

Cross-Mentoring Conference January 21st, 2008
Speech of Rita Knott

Dear Mrs. Jacobs,
Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to wish a very warm welcome to everybody and I am glad that so many people have found the time – a few have come from far away – to share with us the presentation of the results of the 2nd edition of the Cross-Mentoring Program for Women in Leading Positions, which comes to its end after 12 months today.

When I started the first edition of the Cross-Mentoring in October 2006, I had the VISION that other women might experience and appreciate such a tool for professional development as I did a few years ago with my former Manageress, Mrs. Dalia Kaizerman from Israel which I also warmly welcome among us today.

To set up the program I needed the CO-OPERATION with an institution and I am very pleased that the Ministry of Equal Opportunities supported the program in 2006 as they did again in 2007.

I then had to have the PARTICIPATION of organisations which had the courage to experience this tool with their female mentees and their male and female mentors - and I am happy to say that we had 6 companies that did so in 2006 and 11 organisations in 2007.

A great many thanks to the Mentees and Mentors, as they had the CONFIDENCE to make this experience through this program, and they will share with you the lessons learned in the two workshops after the speeches.

With Mrs. Christel Klapper, my partner in the organization team, and thank you very much for all your support, we did the REFLECTION after the feedback of the first edition and we are now eager to hear what we can improve and what worked well.

To describe the goals of the mentoring program I may use the words of the Little Prince of Saint-Exupéry: "If you would like to build a ship don't look for people gathering together the wood, but teach them the longing for the sea".

And this is what it is all about in this Mentoring program:

There is no “One-fits-all” recipe for leadership development, career planning, work-life balance and many other relevant issues.

But we tried to increase the participants’ awareness of their own influence in their career life with their values, in the development of further options to succeed in a balanced way with their private life and we wanted to be facilitators, with the propose to increase their self-responsibility and personal reflection.

My MOTIVATION to go on with this second program was to respond to the demand after the last closing conference and to have fun to see many people developing further.

So it goes on: we have already registrations for a third edition and therefore if other interested organisations would like to join us, they can do so by registering until February 15th.

And now I am even more pleased to tell you that the Luxembourg Cross-Mentoring met a lot of interest on a GLOBAL level:

Today I welcome specialists from many countries like Germany, Switzerland, Portugal, Israel and Kazakhstan.

Together with Dr. Gudrun Ziegler, from the Master study course Multi-Learn of the University of Luxembourg we are now seeking funds from the 7th Research Program of the European Commission to launch the Cross-Mentoring 2009 in 10 European Union countries and in Switzerland, Istanbul, Israel, Kazakhstan and India - you see that the VISION goes on.

I take this opportunity to thank my Managing Director, Mr. Daniel Calo’ of Bank Hapoalim Luxembourg for the support the Bank gave me with this program during the last years which I did on an extraprofessional level besides my function in the Management Committee.

I am very honoured to welcome Mrs. Hana Pri-zan, Member of the Board of Management of Bank Hapoalim Head office in Israel, she took the time to be here today and to share with us her personal experience as a women in a senior position.

I have been working for Bank Hapoalim in Luxembourg more than 25 years and – in order to develop also some other skills – I will venture this spring to work “full- time” on consulting and human resources development programs within my own company.

I thank you all for your interest, participation and support – without this I would not be here today.