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Women in Geothermal (WING) Future Leaders Cohort: Spreading the WINGs of Future Women Leaders

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1 INTRODUCTION

Future Leaders Cohort Program brings together current female geothermal professionals to share experiences that focus on developing female leaders and supporting the increased presence of women in business and community leadership roles.

The program facilitates the sharing of experiences, tools and insights with women geothermal professionals to strengthen their roles as future leaders. The year-long curriculum consists of six to seven comprehensive modules, each of which has been meticulously designed to provide participants with the essential knowledge, skills and competencies for advancing in their professional careers. WING Global Operations Team *(Women in Geothermal: WING (2013))* conducts monthly virtual sessions in which participants engage with senior geothermal professionals, develop leadership plans, and share experiences with peers*(Özatalay, (2023)*).

The Future Leaders Cohort programme was initiated in 2020 *(Görgülü(2023))* and, by the end of 2025, it had successfully graduated four cohorts.

2 METHODS & RESULTS

WING Global Operations Team announces the application starting date in October each year. The announcements are made via social media and newsletter. The criteria to apply to the programme is listed below. The candidate must be female and;

- has a maximum of 2 employees directly reporting to her
- her career aspirations include moving into a leadership role in the next 2-3 years
- has at least 3, but no more than 10 years of experience
- is a current member of WING, working within the geothermal industry

The application deck must include;

- A cover letter including:
  - applicants full name,
  - home country, (if you are currently living in a country other than your home country, please note this as well for time zone purposes)
  - e-mail address,
  - contact phone number,
  - number of years of experience in the geothermal industry
  - number of direct reports (if any)
- A copy of applicants CV

- A maximum 300 word paragraph on why they think the advancement of women is important.
- A maximum 300 word paragraph on why they think they should be chosen as a future leader.
- Two letters of endorsement from a work related person i.e. your supervisor, work colleague, client, industry leader, mentor &/or sponsor etc endorsing your capability and qualities as a future leader in our industry.

A jury consisting of leading women executives of the industry have been invited by the WING global Operations Team each year. The jury reviews the application decks of the applicants and scores them from 1 to 5 with their comments and notes. While selecting the students, the jury focuses on the essays, applicant's background, and their capacity for leadership and being open for further development. Jury considers the relevant volunteering activities as an asset when scoring the candidates.

By consolidation of the scores by the programme supervisor, a short list is created. The team double checks that short list with the country ambassadors of each elected participant. After all confirmations have been collected, the Cohort Election results are announced via direct e-mail, website and social media. A kick-off meeting is being held by the WING Global Operations Team at the beginning of the programme in January of each year. And the final session occurs in July each year.

Throughout its implementation, the programme prioritised diversity among participants, particularly with regard to nationality. In line with this commitment, applications were accepted from 21 different countries (Argentina, Colombia, UK, El Salvador, France, Mexico, Kenya, NZ, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Philippines, Canada, Germany, Ecuador, US, Switzerland, Iceland, Australia, Brazil, Türkiye and Portugal) **Figure 1** . A total of 51 participants have completed the programme, demonstrating its international reach(**Figure 2)** and inclusive nature(*Çimen, (2023)*).

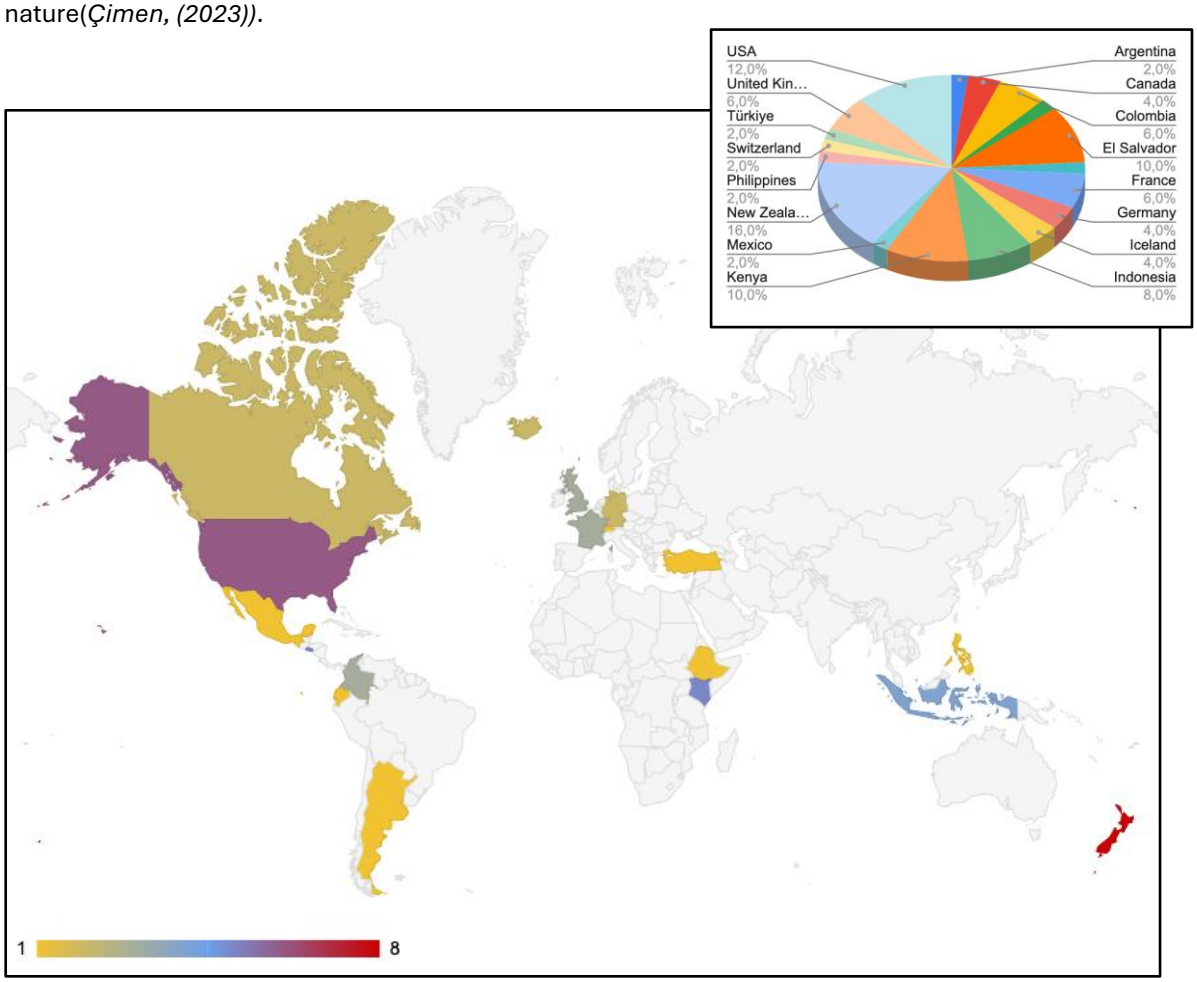

Figure 1. The map shown here gives the country specific origin of the FLC students that have attended the FLC cohort since 2020. The pie chart also shows the percentage of the attendees in each country.

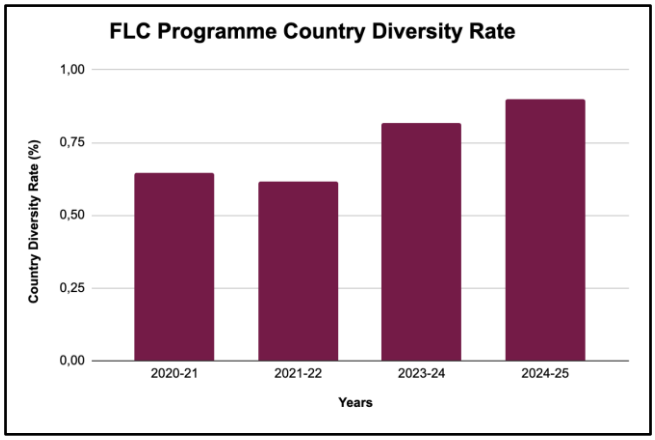

Figure 2. The chart shown here gives the country's diversity rate per year from 2020.

Program focuses on: meetings with current leaders sharing their career path, motivations, and goals; discussions on the type of knowledge and skills required to be a leader; plan development to build a leadership pathway for each attendee; and the opportunity to build relationships with other geothermal professionals looking to move into leadership roles.

The sessions generally includes given topics but not limited to;

- Strategic Career Planning
- Marketing Yourself and Interviewing
- Networking & Communication
- Leadership - Team Management
- The Curiosity Driven Career
- Time Management
- Gender Equality in Workplace - Awareness & Empowerment
- Final Session

In the first 2 seasons of the program there were round table discussions and there weren't any final presentations from the participants. After the Turkish Global Operations Team took over the programme they reviewed and challenged the content in terms of social impact and productivity. And a series of changes were made to increase and measure the impact, including;

- Pre & Post surveys about the programme
- Collecting feedback through initial surveys after each session
- To ensure that the participants internalized the concept and could apply it to their personal career path by having them present their new career plans in a final session at the end of all sessions. Participants present their short- and long-term career plans, which they have developed based on the knowledge and insights they have gained throughout the programme. Leading figures from the sector attend this session to hear the participants' plans and provide constructive feedback.

By the end of 2025, twenty-three distinct topics had been identified, and a seasoned leader with expertise in each topic had been engaged to serve as a mentor.

3 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

In the last two years of the FLC cohort, **the diversity of the country of origin has increased from %80 to 90%.**

Also, in the same period all students had to prepare and present their own career planning to the WING FLC Coordinators and invited leaders of the community; **that presentation was positioned as a threshold for the graduation.**

On another point, **the students' attendance to the 6 month program was around 90% with a 90 % graduation rate.**

Above all, FLC resulted in diverse career accomplishments, there are very encouraging examples such that after the cohort they were able to gain a promotion with higher level managerial positions. But, most importantly, many have re-visited their personal career plans and developed a better understanding of their current position and their future goals.

With this model we do not only build individual capacity, but also create an impact in advancing Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG's; 5 (Gender Equality), 4 (Quality Education), and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Women empowered through the program gain skills to lead initiatives in clean energy access (SDG 7) and community well-being (SDG 3) in underserved regions.

By supporting women leaders in geothermal, the FLC program is shaping a new generation of changemakers, directly contributing to a more sustainable world.

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Acknowledgements

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