



Women in Life Science Denmark



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Empowering Women in Life Science: The Transformative Power of Role Models

CASE by KMP+ House of Mentoring[®]



Women in Life Science Denmark (WiLD) is a professional network for women in the Danish Life Science field established in 2022.

The network brings together executives, non-executive directors, board members, experienced specialist and top-level scientists.

The ambition of Women in Life Science Denmark is to create an inspiring and science-centric network forum for women in senior positions across industry and academia and increase the visibility of women in top leadership roles.

By acting as visible and active role models, WiLD members wish to inspire the next generation of women to realize their full potential and assume positions of leadership.

Purpose

To support the value creation in Danish Life Science by leveraging and promoting diversity of talent at the executive and senior specialist levels, in both corporate and academic organizations.

To pave the way for more women to step into senior and executive positions through active role modelling.

To educate experienced career women in the art of mentoring.

The mentoring programme is one of the initiatives aimed at achieving these goals.

The WiLD Mentoring Programme

In the Mentoring Programme, WiLD members act as mentors for fellow members in one-to-one confidential relationships where they can reflect on their ambitions and competencies. Mentors share their knowledge and experience and act as sounding boards to the mentees. While mentees have a safe place to explore their career ambitions, career challenges and career potential.

Both mentors and mentees are professionally prepared for their mentoring partnership, and both mentors and mentees have the opportunity to grow and learn through the programme.

"By acting as an active role model and mentor, I wish to inspire the next generation of women to realize their full potential and assume positions of leadership. I feel an obligation to mentor women in the workforce to support their professional development, to help build their confidence, and to guide them through challenges as they advance in their careers."

Mentor: Lene Gerlach, Venture Partner, Hadean Ventures & Chairperson of WiLD

Mentoring Programme Design

The first step in creating the mentoring programme, was the establishment of a programme management team to design the mentoring programme and plan for the promotion and implementation of the programme - this took place in the fall of 2023. The programme now includes:

Promoting, recruiting and matching the mentors and mentees - undertaken by the programme management team who study the applications to create the best possible matches.

In-person kick-off, where all mentors and mentees meet and are introduced to the concept of Modern Mentoring, engage in building community, and clarify their expectations around the programme also through playing the Mentor+Game™. During this session, the matching is revealed, and the mentor/mentee pairs start building their relationship and plan their collaboration.

Mentor/Mentee meetings - during the 12 months of the programme, participants are encouraged to have a minimum of 6-8 mentor/mentee meetings.

Online Mentor/Mentee Toolbox and inspirational emails with recommendations for how to use the toolbox.

Online, midway workshops which aim to support the learning and knowledge sharing and serve as a platform for building community and strong relationships among the participants - one for mentors and one for mentees.

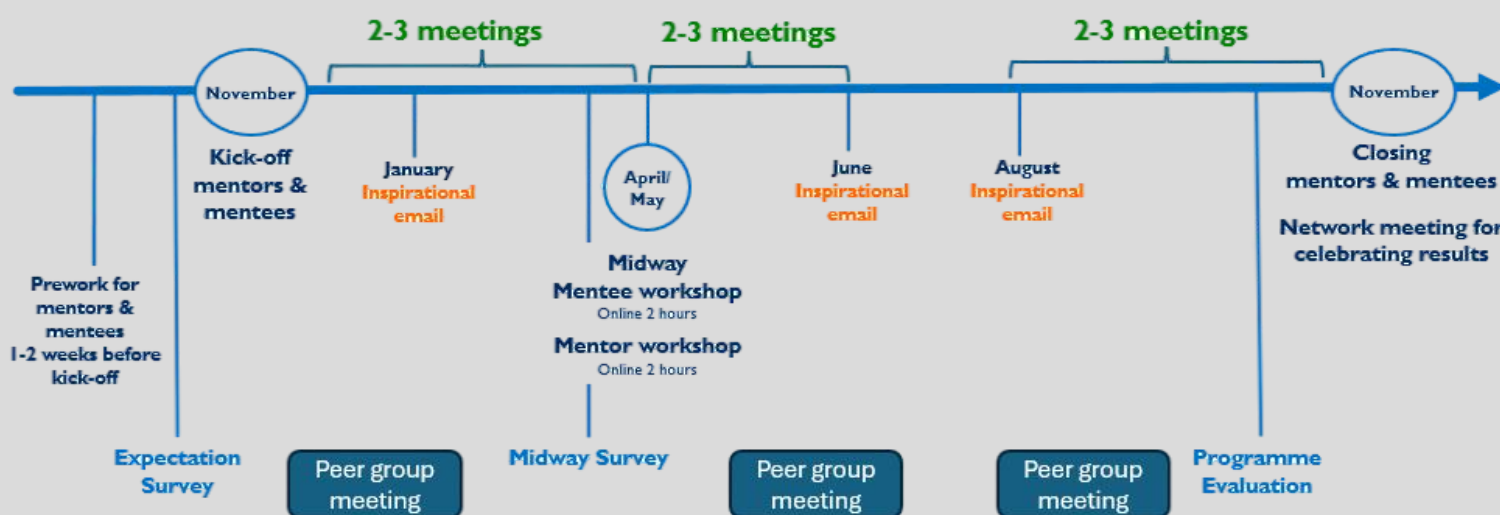
Peer mentor/mentee groups - providing participants with smaller groups to share mentoring experiences and build peer community.

Closing celebration - a network meeting for all mentors and mentees to share their learnings in plenary and show their appreciation for their mentor/mentee as well as to support continued community building.

Monitoring and evaluation - three surveys are included in the programme: an expectation survey administered to all mentors and mentees at the beginning, a midway survey and a final programme evaluation. The expectation and midway surveys are used to inspire contents for the inspirational emails and identify topics for the midway workshops. The final programme evaluation link to the expectation survey and document objective and subjective outcomes.



Timeline



Mentoring Programme Participants

All members of the WiLD network can apply to become either mentor or mentee in the mentoring programme. Members of the network volunteer as mentors and mentor younger women in their transition from individual contributor to taking on leadership positions. Mentees are either relatively new in their leadership positions or have a strong wish to take on a leadership position as the next step in their career.

Ten pairs were matched in the first edition of the programme, and the second edition included 15 pairs. The ambition is to include even more pairs in the coming editions.

Matching is based on the information in the application forms where potential mentors and mentees describe their present situation, what they would like to learn and achieve from participating, and their expectations for the mentoring relationship.

The second edition of the mentoring programme commenced in November 2024 and introduced an additional activity: the formation of peer mentee and peer mentor groups, which meet independently throughout the programme. This addition was made in response to feedback from participants.

"It is SO value-creating for me to get the perspective of someone else and to have someone to discuss work related and career dilemmas with: I do see a point in having a woman – not that I'm against men, but the dynamic and "closeness" and ability to be completely open and honest seems wider due to the network of only women – both when I talk to my mentor and the mentee-group (which is not what I expected, I'm really positively surprised by this)."

**Mentee: Sif Press-Kristensen,
Director, Novo Nordisk A/S**



Learnings and in-sights from the mentors in the mentoring programme

- New and different perspectives
- New learning tools through mentoring programme
- Becoming a better mentor and leader
- New insights on academia, mergers and acquisitions
- Sparks curiosity and inspiration
- Loneliness in top management



"Mentoring bridges the gender gap "

"Mentoring plays a crucial role in developing the leadership career of women by providing access to opportunities, cultivating confidence, and fostering a diverse leadership team that improves decision-making. It also helps women build a professional network, which is essential for career growth.

Mentoring can significantly increase an employee's chances of being promoted, making it a valuable tool for women seeking to advance in their careers. I firmly believe that mentoring stands out as a key tool in bridging the gender gap in business leadership."

Lene Gerlach, Chairperson of WiLD and active as a mentor in the mentoring programme



“Extremely valuable to work and develop with someone who has so much experience and insights to draw from. My mentor is a great role model, and we can mirror each other’s experiences and better contextualize what the career path may look like for women in Life Science. We have shared experiences and found common ground easily. The set-up feels like a very safe and constructive space, which makes it highly effective.”

Mentee: Tanja Villumsen, Department Manager, Novo Nordisk A/S

Programme Evaluation

The participants of the first cohort evaluated their participation and learning very positively.

On a scale from 1-5, where 5 is completely agree, here are some examples of the results:

Mentees		Mentors	
I think that we have been good match.	4,5	4,6	I think that we have been good match.
My mentor has really encouraged me to be my best.	4,9	4,4	My mentee works hard with her issues between our meetings.
I have achieved more clarity in terms of what I want for my career.	4,1	4,2	The mentoring programme has given me an opportunity to reflect on and see my own career with new eyes.
Participating in the mentoring programme has helped me prioritise what is important to me.	4,5	4,4	Participating in the mentoring programme has inspired me in my leadership role.
I feel that my self-confidence has grown as a result of participating in the mentoring programme.	4,2	4,4	Participating in the mentoring programme has inspired me in my leadership role.

How KMP+ House of Mentoring® supports the WiLD Mentoring Programme:

- Knowledge sharing with programme management.
- Design and facilitation of kick-off event and online workshops - creating the foundation for a good learning process.
- Support materials for mentors and mentees - Online Mentor/Mentee Toolbox.
- Customized evaluation of the programme - including expectations survey, midway survey, and closing survey.



This case has been prepared in collaboration with Women in Life Science Denmark

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