

LEARNING FOR GROWTH: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2014 GLOBAL WIAL FORUM (NEW DELHI, INDIA)



It is difficult to point out the highlights of a packed 2-day program, as there were no low-lights ! The variety of exchanges, contacts and testimonies made for an intense period of learning and expanding the WIAL family. Fittingly, both days started with the symbolic lighting of the light of learning, and the reference to Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning and Knowledge.

Day 1 was for Action Learning coaches, and there was a room full of experience sharing the experiences with Action Learning in different cultures and settings.

Day 2 was the public day and brought a wide variety of professionals together, some with experience with Action Learning, and others curious to find out more. Professor Michael Marquardt opened the session

with his keynote address on “Learning for Growth in a VUCA world”, VUCA standing for volatile, uncertain, changing and ambiguous. Learning, maybe more than knowledge, is obviously key in the environment individuals and organizations are faced with!

“You cannot know what you need to learn, because that would be based on past experience. Real learning can only be useful if it helps you to deal with today’s and tomorrow’s challenges.”

Professor M Marquardt



There was a good balance of short and specific presentations, panel discussions on the issues of leadership development, and the chance for all participants to participate in an Action Learning session. No surprise that the demonstration session with Dr Marquardt attracted the largest

group of interested observers ! The panel discussions brought together experts with diverse backgrounds and viewpoints, who shared their thoughts and experiences on a variety of critical themes such as post-graduate talent development, employee engagement and entrepreneur development. The questions from the audience confirmed the high level of interest and engagement with these topics.

We learned how Action Learning helps develop leaders and teams, and address the organization’s priorities at the same time. I was very impressed by the testimony of Varun Kumar, who highlighted to what extent he had changed personally, finding a better life/work balance, while growing his business more than ten-fold, thanks to a series of Action Learning sessions with fellow business owners and entrepreneurs. Action Learning is not only to develop “the others” but is even more profound when people share their personal change and growth.

Another powerful presentation was by Professor Mikinari Higano, from Rikkyo University. Starting pretty much alone, Professor Higano has developed Action

“What you think is what you are”

Sanskrit expression

Learning as a key component of the business school’s students curriculum, with impressive numbers of coaches and participants. The projects the student teams work on are real business challenges faced by organizations, and the teams present their work to the company’s top management. This experience definitely gives them a step ahead once they enter into a professional role. The program’s success only put more challenges ahead of Professor Higano, because he was recently asked to expand the program over all departments of the university !

The WIAL India team definitely put the bar for future editions pretty high. I am sure Cleo Wolff and the Brazil team are all excited for the 2015 Brazil Global Forum!

Peter Cauwelier, director of WIAL Thailand

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