

Women's International Leadership Development WILD



Text: Diana Walters

**With thanks to Felicity Gibling, Michèle Taylor and
the Western Balkans WILD group**

What is WILD?

WILD is a professional development programme focused on leadership, coaching and team building. The WILD programme fosters a spirit of togetherness, confidentiality and sharing through learning mutual support.

Trust is built through working together on common areas such as leadership, problem solving, assertiveness and developing staff. From working trust, strong personal bonds are fostered, collaborative networks are created and isolation is reduced.



Women at the first WILD seminar take time out for coffee and friendship

'I loved meeting strong, diverse women in a safe and challenging space'

Why WILD?

Women play a key role in heritage organisations in the western Balkans. The WILD programme is about supporting them as creative passionate leaders and to connect them through working together.

Cultural heritage and museums shape society. If we think about our identities, the places with special meaning, the food that reminds us of home, these are all about our heritage. These things connect us and we have a right to them.

The places that protect and interpret our cultural heritage are precious, and the people that run them are dedicated and passionate about the work that they do.

All too often society devalues cultural heritage or uses it for political purposes that seek to divide peoples. There is a constant need to work together and to enhance the skills needed to make heritage relevant, exciting and interesting. WILD supports women to come together and strengthen their voices, across boundaries and divisions wherever these may exist. It focuses on positives and solutions not problems.

Creating a team



Trust and humour were identified as key values for the group

A Wild woman shares her experiences at the Balkan Museum Network's 'Meet See Do' conference in Sarajevo



At the 'Meet See Do' conference, WILD women sat together, bucking the trend that saw most delegates sitting with people from their own countries

Why women's leadership?

Although women reach senior positions they often experience discrimination. They are sometimes dismissed as 'emotional' – reinforcing a stereotype of strong leadership being macho and emotionless. Women are often better listeners – and therefore they

may appear passive or weak – which means they are not always respected or listened to. However, management studies show that the opposite is true – people who value and support their staff make better leaders. (Pendleton & Furnham, 2011).

'A 'Strengths Based Approach' will lead to a level of engagement of over 70%.

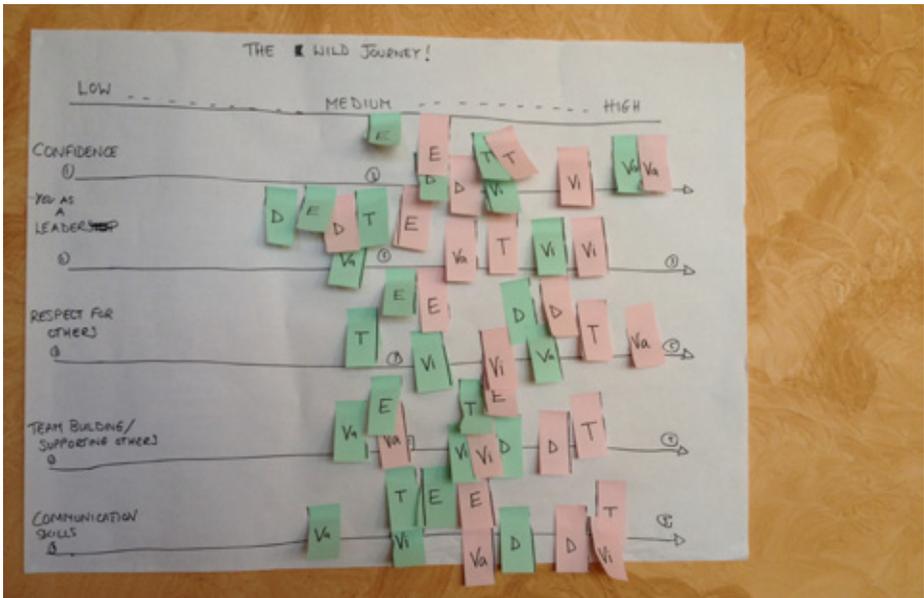
Focusing on weaknesses will reduce this to 9%'

'I've realised that good leadership is not about always being right – it's about engagement, passion and collaboration' (WILD participant)

Making a difference

WILD is driven by real life situations and the programme reflects the daily reality of senior women in cultural heritage. Much of the focus is on helping them understand themselves

and how this shapes their leadership through their personal styles, preferences and strengths – becoming even better at what we do.



Some of the participants plot their WILD journey

'Good leaders have empathy, trust, humour, respect and self awareness. They are open to new ideas and know about their own strengths and are actively and continuously learning. They listen and give active and positive feedback' (WILD group)

Strength through diversity

Heritage is sometimes used to divide people, especially at times of societal change and political uncertainty. Drawing out differences can sometimes be experienced as a negative thing – a way of separating.

WILD sees diversity as a powerful strength. Yes, differences exist, and these are what make a team functional and effective.

No one can manage in isolation – we don't have all the skills and knowledge to do that. Working with people whose styles, perspectives and experiences are different from ours makes individuals and organisations stronger and more versatile to survive in an ever-changing world.

'I have learned that I have to take into account other people's feelings and personalities to develop personally and bring the best out of collaboration with other people' (WILD participant)

The value of WILD



WILD workshops are thought-provoking...

'The best thing about the workshop? --- Getting back together. Learning more about myself and others.'

'Different examples and working in groups helped me understand different types, diversities and similarities.'

'I have learnt so much about myself – that I am a leader, not just a workaholic, that I can listen and support others, that I can't do everything on my own.' (WILD participants)



The Foundation Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB) is an independent Swedish non-governmental organisation dedicated to rescuing and preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage affected by conflict, neglect or human and natural disasters. We see our work as a vital contribution to building democracy and supporting human rights. CHwB is neutral when it comes to conflicting parties, but not to the rights of all people to cultural heritage - now and in the future.

CHwB works with cultural heritage as an active force in reconciliation, peace building and social and economic development by creating capacity, awareness and opportunities in preserving and rescuing cultural heritage in societies affected by conflict, neglect or human and natural disasters.

CHwB is committed to equality, non-discrimination, participation, accountability and transparency.

Our vision is that everyone has the right to enjoy, have access to and participate in cultural heritage

- Our mission is to promote cultural heritage as both a right in itself and a resource. CHwB works with civil society and institutions at all levels to strengthen peace building, sustainable socio-economic and democratic development and the realization of human rights.

WILD has been made possible through the work of Cultural Heritage without Borders and funded by the Swedish Government.

WILD is always looking for mentors from the cultural heritage world. If you feel you can support WILD women in the future – please let us know

info@chwb.org

**CH
WB**
Cultural
Heritage without Borders
KULTURÄRV UTAN GRÄNSER