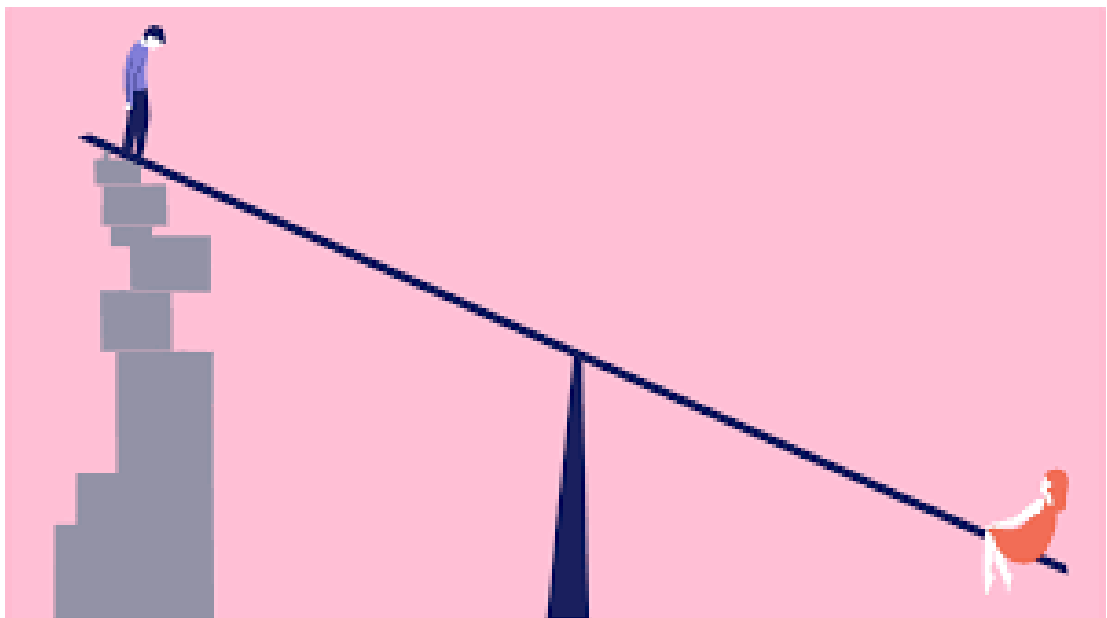


# Women In Leadership in the Visitor Economy Workshop Report



July 2023

Although more than 50% of hospitality, tourism, and events employees are women, there is a persistent lack of women in top leadership positions (National Travel and Tourism Office, 2020). A combination of both structural and social factors contributes to this inadequacy, including societal expectations of women's roles and cultural stereotypes at work and home, lack of informal social support, embedded institutional, and organizational biases (e.g., lack of/limited maternity, paternity and work and family support, physical and mental health support during menopause, gender and race biases, mentorship, career advancement opportunities, etc.). Many of these have been exacerbated through the pandemic, undoing years of progress toward gender parity in leadership.



To bring together current academic research and evidence from the industry on how to develop and support women in leadership, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of

May 2023 a workshop on ‘Women in Leadership in the Visitor Economy’ was organized by a group of researchers from the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management and hospitality and tourism industry experts, with the support of the IAS and GESPi of the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, at the University of Surrey. The event took place at the Oak House of the University of Surrey.



The workshop brings together three industry speakers, including Carol Fergus from Fidelity International, Fiona Anderson from Travel and Lifestyle, and Jane Pendlebury from HOSPA, who are women leaders in the hospitality, and tourism industry. Carol shared her career path and mentioned that she is a great example of who *walked the walk, talked the talk, and fought the fight*.



Our speakers also include a group of excellent researchers who are researching women in leadership and EDI issues in the visitor economy. The event attracted around 30 participants comprising PGR students, international visiting researchers, and public audiences from outside of the university. The following topics including women leaders' journey in hospitality and tourism, the industry's effort in promoting women in leadership, barriers and supports for women, motherhood, and leadership, were discussed in the form of keynote speeches, featured talks, and panel discussions.



We also engaged the audience by designing a “Harvest Session” towards the end of the workshop, where everyone openly reflected on their takeaways

from the workshop. In this harvest session, we identified the top issues and priorities of women in leadership facing the visitor economy and ask the audience to vote using different colours stickers (Figure 1). We first asked our audience to share the main takeaways from the session, and some of the answers that received the most votes are listed below.

- Know your value
- Resilience
- Be myself
- Be your authentic self
- Believe in yourself
- You can be anything you want
- Belong
- Work together to be inspirational
- It is OK to not be okay
- Self-congruency
- Mentor
- Networking
- Collaboration
- Cocreation
- Keep on going

- Do what you love

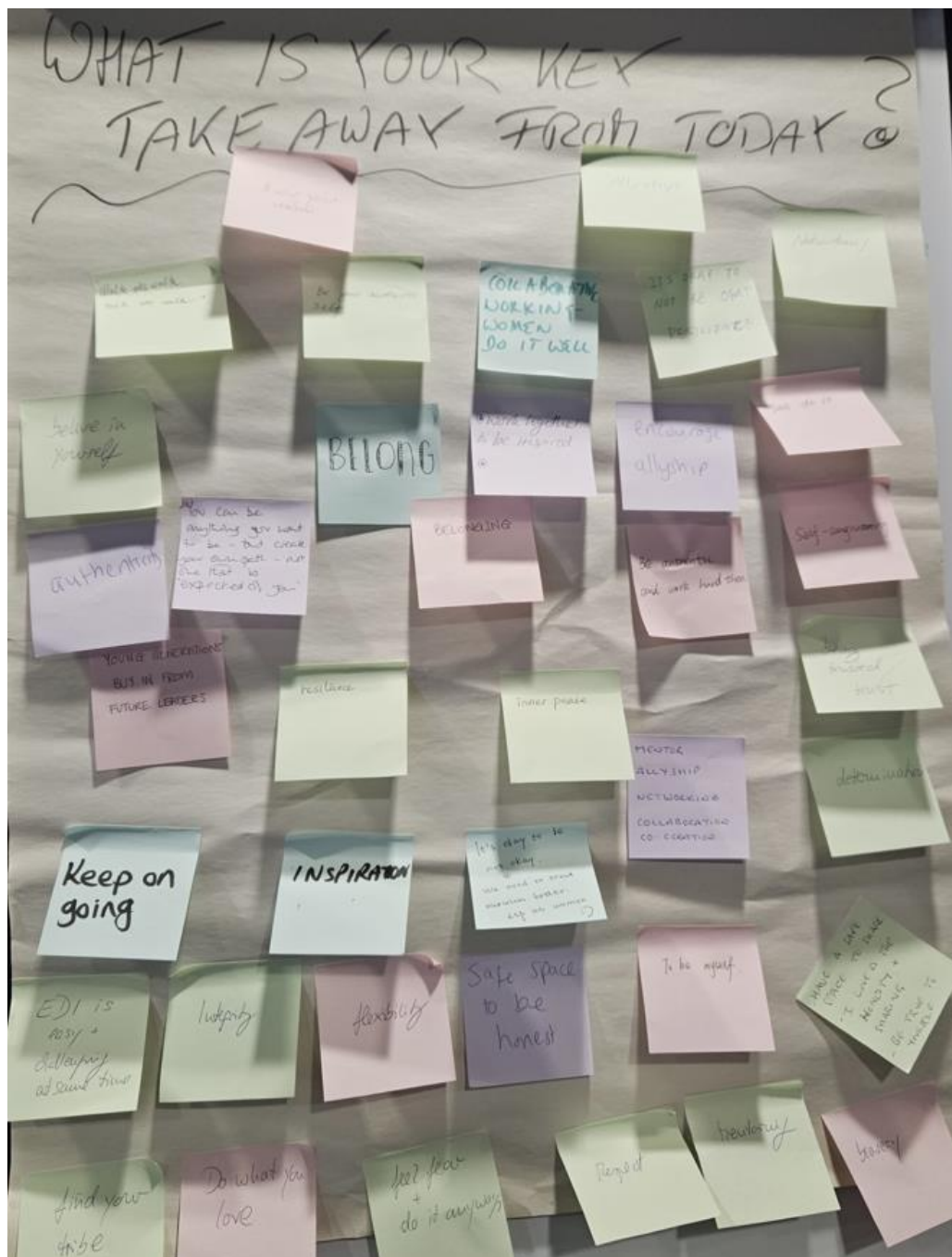


Figure 1 Main takeaways shared by audience

One aim of the harvest session is to identify essential support needed to foster women in leadership in the visitor economy. Some of the answers receive most votes are listed below.

- Mentorship support for women
- Integrating the EDI into your KPI
- Being courageous to make changes to your current status
- Apprenticeship programs to support career progression
- Fairness in pay
- Financial and monetary support
- Focus on it as a culture change



Together we also identified future directions by asking ‘where shall we go here?’ and some of the promising directions identified are listed below (Figure 2).

- Be the authentic you
- Industry academic collaboration
- Closer collaboration between the industry and the educational institutions
- Get together, and work together to achieve the dream together



- Follow your heart, and make your dream come true
- Willing to share own experience with others, being supportive, and being brave to ask for support
- Open dialogue and keep the conversation going
- Keep talking and communicating
- Bring more money in
- Be humble, be venerable, be honest, be true and ask for help at all levels

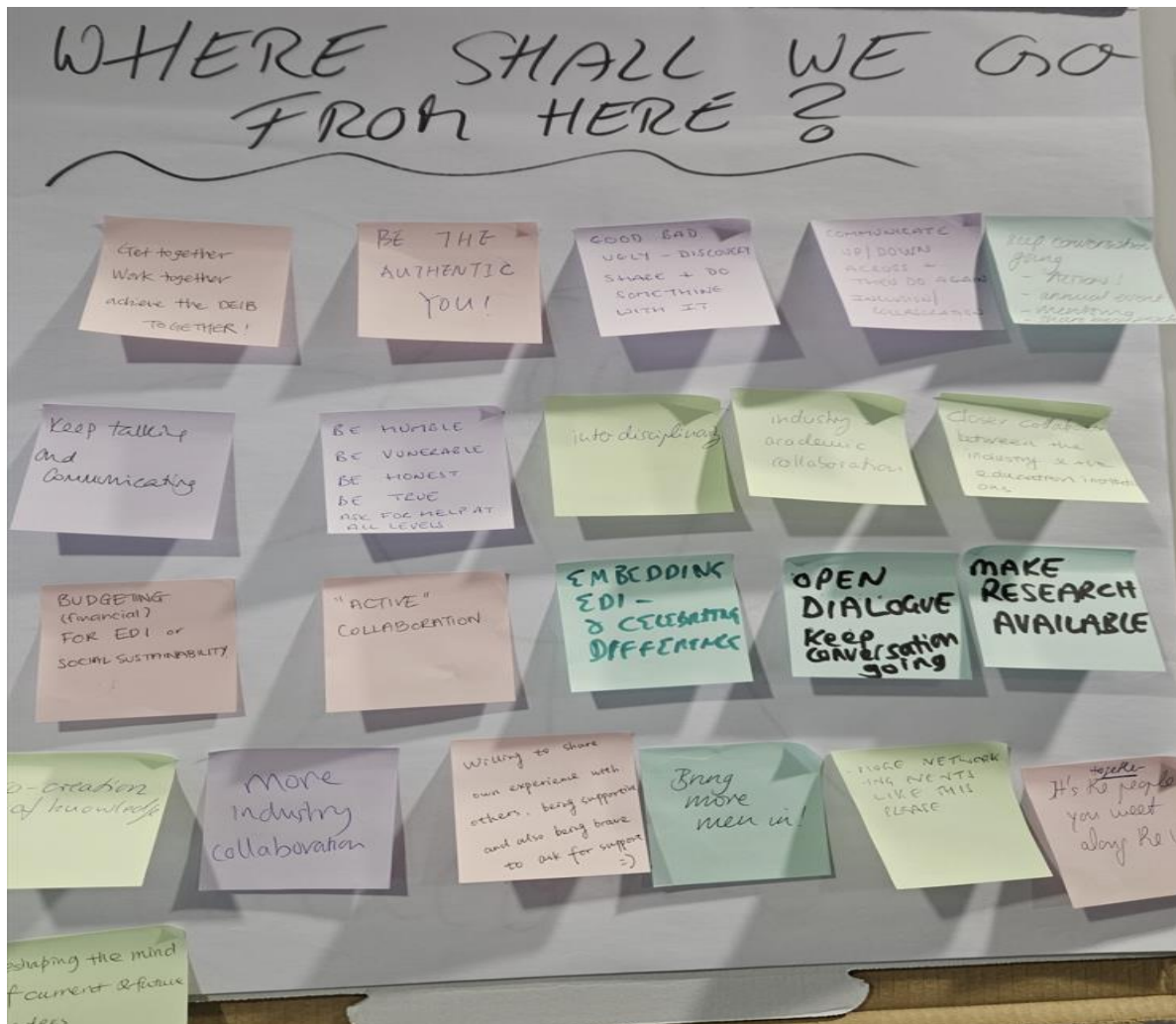


Figure 2 Where shall we go from here?



Detailed findings of the reflection session are attached in Appendix

The audience shared positive feedback after the workshop, and many expressed that we should have the workshop again next year. Many commented that they left the place feeling uplifted. One of the attendees shared *‘Echoing the sentiments below... such a great, inspiring, and insightful day!’* Another attendee suggested that *‘we should think about getting together next year!’*, another attendee shared *‘It was fabulous, really uplifting, with a robust and honest exchange of views, ideas, and solutions’*. Some of these feedback also include, *‘Yes! An inspiring day - really well organized and full of brilliant people all around. Thank you all.’*, *‘Fantastic organisation and support’*, *‘such dexterity and fluidity all through till the end’*, *‘Well done to the team!!!’*, *‘A big heartfelt thank you from me too.’*, *Thank you the entire team. It was a great day and I left feeling totally uplifted. I came intending to give back but got so much more out of the day so a big thank you.’*, *‘It was such a wonderful, safe space that you created for us – very inspiring and uplifting.’*

The whole organization team has been putting great effort and commitment in the event, and a special thanks to all who contributed to the event (names in alphabetic order): Ms. Mirela Dumic, Dr. Albert Kimbu, Ms. Louise Jones, Mr. Kevin Li, Professor Emily Ma, Dr. Sumeetra Ramakrishnan, Professor Caroline Scarles, Dr. Tracy Xu, Dr. Lorna Wang, Dr. Anke Winchenbach, and IAS, GESPi and SHTM at the University of Surrey.

## Appendix A Reflection Session Summary

### Your contributions to the three panel discussion topics

*Topic 1 (T1): What is your key take away from today?*

*Topic 2 (T2): Where shall we go from here?*

*Topic 3 (T3): How should industry support profession into leadership?*

Answers to T1	Number of "dots"	Answers to T2	Number of "dots"	Answers to T3	Number of "dots"
Know your value	4	Women work network, girls help girls		Listen + action	
To be myself	3	Get together, work together	1	Measurement	
Walk the walk, talk the talk		Co-creation of knowledge	1	Seeing, hearing, and listening	
Be your authentic self		Active collaboration		Be flexible	
Believe in yourself	1	Industry-academic collaboration	2	Interorganisational mentoring + best practice sharing	
Authenticity		Interdisciplinary	1	Mentoring and rethink roles	
Young generations buy from future leaders		Closer collaboration between the industry and the education		Accept the thing I can't change, courage to change the things I can change	3
Resilience	2	Bring more men in		Apprenticeship program to support career progression	1
Belonging	1	Share + do		Mentorship support for women	3
Keep on going	1	More industry collaboration	1	Money	2
Do what you love	1	Keep conversation going		Respect more women workers	
Inspiration	1	More networking events		Accountability	
Flexibility		Keep talking and communicating		It is not just about the data	2
Feel fear + do it anyway		Be humble, vulnerable, honest, true, and ask for help at all levels	1	Flexibility	
Safe space to be honest		Willing to share own experience with others	1	Educate and change the perception	
Repeat		Follow your heart and make your dream come true	2	Listening and looking	
Bravery		Be the authentic you	6	Integrate the EDI into your KPI	2
Have a safe space to share		Make research available		Need more male allyship	
It's okay to be not okay	2	Budgeting for EDI and		Focus on it as a culture	2

Mentor, Allyship,	1	social sustainability		change	
Networking, and		Reshaping the mind of	1	Better work-family	
Collaboration		current and future		supportive policies and	
Trust and being trusted		leaders		programs	
		Embracing EDI and	1	Seeing people as	2
		creating difference		people	
Self-congruity	1	Open dialogue	1		
Be authentic and work	2				
hard then					
Encourage allyship					
Work together and be	1				
inspired					
Just do it					
Collaborating working					
Allyship					
Networking					
Inner peace					
You can be anything					
you want to be					

*\*Notes: More dots, more focus on certain answer from the guests*