepares questions for the mentor before session about areas she wants to explore,
  - structured discussions by e-mail before the call,
  - mentor taking notes during session,
  - agreeing at the end of each session on the date of the next one and defining topics,
  - personality test for identifying the protegé’s strengths and skills to develop,
unstructured informal discussions.

- **Topics covered:**
  - work-life balance (recurring topic),
  - time-management (recurring topic),
  - gender roles at workplace,
  - career substance matters,
  - career progress,
  - raising self-awareness in a workplace environment,
  - billable/non-billable tasks,
  - conflict management at workplace,
  - managing career and side projects.

- **Benefits for protégés and mentors:**
  - “I gained helpful insights and comments by an experienced and successful mentor which influenced my next steps and attitudes” “It broadens my horizon”,
  - “It forced me to pause and consider issues from the perspective of a younger professional”.

- **Suggestions for improvements:**
  - share best practices via WILA zoom call more often,
  - enable to better match mentors and protégés according to their professional background – to ensure there is more in common.

**Mentors and protégés would recommend WILA mentoring for the following reasons:**

“It gives you the opportunity to speak to a role model and ask questions you might have” “Deeper insight into LES as an organisation” (WILA protégé).

“Opportunity to ask questions and benefit from others’ experience that is independent of day to day direct working relationships” (WILA protégé).

“There is so much to learn from others who are senior in the profession. Even I continue to learn from the hearing about the experience of others. For a younger person it could be confidence boosting. I certainly would have loved to participate in such a program in my earlier years” (WILA mentor).

With these quotes WILA would like to THANK ALL PARTICIPANTS OF THE PILOT MENTOR PROGRAM to help us explore this form of knowledge and experience sharing within LESI and confirm its potential.
Next steps for WILA-PMP

Continuation of the Mentor Program – Join anytime!

Following the LESI 2021 Annual Conference we hope to give the WILA Mentoring Program a permanent form where mentors are presented on the website, specifying their backgrounds and scope of offered mentoring. Free mentors can be contacted throughout the year. We hope to extend the circle of mentors so that every interested potential protégé can find a mentor matching their location and background. In addition, recurring online events are planned to facilitate exchanging best practices about mentoring also to discuss topics of high interest, led or presented by a mentor.

Meet WILA mentors at our events at the LESI 2021 Annual Conference.

1. Advancing Women Leaders in Licensing panel Session 6 on May 27, 2021 with speakers Sonja London, Sara Matt and Linda Kawano (10:10am EDT / 4:50pm CEST)

2. Join our live roundtable discussion -- hosted by Cândida Caffé -- on the Top 5 Female Challenges in Early Career on May 27, 2021 (4:20pm ED)

3. WILA social events

Contact WILA:

If you are interested in joining either as mentor or protégé, have any question or would like to be active in WILA please contact Pam Cox (pcox@marshallip.com) or Eszter Szakács (eszter.szakacs@danubialegal.hu)

For more information on WILA visit www.lesi.org/wila.