

Pressemitteilung

Roland Berger Foundation presents scholarships to school children joining its "Fit for Responsibility" program

Munich, June 30, 2009: 140 school children have been formally awarded their scholarships under the Roland Berger Foundation's "Fit for Responsibility" program. The students, including a large number of primary school pupils, are from Berlin, Brandenburg, Upper Bavaria and the Ruhr Area. At this afternoon's award ceremony, Prof. h.c. Roland Berger handed the certificates to representatives of the state ministries for education, who accepted these on behalf of the scholars.

Speaking at a ceremony in Munich, Prof. h.c. Roland Berger welcomed 140 school children and 14 university students to the "Fit for Responsibility" scholarship program. The State Ministers and State Secretaries of Education in charge of schools in the four pilot regions accepted the scholarship certificates on behalf of the lucky school students. The states involved at this stage are Berlin, Brandenburg, Bavaria and North Rhine-Westphalia.

The "Fit for Responsibility" program is designed to help motivated and responsible gifted children and young people from socially disadvantaged families. The support package is individually tailored to the needs of each recipient. Scholarship holders enjoy ongoing assistance right through to the final school exams qualifying for higher education. From the more than 600 applications received, 140 school children were selected. They are between the ages of seven and seventeen and hail from the program's pilot regions of Berlin, Brandenburg, Upper Bavaria and the Ruhr Area. A pre-selection of fourteen students was made back in February to set an example and encourage younger pupils to apply for program admission.

Just how important a good education is for an individual's subsequent career is explained in a report entitled "Information society Germany: Developing talent – Ten recommendations for improving education". This publication is issued by the Roland Berger Foundation to accompany the initiative.

Explaining the reasons for the program, Roland Berger pointed out that, "Our country has few natural resources. That makes the resource knowledge all the more important. There is nothing we need more urgently than the bright minds of our children. Fostering their development not only means giving these youngsters a fair chance in life; it also represents the best possible investment in the future of everyone in society." But, as he went on to say, "In Germany, a child's progress at school is unfortunately closely dependent on his or her social background. A society that neglects the latent skills and talents of its children acts irresponsibly in terms of the human cost. And it runs the risk of failing to meet its future needs for well-educated skilled workers and graduates. This is why it is so important to make children

and young people from socially disadvantaged families a stronger focus of educational support."

Dr. Agi Schründer-Lenzen, Professor for Primary Education Pedagogy and Didactics at the University of Potsdam, calls for "providing pupils with support preferably early on rather than damage control down the road". She says, "In the educational sphere, we cannot do enough in terms of early intervention because the futures of children and young people are at stake. We all share responsibility here. If we fail to support gifted children at an early stage, it will be far more difficult to put things right in the future."

"Fit for Responsibility" is a modular program in which an individual support plan is drawn up for each scholarship holder on the basis of ten possible components. The plan is customized for each scholar according to his or her specific strengths, weaknesses and talents. The plan can include, for instance, one-on-one tutoring in specific subjects and seminars on business, science, politics, art, music as well as etiquette. These topics can be further focused on in summer academies. Internships at companies and non-profit organizations round out the program.

The school students receive individual guidance from volunteer mentors operating in their regions. "We have recruited around a hundred mentors. These are individuals with a strong track record in education, parenting, business, academia or church initiatives," explained Barbara Loos, who coordinates the mentoring program. "The mentors give the youngsters counseling and supervision, furthering their personal and academic development as they strive to do well at school and achieve good grades. They play a mediating role between the young scholarship holder, the parents, the school and the foundation."

The Roland Berger Foundation's support package also includes financial assistance. The school students receive grants towards remedial coaching, school trips and study materials, such as for books or computers. The foundation can also pay for books and media, meet other study-related expenses and cover tuition fees.

Photos of the event (in high-resolution print quality) as well as the above-mentioned report in German ("*Wissensgesellschaft Deutschland: Begabungen fördern – Zehn Empfehlungen zur Steigerung der Bildungsqualität*") are available for free download under: www.rolandbergerstiftung.org

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The Roland Berger Foundation, headquartered in Munich, is an independent public foundation under German civil law. It was founded by Prof. Dr. h.c. Roland Berger on March 27, 2008. The Roland Berger Foundation is endowed with a foundation capital of EUR 50 million, from Roland Berger's own assets, and has an Executive Board and a Board of Trustees.

The Foundation has two objectives: first, the Foundation is committed to recognizing, promoting and protecting human dignity and human rights around the world. To this end, the "Roland Berger Human Dignity Award – to promote peaceful cooperation in the world", endowed with EUR 1 million, is awarded every year. The award winners are selected by an Awards Committee consisting high-caliber people, including three Nobel Peace Prize Laureates. Second, the Roland Berger Foundation supports talented young people from less privileged backgrounds. The Roland Berger "Fit for responsibility" scholarship program makes it possible for them to obtain a high-quality education and thus lead a self-determined life.