

Conference of the Mentoring Programme for University Women of Europe

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Anneke van Doorne-Huiskes
President VVAO, the Netherlands



Mentoring: Empowering women in a non-profit organisation

- Women in The Netherlands: some facts and figures
- What is mentoring?
- Main principles and models of mentoring VVAO
- Specific mentoring benefits for women
- Conditions for a successful mentoring
- Mentoring in an academic setting
- Different accents in Finland, Turkey and The Netherlands

Women in The Netherlands: some facts and figures

- Substantial progress of women in level of education during the last three decades
- Of all students in higher vocational schools and universities 51% are women
- Share of women in PH D's 42%

Labour Force

- Labour force participation of women in NL 57% in 2007; men 75%
- Substantial increase in labour force participation among women 45-55 years of age (65% in 2007)
- Participation elder women (55-65 years) increased to 30%

Some characteristics of female labour force participation in NL

- High number of female part-time workers (about 70%)
- Even highly educated women work in (large) part-time jobs (about 30 hours per week)
- Low percentages of women in top positions
- Work-family balance highly valued
- Still an actual issue: how to get more women in top positions

What is mentoring?

- A voluntary, not-for-profit relationship between two individuals
- The mentor is a person with relevant knowledge and experience
- The mentee wants to learn from the mentor for her (or his) personal and professional development
- Basic concept: mentoring is a relationship created to share knowledge and experience for learning in a purposeful way

Main principles of VVAO mentoring

- Mentoring is meant to increase mentee's participation to society
- Mentee gets support to build up a significant network
- Mentee will gain an insight into own functioning
- Mentee, of course, is responsible for her own success

VVAO models of mentoring

- A general model: members for members
- Members for members, specified to field or discipline
- Members for women outside VVAO:
 - female refugees
 - migrant women from western or non-western origin

Specific mentoring benefits for women

- Strengthening support relationships
- Expanding career horizons
- Bridging career breaks

Conditions for successful mentoring

- Complete confidentiality
- Absence of a judgemental attitude
- Open-mindedness and willingness to learn
- Respect for each other's contribution
- Understanding that examining the past is/could be valuable for providing clear insights into the future

Mentoring in an academic setting

- Training for male/female professors who were willing to become a mentor for academic female staff
- Starting with “the problem”
 - Female students 60%
 - Female PH D students 50%
 - Female assistant professors 42%
 - Female associate professors 20%
 - Female professors 14%

Why so few female professors

- The Dutch pattern of part-time jobs
- Opportunity costs for women higher than for men (?)
- Small steps, large consequences (cumulating effects of decisions during the life course)
- Doing things right or doing the right things
- Visibility; perception of risks; the power of traditional frames and patterns

Mentors know the ins and outs of academic life

- Looking at yourself: how did you achieve the function/the rank of professor?
- What have you done for your career, what have you given up

Exercise

- Imagine you are a female member of academic staff (assistant or associate professor)
- Formulate a question you would like to ask your mentor
- Have a mentor/mentee discussion on this question

A good mentor.....

- Gives time and attention to mentee
- Recognises the qualities and competences of mentee
- Is able to listen
- Is able to give feed back
- Communicates at a level which is workable, useful for mentee
- Has authority in the organisation
- Does not judge immediately
- Strengthens the chances of success for mentee

Questions of mentor to mentee

- Look back at your career so far: what went well, what went wrong?
- Which people you admire?
- What moves you, what are your dreams?
- What is of real importance in your life?
- Where do you want to be in three years time? Action plan?

Some tips for the mentor

- Level with your mentee
- Open doors and initiate contacts
- Give a perspective
- Use your own experience (in a sensible way)
- Share what you know; share what you are doing

Different accents in Finland, Turkey and the Netherlands

- Finland: focus on careers of young women
- Turkey: focus on young women, coming from the country side, going to university cities
- Netherlands: different foci (migrant women; own members VVAO; older women; career switchers; women who start their own company)

Thanks for your attention