



PRO::ICT – Promoting ICT to Female Students

European Gender-Sensitive Training Material for Professionalizing Training and Consulting Activities

February 2005 Bielefeld/ Salzburg. **The project PRO::ICT (Promoting ICT to Female Students) funded by the European Leonardo da Vinci Programme, tackles the European-wide problem of female under-representation in ICT by bringing together Europe's Best Practise Projects. The project now presents the study "Female students make it in IT, but change needs a chance!" (free download) and an extensive internet database: www.pro-ict.net**

Under-representation of women in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is not a new phenomena, but a very persistent one. On the one hand women all over Europe are still missing in this important field while on the other hand industries claim a demand on qualified workers. The PRO::ICT project firstly carried out research about the multiple factors influencing the chances of women to work continuously in the ICT. The study "Female students make it in IT, but change needs a chance!" highlights barriers and needs of change agents and sets out strategies and activities on how to support girls and women in practise. The research focuses on three main transition phases in career orientation: first the idea of a technical career, then enrolment and study, and finally entry into working life.

Support for Change Agents

The study strengthened the idea of providing support for change agents in all these phases. "Our particular project approach is to take respect of the needs of responsible change agents, such as parents, peer-groups, youth workers, teachers, management staff of universities, career advisors, human resource managers and personnel developers who assist young women and female students along the multi-faceted ICT career path", the project manager Veronika Hornung-Prähäuser says. A change agent is a person, in any position or at any level, who is focused on the continual constructive reinvention of a system. He/she is always scanning for ideas, potential applications, needs, synergies, or emerging markets and is ready to move on anything promising.

As a concrete support an internet database was set up recently. Different stakeholders were testing the first outcomes and assured themselves of the quality of the provided material during several PRO::ICT workshops all over Europe: "The PRO::ICT training material is appealing for young women and inspiring for older women as well!" (Danish human resource manager) "It was really cool. We learned something about jobs and that there are a lot of jobs, we never heard about and didn't give any attention before. We could get an insight what computer specialists are doing." (Austrian students) "I would recommend the PRO::ICT collection, because it is an important topic. There are many different training and information materials which help to motivate girls having a closer look at IT professions." (Austrian youth trainer)

During the next months new material will be added weekly. Projects, institutions and interested persons are still welcome to contribute to the PRO::ICT database by sending their Best Practise material to the project management at: www.pro-ict.net

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Full report (free download) and database: www.pro-ict.net