

## WIA-E Friday Lunch Meeting

## "Leaving your native country or staying - what is the best choice for a young woman starting an aerospace career?"

29th of May

The WIA-E Rome Local Group (LG) moderated on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2020 the weekly WIA-E Friday Lunch Meeting, focusing the discussion on the theme "Leaving your native country or staying what is the best choice for a young woman starting an aerospace career?".

28 participants of different nationalities (African, Turkish, Italian, French, German, Dutch, Spanish, English, Mexican, American, Swiss, Indian, Swedish, Canadian, Austrian) from all over Europe joined the meeting to share their experiences. The two event's moderators (Alessia Gloder and Alice Pellegrino from the WIA-E Rome LG core team) started by presenting the main purposes of the meeting and the reasons behind such a topic. The idea for the event was to focus the discussion on the different perspectives of women working in the aerospace domain who decided to leave their native country to work abroad and women who decided to stay. The core aim of such a discussion was to eventually provide support to other young women that are going to face this situation and choice very soon.

The Aerospace field is a very rich and international environment, and the alternatives are many. Unfortunately, not all the countries and cities offer the same possibilities. Depending on the dreams for the future and self-ambition, young women might be obliged and pushed in choosing to leave or to stay.

After a brief personal introduction of all the participants, the moderators invited them to share their experiences and to explain their reasons behind the choice to remain and work in the native country and/or to move abroad to start the career somewhere else.

The participants gladly intervened and share different experiences.

It was agreed by all that there are several pros and cons in leaving the home country and for sure, it is never an easy choice. One must be ready to leave the family and friends behind, with the consciousness of not being fully part of their lives anymore. In the end, home is home, and not all the places might feel the same, especially if dealing with a completely different culture and reality. Despite recognizing these drawbacks, the majority of women encouraged young ones to not being afraid in taking the big step. Being abroad and out of the comfort zone is in fact seen as a personal test that surely helps growing and enriching yourself as a human being and as a professional. There is plenty of chances out there, while sometimes the native country is not offering the same level of opportunities in terms of job availability, salary, career, etc. if compared to other countries. Not having a restriction in terms of a job's location increases the career's chances. Furthermore. working and living in an international environment is very stimulating and helps to open the minds, even though sometimes such an experience makes people evaluate things in different ways, changing priorities. Indeed, several participants encouraged young women to try an experience abroad prior to have a family, as it is easier to move when other people do not depend on you.



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Nationality issues are to be taken into account, especially for people moving for example to Europe or America but not belonging to the

European Union (EU) or without a U.S. Citizenship. There can be in fact serious limitations while searching for a job, as the aerospace world is linked to the national security restrictions and this can strongly impact the amount of available options while searching for a job.

As mentioned before, being abroad has a strong impact on the life of a person, so such a choice should not be taken lightly. Anyway, fear should not stop a person from taking the big step, as there is always the possibility to change the mind and to come back to the native country. Experience can surely help to make a more conscious decision; therefore, students should take early chances to move abroad for their studies or for their thesis projects.

In conclusion, it was reminded to young women that they are not alone and that they can rely on the support of generations of women that faced the same uncertainties and already took several difficult choices, even more than once. It is important that they ask for opinions and advises. Nobody is without fear when deciding to leave the native country or to stay, but every path is different and there is no right or wrong answer. Whatever the final decision is, a person should follow the dreams and find what works best for his/her life.

All these messages, key words ad "reasons to leave or to stay" were collected during the discussion by the event's organizers to create a final Word Cloud (Figure 1) as main outcome of the Friday Lunch.



Figure 1: Word Cloud generated with the inputs of all the participants to the Friday Lunch organized by WIA-E Rome Local Group on the 29th of May 2020.

Together and stronger to cooperate in the promotion of a future Aerospace Sector characterized by a balanced workforce, where young women will not be afraid to stand up and take challenges.







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