

Promoting Gender Diversity and Equality in the ICT Industries

The European ICT industry is characterized by a deep gender imbalance in which only about 15% of jobs are occupied by female employees. At the same time unemployment rates in this sector are comparatively low and employment agencies report an unsatisfied demand for ICT professionals and leadership management (see www.e-skills.com). Although the situation varies among the different ICT sectors and European countries, more than ever women need more support in reaping benefit from this development and in overcoming educational and entrance barriers. Many studies provide evidence that multiple factors influence the chances of women to work continuously in the ICT field. The most important are:

- The awareness and mindset of a girls' social environment, e.g. parental and school environment in supporting female students perceiving a role in an ICT profession.
- The "right" match, e.g. supporting female ways of learning and handling ICT with diverse curriculae and enrolment procedures at schools and academic educational institutions.
- An explicitly gender sensitive support facility for female graduates available from the time they first enter the "male world" of IT.

Thus, professional guidance at all stages of a women's career-path will raise career opportunities, and smooth over the entrance barriers into what is generally perceived by many women as a male dominated industry.

PRO::ICT - Web Based Collection for Gender Sensitive Training Materials and Modules

The EU-project **PRO::ICT**, funded by Leonardo da Vinci, has identified this need for broad support and aims at bridging the gap in gender participation. Eleven European partner institutions joined together and will develop and test a set of gender sensitive training designs, workshop modules, eLearning settings or single material. The application of the training material shall support girls and women during their decision making for career and life planning within the IT sector. It will be offered via a webbased database, can be searched very flexibly and applied by all those persons who train girls and women in the various education and job-orientation phases. Free access will be offered to teachers, educationalists, human resources managers and consultants who play a (non-profit-oriented) role in the vocational guidance process.

The collection targets the following learning objectives:

■ **Group 1:: Women in ICT industry**

How to raise the awareness in the personal mindset (anticipation) towards an "unconventional career choice"? How to address the challenges of breaking into an IT career?

■ **Group 2:: Education and Courses**

How to introduce gender sensitive mechanisms in educational institutions in order to attract more female students? How to match female ways of learning and handling ICT with the requirements of school and university curricula? How to make qualification requirements visible and point out IT vocational career steps?

■ **Group 3:: Recruitment and Employment**

What job-profiles are offered by the market? How to prepare graduates for the IT recruitment process and working sphere? How to market an ICT company as an attractive employer for women?

The collection offers a variety of different training material, from plain information (e.g. literature, studies, statistics) to worked out workshop designs or single items (e.g. games, videos, songs). The aim of the **PRO::ICT Wizard** is to help users to search and flexibly combine these training materials depending on the age of the trained group [girls (13-16), students (16-19) and graduates].

PRO::ICT training material will include eContent in several languages and thus be spread among a strong **PRO::ICT network** in Europe. In particular schools and teacher's training institutions, universities of applied sciences and other operators of courses of studies within the range of ICT/new media, institutions of vocational guidance as well as human resources departments of enterprises get informed.

The PRO::ICT Partners

Salzburg Research Forschungsgesellschaft, Austria (Project Coordinator)

Centre for Social Innovation, Austria

ed-consult, Denmark

European Centre for Media Competence, Germany

National Organisation Women in Higher Technical Education and Positions, Netherlands

Student Computer Art Society, Bulgaria

Swiss Occidental Leonardo, Switzerland

University of Applied Sciences Salzburg, Austria

University of Wales Lampeter, United Kingdom

Verein Spektrum, Austria

Women give new Impetus to Technology, Germany

More Information:

<http://www.pro-ict.net>

Contact:

Project Management

Salzburg Research Forschungsgesellschaft mbH

Veronika Hornung-Prähauser

Jakob Haringer Str. 5/III

5020 Salzburg

Austria

fon: +43 (0)662-2288.405

fax: +43 (0)662.2288.222

eMail: veronika.hornung@salzburgresearch.at



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci