

CIGRE Women's Network UK "Standing Out with Confidence"

7th November 2017, London

The latest Women's Network event broke new ground by challenging participants to "Stand out with Confidence".

CIGRE Women's Network UK is a group of women and men who work together to forge a pathway for female engineers to build fulfilling careers in the energy sector. Our events are designed to support that goal. The "Standing out with confidence" agenda could easily be repeated in other parts of the world. Read on to find out what we did, and I hope that this will inspire you to do something similar. We put the event together with the aim of giving attendees a sense of empowerment by sharing the views of female as well as male leaders.

The day consisted of inspiring talks, thought-provoking panel discussions and exclusive networking opportunities. The event moto was "Confidence is the key" and we discussed how too often women have a confidence gap. This issue causes careers to pause/slow down, and in the meantime, men advance. Confidence means "Speaking up and not being afraid to say what's on your mind or ask for what you want. And that in order to break-down the barriers to success, we need to "Raise our hand, take risks, and overcome fear of failure.



We started with an opportunity for delegates to network over lunch. Following lunch, we had a welcome speech from Kristel Fobelets, Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering at Imperial College London. She shared some key thoughts on women in engineering in Academia and about nurturing the next generation of female engineers.

This was followed by a key note speech from Kate Harvey, Global Offshore Wind Health and Safety Organisation General Manager, sharing her personal career journey and talking about the role of mentors and role models in her own career. Kate admitted herself that until she was asked to speak at our event and analysed her own path, she had not recognised to what degree mentors had shaped her career.

Our participants then took part in a workshop where they received practical advice on negotiating an outcome from Natasha Clarke, the Chief People Officer at SThree.

We rounded up the agenda with a presentation from Chris Whiteley on the importance of mentoring as a means of networking, testing ideas and career plans, improving communication, and sharing concerns.

We closed the event with key messages:

- Be your authentic self
- Be open to opportunities
- Surround yourselves with a good team (360° / formal and informal relationships)
- Find the right balance for you

Women's Network UK is planning exciting events for our members in 2018. I would like to also take this opportunity to thank all the speakers, the people that worked behind the scenes to make this happen and I would particularly like to thank Prof. Goran Strbac from Imperial College London for his support and contribution to this event.