



Women Effect Conference - 9/05/16

Interview with Vincent Hieff from the Ministry of the Economy

The Women Effect can only happen when men and women work together to drive change. Hedda Pahlson-Moller caught up with Vincent Hieff from the Ministry of the Economy who gave a male perspective on the Women Effect event and explained the Ministry's work in this key area.

There was a plethora of information about the Women Effect shared at the recent Invest Differently event. What is your reaction to it and what are your thoughts on the perspectives of the Luxembourg women who spoke on the panel?

By Luxembourg standards, I was brought up in a fairly gender neutral context, with both parents working as entrepreneurs. The event has given me a new perspective. I have now learnt about gender positivity, which has given me a different focus.

In Luxembourg, the foundations are not bad, but it is important that women are part of the whole economy. This is something that starts at the education level, at the Lycée or even earlier. At the moment kids are being educated to want secure jobs and not to take risks, but this needs to change and kids need to be supported when they have their own bright ideas. An entrepreneurial spirit needs to be brought into schools and in that same vein so does the gender lens. This could be an ideal combination.

Do you think that Luxembourg is putting the right amount of resources into this initiative?

What resources are being put into facilitating change?

The Ministry of Equality of Chances is, of course, deeply involved in this area. As for the Ministry of the Economy, we have several programmes which support entrepreneurship. We try and support initiatives which lead through good example. To take action, you need to see other people that did it.

We need to hear their stories. There are a handful of stories which we hear fairly regularly, but we need to hear from more of the thousands of other entrepreneurs in the country and we need to share their stories. There are initiatives that you can join. Do not hesitate to tell your entrepreneurial story. The Ministry is also supporting women in investment roles and women networks to ensure that men and women are helping women to make this change.

Do you have a call to action? How can the private sector work with the public sector?

Again, please do share your stories. Please do join our initiatives.

Secondly, mentorship is necessary. There are a lot of young women that want to start a business or go into the investment world. They need support. They need guidance. They need a mentor. And we need both men and women to step into this role. Women entrepreneurs should not only be mentored by women but also by men. Unfortunately, there were not so many men at the Invest Differently conference, but I do hope those who were there will take this responsibility on board.