

Bulgarian good practice: Leadership Academy for women on management positions

The Leadership Academy¹ has been launched in Bulgaria in 2014 and continued in 2015 by one of the powerful business gender equality supporting women's organizations. The academy fosters the personal and professional development of women in mid-level management positions.



Sofia Mayor Yordanka Fandakova, the patron of **Ladership Academy 2015/2016**, said at the opening: *“Undoubtedly, we need strong women leaders in all areas and the Leadership Academy is an initiative that effectively works towards the*

development of such leaders. I am glad that many women from Sofia have enrolled at the Academy as the region needs their expertise and professionalism. I will be happy to give away the diplomas to the graduates of the second class after their year of training,”

How does it work?

“Leadership Academy” represents a one-year training in the form of several consecutive one-day sessions, organized once per month, dedicated to the development of personal and professional “soft skills” of the participants in a work environment. The Academy is entirely funded by the member companies of the business women's organisation and is completely free for the candidates taken in.

The training programme consists of 7 modules:

- ❖ Emotional intelligence – Real life learning
- ❖ Career consulting – Business model
- ❖ Giving and receiving feedback
- ❖ Inclusion at work – Strengths and weaknesses of a team
- ❖ One for all and all for one – Leadership academy teambuilding
- ❖ Design thinking (new in 2015/2016)
- ❖ Final module and official closing ceremony

¹ <http://womeninbusiness.bg/en/leadership-academy-2015/>



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Different member companies of the business women's organisation host the modules and so trainees can get to know various businesses.

The number of candidates increases on early basis and among the trainees are representatives of various economic sectors - banks, information and communication technologies, trade, consulting services, education, manufacturing, construction, tourism, public administration and others.

According to the IT Jobs News² over 40 ambitious ladies, representatives of small and medium businesses and ladies with experience in managerial positions have undergone training at the 2014/2015 academy. The promoters of this training continue to support graduates with coaching and mentoring programmes. 33% of the first graduates develop their own business. Others are employees of companies as well as representatives of the state administration. Some ladies hold high positions in the insurance sector, retail and hospitality. 43% of attendees occupy managerial positions. The academy attracts women from across the country.

International GLOW initiative in Bulgaria for young women leaders

Another initiative has been implemented in Bulgaria to improve leadership skills for women. Girls Leading Our World (GLOW)³ is seven-day experience that is aimed at helping 75 young Bulgarian girls between 14 and 18 reach and explore their potential as future leaders. The Academy aides in their development by engaging them in various topics, such as identity, teamwork, self-esteem, decision making, civic responsibility, European citizenship, business skills and many others in ways that allow the young women to form their own knowledge.

The international initiative was established as a Camp by Peace Corps volunteers in Romania in 1995, when three volunteers and four Romanian teachers took 80 young women to a mountain campsite for a weeklong leadership camp to help the young women improve their self-esteem and develop life skills. Since 1995, Peace Corps volunteers in more than 60 countries have established similar programs to promote the empowerment of women.

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² <http://itjobs.bg/news/2015/03/04/business-ladies-can-apply-for-training-in-leadership-academy/?lang=en>

³ <http://www.bgglow.com/index.php/en/glow-leadership-academy/about-the-academy>,

<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/glow-bulgaria/>, <https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/glow-bulgaria/>

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