Women in ZDMP

Women in ZDMP – Andreea Paunescu

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Some questions for you

- How did your career finally follow the path to STEM?
- How does a humanist survive in a technical world?
- What is your working field?
- What message would you give women regardless their age?

How did your career follow the path to STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics)?

It came as a surprise for me! It took this turn after many years in totally other fields, so here is the story: I have graduated in Economics and Law and my first job was in the banking sector, in the front office, interacting directly with the clients always expecting a friendly and smiling person behind the desk. The predilection to organise things made me think that I would do better in the back office, and this proved to be true because for 5 years I coordinated the credit management teams within two bank branches.

After that, I headed to the IT sector, working for the leader of Romanian software houses and one of the most successful software integrators from Central and Eastern Europe (SIVECO) [1] monitoring specialised websites to identify tenders and opportunities of interest for the company and having contact, for the first time, with the projects financed by the Romanian state, but as a back-up project manager.

I broke away from SIVECO and entered the world of start-up SMEs managing my own business of consultancy in accessing government programs. First in writing proposals and then by implementing them. My knowledge in legal sciences helped me become an insolvency practitioner providing support before the judges where companies go bankrupt, moments in which, I needed to prove that I could just as well argue the motives and ideas as a male practitioner would have done and be taken seriously even if I was a female practitioner. SIMAVI [2], the spin off SIVECO, wanted me back after two years and offered me the chance to manage R&D projects and even though it was a double challenge for me acting as a full project manager for the first time and becoming involved in the STEM, I took to it immediately.

How does a humanist survive in a technical world? How do you face this challenge?

Returning to SIMAVI in the mist of COVID pandemic, I didn't have the chance to meet my teams because we were all working from home. As hard as it seems, it was only recently that I have met my ZDMP team at the office for the first time. It was difficult at the beginning to build up the respect and the bridge of trust in this way, but not impossible and we did this as a team. I survive because of my team.

Initially, all my 3 R&D projects were made up only of male colleagues, which most of them I didn't know in person. But from last year, the ZDMP team enriched with another female colleague, software developer, but never till then have I sensed or felt disadvantaged in this regard.

What is your working field and position in the ZDMP project and how has this experience been so far?

I am the Project manager on behalf of SIMAVI, the partner leading the following tasks on Requirements Analysis, AI and Analytics, Secure Business Cloud, Human Collaboration Environment and Developer Engagement / Interaction. I am also a mentor for a subproject winner in open call 2 and recently I have been asked to join the GAP team and I gladly accepted. ZDMP is my first and great experience in European

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Projects, my most difficult project, but at the same time the most challenging one. Stepping in in the middle of the project was not easy at all, but I discovered a combination of knowledge, abilities, pleasant people that make it worth.

What message would you give women regardless their age?

Don't be put off by the fact that you're halfway through your professional life and it's too late to make a change! Embrace every opportunity that comes your way. You will never know where it can lead you. You may discover a world of great perspectives that you can face even though you think it's out your league. It is never too late to change your path towards a more attractive and innovative domain.

ZDMP Links

•	**Work Package**	WP13: Impact
•	**Tasks**	T4.1 Requirements Analysis T5.6 AI and Analytics T6.2 Secure Business Cloud T6.3 Human Collaboration Environment T11.4 Developer Engagement and Interaction

References

[1] http://www.siveco.ro/en

[2] https://www.simavi.ro/en