

# NEWSLETTER

2022 – September Edition

## GLOBAL PRESIDENT EDITORIAL

### Narrowing the Digital Gender Gap needs all of us

Recent research from the GSMA highlights a worrying trend; we are seeing a slowdown regarding digital inclusion for women across low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Whilst the mobile internet gender gap narrowed every year from 2017 to 2020, from 25% to 15%, it seems momentum has been lost. Could this in part be due to a global pandemic which saw the burden of caring responsibilities disproportionately impact women once again with families reverting to traditional gender roles?

According to GSMA's latest data from its Mobile Gender Gap Report 2022, women are now 16% less likely than men to use mobile internet across LMICs, which equates to 264 million fewer women than men using mobile internet.

As responsible businesses who care about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within our own workforces, we need to be aware of these trends globally and we need to act. Significant and coordinated efforts are urgently needed to ensure that women can participate fully in a more digitised society.

Before we can act, we need to fully understand the key drivers for this trend, which are complex. There are indications that fewer women can afford phones and when this is possible, they can't afford minutes and data. This is further complicated by cultural drivers that mean women are seen as not having reason to be online, whilst literacy is still a barrier.

While we can distribute hardware, this is just one solution but it's not enough on its own. The pandemic briefly gave women a reason e.g., to educate their children but this fell away as life returned to normal. One intervention would look at education and finding reasons for women to participate online for instance mobile banking is less costly. In addition, there are many apps now available for female farmers and entrepreneurs such as Alipay.

As technology providers, we also need to look at technological solutions e.g. developing apps that use low internet frequency for some markets - as providers we need to absorb the costs. We need to be allies of women globally and put our collective heads together.

There are silver linings; where women are online, they will often prioritise comms as an essential and it is highly valued in this case. But what more can we do?

This is my call to action:

As an industry we need to be more aware of trends globally, especially related to equality. As a first step, I recommend you read the full GSMA report, [click here](#). Consider how your organisation may help - a collaborative effort is needed and diversity of thought - reach out to myself or any one of the GTWN members with your thoughts

Keri Gilder - GTWN Global President - Colt CEO

## Spotlighting Gema Esteban



The Spotlighting section is a reserved space to showcase GTWN Members, an opportunity to know each other better and connect in a different way.

In this second edition the spotlight is on Gema Esteban, Global Head of ESG at IG4 Capital a private equity firm where she is responsible for fully embedding ESG into its Investment Cycle as well as driving its portfolio companies towards the highest ESG standards. ke AI more accessible and usable. Prior to joining IG4 Capital, she spent several years at Telefónica, most recently as ESG Investors Director (2018-2020), where she revamped Telefónica's ESG strategy in order to attract ESG investors and positioned the company as a leader amongst the most influential ESG ratings, ere Telefónica consistently achieved a top 5 ranking.

This computer science engineer expert in sustainability & ESG spent some time with us during an interview that you can watch here:

<https://youtu.be/FozwfGx4ljc>

“IF ONE IS LUCKY,

A SOLITARY FANTASY CAN TOTALLY TRANSFORM ONE  
MILLION REALITIES.”

Maya Angelou (Civil Rights Activist and Poet)

# GLOBAL UPDATES

- Janice has signed a 150 million Euro deal to do a Green Fibre Optic network in Lincolnshire.
- 10 years after the GTWN started the Global Business Ready Women with Viviane Reding, the European Parliament voted to accept the quotas of putting women on boards of publicly listed companies. The GTWN (Bridget and Candace) started this with Viviane and then got the European Business Schools and then the Global Business Schools involved. It became the Global Board Ready Women initiative and is now under Forte Foundation. Find more here : <https://globaleurope.eu/europes-future/women-on-boards/> and Candace's article here under
- Our Sponsor CMS introduced us to Maria Henley from TMT Finance to start collaborating with them to get some diverse thought leadership panels. Check out section "Upcoming Opportunities to Connect" of this edition
- GTWN LinkedIn Page (in addition to the existing Group page) has been created. Follow our Page, share and like content so we can keep increasing our visibility and impact <https://www.linkedin.com/company/global-telecom-womens-network/>
- Do not miss the upcoming Global Board Meetings for 2022: September 1st and October 24<sup>th</sup>. Save your dates !

## Recovery Post Pandemic: The ambition of Europe's Next Generation EU (NG-EU) Program by Lucy Lombardi

The pandemic has taken a heavy toll on the economic and social fabric globally with most countries introducing dedicated measures to address recovery. Among the different approaches, Europe's Next Generation EU (NG-EU) approved in December 2020 by the EU Parliament and Council, is likely the most comprehensive in terms of long-term ambitions and areas addressed.

Besides being stretched over a long period of six years, the NG-EU program's ambition is broad: it includes helping repair the immediate economic and social damage caused by the coronavirus pandemic by making the EU greener, more digital, more resilient and overall better fit for the current and forthcoming challenges.

The program allocates 750 billion euro (\*) on top of the 2021-2027 Long Term Budget of approximately 1 billion euro (\*). The financing is envisaged both in terms of grants and in terms of loans. [1]

In order to ensure harmonious utilization of the budget, seven headings (expenditure categories), are defined. Among these, the Cohesion, Resilience and Values Heading is organized into facilities (sub-categories), one of which, the Recovery and Resilience one, attracts 90% of the NG-EU budget. The funds under the Recovery and Resilience Facility will be distributed according to national recovery and resilience plans prepared by each Member State, with the aim of supporting public investments and plans that promote the green and digital transitions.

Italy, which is the first EU country to have been hit by the coronavirus pandemic, the first to go into national lockdown and the worst hit in terms of death toll [2], has presented a strong National Recovery and Resilience Plan (Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza - PNRR) which ensured an allocation of approximately 191,5 bln€ budget for the 2021-2026 timespan. For example, 25% of the PNRR budget will be dedicated to digitalization which includes 1 Gbps wireline connectivity to approximately 8.5 million households and to 9 million school buildings and to 12 thousand Healthcare Centers; fostering wireless connectivity investments in low market potential areas; incentives for the adoption of innovative technologies and skills in the private sector and focus on migration to cloud for the public sector [3].

The European approach to recovery, has created an effective framework within each country designs its own National Recovery and Resilience Plan according to its specificities.

The effectiveness in attracting funding is measured on the ability to plan and use them effectively. Therefore, the next 5 years are important for those industries that have a role to play in ensuring that the objectives and goals of the NG-EU Program are met.

(\*) 2018 prices

[1] "The EU's 2021-2027 long term Budget and NextGenerationEU - Facts and Figures"

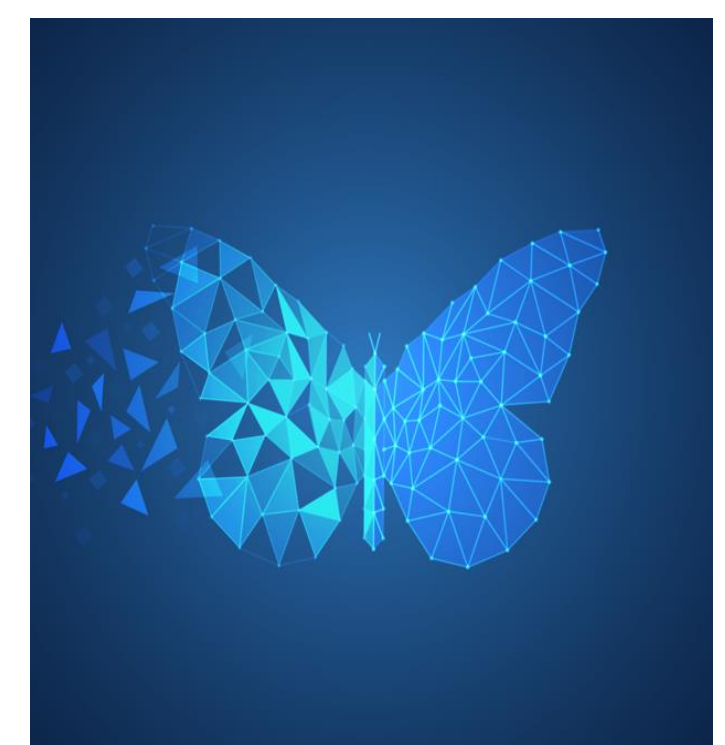
[2] <https://www.statista.com/page/covid-19-coronavirus>

[3] "Piano Nazionale Di Ripresa e Resilienza #NEXTGENERATIONITALIA" and [Recovery Plan: Palazzo Chigi, è un piano epocale. Dall'istruzione alla rivoluzione verde, ecco tutte le voci del Pnrr - Il Sole 24 ORE](#)

## DIGITAL METAMORPHOSIS Theme for The Mobile Century 2022-23 by Vicki MacLeod

Digital Metamorphosis is the 2022-23 theme for the GTWN's flagship publication The Mobile Century (TMC). Every year the GTWN chooses a theme to guide the authors' contributions to TMC. Starting this year, rather than releasing TMC once per year, we have decided to have a rolling publication. This will coincide with events and congresses where the GTWN will be present. We are delighted to say that the GTWN launched its theme for 2022-23 of Digital Metamorphosis on center stage at the GSMA's Mobile 360 APAC Conference in Singapore with great success.

To symbolize the 2022-23 TMC theme, the GTWN has developed an icon of an evolving digital butterfly, to link together all our activities and thought leadership around Digital Metamorphosis. This symbol was developed by our digital arts guru, Marge Salem, and represents our mantra of "the changing culture of communications" through the symbiotic relationship between digital transformation and cultural transformation. The 2022-23 TMC icon visually conveys these two key elements, which the GTWN views as equally important to achieve the most benefit from digital technology.



# ELEVATE EVENTS

## GTWN launches global discussion of Digital Metamorphosis at Mobile 360 APAC in Singapore by Vicki MacLeod



[L to R: Marge Salem, Vicki MacLeod, Candace Johnson  
at Raffles Hotel, Singapore]

GTWN Founding President Candace Johnson, Secretary-General Vicki MacLeod and Operations Manager Marge Salem, launched a global discussion of the GTWN's new 2022-23 TMT theme of Digital Metamorphosis on the first day of the GSMA's regional APAC event Mobile 360 which took place on 2-3 August in Singapore.

Participation in keynotes and panel discussions by GTWN Board Members and our colleagues and supporters at Mobile 360 APAC, showed how we are translating this vision of the future of communication networks - the "Networks for the Universe" - into our approach to digital technology adoption through entrepreneurship and innovation.

The Networks for the Universe Panel was co-moderated by Vicki MacLeod and Jeanette Whyte, Head of Public Policy GSMA Asia Pacific and was very well attended. Panel speakers included GTWN International Board Members Candace Johnson and Rosalia Gitau, CEO of Bixie, as well as: Jaya Deshmukh, Colt EVP Strategy and Technology representing GTWN Global President, Colt CEO Keri Gilder; Shweta Jain, APAC head of Business Development, Media and Entertainment at AWS; and Sheena Jacob Head of IP Practice at CMS Holborn Asia, representing CMS.

Candace Johnson also moderated the opening panel session with CEOs from both Singtel and Axiata, while Jaya Deshmukh also appeared on center stage and Rosalia Gitau contributed to the FinTech session, all on 02 August.

We were particularly pleased to be joined via video by Susan Brazer, CEO of Lion Share Media, who described the Networks for the Universe as "one of the most significant moonshots of our lifetimes". CEO of Singapore Space and Technology, Lynette Tan, also joined by video, encouraging both men and women in the industry to seek the best talents and best minds, so that we can shape the future of the network industry together.

Following the panel discussion on the Networks for the Universe, the GTWN invited panelists and participants at Mobile 360 to an evening cocktail reception and networking event sponsored by Kacific at the Cool Cats Bar at the JW Marriott hotel.



[L to R: Shweta Jain, AWS; Jaya Deshmukh, Colt; Sheena Jacob, CMS Holborn Asia; Rosalia Gitau, GTWN Board Member, CEO Bixie; Vicki MacLeod, GTWN; Jeanette Whyte, GSMA; Candace Johnson, GTWN Founding President.]



Guests were able to continue the discussion with members of the speaking panel on how we can all work together to deliver digital networks and services to the world. A slide presentation on Kacific's present operations and future plans to serve the broadband needs of the underserved communities in the Pacific was given by Jacques-Samuel Proton, EVP and Co-Founder of Kacific.

GTWN were one of the first investors in Kacific, ('the heart of broadband'), which was established 9 years ago as a next generation broadband satellite operator committed to providing universal, fast, high-quality broadband access at an affordable cost to the underserved markets in the Asia Pacific. The success of Kacific and its plans for future development demonstrate the power of women entrepreneurs and investors in bringing about "Networks for the Universe" and "Digital Metamorphosis" to achieve social, economic, and sustainable outcomes through digital tech.

Look out for the full report about GTWN's participation at Mobile 360 APAC which will appear soon on our magazine website <https://themobilecentury.com/>

## GTWN initiative “Global Board Ready Women” leads to European Parliament voting a Quota to put Women on Boards by Candace Johnson

10 years ago, GTWN President Emeritus Bridget Cosgrave and GTWN Founding President Candace Johnson were called on by GTWN Lifetime Achievement Award Winner and the then 1st Vice President of the European Commission, Viviane Reding to help her with her initiative to establish a quota of 40 % to put Women on Boards of publicly listed companies throughout the European Union. As Viviane said at the time, “We don’t like Quotas, but we like what they do”.

**Establishing a Task Force:** Bridget and Candace quickly swung into action, enlisting all of the GTWN International Board Members and the European Business Schools to support this initiative. They were joined by a group of incredibly motivated and active women executives around Europe. This task force included the likes of Cristina Vicini, President TIAW (The International Alliance of Women); Lori Gonnu SFR Vice President; Audrey Mandela, President of WiTT (Women in Telecoms and Technology); Lesley Stephenson, Publisher FT Board Director Programme, Owner Governance Publishing; Lady Barbara Judge; Marina Niforos, Director AmCham France; Elissa Sangster and Diane Morgan, Forte Foundation; Anne Negre, Vice President International Federation of University Women, Marijo Bos, President European Professional Women’s Network; Brigitte Boone, CEO Merchant Banking Fortis Bank and Claire Bergery-Noel, Vice President EDHEC.

**Global Board Ready Women data base:** Galled by the fact that Executive Search firms and many corporate boards were saying that “they could not find enough qualified women” as well as, despite many reports by McKinsey and Goldman Sachs, among others, showing that “diversified” boards had better results than mostly (sometimes all) white male boards, they went into action to disprove this overwhelming sentiment and myth and to establish a list of highly-qualified women. This resulted in the setting up of the Global Board Ready Women data base, together with the Association of Executive Search Consultants and the Forte Foundation,

**Establishing Criteria and the role of the Business Schools:** First action to be undertaken was to establish globally accepted criteria for Board positions. For be it, men or women, the task force soon found out that there were no real criteria for choosing Non-Executive Director or Independent Board Members.

The link to the Business Schools had early on been established as critical. Why? Because Business Schools a) had a list of C-level Alumnae which could be culled, b) usually had a Board of Governors who had corporate Chairs and CEO’s who could place women on their boards, and c) had a pool of Corporate Governance professors who could weigh in on establishing criteria for NED’s and Independent Board Members. The pioneering work and support of such business schools as EDHEC, London Business School, INSEAD, ESPC, Esade, Essec, etc. cannot be underestimated in this endeavour. In particular, EDHEC, France’s largest business school was our first supporter, hosting the website, corralling the other business schools to join us, and providing corporate governance leadership and tracking.

As such, the GBRW Task Force had access to the best minds on Corporate Governance and set Quantitative and Qualitative Criteria, which was used to inform the Data Base and which has consequently set the global standard for selecting NED’s and Independent Board Members. The criteria may be found at [http://www.fortefoundation.org/site/PageServer?pagename=women\\_boards](http://www.fortefoundation.org/site/PageServer?pagename=women_boards)

**Globalization:** Viviane Reding had purposely set the quota to be applied only for publicly listed companies as they would be the most prone to replying to shareholders who would need to follow what today is ESG, but at the time was CSR. The idea was also that in focusing on Board positions, this would trickle down to the C-Level and then within the entire corporate structure. It quickly turned out that whereas the initiative was aimed at European corporations, the arena in which Vice President Reding was operating, there was a real need for most of these corporations to have Board members who had experience and expertise in regions and countries outside of Europe. The GTWN/European Business School Board Ready Women thus became the Global Board Ready Women initiative.

**Selecting the Candidates:** It was one thing to have an excellent list of experienced Women Executives which the Business Schools and professional associations around the world, (the Global Women’s Accounting group, the Women Lawyers group, etc.) including of course the GTWN, it was another thing to apply the criteria and select truly Global Board Ready Women. Every Saturday, Bridget, Cristina, Lori, and Candace would go through the candidates who had been recommended to apply to our Global Board Ready Women Linked In group. We knew that we would have highly qualified candidates, but we were truly exhilarated to discover a) immensely qualified women who applied and were then selected to be Global Board Ready Women and b) candidates who, although might be too young and did not fit the criteria at the time of application, would soon do so, thus ensuring the “next generation”, reinforcing GTWN’s mantra of “Changing the Culture of Communications...from Generation to Generation”.

**Destroying the Myth of “not enough qualified women”:** Armed with a data base of more than 8000 qualified women, we began marketing our data base to Executive Search Consultants, Corporations, and Institutions in which governments had large shareholdings, such as the British Business Bank, the Deutsche Telekom, Telecom Italia, etc. One interesting fact that we found out along the way was that at the time, Executive Search Consultants were usually not paid for Board searches. Without any of the criteria that we had established, it truly was dependent on “mouth to mouth” and, quite frankly, the “Old Boy’s Network”, recommending their buddies, etc. to be on boards. This discovery also led to the practice of requesting women who were asked to be on a board but could not do it for a variety of reasons, to always recommend, if possible, other women who could fill the position. It also led to us realising that we had to “Change the Culture” of the Executive Search Consultants, among others.

**Partnership with the AESC and Forte Foundation:** In 2013 we announced a partnership with the AESC, Association of Executive Search Consultants. This partnership was specifically aimed at their membership, the likes of Korn Ferry, Spencer Stuart, Heidrick & Struggles, etc. to be pro-active with their clients, getting Board mandates and being paid for them, as well as of course, giving them access to our GBRW data base AND having those women be given free membership in the AESC Blue Steps program, this latter itself then swelling to become a data base of more than 25,000 women executives having access to the executive search consultants around the world. In 2017, we solidified our relationship with the Forte Foundation to manage the Data Base going forward and to have the dedicated, full-time team of their partners, Phoenix to not only select but also to actively market the data base to corporations and publicly owned corporations.

**“Changing the Culture of Communications...from Generation to Generation”:** As we all know, change and, educating the Status Quo is difficult to bring about. When we first started on this endeavour, we did not know that it would take a decade to bring about the fulfilment of Viviane Reding’s initiative. BUT we knew we had to do it. On 06 June 2022, the night before the Parliament voted on the Quota of 40 % of Women on Boards, EU Commission President Ursula van der Leyen, an early supporter when she was a member of the cabinet in Germany, called Viviane Reding to invite her to Strasbourg to be present at the vote. The first call Viviane made was to the GTWN and the GBRW to thank us. We know this is just a first step, but one that we truly believe will bring about better corporate governance today and for the next generation.



[L to R: Viviane and Ursula von der Leyen taken on the night of the decision!]

## Inclusion. A love letter. By Rosalia Gitau

Delhi, India- I was recently invited to speak on a panel at the FinTech Festival in India, India's largest gathering of innovators pushing the boundaries of money. Our topic: preparing society for a cashless world. I was truly honored to be seated alongside industry giants, so I wanted to really contribute to a discussion that would advance humanity. I wanted to bring it.

I shared my personal journey that led me to this moment: how 30 years prior, I visited India for the first time, also in a fintech role of sorts. I was 10 years old and my father's money mule, because back in the '80s, the only way for businesspeople to transfer large sums across borders was to carry it. In purple backpacks with sparkly rainbows to be precise.

I figured my anecdote would kick off a self-congratulatory roundtable about how far money has come in the last three decades: how we now move more money with a swipe of a phone than my backpack was ever able to carry. Instead, my 30-year journey triggered the crowd, provoking a discussion about how advances in its technology benefit the elite namely businesspeople, diplomats... panelists. Indeed, within one minute of the panel kicking off, a conversation about money soon became a conversation about those without it. This is the key tension in the world right now: the haves versus the have nots- and what global tech execs around the world are doing to narrow the divide or widen it.

Inclusion. As ubiquitously uttered in panels all over the world as inflation is lamented across households the world over. How are we going to harness unprecedented technology and capital- the most of both the world has seen in human history- to lift everyone up?

The first step is to recognize that we have a problem.

To placate the crowd, the panel moderator threw me a softball: "Do you think women have a role to play in realizing inclusion?"

"No." I said. I could feel the air in the room constrict. I persisted. "I don't think women have a role to play in realizing financial inclusion."  
Mic feedback; fellow panelists shift nervously in their chairs; the audience is about to pounce.

"I think women are the key to realizing inclusion".

And then I rattle off the dismal numbers that make me know we are still the lesser sex despite generations of feminist waves: we make a fraction of what men make (65%), we own a fraction of what men own (30%), we are invested at a dismally low fraction than what men are invested in (2%), we are hired less, hold influential roles less. Across industries, roles and rewards- we're fractional. Only one other group of people were ever treated as fractional human beings and those were slaves.

So, as we bravely define the next frontier of our humanity- that among the stars- let us consider this: rather than a general call for inclusion so broad that it dilutes the force of its action, why don't we just focus on including women? We are 51% of the world and encompass different socioeconomic and education levels, races and ethnicities, abilities and disabilities, sexualities and gender spectra. By including us, we include everyone.

When my daughter puts on her backpack to accompany us on GTWN's intergalactic mission in 10 years, I don't want her to just have a token role to play among the stars, I want her to hold a defining role- on par with the men, the moon, the stars, and maybe even the Martians.

## UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

Connect, meet and keep building a strong network!

September 14, 2022:	SubOptic Foundation's - Wave - Ride into the Future - BT Tower
Sept 28-30, 2022:	MWC Americas (Las Vegas) in partnership with CTIA
September 28, 2022:	TMT Finance - TMT M&A Forum USA 2022, The Metropolitan Club, Manhattan, NY
October 18-20, 2022:	Broadband World Forum, Amsterdam, Netherlands
November 7 - 10, 2022:	Gartner IT Symposium Xpo, Barcelona, Spain
January 5 -8, 2023:	CES, Las Vegas
January 15-18, 2023:	PTC Honolulu, Hawaii
January 25-26, 2023:	TMT World Congress 2023, London (GTWN Global Presidency will be part of this event !)

## GLOBAL CELEBRATIONS

Upcoming D&I celebrations for the next months

### September 2022

- September 15 - International Day of Democracy
- September 21 - International Day of Peace
- September 26 - European Day of Languages

### November 2022

- November 1 - All Saints' Day (Roman Catholic)
- November 2 - National Stress Awareness Day
- November 9 - World Freedom Day
- November 9 - World Adoption Day
- November 24 - Thanksgiving

### October 2022

- October 2 - International Day of Nonviolence
- October 5 - Yom Kippur (Jewish) (begins sundown October 4)
- October 10 - World Mental Health Day
- October 24 - Diwali (Hindu)

## THOUGHT LEADERSHIP RESOURCES

Some book recommendations that are worth to be shared:

*Open to Think* by Dan Pontefract. How to slow down, think creatively and make better decisions.  
*This Monk Wears Heels: Be Who You Are* by Kodo Nishimura.

*Death by Meeting* by Patrick Lencioni. This is an old book that was written back in 2004, I dusted it off recently to try to remember some of the aspects of good meeting management

If you want to submit articles, events, resources and more please send them to [gtwn.globalpresidency@gmail.com](mailto:gtwn.globalpresidency@gmail.com)