



Women's Empowerment Program Boosts Career Prospects

The Women's Empowerment Program allowed Ana Dankman of Israel to accomplish her dream of returning to school.

Throughout the world, the Cisco® Networking Academy® program aims to increase the participation of women in the ICT industry through inclusive programs and initiatives. This goal is supported by the Women's Empowerment Program (WEP), which helps women overcome challenging economic or social circumstances.

"For me, the course was like a gym for the brain. You are always looking forward to the next lesson. It's almost like an addiction!"

Ana Dankman,
Academy graduate

One student who has benefitted from WEP is Ana Dankman, a 23-year old mother of two living in Tel Aviv, Israel. Before WEP, Dankman had given up on her hopes for college. "I wanted to start my higher education," she explains, "but soon realized that because of my financial status, it would never happen. I simply couldn't afford it." To make ends meet, Dankman sold clothes at a local shopping mall.

In 2006, her fortunes changed when she saw a newspaper ad about networking courses that were being offered at a nearby WEP academy. She enrolled in the Cisco CCNA® course at the Neot Herzal center in Netanya and soon rediscovered her love of learning, along with a sense of independence and fulfillment. "I enjoyed every minute of the course," she recalls. "When I left my house to go to the academy, I felt I was doing something for myself for the first time in years."

After completing her studies, Dankman became a qualified Networking Academy instructor at Neot Herzal, and soon afterwards, she accepted a position at a local bank.

One of the factors that allowed Dankman to complete her studies at the academy is the provision of childcare. Area Academy Manager for Israel, Ifat Baron, explains; "We noticed that the mothers were coming to the course with their young children, since they couldn't afford to pay for a babysitter, so we recruited a local teacher to play with the kids during the class and help them with their homework."

By remaining sensitive to the specific needs of its students, the networking academy in Netanya has allowed women to access opportunities that were previously unattainable, while increasing their self-confidence and improving their economic prospects.

