



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union

STUDY

Policy Department  
Structural and Cohesion Policies

**GENDER ASPECTS IN LIFELONG LEARNING**

CULTURE AND EDUCATION

October 2007

EN





ΕΒΡΟΠΕΪΣΚΙ ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤ ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤΟ ΕΥΡΟΠΕΟ ΕΥΡΟΠΣΚΪ ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤ ΕΥΡΟΠΑ-ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤΕΤ  
ΕΥΡΟΠΆΙΣΧΕΣ ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤ ΕΥΡΟΟΡΑ ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤ ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΟΙΝΟΒΟΥΛΙΟ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
PARLEMENT EUROPEËN PARLAIMINT NA ΗΕΟΡΑ ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤΟ ΕΥΡΟΠΕΟ ΕΙΡΟΠΑΣ ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤΣ  
EUROPOS PARLAMENTAS EURÓPAI PARLAMENT IL-PARLAMENT EWROPEW EUROPEES PARLEMENT  
PARLAMENT EUROPEJSKI PARLAMENTO EUROPEU PARLAMENTUL EUROPEAN  
EURÓPSKY PARLAMENT EVROPSKI PARLAMENT EUROOPAN PARLAMENTTI EUROPAPARLAMENTET

**Directorate General Internal Policies of the Union**

**Policy Department Structural and Cohesion Policies**

**CULTURE AND EDUCATION**

**GENDER ASPECTS IN LIFELONG LEARNING**

**STUDY**

**IP/B/CULT/IC/2006\_196**

**31/10/2007**

**PE 389.580**

**EN**

This study was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education.

This paper is published in the following language:

- Original: EN.

Author: European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA),  
Brussels, Belgium

Responsible Official: Constanze Itzel  
Policy Department Structural and Cohesion Policies  
European Parliament  
B-1047 Brussels  
E-mail: [ipoldepb@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:ipoldepb@europarl.europa.eu)

Manuscript completed in October 2007.

This study is available on the Internet at:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/expert/eStudies.do?language=EN>

Brussels, European Parliament, 2007.

The opinions expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of the European Parliament.

Reproduction and translation for non-commercial purposes are authorized, provided the source is acknowledged and the publisher is given prior notice and sent a copy.



ΕΒΡΟΠΕΪΣΚΙ ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤ ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤΟ ΕΥΡΟΠΕΟ ΕΥΡΟΠΣΚΪ ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤ ΕΥΡΟΠΑ-ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤΕΤ  
ΕΥΡΟΠΆΙΣΧΕΣ ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤ ΕΥΡΟΟΡΑ ΠΑΡΛΑΜΕΝΤ ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΟΙΝΟΒΟΥΛΙΟ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
PARLEMENT EUROPEEN PARLAIMINT NA HEORPA PARLAMENTO EUROPEO EIROPAS PARLAMENTS  
EUROPOS PARLAMANTAS EURÓPAI PARLAMENT IL-PARLAMENT EWROPEW EUROPEES PARLEMENT  
PARLAMENT EUROPEJSKI PARLAMENTO EUROPEU PARLAMENTUL EUROPEAN  
EURÓPSKY PARLAMENT EVROPSKI PARLAMENT EUROOPAN PARLAMENTTI EUROPAPARLAMENTET

**Directorate General Internal Policies of the Union**

**Policy Department Structural and Cohesion Policies**

**CULTURE AND EDUCATION**

**GENDER ASPECTS IN LIFELONG LEARNING**

**STUDY**

**Content:**

The objective of this study is to contribute to the gathering of data available on women's participation in lifelong learning and to make recommendations concerning non-academic lifelong learning, in particular adult education, for women. The relationship of learning for access to, and promotion in, the labour market has also been considered.

**IP/B/CULT/IC/2006\_196**

**PE 389.580**

**EN**



## **Executive Summary**

### **The Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study is to contribute to the collection of the available data on women's participation in lifelong learning and to make recommendations concerning non-academic lifelong learning, in particular adult education, for women. The relationship of learning and the access to and progress in the labour market has also been considered.

There is an abundance of documentation and data in the fields of gender, the labour market, and education and training. Given the timeframe available for the study, it was decided to make a selection of European countries which would enable analysis of the most important issues in the field of gender and lifelong learning.

The countries selected are Germany, the Republic of Ireland, Greece, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom; an additional short report discusses childcare provision as a specific point of interest from the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, which have well-developed adult education systems and have also implemented a range of measures to support gender equality at all levels of society over a long period. The study (see annex) includes a chapter on women in business from an international perspective, suggesting what women need to succeed in their work environment and to enable them to seek promotion since gender mainstreaming is not a binding principle for companies.

### **Gender Mainstreaming at European Level**

The development of gender mainstreaming, initiated in the early 1990s by European governments, the European Union and the Council of Europe, led to the standard definition of the term: 'Gender mainstreaming is the (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated into all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making.'

Gender mainstreaming cannot replace specific policies which aim to redress situations resulting from gender inequality. Specific gender equality policies and gender mainstreaming are dual and complementary strategies and must go hand in hand to reach the goal of gender equality.'

The European Commission's Communication 'A Roadmap for equality between women and men' of March 2006 has 'six priority areas for EU action on gender equality for the period 2006-2010: equal economic independence for women and men; reconciliation of private and professional life; equal representation in decision-making; eradication of all forms of gender-based violence; elimination of gender stereotypes; promotion of gender equality in external and development policies'. This, together with the European Pact for Gender Equality, are major achievements on the road to real equality between women and men. Gender mainstreaming is therefore an important principle in the European Union and in all the Member States, supported by a wide range of initiatives and efforts at all levels.

### **Women and Men in Lifelong Learning**

It should be noted that gender factors are not always explicit in the data: conclusions have to be drawn by cross-analysing, as far as this is possible.

## **EU Benchmark – Adult Participation in Lifelong Learning**

Slovenia, the Netherlands and Austria. All remaining EU countries are still below the average performance level of 12.5%. Italy, Greece, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia and Hungary have participation rates at or below 5%. Bulgaria and Romania are at the extremely low level of less than 2%.

Persons with high educational attainment have a much higher participation rate in non-formal education than those with medium or low attainment levels. Within countries, the highest participation rates in lifelong learning are often found in the regions around the capital. Lifelong learning should therefore be an integral part of a regional development strategy. Using the opportunities afforded by the European Structural Funds could be a powerful tool in achieving gender equality.

The working status of the participants has more impact on the intensity of their participation than their educational attainment. In most countries, those in employment receive nearly three times as much training as the unemployed.

Recognition of non-formal and informal learning would make a substantial contribution to promoting women. Together with the European Qualifications Framework, an important tool for accrediting competences, recognition of non-formal and informal learning will be one of the decisive means of implementing gender mainstreaming through learning.

## **Employment and Women**

Directives from the European Commission so far have raised awareness of the need to respect the equality of women and men; nevertheless, the reality is that there is still a long way to go. Figures for participation in lifelong learning do not correlate with better conditions for employment and access to the labour market.

Although the participation rate of women in lifelong learning is higher than that of men and their educational achievements exceeds male performance, this is not reflected in the employment rate. Female employment has not yet reached the Lisbon aim of 60%; it is currently at 55.7% and at 31.7% for women 55-64 years old.

Lifelong learning is of increasing importance; the acquisition and improvement of qualifications and skills are more and more essential for those in employment and equally for the unemployed. However, women in employment are still concentrated in fewer sectors than men, and these sectors are still the 'traditional' ones for women. Work related to 'male' characteristics – such as ICT and technology – brings higher rewards in terms of income and social status whereas that related to 'female characteristics': – the health and care sectors, education – yields lower income and inferior status.

The pay gap between women and men has to be bridged. Not only does a high proportion of women work in low-paid jobs, but women often receive lower pay for the same work and earn less than men with the same qualification levels. Because of family commitments, women more often work part-time and thus have lower incomes than men.



## **Financing Lifelong Learning**

The range of providers and the sources of finance in particular for non-formal education for adults differ throughout European countries and within countries. Generally speaking, non-formal learning is financed through a combination of resources. Various incentives such as learning vouchers, paid educational leave, and training grants have been developed in European countries.

## **Indicators and Benchmarks**

The only existing agreed European benchmark for lifelong learning is, that by 2010, the European Union average level of participation in lifelong learning will have reached at least 12.5% of the adult population of working age (25-64). As the promotion of lifelong learning is a key element in the Lisbon strategy, this indicator is clearly insufficient.

The indicator refers only to overall participation in lifelong learning activities, even though statistics exist for participation by gender. There is no analysis of the impact of lifelong learning on employment or job creation. Nor are gender aspects mentioned in the different indicators currently being proposed (participation, skills, age groups etc).

Generally, the position in respect of benchmarks and indicators for lifelong learning is poor. There are other statistical data such as Eurostat surveys, but they cannot provide benchmarks or indicators for lifelong learning.

## **European Projects**

Some projects from the Grundtvig programmes which focus on gender issues have been selected as good practice examples. However, it would be worthwhile analysing all EU-funded projects in non-formal education and training to review how they address gender and, in particular, whether they offer examples of good practice and transferability.

Within the theme of gender, the role, or the changing role of men is very important. Two projects have been selected out of several focusing on men's role in society.

## **Gender Aspects in Lifelong Learning at National Level: A Comparative Study of Lifelong Learning and the Labour Market from six Member States.**

The most important issues from the national reports in this study are analysed and compared, against the background of the National Progress reports 2006. Each of the national reports reveals specific perspectives and perceptions flowing from the national contexts, differing policy traditions and frameworks for education, differing economic environments and labour market conditions.

The **Republic of Ireland** has reached practically full employment with an 83% increase in the number of women working since 1985. Policy strategies and society in general therefore no longer aspire to job growth as an end in itself. The quality of employment is becoming more important than the number of jobs. Policy therefore now focuses on achieving a balanced workforce that has access to education and training beyond job related skills. The economic growth of Ireland over the past decade has been achieved partly through the huge increase in women's labour market participation.

Women's increasing participation in education systems is a major outcome of the growth of women's community education groups as providers. But there is evidence that employment and training policies have tended to focus on securing access to the labour market with less emphasis on education and training for progression within it. Inadequate training has been identified in the National Women's Strategy 2007 as a major factor affecting the advancement of women. The successful development of female education and work essentially is an outcome of European policies and programmes, which were taken up and extended by Irish national government. Gender mainstreaming has become a central key policy.

The **United Kingdom** has a significant range of legislative and policy measures designed to mainstream gender equality. At 67%, the employment rate for women exceeds the Lisbon target of 60% by 2010. However, structural inequalities in the labour market remain stubbornly resistant to change.

Gendered patterns of employment, hours of work, occupational segregation and pay, emerge immediately after compulsory education and continue throughout working life. The gender pay gap in the UK is among the worst in Europe.

The report confirms an overall increase in employment-related skills and a reduction in the number of female and male employees without qualifications. Women are accessing higher levels of education and more work experience, which means they are increasingly equipped for high level jobs. But women are not accessing key positions in the economy. Those sectors traditionally dominated by women (the 'five Cs' – cleaning, catering, caring, cashiering and clerical work), remain poorly paid and undervalued.

Current adult learning discourse is starting to focus on the need to retain more women for the labour market, and particularly those of black and ethnic minority origin.

There are numerous examples of good practice which deal with tackling the specific barriers to women's participation in lifelong learning and employment. Amongst them a recent EQUAL-funded programme ('Women into Work: Building Futures') which clearly identified a male workplace culture as a major barrier to non-traditional employment. Current vocational training also perpetuates gendered occupational differences. A disproportionately high number of participants in work-based training routes are male, with a direct impact on later employment patterns.

In **Poland**, a process of rapid economic reforms, which has resulted in relatively high unemployment rates, has been accompanied by major transitions in the Polish educational system. Whilst there has been an enormous increase of higher education, Poland has one of the lowest participation rates in educational opportunities focusing on practical job-related skills. However, contradictory trends can be observed: a growing number of very well qualified women but strong traditional role patterns. 47% of Polish women feel there is discrimination in the labour market.

There is a very low participation rate in lifelong learning; one reason may be found on the supply side, where the quality and relevance of some training may be below EU-average because of insufficient mechanisms for quality control. Only recently (with the growing flow of EU funds available for training measures) has a system of voluntary registration of institutions providing training been established.

Gender mainstreaming is a relatively new concept for both public administration and civil society in the country. Due to the binding obligations of Poland's membership of the European Union and the remarkable funding opportunities of ESF and EQUAL, a range of activities have been introduced, many directly supporting women and with 62% of the beneficiaries overall being women.

**Germany:** The rapid political, economic and cultural changes post reunification have been a radical turning point for citizens of the so-called 'new' federal states (Länder). Employment structures, tax and social security systems in the united Germany have in principle continued and have developed the models of the old Federal Republic of Germany.

From 1992-2003 the employment rate of women increased continuously (by nearly 60%) whereas the employment rate of men declined from 76% to 70%. But when comparing full-time-equivalents the picture changes: the full-time equivalent of men has stayed at around 70% whereas the full-time workplaces of women have remained at 45%.

Throughout Europe part-time work is typical of a gendered labour market. Women with children look for part-time work. Moreover, in Germany the employment rate of women with children is lower than that of women without children whereas men without children have a lower employment rate than men with children.

The participation rate of women in the labour market is higher in the East although unemployment in the new federal states has dramatically increased.

The differences between the two parts of Germany indicate that, despite similar institutional frameworks, attitudes, experiences, and perceptions have a major impact on education. The higher the formal levels of qualification, the better the chances of participating in continuing education and training.

Projects funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) have a supporting role in German labour market policies, but they have not the outstanding importance as in Ireland or Greece. European funding is more important for the federal states.

**Spain** draws particular attention to the role of women in the establishment of democracy after decades of dictatorship in the country.

With the support of policies, there has been an enormous increase in programmes and actions initiated and developed by institutions, agencies and organisations, such as Popular Universities, to foster civil society and the equal participation of women. An important aspect of the report is the role of adult education in democratic awareness-raising, and in implementing and disseminating democratic values as a necessary prerequisite of gender equality.

Spain traditionally has one of the highest rates of unemployment with a gender gap of more than 20% in participation rates (male 75.2 %, women 51.2%). Labour market segregation and inequalities become even more obvious when underground and illegal employment is taken into account. 17% of women work without being registered in the social security system. The majority of the women working under illegal employment contracts have a migrant background.

In order to face the challenges of this change, in particular with regard to gender equality and qualifications for entry to the labour market, the specific contribution and the experience of non-formal adult education institutions in lifelong learning programmes are needed more than ever.

The report refers to the lack of concrete information on the European Social Fund's contribution to different priorities in Spain, although the Spanish Government developed a joint strategy for the ESF with a focus on promoting employment and continuing training including specific support, guidance and training on gender aspects.

**Greece** is an example of the establishment of promising policies and measures for gender equality without any previous experience. Policies remain contradictory. Greece still has one of the biggest gender gaps in the labour market amongst European countries, with the rate of unemployment of women (2005: 15.3%) being nearly double that for men (8.3%). In 2005 the employment rate for women in Greece was 46.1%, whilst the male rate was 74.50%.

The model of the family is still based on the strong breadwinner and has not yet been substantially modified especially within the social security system and the welfare regime, which remain traditional and family centred, treating women mainly as dependants. The pension system de facto perpetuates gender inequalities.

Greece has introduced various entitlements to support maternity, paternity and parenthood. Despite these efforts the lack of childcare facilities is evident (7% for children under 3 years of age, 60% for children between 3 years and the mandatory school age) and remains one of the most significant obstacles to achieving gender equality.

Along with changes in policies gender equality principles have been incorporated into lifelong learning policies. The National Strategy for adult education in Greece aims to review and redesign the aims of formal, non-formal and informal education, thus providing policy makers with a unique opportunity to increase citizens' access to knowledge, training and education. Greece is also an example of the decisive impetus given by European legislation, alongside national commitment and funding, to new gender policies. The European funds offered the means - financial, political and methodological - of strengthening gender equality, and the national government took the opportunity of designing and implementing measures, policies and initiatives to promote gender equality as a horizontal measure encompassing all aspects of public activity and government.

A large share of resources, mainly EU funding, has been channelled into vocational education and training, with the main priority being employment and social inclusion. In all training programmes for unemployed people run by the Greek Manpower Organization, there is a quota of at least 60% women. During 2005 and the first quarter of 2006, 35.000 women benefited from national employment and training programmes. The influence of European policies in bringing about a different, non-discriminatory perception of society is of special interest in the case of Greece.

### **Gender Evidence in Lifelong Learning**

The quality of female participation is still a question; women still lag behind men in participation in employment especially in areas such as the sciences, engineering and construction.

All Member States show evidence that women have been stereotyped in their career choices. This is happening even at the early stages of formal education. Whilst females are outperforming males in both formal and non-formal education they are still taking up typically female careers such as education, health, social and retail services.

Education plays a key role in the labour market participation of women. However statistics also show that despite women's access to education, women's position in the labour market is much weaker than that of their male counterparts. There main reasons for this are:

**Caring Responsibilities:** caring roles within the family are mostly taken by women. Women find themselves taking on part-time work below their skills and educational levels in order to continue their caring roles. Lack of adequate, flexible and affordable childcare has been highlighted as the main reason that prevents women from accessing and progressing in the labour market.

### **Stereotyping of Career Options**

The majority of women now participating in employment are accessing work in retail, social care, health and education. Women also make up the majority of low paid and part-time workers with promotion and progression hindered by their caring responsibilities. The following barriers for women in non-traditional employment are: individual perceptions; societal perceptions; practical issues; lack of knowledge and awareness; a male workplace culture.

### **Legislative and Policy Frameworks**

Various legislative frameworks support gender equality and mainstreaming.

In **Germany**, reunification provided an opportunity to emphasize Article 3 'Men and women have equal rights' by adding an essential supplement: 'The state shall support the actual implementation of equal rights for women and men and shall work toward elimination of existing disadvantages.' An equal treatment law was passed in 2006 and is based on the EU guidelines for equality.

**Greece** is still in the process of development and ESF support has enabled the inclusion of gender equality in state policies.

**Poland** is also in the very early stages of developing its equality legislation. ESF supports action in respect of gender as a key focus in the EQUAL programme.

**Spain's** main legislation is the Gender Violence Act and the Act for Equality for Women and Men passed in 2007.

**Ireland** has two main bodies of legislation to cover equality: the Employment Equality Act and the Equal Status Act. There is also a range of more specific laws governing employment. Gender mainstreaming underpins all national policies, and two dedicated Gender Equality Units exist in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Department of Education and Science to inform and monitor gender equality.

The **United Kingdom** has a significant range of legislation and policy measures designed to mainstream gender equality. The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) is funded by

government to advise, inform and monitor equality policies and practice (from September, subsumed within the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights).

### **General Conclusions from the Country Reports, the Snapshot from the Nordic Countries and the Report on Women in Business**

The European Social Fund (ESF) has contributed widely to improving women's access to education and training and consequently to employment in all Member States in this study. EU involvement has led to equality laws and gendering the monitoring of national policies, in particular in Member States with strong traditional role patterns such as Greece and new EU Member States such as Poland.

The short report from the Nordic countries shows how measures concerning paid parental leave and comprehensive childcare contribute to higher participation by women in education and training measures and better access to, and promotion in, the labour market.

Diversity management is one of the key concepts to get more women into the field of business, including access to traditional 'male' fields of work and also different levels in the hierarchy. The importance of women's networks, mentoring, female role models and affirmative action cannot be overestimated for enabling women to access employment and promotion in business, irrespective of qualifications.

### **Gender Dimensions of Teaching and Learning Methodology**

The study identifies some features of lifelong learning that foster women's participation, both for their personal lives and for engagement and promotion in the labour market. We have considered in particular the general adult education sector.

There is sufficient evidence that women-only courses succeed in enhancing women's self-confidence and self-esteem and reinforcing empowerment. How courses are organised - place, accessibility, rooms, days of the week, time of day, methods of teaching and learning arrangements – group, peer, plenary or individual work – impact considerably on participation.

Interactive and participative methods and flexibility of working is current common practice in adult education, although there are differences between countries and organisations. The criteria for appropriate methods are whether they help women *to interact socially* and are *active and participative, group-related, creative, critical and flexible*.

A comprehensive approach, gender-appropriate methods would allow women **and** men to express their learning needs and thus contribute to a democratisation of gender relationships.

Teachers and trainers, however, need to be trained in gender-awareness; a range of organisations have already adopted training measures to this effect. These need, however, to be reinforced.

However, women tend to participate less in courses with themes that are associated with 'male' characteristics such as technical and technological subjects.

About 70% or more of participants in adult education in Europe are women. Women mainly follow language courses; health and related subjects; and creativity. The responses to a questionnaire completed by 16 organisations in 15 countries also show that vocational courses

are usually attended by roughly the same number of women and men when they are relevant to their job and the workplace.

### **Impact of Lifelong Learning on Women**

The benefits of learning have been studied mostly in the field of vocational education and training; studies that explore the impact, in particular the long-term effects, of general adult education are lacking. The testimonies of women describing their experience of continuing education and training show the impact of learning on their professional and personal lives.

### **Conclusions**

The national reports give evidence of the enormous influence of European policies and funding. National policies follow European policies and measures. National Strategic Reference Frameworks develop national means of implementing gender equality and European gender policies. The imperative of European policies – to ensure equal rights and opportunities; to ensure that the principle of non-discrimination and gender equality is effectively implemented; to mainstream this – is taken up specifically in Member States' national action plans. Thus both key components of the study – gender equality and lifelong learning – are reflected in the close links between European and Member States' policies.

Employment rates in all European countries reveal a significant gender gap. The challenge of ensuring equality between women and men is one of the EU's fundamental tasks; the gender perspective is to be incorporated into all EU policies.

Equal opportunities will not be achieved, gender stereotypes will not be countered, gender segregation in the labour market will not be overcome, without a tremendous educational effort. In principle all protagonists accept the fundamental importance of education and training. The European Union proudly draws attention to the enormous achievement of co-financing annually the training of 9 million people, more than half of them women. This underlines the role of education and training as the key to the participation and advancement of women in the labour market.

Participation in the labour market is an essential precondition for women's achieving economic independence, enabling them to overcome social exclusion and disadvantage. It is not therefore sufficient only to increase the opportunities for women to get employed. Means must be established of ensuring that women do not remain at the lower end of the labour market.

Despite women's high level of educational attainment the labour market is gendered in favour of men. The majority of positions occupied by women are lower paid, although disparities in income and employment across Europe have narrowed over the past decade. Most part-time employment contracts are taken up by women.

Education and training are crucial to improving women's participation in the labour market during and following phases of caring responsibilities. Across Europe women make up around 70% of the participants in programmes in adult and community education, the tertiary, non academic sector of lifelong learning not directly concerned with training for the labour market.

But implementing recognition of gender equality requires a comprehensive educational approach, balancing knowledge, awareness and sensitivity, a change in attitudes and behaviour.

Women's struggle for equal rights has been from the very beginning a – very successful – struggle for equal opportunities in education and training. Women have long understood education and training as a major tool for achieving and securing equal treatment. Learning plays a specific, important role for them: it is of historic significance because it is at the heart of their claim to participate comprehensively in society.

European gender policies have been their ally in achieving at least a reduction in discrimination. European legislation and of course legislation in the Member States, ensures equal rights for men and women. It cannot ensure equal opportunities. Hundreds of projects aiming at more gender equality, a number of them referred to in this study, have provided a basis for increased participation in the labour market *and* society.

Adult education as one of the most prominent pillars of lifelong learning plays an important role in achieving change in existing gender hierarchies and breaking down gender stereotypes. Adult education has contributed substantially to a change in the perception of equal rights and equal opportunities. Gender policies in the countries in this report have been influenced 'bottom up' from adult education in important ways. All the reports confirm the high participation rates of women in adult learning, leading to the conclusion that the programmes match the needs. Non-formal youth and adult education took up the issue of gender equality some 30 years ago, developing emancipatory programmes and projects for girls AND boys, for women AND men. The gender perspective has been integrated into methods of teaching and learning as a crosscutting perspective. Gender-appropriate teaching and learning identifies and promotes the specific learning needs of men and women and provides methodological tools to help to develop confidence in individual creativity and the capacity to act, which are important prerequisites for participation in the processes of transforming civil society. These are necessary steps towards gender democracy.

### **Recommendations: Issues to Be Addressed**

- There will be no change without a different way of thinking and living. Alongside political strategies and effective means of implementation there is an urgent need for *gender education*, which has to be an ongoing, continuous, comprehensive process.
- We need to establish coherent learning structures and support the already existing learning structures, in particular in the non-formal and informal adult education.
- Lifelong learning institutions have to develop learning opportunities in the fields of personal development, democratic citizenship and vocational education and training; synergies between the existing education and training systems have to be better used.
- Lifelong learning institutions have to offer women-appropriate courses in the fields of democratic citizenship, general education, mathematics, natural sciences, technical and technological subjects.
- Policy strategies must be based on the principle that there is no gender-neutral education.
- The differentiated recognition accorded to educational structures has to be changed.
- The concept of gender mainstreaming includes positive action programmes for women as integral part of the double strategy for combating inequality.
- Gender education is needed at all levels of education and training and also has to develop specific programmes and approaches for men.



- Cooperation and better links between the stakeholders in both action and research are needed and will help to promote networks for gender education.
- Policy-makers, administration personnel and all public servants responsible for the implementation of gender mainstreaming need to receive not only basic information and gender training appropriate to their tasks, but also regular updating with a focus on their progress in gender awareness.



## Table of contents

	Page
<b>Executive Summary</b>	iii
<b>Introduction and Methodology</b>	1
<b>1. The European Level</b>	5
<b>1.1. Gender Mainstreaming at European level</b>	5
<b>1.2. Women and Men in Lifelong Learning</b>	6
<b>1.3. Employment and Women</b>	13
<b>1.4. Financing Lifelong Learning</b>	17
<b>1.5. Indicators and Benchmarks</b>	20
<b>1.6. European Projects</b>	22
<b>2. National Level Gender Aspects in Lifelong Learning: A Comparative Study of Lifelong Learning and the Labour Market from Six Member States</b>	27
<b>2.1. The Republic of Ireland</b>	28
<b>2.2. The United Kingdom</b>	29
<b>2.3. Poland</b>	30
<b>2.4. Germany</b>	31
<b>2.5. Spain</b>	33
<b>2.6. Greece</b>	34
<b>2.7. Gender Evidence in Lifelong Learning from the National Reports</b>	35
<b>2.8. Conclusion</b>	38
<b>3. Gender Dimensions of Teaching and Learning Methodology</b>	41
<b>3.1. Women-Only vs. Mixed Groups</b>	41
<b>3.2. Organisation, Content and Methods of Courses</b>	45
<b>3.3. Gender-Appropriate Didactics and Methods</b>	45
<b>3.4. Impact of Lifelong Learning on Women</b>	49
<b>3.5. Evidence from Individual Women</b>	50
<b>4. Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	53
<b>4.1. European and National Education and Gender Strategies</b>	53
<b>4.2. Women in the Labour Market and the Role of Education and Training</b>	54
<b>4.3. Gender Aspects in Lifelong Learning: Adult Education Supporting European Policies</b>	55
<b>4.4. Gender Aspects in Lifelong Learning: Obstacles and Needs</b>	56

<b>4.5. Gender Aspects in Lifelong Learning: Recommendations - Issues to Be Addressed</b>	58
<b>4.6. Gender Aspects in Lifelong Learning: Perspectives</b>	61
<b>Bibliography</b>	63
<b>Annexes - Germany</b>	67
<b>1. The Context for Lifelong Learning for Men and Women</b>	67
<b>2. Women and Men in the Labour Market</b>	72
<b>3. Participation of Women and Men in Education and Training</b>	79
<b>4. Summary and Conclusions</b>	88
<b>Appendix: Gender Projects in Germany</b>	90
<b>Greece</b>	91
<b>1. The Context for Lifelong Learning for Men and Women in Greece</b>	91
<b>2. Men and Women in the Labour Market (Background)</b>	95
<b>3. Participation of Men and Women in Education and Training</b>	88
<b>4. Methods and Procedures for Mainstreaming Gender in Educational Policies</b>	99
<b>5. Summary-Good Practice</b>	101
<b>6. Open Questions</b>	102
<b>Appendix - Statistics and Information</b>	104
<b>Ireland</b>	113
<b>1. The Context for Lifelong Learning for Men and Women</b>	114
<b>2. Men and Women in the Labour Market</b>	115
<b>3. Participation of Men and Women in Education and Training</b>	117
<b>4. Summary and Conclusion</b>	123
<b>Appendix - National Women's Strategy for Ireland 2007-2016</b>	125
<b>Poland</b>	137
<b>1. Background Information</b>	137
<b>2. Women in Formal Education</b>	137
<b>3. Labour Force Participation</b>	138
<b>4. Continued Education and Training</b>	141
<b>5. Gender Mainstreaming in Poland</b>	143
<b>6. The Role of the European Social Fund</b>	144

<b>Spain</b>	147
1. <b>Framework Conditions of Lifelong Learning for Men and Women</b>	147
2. <b>Women and Men on the Labour Market: Spanish Statistics</b>	148
3. <b>Participation of Women and Men in Education and Training</b>	150
4. <b>Summary and Conclusions</b>	154
<b>Appendix</b>	155
<b>United Kingdom (UK)</b>	161
1. <b>Introduction</b>	161
2. <b>The Context for Lifelong Learning for Men and Women</b>	161
3. <b>Men and Women in the Labour Market</b>	162
4. <b>Participation of Men and Women in Education and Training</b>	168
5. <b>Legislative and Policy Framework for Gender Mainstreaming</b>	170
6. <b>Examples of Practice</b>	172
<b>Women in the Nordic Countries - Snapshots</b>	175
1. <b>Trends in the Nordic Countries</b>	175
2. <b>Combining Working Life or Studies and Family</b>	175
3. <b>Parental Allowance – A Comparison between the Nordic Countries</b>	176
4. <b>Childcare – All Nordic Countries</b>	179
5. <b>High Participation in the Labour Market</b>	181
<b>Women in Business – An International Perspective</b>	185
1. <b>Diversity</b>	185
2. <b>Career Facilitators</b>	188
<b>Appendix Chapter 3</b>	193
<b>Bibliography and References</b>	205
<b>The Team</b>	215



## **Introduction and Methodology**

### **Introduction**

The objective of this study is to contribute to the collection of available data on women's participation in lifelong learning and to make recommendations concerning lifelong learning for women. The relationship of learning to access to and progress in the labour market has also been considered.

The present study looks at lifelong learning in the tertiary, non-academic sector (that is, outside higher education), in particular adult education. The focus is on public institutions and non-profit NGOs because there is little data on private organisations. Lack of data in several areas and the restricted time available for research and collection have allowed for only a preliminary study of a selected number of EU member states.

The European Association for the Education of Adults, EAEA, the largest European association on general adult education, has brought together a team of authors both from research and from practice. Cooperation in research topics between researchers and practitioners does not often happen. We decided on this method in order to reflect a series of aspects from desktop research against the background of practical usefulness and implementation. Practitioners pointed out vulnerable items that in data analysis appear satisfying and positive but in reality are not considered or implemented.

Starting from the European level and analysing the situation as to gender mainstreaming in relation to lifelong learning, reports from some countries follow: A selection of six countries chosen for their specific features, along with a series of 'snapshots' from the Nordic countries and an additional chapter on women in the area of business, make up the study:

Germany, Central Europe; in some ways a transition country after reunification; role models for women comparing the East and West; a well-developed adult education system;

Republic of Ireland, Northwestern Europe; a high employment rate as a consequence of EU policies and funding; a large range of adult education programmes for women;

Greece, Southeastern Europe; an example of the impact of European policies on social development; strong traditions; a rapidly developing lifelong learning system;

Poland, Eastern Europe; a high unemployment rate; limited opportunities for women for education and training; strong traditional roles; an example of a transition country with high investment from the EU;

Spain, Southwestern Europe; a high unemployment rate; traditional values and Catholicism; democratic development of society dating back only 30 years; prominent role of women in the process towards democracy;

United Kingdom, Northwestern Europe; a high employment rate and a significantly decreasing proportion of the labour force without qualifications; a well-developed system of adult education, in particular community education;

Some information from the Nordic countries is added to focus on specific issues, namely provision for child care.

A chapter on women in business from an international perspective gives some insight into what is needed for women to access the labour market, and in particular gain better jobs, achieve higher recognition and make career progress.

The country reports follow the same structure but with differing emphasis since they are conceived by experts from the respective countries that are well acquainted with practical implementation.

A comprehensive analysis based on a collection of data structured according to gender-relevant factors was not possible: when looking more closely at the statistics in different subjects, we found that only a small proportion contained gender-related information.

There is insufficient data to allow for a clear analysis of the impact of lifelong learning on access to the labour market, career progression or salary increases. This is particularly true when we try to explore the sustainability of success in employment. There are only some studies focusing on vocational education and training. Therefore, we have asked some individual women to report their experiences of learning and their impact on them; these few experiences are only 'snapshots' and can only be used for a very basic analysis.

There is a lack of statistical evidence for adult education, as the 'Communication on Adult Learning' issued by the European Commission in October 2006 points out. Therefore only partial data concerning education and training activities undertaken taken by women could be taken into consideration. There is barely any information on the profile of female participants.

This lack of statistical evidence and the scarcity of gender-related data in the few examples that exist is a major obstacle to an in-depth analysis of content, form and outcome of education and training measures chosen by women.

We have recurred in our study to comments from experts in adult education, lifelong learning or gender from several countries: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Liechtenstein, Romania, Sweden, UK, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom, and Yugoslavia; we have summarised answers by adult education and lifelong learning experts to a questionnaire; we have analysed studies in various fields of adult and non-formal education as to methods, content, organisation related to gender.

Our conclusions and recommendations are based on the analysis of the country reports, the relevant documents in the field of gender and lifelong learning and our own experiences as practitioners and researchers working in the field of non-formal education for adults.

The chapter discussing the position at European level takes up the main initiatives of the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council of Europe, and the reports of the EU Member States on the implementation of strategies in the fields that we feel are important for the subject of this study. The amount of literature – official papers of the European Commission; the European Parliament; the Council of Europe; the responses of the EU-Member States; of other European bodies; and of civil society – is huge and needed careful attention. In addition, the references for the chosen countries represented another long list of important documents. The main problem we have encountered is the lack of interrelationship: some papers



refer to one set of issues, for example, employment in lifelong learning and gender, but do not refer to other variables such as poverty. The present study has tried to interrelate some of these factors.

Calls for proposals in education and training programmes contain a gender-related feature (No. 7, Contribution to transversal policies - equal opportunities between women and men). We have therefore studied some gender-related projects in the Grundtvig programme corresponding to our focus on non-formal education and training. We have selected some of the projects as good practice examples for gender mainstreaming and the promotion of women.

Evidence of gender mainstreaming in other projects financed by the European Union is often not easy to verify because in many cases a general comment asserts that gender mainstreaming has been respected without revealing actual figures. The country reports show several projects, in particular ESF funded ones, as good practice examples. Good practice examples from EQUAL projects have been gathered by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in its publication *Gender and career development*, 2007.

Because there is insufficient or no data on the success of EU-funded education and training measures for women's participation in the labour market we were not in a position to produce results in this area. An analysis of success would also need to consider the sustainability of labour market integration, which would in turn need long-term investigation, interviews with participants and teachers/facilitators, employers, trade unions and others.

Comparing Member States innovative schemes aiming at a substantial increase in female success in the labour market, and defining best practices in placing women in long-term employment presupposes a definition of 'innovative schemes'. Innovation in one country may be a well-known tradition in another. Global features, however, may be applicable to all countries, such as childcare, division of household work, right to leave, equal pay and others.

With the good practice examples for each country, we compare selected aspects of the schemes concerning female success in the labour market for these countries. We consider the good practice examples being transferable to other contexts and countries and, together with the results of the EU projects, offering positive ways of promoting gender mainstreaming.

## **Methodology**

The collection of data was organised at European level taking into consideration all papers relevant to the theme issued by the European Commission, European Parliament and European Council.

The country reports relied mostly on national data and papers that are quoted in the list of references. Analysis and interpretation of national and European data are reflected against a number of findings and documents from national organisations, European associations, research institutes and others.

The methodology chapter is based on 16 questionnaires (annex) completed by adult education organisations and practitioners in 15 countries: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, Germany (2x), Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Nordic countries cooperation, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom. The results were compared to research papers on gender-specific didactic and methods.

The impact of participation in education and training on women is based on a small number of questionnaires together with findings in a desktop research on the impact of vocational education and training on women.

The recommendations and issues to be addressed draw together statements and recommendations from the European Commission, the European Parliament, but also from a number of NGOs working in the field of gender and / or non-formal education for adults.

Project management has been organised through two face-to-face meetings, intranet communication, e-mails and two telephone conferences. Most of the work was desktop research respecting and including the practical experiences in the selected countries with some cross-analysis of statistics. During our work we concluded that future studies on the theme need field research.

EAEA members of the Executive Board gave feedback on the first draft and all EAEA members had the opportunity to react to our description of the study in the June 2007 Newsletter.

The project was organised through the EAEA main office in Brussels, which maintained contacts with the team and others, and collected and collated all documents. EAEA has established a dedicated intranet for the project where all the material has been collected.

## 1. The European Level

### 1.1. Gender Mainstreaming at European level

The definition and implementation of the strategy of gender mainstreaming were initiated in the early 1990's by European governments, the European Union and the Council of Europe.

The European Union declared its commitment to gender mainstreaming in 1996, and has since begun an ambitious programme to integrate a gender perspective and gender expertise into all EU policies. Recommendations and directives as well as monitoring by means of annual progress reports give evidence of this commitment<sup>1</sup>.

The standard definition of the term has been formulated in 1998: 'Gender mainstreaming is the (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making. Gender mainstreaming cannot replace specific policies which aim to redress situations resulting from gender inequality. Specific gender equality policies and gender mainstreaming are dual and complementary strategies and must go hand in hand to reach the goal of gender equality'<sup>2</sup>.

Numerous regulations and guidelines to achieve equality between women and men in the Member States of the Union have been adopted by all EU bodies with an obligation for EU Member States to implement them at national level<sup>3</sup>.

The Communication of March 2003, 'A Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men', sets 'six priority areas for EU action on gender equality for the period 2006-2010: equal economic independence for women and men; reconciliation of private and professional life; equal representation in decision-making; eradication of all forms of gender-based violence; elimination of gender stereotypes; promotion of gender equality in external and development policies'<sup>4</sup>. The Roadmap and the European Pact for Gender Equality, which should further heighten the profile of gender mainstreaming, are major achievements on the road to real equality between women and men.

Gender mainstreaming is thus a fundamental principle in the European Union and in all the Member States. There is a wide range of initiatives and efforts at all levels – European, national, regional and local levels – but the 'difficulty for the implementation of gender mainstreaming lies in the fact that men are always presented as being the norm, as the 'standard' human being. (...) The problem is not that people have a constructed gender identity, but that we connect this gendered

---

<sup>1</sup> See Directive 2006/54/ec of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast), Official Journal of the European Union 26.7.2006, L 204; Report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European economic and social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Annual Report on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the European Union 2002, COM(2003) 98 final; Report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European economic and social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on equality between women and men – 2007, COM(2007)49 final – to mention just a few reports.

<sup>2</sup> Council of Europe Introduction to Human Rights, Equality between Women and Men. Gender Mainstreaming, [http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human\\_Rights/Equality/02\\_Gender\\_mainstreaming/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Equality/02_Gender_mainstreaming/)

<sup>3</sup> The references of the most recent documents are in the reference list at the end of the study.

<sup>4</sup> Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, A Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010, {SEC(2006) 275}, p. 1.

identity to unequal access to resources and to gendered rules that constrain the choices of men and women in a different way. Therefore, careful attention must be paid to the ways policies are made and whether they are gender sensitive'<sup>5</sup>.

## 1.2. Women and Men in Lifelong Learning

All these factors have an impact on the participation of women in lifelong learning and in particular on how women benefit from learning in their personal, civic and professional lives. Earlier surveys have shown that gender, age, educational background, income and position in the labour market have an impact on an individual's learning behaviour.

However, gender is not always a variable in European lifelong learning reports; conclusions sometimes have to be drawn by cross-analysing, a somewhat complex task and a remaining challenge for future studies. 'Searching Eurostat for statistics in the area of 'general economic background', 'employment' and 'social cohesion', one finds that not all of the indicators are broken down by gender. Without such indicators, many policy decisions are made without decision-makers having a clear picture of women's situation and needs.'<sup>6</sup> In a very detailed study Alan Rogers regrets the absence of gender in lifelong learning. He mentions 'only one serious attempt to address the issue of gender and the basic concepts of lifelong learning, and that may well be overlooked in any survey of the literature'<sup>7</sup>.

There are additional problems concerning data and definitions. Most of the information and data on the following pages rely on the 2006 report *Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training*. The analysis of lifelong learning participation is based on the LFS (Labour Force Survey) ad hoc module on participation in lifelong learning from 2003, which produces different and sometimes contradictory data to the one used for the EU benchmark. Data from other sources, for example more recent Labour Force Surveys, also differ across periods and definitions. When consulting the data on the following pages, it is therefore necessary to take these difficulties into account. 'However, the comparability of data from LFS ad hoc module on participation in lifelong learning from 2003 with the data on participation of adults in lifelong learning covered by EU benchmark (12.5% in 2010) is limited because of at least two most significant reasons:

- 1) reference period taken into account by respondents in the surveys is different (four weeks before survey in standard LFS, 12 months before survey in LFS ad hoc module);
- 2) different interpretations of informal learning in individual countries'<sup>8</sup>.

The definitions for different forms of learning and education need to be taken into account, too: 'According to the definition used in LFS ad hoc module on lifelong learning (2003), lifelong learning encompasses all purposeful learning activities, whether formal or informal, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence. Participation in *formal education* (i.e. the regular educational system of each country), *nonformal education* (i.e. organised and sustained educational activities that do not correspond exactly to the

<sup>5</sup> Workshop on Gender mainstreaming for Chairs and Secretaries of Steering Committees of the Council of Europe, 2001, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Gender Budgeting: An overview by the European Women's Lobby*, 2004, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Alan Rogers, *Lifelong learning and the absence of gender*, (2006) International Journal of Educational Development, Volume 26, Issue 2, pages 189-208; B. Dybbroe and E. Ollagnier, Editors, (2003), *Challenging Gender in Lifelong Learning: European Perspectives*, Roskilde University Press, Roskilde, Denmark.

<sup>8</sup> Progress Report, <http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progressreport06annexes.pdf>, p.143.

definition of formal education) and *informal learning* (i.e. activities outside formal or non-formal education, of a low-level of organisation, such as self-study) is distinguished<sup>9</sup>.

As lifelong learning is a vast area, whose analysis would go far beyond a study of this scope, it was decided to focus more intensely on non-formal adult education as the important sector of lifelong learning for persons outside the formal education and training systems, so below one will find more general data on **lifelong learning** (taking the caveat of the **data comparability** into consideration) and then also on **non-formal education**.

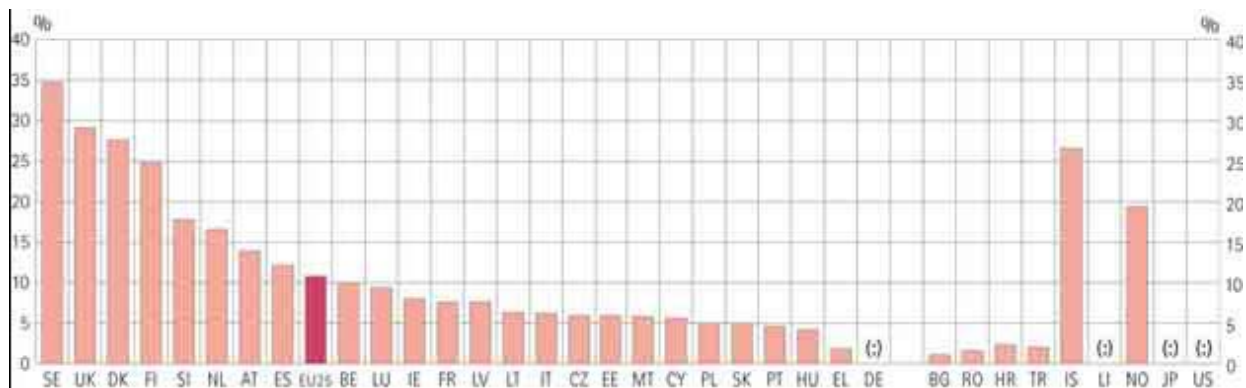
### 1.2.1. The EU Benchmark<sup>10</sup>

Because of the crucial importance of achieving the Lisbon goals, lifelong learning was approved by the (Education) Council in 2003 as an area where progress in the European Union should be monitored against a European reference level. This benchmark foresees that 12,5% of adults aged 25-64 participate in lifelong learning by 2010. The same target of increasing the participation of adults has also contributed to the European Employment Strategy since 2003.

#### Best performing countries

The three best performing countries are Sweden (34,7%), the UK (29,1%) and Denmark (27,6%)<sup>11</sup>, followed by Finland, Slovenia, the Netherlands and Austria. All other EU countries are still below the benchmark performance level of 12.5%. Italy, Greece, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia and Hungary have participation rates at or below 5%. Bulgaria and Romania are at the extremely low level of less than 2%.

**Table: Participation in lifelong learning in Europe**



Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey 2005

Additional notes: DE: data for 2004. LU, MT and the UK: provisional data.

To achieve greater progress, eight Member States (Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain) have set national targets for participation in lifelong learning in their Lisbon National Reform Programmes 2005.

<sup>9</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progressreport06annexes.pdf>, p.143.

<sup>10</sup> This and the following articles including 'Improving information and guidance' are extracts from the European Commission, Report based on indicators and benchmarks, *Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training*. Report based on indicators and benchmarks, Report 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Progress Report, <http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progressreport06.pdf>, p. 12.

### 1.2.2. Participation in Non-Formal Education<sup>12</sup> by Educational Attainment

People with high educational attainment are much more likely to participate in **non-formal education** than those with medium or low attainment. In 2003, 31% of those 25-64 years old with higher educational attainment participated in non-formal education, in comparison with 16% of those who had reached a medium educational level and 7% of those with less than upper secondary education<sup>13</sup>.

### 1.2.3. Participation in Lifelong Learning of Adults with Low Educational Attainment

Participation in education and training tends to be proportional to the level of prior education. In 2005 only 3.4% of the population aged 25-64 with less than upper secondary education participated in **lifelong learning**. The fact that many initiatives do not reach people with a low initial level of education is a key challenge for policy makers.

Within individual countries, the highest participation rates in lifelong learning are often found in the regions of their capitals. Those regions are also most often those with the highest levels of educational achievement. In the Czech Republic, Prague has the highest percentage of lifelong learning participation, 9.8%. In Germany, the highest percentage is in Berlin, 9.9%<sup>14</sup>.

Any lifelong learning strategy should therefore be an integral part of regional development strategy, a strategy that also envisages multifunctional local and regional learning centres in the neighbourhoods to allow easier access for people<sup>15</sup>, in particular women. Lifelong learning otherwise might be out of reach for women. The opportunities given by the European Structural Funds could provide a powerful tool for achieving gender equality: the Structural Funds make up about 1/3 of the EU budget. The programme periods for 2000-2006 and 2007-2013 of the Structural Funds have integrated the gender dimension into its goals<sup>16</sup>.

So far, the clearest commitment to gender equality can be found in the objectives of the European Social Fund (ESF). Whilst there is a process of ongoing monitoring of the ESF in particular through the European Employment Strategy and the Social Inclusion Process, the results (of the period 2000-2006) have been very disappointing in relation to positive outcomes for gender equality<sup>17</sup>.

### 1.2.4. Participation in All Kinds of Learning by Gender and Age

The participation rate of men in **all kinds of learning** (which includes formal, non-formal and informal learning) in the EU 25 was slightly higher than that of women (42.8% as opposed to 41.1%)<sup>18</sup>. At national level, however, this is not always the case. The greatest difference in

<sup>12</sup> We understand by non-formal learning: 'Learning that is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. It is, however, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective.' *Adult education - trends and issues in Europe*, EAEA, Brussels, 2006, glossary p. 73.

<sup>13</sup> Europe in Figures, Eurostat yearbook 2006-2007, p.95, also:

<sup>14</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progressreport06annexes.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progressreport06.pdf>, p.72.

<sup>14</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progressreport06annexes.pdf>, p. 140.

<sup>15</sup> See Communication from the Commission, *Adult learning: It is never too late to learn*, European Commission, Brussels 2006, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/esf/docs/genderequality\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf/docs/genderequality_en.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> *Gender Budgeting* op. cit, p. 22.

<sup>18</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/progressreport06annexes.pdf>, p.145.

favour of men was in France (54.8% of men, 47.4% of women). On the other hand, women participated in lifelong learning more in Ireland (44.1% men, 53.2% women), Lithuania, Latvia and Finland. Participation decreases as age increases (from 50.2% for 25-34 year olds to 29.5% for 55-64 year olds in the EU 25). This pattern applies to both genders and most countries, with the exception of Denmark, Luxembourg, Finland, Slovenia and Sweden<sup>19</sup>. There is also a decrease in participation as age increases. Participation in non-formal education decreased slightly between 25-34 and 35-44 years olds, a little more for 45-54 years olds and considerably for 55-64 year olds. The same pattern was noticed in most countries and in both sexes<sup>20</sup>.

Within the EU, males participated in **non-formal education** as much as females. In Sweden, Latvia and Finland more females than males participated in **non-formal education**<sup>21</sup>.

### 1.2.5. Participation in Non-Formal Education by Employment Status

In 2003 (and over a reference period of 12 months), 21% of those employed, 14% of the unemployed and 6% of the economically inactive participated in some kind of **non-formal education** in the EU25. About half of the employed workforce participates in non-formal education in Nordic countries, followed by about 40% in the UK and by a group of 3 countries – Slovenia, Austria and Slovakia – with participation rates of about 30%, all well above the EU average. Only a few countries (Spain, Greece, Luxembourg, Austria and Portugal) record similar participation rates for the employed and unemployed populations<sup>22</sup>.

Participants' employment status has a much greater impact on the extent of their participation than their educational attainment. In most countries employed people undertook nearly three times as much training as did unemployed people.

### 1.2.6. Valuing Learning

One of the main themes on the agenda of lifelong learning is the valuing / recognition and validation of learning. This theme is a logic consequence of the efforts to make education and training systems more transparent and achieve an agreement on European standards.

Europe-wide consultations and discussions, still ongoing<sup>23</sup>, several European projects financed by the European Commission<sup>24</sup> and a series of documents<sup>25</sup> have contributed to the current state

<sup>19</sup> It must be noted that informal learning poses a statistical and conceptual problem. As the Progress Report states, 'a long reference period -12 months from the time of the interview- was selected because it was expected that the coverage of irregular learning events could be better than for a short reference period. But, on the other hand, it might be harder for the respondent to remember learning activities further back in time. Although a statistical definition of informal learning exists, the field was probably less clear cut from the respondent's point of view and some cultural differences may exist in the interpretation of what is learning and what is not. ... the total rate of participation in lifelong learning is much higher only because of reported extraordinary higher participation in in-formal learning.', *ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>23</sup> See e.g. the CEDEFOP virtual communities on Credit Transfer In VET and the European Qualifications Framework, [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/consultations\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/consultations_en.html)

<sup>24</sup> To mention only two: Transfine [http://www.eucen.org/projects/recently\\_completed.html#transfine](http://www.eucen.org/projects/recently_completed.html#transfine) and Refine [http://www.eucen.org/projects/recently\\_completed.html#refine](http://www.eucen.org/projects/recently_completed.html#refine), both coordinated by EUCEN.

<sup>25</sup> See Jens Björnavold, Guidelines on the accreditation of prior learning, September 2004, ISBN 1 84482 177 3, <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/apl/guidance.asp>

of the debate: the EQF - the European Qualifications Framework<sup>26</sup> - and the wide recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning<sup>27</sup>.

Good results and achievements of national developments that envisaged the same aims have been fed into the development of the European framework. The terms used are recognition, valuing, and validation.

Two issues of the current debate are of specific importance for women:

Recognition of non-formal and informal learning will make an important contribution to helping women to progress. If women have the opportunity to gain accreditation for what they have done in their lives without formal qualifications, they will develop greater self-esteem and self-reliance; they will be more confident in taking up further education and training, and they will be more likely to try to gain access to the labour market<sup>28</sup>. An important tool for recording competences, the recognition of non-formal and informal learning will be one of the most effective means of making learning a channel for implementing gender mainstreaming.

There is already positive evidence in the Nordic countries: ‘Validation is a major theme in the discussion on lifelong learning. Women are more eager to participate in learning activities; especially in non-formal learning the percentage of women is higher than men. Men look for ‘hard’ value, certificates, diplomas, etc. Validation is a tool that could reach men and motivate (shorter education, work-place learning)<sup>29</sup>.’

Norway e.g. has an experience of several years with a high number of women who have gone through the process of validation, i.e. recognition of their non-formal and informal learning, and who were thus able either to continue their formal education at a higher level, to enter the labour market, or to get a better job<sup>30</sup>.

Recognition of non-formal and informal learning is one of the top priorities on the European agenda<sup>31</sup>; it was the priority theme of EAEA and the Nordic-Baltic adult education associations in 2005; it was the focus of a Nordic seminar and it has been one of the main themes in the European conference under the German presidency in 2007<sup>32</sup>.

Recognition of non-formal and informal learning represents a dramatic shift from the learning *system* (institution, curriculum, diploma, certificate etc.) to the *outcome* of learning, independent of where something has been learned, with whom and with which, if any, certificate. This will make it possible for persons without formal qualifications to prove their knowledge and competences in interviews or tests and get them recognized as equivalents to formal qualifications.

<sup>26</sup> Commission Staff Working Document, Towards a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, European Commission, SEC(2005) 957, Brussels, 2005.

<sup>27</sup> See e.g. Communication on *Adult learning*, op. cit., p. 7-8, Message 3.

<sup>28</sup> See the answers of women in interviews, chapter 3, impact of learning.

<sup>29</sup> Antra Carlsen, Coordinator of the Nordic Network of Adult Learners, NVL, June 2007.

<sup>30</sup> See VOX, Norway, Validation: <http://www.vox.no/templates/CommonPage.aspx?id=2609>

<sup>31</sup> See the development in the European Commission:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/rec\\_qual/rec\\_qual\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/rec_qual/rec_qual_en.html); in CEDEFOP, Making learning visible: Identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning in Europe, 2000, and CEDEFOP virtual communities: [virtualcommunities@cedefop.europa.eu](mailto:virtualcommunities@cedefop.europa.eu); and in the OECD, *Beyond rhetoric: Adult learning policies and practices*, OECD 2003, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/18/57/18466358.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> EAEA conference on ‘Valuing Learning’ and Baltic-Nordic seminar ‘Validation of Learning’, Lillehammer 2005; ‘Recognition of prior learning: Nordic-Baltic experiences and European perspectives’, Copenhagen 2007; ‘Realizing the European Learning Area’, Munich, 2007.



The recognition and the validation of prior informal learning is a policy objective, relevant for many women outside the labour market as well as at work, as it includes activities in the family, in NGOs or democratic citizenship activities.

The second important issue is the recognition of so-called ‘soft skills’, such as self-reflection, self-critical attitude, democratic citizenship, and other<sup>33</sup>. These skills are not fully integrated into the framework; indeed, the current debate focuses on vocational education and training, employability and the labour market. Yet, lifelong learning is more, and these ‘soft skills’, generally related to female characteristics, make up society, contribute to better communication and understanding, enhance citizenship and the feeling of belonging and are the fundament of democracy.

### **1.2.7. Improving Information and Guidance**

Help, advice or guidance about training opportunities is revealed as a powerful means of promoting training for women and men. Those who received guidance were much more likely to undertake training. The primary reason for seeking guidance was to learn new skills (63%).

Survey results<sup>34</sup> show that making time available during working hours would encourage citizens to undertake more training (reported by 30% of respondents), but the main incentive seems to be financial support (39 %). In particular in the new Member States, employers’ funding of training and support by public measures (such as free access for certain themes such as literacy, democratic citizenship or certain disadvantaged groups, learning accounts, vouchers and tax relief) could increase participation in continuing vocational training. Recognition through accrediting skills or offering qualifications would also persuade citizens to undertake more training

### **A wide range of stakeholders**

However, as a recent OECD study concludes<sup>35</sup>, adult learning is a complex policy issue. Different stakeholders are involved in the process of defining and designing policies, including ministries of education, labour and welfare, the social partners and other agencies. The involvement of different sorts of stakeholders and levels of government and a lack of monitoring and clear responsibility for the outcomes for women and men, may result in conflicting interests, policies that run counter to the objectives of improving adult skills, and waste in public expenditure.

---

<sup>33</sup> See: An EAEA Response to the European Commission Staff Working Document, December 2005, p. 2 and 4; Folkbildningsradet, Sweden, December 2005. p. 2 and 4 Statement regarding the European Commission’s proposal for a European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF); Recommendations and comments of SoCiuS on the Commission Staff Working Document ‘Towards a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning’, December 2005.

<sup>34</sup> Abstract from the 2006 EU report on ‘*Progress toward the Lisbon objectives in education and training. Report based on indicators and benchmark*’. The report is referring to European Commission (2005) Special Eurobarometer 216 ‘Vocational Training’, pp 14.

<sup>35</sup> *Promoting Adult Learning*, OECD 2005.

### 1.2.8. Lifelong Learning as an Instrument for Gender Mainstreaming in Other Policy Areas

The importance of adult learning is obvious. It can be seen as a tool to address various challenges in Europe today<sup>36</sup>:

- The low participation rate of older workers in the labour market and in particular women over 55 years of age.
- Demographic change, elderly women constituting the majority of senior citizens.
- Poverty and exclusion, in particular of women.
- The lack of integration of immigrants, in particular women from particular cultural backgrounds.

If we look at the figures for participation in lifelong learning, in only a few countries is the participation rate of women and men above the Lisbon target of 12.5%. In fact, the figure of 1 in 10 adults being active in some kind of lifelong learning seems very low.

#### Obstacles to participation in Lifelong Learning

Barriers to improving participation in adult education are outlined in the Communication of the European Commission, 'Adult learning: it is never too late to learn'<sup>37</sup>, and in the Task Force Report on Adult Learning<sup>38</sup>. They are:

- Policy-related.
- Informational (level of access to good and timely information; lack of guidance and counselling, also in relation to gender).
- Provider-related (entry requirements, cost, level of learning support, nature of learning outcomes, etc.).
- Situational (the cultural value attached to education; the extent to which the life situation or the family and social environment or the workplace of the adult supports participation).
- Dispositional (the self-esteem and self-confidence of the adult as a learner, often linked to failure in previous educational experiences).
- Financial.
- Non-financial (e.g. time restrictions, formal access requirements, geographical barriers, insecurity (remote area, late in the evening, etc.), language barriers, socio-economic, etc. barriers, insufficient opportunities, personal, cultural, ethnic, religious and psychological barriers such as age, image of school, self-image)<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> See: UEAPME (European Association of craft, small and medium sized enterprises) *Position paper on adult learning 2007*.

<sup>37</sup> Communication of the European Commission, *Adult learning: it is never too late to learn 2006*, COM(2006) 614 final, p.6.

<sup>38</sup> *Task force report on adult education survey 2005*, p. 67; see also EAEA 2006, op.cit: 2.2, Trends in Participation - Access and Social Inclusion. Trends in participation barriers, data and expectations, p. 24 following.

<sup>39</sup> Concerning obstacles and barriers see in particular *Task force report 2005*, pp. 97-99.

What can be done to tackle these obstacles?

- Improve awareness and guidance. Provide better information and guidance on learning opportunities and benefits and make information on quality of courses and providers available to the great public. Provide specific information for women as to accompanying measures to learning such as caring facilities, accessibility of learning places, women-only courses and similar.
- Explore more sites for learning, including public and local areas with good and free learning facilities; bring learning closer to home, accessible for women with children, with care duties or without easy transport means.
- Provide more free learning opportunities in technical and technological fields as well as in fields that are important for society as a whole, such as democratic citizenship.
- Provide financial support for socially disadvantaged individuals who are willing to learn.
- Provide support such as childcare and care for the elderly in order to enable women and men to participate in lifelong learning.
- Apply new educational methods, in particular gender-appropriate methods.
- Foster the role of adult education providers in offering tailor-made learning and training, in particular for disadvantaged groups like migrant women, elderly women, mothers, disabled and other.
- Implement an intergenerational approach with women and men.
- Foster the part played by the European level.
- Facilitate investment in lifelong learning for women and men by gender budgeting.

### 1.3. Employment and Women

The directives<sup>40</sup> up to now have raised awareness for the need to respect the equality of women and men; nevertheless, reality proves that there is still a long way to go. The figures for participation in lifelong learning do not correlate with better conditions of employment and access to the labour market.

---

<sup>40</sup> a) Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002, amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions. (OJ L 269 – 05/10/2002).

b) Council Directive 75/117/EEC of 10 February 1975 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women (OJCE L 45 – 19/02/1975).

c) Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 of July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast) (OJ L 204 – 26/07/2006).

According to the Labour Force Survey 2006, the participation rate of women in lifelong learning is higher than that of men<sup>41</sup>. We should note that vocational education and training plays a much more important role than general continuing education in most of the former socialist countries. Bulgaria and Romania report<sup>42</sup> that providers offer few courses on themes such as democratic citizenship or personal development; nor is there great interest in these themes, whereas there is high demand for courses that offer the opportunity of certificates and diplomas. But although female participation and achievement in education exceeds that of males, this is not reflected in the employment rate. Female employment has not yet reached the Lisbon target of 60%; it is currently at 55.7% and 31.7% for women 55-64 years old<sup>43</sup>.

A comparison of the employment rate with participation in lifelong learning gives an interesting insight into the current situation<sup>44</sup>. Participation in lifelong learning by women depends to a high degree on their employment status, their care responsibilities in the family, and the support available within the firm or organisation they work in.

---

<sup>41</sup> Eurostat Labour Force survey 2006; website:  
[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?\\_pageid=1996\\_39140985&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL&screen=detailref&language=en&product=STRIND\\_EMPLOI&root=STRIND\\_EMPLOI/emploi/em053](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1996_39140985&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&screen=detailref&language=en&product=STRIND_EMPLOI&root=STRIND_EMPLOI/emploi/em053)

<sup>42</sup> Comment to our study by Mariana Matache, Bucharest, director EUROED, adult education centre, coordinator of Lifelong Learning Weeks in Romania and member of EBIS, Adult Education in Southeast Europe.

<sup>43</sup> European Commission, *A Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010*, p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> See also p. 9 of this study; this survey is an example of contradictory results based on data that are not really comparable. Nevertheless, the correlation between employment rate and participation in this table provides valuable conclusions.

**Table: Employment rate – Gender pay gap – Participation in lifelong learning**

	Employment rate			Participation in lifelong learning			Gender pay
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Gap
	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	2006	
EU (27 countries)	64.4 <sup>(p)</sup>	57.2 <sup>(p)</sup>	71.6 <sup>(p)</sup>	9.6	10.4	8.8	15 <sup>(s)</sup>
EU (25 countries)	64.7 <sup>(p)</sup>	57.4 <sup>(p)</sup>	72.0 <sup>(p)</sup>	10.1	11.0	9.2	15 <sup>(s)</sup>
EU (15 countries)	66.0 <sup>(p)</sup>	58.6 <sup>(p)</sup>	73.5 <sup>(p)</sup>	11.1	12.1	10.2	15 <sup>(s)</sup>
Euro area	64.6 <sup>(p)</sup>	56.6 <sup>(p)</sup>	72.6 <sup>(p)</sup>	8.2	8.5	7.8	14 <sup>(s)</sup>
Euro area (13 countries)	64.6 <sup>(p)</sup>	56.7 <sup>(p)</sup>	72.6 <sup>(p)</sup>	8.2	8.6	7.9	14 <sup>(s)</sup>
Euro area (12 countries)	64.6 <sup>(p)</sup>	56.6 <sup>(p)</sup>	72.6 <sup>(p)</sup>	8.2	8.5	7.8	14 <sup>(s)</sup>
Belgium	61.0	54.0	67.9	7.5 <sup>(p)</sup>		7.6 <sup>(p)</sup>	
7.4 <sup>(p)</sup>	7						
Bulgaria	58.6	54.6	62.8	1.3	1.3	1.3	16
Czech Republic	65.3	56.8	73.7	5.6	5.9	5.4	19
Denmark	77.4	73.4	81.2	29.2	33.8	24.6	18
Germany	67.5 <sup>(p)</sup>	62.2 <sup>(p)</sup>	72.8 <sup>(p)</sup>	7.5	7.3	7.8	22
Estonia	68.1	65.3	71.0	6.5	8.6	4.2	25
Ireland	68.6	59.3	77.7	7.5	8.9	6.1	9 <sup>(p)</sup>
Greece	61.0	47.4	74.6	1.9	1.8	2.0	9 <sup>(p)</sup>
Spain	64.8	53.2	76.1	10.4	11.5	9.3	13 <sup>(p)</sup>
France	63.0 <sup>(p)</sup>	57.7 <sup>(p)</sup>	68.5 <sup>(p)</sup>	7.5	7.8	7.2	12
Italy	58.4	46.3	70.5	6.1	6.5	5.7	9
Cyprus	69.6	60.3	79.4	7.1	7.8	6.5	25
Latvia	66.3	62.4	70.4	6.9 <sup>(p)</sup>	9.3 <sup>(p)</sup>	4.1 <sup>(p)</sup>	17
Lithuania	63.6	61.0	66.3	4.9 <sup>(p)</sup>	6.6 <sup>(p)</sup>	2.9 <sup>(u)</sup>	15
Luxembourg (Grand-Duché)	63.6	54.6	72.6	8.2	8.7	7.6	14
Hungary	57.3	51.1	63.8	3.8	4.4	3.1	11
Malta	54.8	34.9	74.5	5.5	5.6	5.5	4
Netherlands	74.3	67.7	80.9	15.6	15.9	15.3	18
Austria	70.2	63.5	76.9	13.1	14.0	12.2	18
Poland	54.5	48.2	60.9	4.7	5.1	4.3	10
Portugal	67.9	62.0	73.9	3.8 <sup>(p)</sup>	4.0 <sup>(p)</sup>	3.7 <sup>(p)</sup>	9
Romania	58.8	53.0	64.6	1.3	1.3	1.3	13
Slovenia	66.6	61.8	71.1	15.0	16.3	13.8	8 <sup>(p)</sup>
Slovakia	59.4	51.9	67.0	4.3	4.6	4.0	24
Finland	69.3	67.3	71.4	23.1	27.0	19.3	20
Sweden	73.1	70.7	75.5	:	:	:	16
United Kingdom	71.5	65.8	77.3	26.6 <sup>(p)</sup>	31.2 <sup>(p)</sup>	22.0 <sup>(p)</sup>	20 <sup>(p)</sup>

Source: Eurostat Labour Force Survey, 2006.

**Note:** employment rate persons aged 15 to 64; lifelong learning rate adult population aged 25 to 64.

**Additional note:** (:) Not available (p) Provisional value (u) Unreliable or uncertain data (s) Eurostat estimate.

In spite of good or excellent achievements in a range of subjects in education and training, and participation in lifelong learning, women in employment are still concentrated in fewer sectors than men. A very large proportion of women work in services: education; business activities; retailing; public administration; hotels and restaurants; and health care and social services. And

some of these services include the workplaces with the lowest wages. The male workforce is much less concentrated in certain areas than the female<sup>45</sup>.

Equally the earnings gap between women and men has to be bridged; not only does a high proportion of women work in low-paid jobs, but women also often receive lower pay for the same work<sup>46</sup>.

Age is another important factor. Women over 50 are highly underrepresented in the labour market and are at greater risk of exclusion and poverty<sup>47</sup>. Their access to lifelong learning is seriously hindered by insufficient financial means, by transport problems, by isolation, or by complete lack of information.

It seems obvious that the attention to women alone is not enough for gender mainstreaming; additional factors have to be considered in relation to women in employment.

Special programmes in education and training which enable women to expand their range of interests in relation to jobs and the labour market may be useful steps towards achieving gender equality, 'but they could also contribute to the reinstallation of gender hierarchy as they tend to identify women as a vulnerable group, and usually fail to address men as a group'<sup>48</sup>.

Another factor to be considered is the proportion of full-time to part-time employment: it is mainly women who take up part-time employment, with lower earnings and less social security, in order to combine paid work and services without pay in the family<sup>49</sup>.

Lack of public services for families such as childcare motivates lifelong learning institutions to offer this service as well as care for the elderly. Many institutions can only provide a minimum because of insufficient resources; caring services should be provided by public administration in order to support adult learners with family duties.

<sup>45</sup> Eurostat, *Statistics in focus; Population and Social Conditions*, 53/2007, pp. 2, 4, 6.

<sup>46</sup> 'Thirty years after the 1975 Directive on Equal Pay women in the EU still earn on average only 85% of men's wages, hour for hour. In many countries, the discrepancy is much wider, and can reach up to 25% (Eurostat 2005). However, the gender wage differential has decreased during the last decades. This is partly explained by the fact that differences in years of schooling among male and female full-time workers have largely disappeared (...). Not only schooling of women, but also female labour force participation and consequently women's accumulated labour force experience have increased. These changes in experience seem to have been even more important in closing the gender wage differential than the increase in years of education. Today, it is not the amount of schooling, but rather differences in what men and women study as well as differences in aptitudes and achievement scores across subjects through which schooling appears to affect gender wage differentials.' de la Fuente, A. and Ciccone, A., *Human capital in a global and knowledge-based economy 2003*, p. 17; see: *ibid.*, p. 50 on wages.

<sup>47</sup> *Report on equality between women and men – 2007*, European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, February 2007, p. 10: 'At the **social** level, women, especially elderly women and single mothers, are at greater risk of exclusion and poverty. The risk of poverty among women over the age of 65 is 20%, i.e. five points more than for men, while that among single-parent households is 34%. In addition, long-term unemployment affects 4.5% of women, i.e. one point more than men. Women also constitute the majority of the economically inactive and are therefore particularly vulnerable to poverty.' The report does not refer gender to non-formal education and training and it is not related to gender in vocational education and training.

<sup>48</sup> *Workshop on gender mainstreaming* for Chairs and Secretaries of Steering Committees of the Council of Europe op.cit, p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, *Combining family and full-time work, 2006*, pp. 5.

#### 1.4. Financing Lifelong Learning

In their study, *Human Capital in a Global and Knowledge-based Economy*<sup>50</sup> Ángel de la Fuente and Antonio Ciccone come to the following conclusions: ‘First, investment in human capital contributes significantly to productivity growth. Second, there is clear evidence that human capital plays a key role in fostering technological change and diffusion. Third, human capital investment appears attractive relative to alternative assets, both from the individual and from the aggregate perspectives. Fourth, policies that raise the quantity and quality of the stock of human capital are compatible with increasing social cohesion.’

Participation in lifelong learning should not therefore be left to private investment alone. Disadvantaged groups in particular need considerable support to participate in some kind of education and training. As the Interim Report on the Education and Training 2010 Programme says<sup>51</sup>: ‘Investing in education and training has a price, but high private, economic and social returns in the medium and long-term outweigh the costs. Reforms should therefore continue to seek synergies between economic and social policy objectives, which are in fact mutually reinforcing.’

Financing their own lifelong learning can be a powerful barrier for many individuals. Measures at a national level have been developed by some countries to increase people’s motivation to participate in continuing education and training. However, ‘national level financial structures or incentives that include non-vocational and non-job oriented adult learning can be found only in very few countries. The implementation of incentives of developing the financing mechanism has started slowly but surely in the Member States. Numerous financing incentives have taken the form of pilot projects being only partially introduced in Member States. They use different methods of reducing taxes on profits, levy/grant schemes such as grant disbursements, individual learning accounts, and learning vouchers.’<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Ángel de la Fuente and Antonio Ciccone, *Human capital in a global and knowledge-based economy* 2003, p. 9; see also Task force report 2005, pp. 115-116.

<sup>51</sup> *Modernising Education and Training: A Vital Contribution to Prosperity and Social Cohesion in Europe*. 2006 Joint Interim Report of the Council and of the Commission on Progress under the ‘Education & Training 2010’ Work Programme (2006/C79/01), p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> *Adult education trends and issues in Europe*, op.cit., p. 58.

The table below gives an overview of incentives in the European countries.

**Table: Financing individuals**<sup>53</sup>

<b>Measures indirectly related to adult education – collateral measures to support participation in adult education</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Country (specifically reported by...)</b>
Housing benefit		Finland
Transport costs	Transport costs funded or subsidised	Bulgaria, Ireland, Latvia, Hungary, Slovenia
Childcare	Support for care of dependent children	Germany, Greece, Ireland (also care for elderly), Netherlands, Norway
Extra tax-free child allowance	Based on the number of children & introduced as of January 1, 2006	Sweden
Tax exemptions or tax credits	Passive measure – Cost of education deducted from taxable income or converted to tax credits  Computer & internet cost (refund of one-third of the cost) to promote IT literacy and distance learning	Majority of countries provide one or more tax incentives  Lithuania

<b>Active financial measures directly related to adult education</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Country (specifically reported by...)</b>
Grants – Training grant/Special grant/Recruitment grant/Student grant/Adult Learners grant/Learning grant		Denmark, Germany, Ireland (postsecondary), Spain, Italy, Hungary, Netherlands, Austria, Poland (applied to the unemployed and employees sent by employers), Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom (England and Wales)
Training vouchers	To be used for all kinds of adult learning programmes & usually over the lifetime of the individual. Providers redeem the voucher from voucher fund	Belgium (Flemish and French Communities – all adult learning), Germany, Italy, Austria (most courses are job-related or transversal)
Individual loans	Terms usually include deferred repayment	Austria, Poland (from Labour Office - only for unemployed), Finland,

<sup>53</sup> *Non-Vocational Adult Education in Europe*. Executive Summary of National Information on Eurybase. Working Document; January 2007, Eurydice, Appendix 6.



		Sweden, Norway
Individual learning accounts (ILA)	Individual savings matched by contributions from public sources or employer – a special bank account to help pay for learning	Belgium (Flemish Community on an experimental basis only), Netherlands (experimental), United Kingdom (Wales – relaunched), United Kingdom (Scotland)
Scholarships/Studentships/Bursaries		Denmark, Lithuania, Netherlands (ILA), Slovenia, Finland, United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), Norway
Welfare income maintenance	Welfare income converts to training allowance during learning period	Bulgaria, Ireland, Sweden

<b>Active financial measures directly related to adult education</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Country (specifically reported by...)</b>
Training bonus / benefits	Additional payment to individuals on welfare income maintenance schemes	Ireland, Poland (unemployed only)
Adult training formula fund	For disabled adults learning a foreign language or for general purpose learning	Hungary
Paid educational leave	Wide spectrum of statutory and/or collective bargaining arrangements across countries and, depending on the country, may or may not apply to NVAE	Majority of countries
Full or partial subsidisation of fees by trade unions, professional bodies, etc.		Iceland and to some extent Sweden

<b>Passive financial measures directly related to adult education</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Country (specifically named by...)</b>
Free or reduced cost courses		Belgium (the three Communities), Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden
Course materials free of charge		Ireland, Greece, Latvia, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway

Source: Eurybas - The information database on education systems in Europe, 2005/06.

Supporting adult learning mostly means funding VET and labour market training activities. Support for non-formal and informal learning has been undervalued. The returns on adult learning have been analysed principally in terms of economic benefit only. But the concept of social capital means recognising that the individual reaps both market and non-market returns from interaction with others. ‘Bridging capital’ is then needed to enable those from disadvantaged groups to access other networks. High social returns generated by educational

investment diminish the need for expenditure in other areas, such as unemployment benefits, welfare payments, pensions, social insurance and healthcare<sup>54</sup>.

### Gender Budgeting

We should also consider the opportunities that are offered by gender budgeting in relation to the participation of women in lifelong learning. According to the definition of the Council of Europe<sup>55</sup>, ‘Gender budgeting is an application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It means a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality. Gender budgeting does not mean a separate budget for women. It is not limited to budgetary allocations targeting equal opportunity policies or promoting women, but encompasses the entire budget, revenues as well as expenditures. It is also important to stress that gender budgeting is an integral part of gender mainstreaming. If gender mainstreaming is to be effected in practice, then budgets must be examined together with policy. If the gap between policy and resource allocation, which has been revealed in almost all gender budget initiatives to date, is to be filled, then budget-making and policy-making must be carried out in close collaboration<sup>56</sup>’.

If gender budgeting is seen as a useful tool for achieving equality of women and men in all fields of society, then there is an urgent need to introduce gender-disaggregated data in research and statistics<sup>57</sup>, otherwise we will not be able to build on reliable information.

### 1.5. Indicators and Benchmarks

We focus here mainly on the indicators and benchmarks that have been developed so far for the Lisbon Strategy and ‘Education and Training 2010’ in relation to lifelong learning.

Within the three strategic objectives of ‘Education and Training 2010’, lifelong learning is part of the second: facilitating the access of all to education and training systems. The Commission’s last Education and Training Report<sup>58</sup> indicates that the ‘increase of participation of adults in lifelong learning still remains a challenge’. It also provides ‘Recommendations on lifelong learning<sup>59</sup>’; however, it does not take the gender dimension into consideration.

The only extant and specifically agreed European benchmark on lifelong learning demands that by 2010, the European Union average level of participation in lifelong learning will have reached at least 12.5% of the adult working age population (age 25-64)<sup>60</sup>. According to the Report, 4 million more adults would need to participate in lifelong learning between now and 2010 in order to reach the EU benchmark.

<sup>54</sup> *Adult education trends and issues* op.cit., p. 58-59; cf. also *Modernising Education and Training*, op.cit., p. 3.

<sup>55</sup> *Gender budgeting*, Council of Europe, 2005, p. 11.

<sup>56</sup> Gender budgeting is a theme and a principle in the European Commission, cf. e.g. the opening speech of at the conference in Vienna: Luisella Pavan-Woolfe. Director. Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, ‘Gender budgeting in the European Union and in the EU policies’; [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/speeches/2005/lp250405\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/speeches/2005/lp250405_en.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> See: Economics of Education Study on *The Returns to Various Types of Investment in Education and Training*. Completed by London Economics Presentation of the Study European Commission Directorate General Education and Culture, Brussels 2005; see *Gender Budgeting – An Overview* op.cit.; see also *Exploring sources on funding for lifelong learning 2003- 2748 / 001 – 001 LE2 52STAT*, 2004, EU-RA (European Research Associates) Luxembourg.

<sup>58</sup> *Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training. Report based on indicators and benchmarks*, Report 2006 SEC(2006) 639, 2.1, p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 39/40.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

As regards indicators, we refer to the Commission staff working paper ‘Progress towards the common objectives in education and training 2004 Indicators and benchmarks’<sup>61</sup>.

The indicator is the ‘percentage of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training during the 4 weeks prior to survey’.

Although the promotion of lifelong learning is a key element in the Lisbon strategy, the only specific indicator for lifelong learning is clearly inadequate. This indicator refers only to participation in lifelong learning activities, even though there may be some data on gender participation. There is no analysis of the impact of lifelong learning on employment or job creation.

Finally, in February 2007, the Commission adopted a Communication ‘A coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training’<sup>62</sup> with a proposal of 20 core indicators<sup>63</sup>.

For the lifelong learning policy area, the Commission proposes:

‘Monitoring progress in making lifelong learning a reality will be covered by core indicators on *participation of adults in lifelong learning* (indicator 16), and on *adults’ skills* (indicator 17), which will allow for the analysis of access and participation levels as well as the skills levels for various age groups of the population. The indicator on *upper secondary completion rates of young people* (9) will monitor the EU benchmark and the preparedness of young people to participate in lifelong learning. The Council should endorse these indicators.’

Again, there is no mention of the gender dimensions of the different indicators proposed (participation levels, skills, age groups etc). It seems that once again the focus is on participation in lifelong learning rather than on the impact of lifelong learning.

The position for benchmarks and indicators for learning opportunities and outcomes for adult men and women seems poor. There are not any above the age of 64.

Gendered additional data are available (Eurostat surveys), but they are not yet under consideration for benchmarks or indicators for lifelong learning or employment policies. In the context of Education and Training 2010 a Working Group G had also dealt with gender mainstreaming issues. In its first report the lack of gendered indicators and statistics was criticised. A virtual sub-group had started electronic communication on gender related recommendations in summer 2004. They could not be agreed in Group G because it was never invited again after the new European Commission took over.

In the future, it would be useful to have an overview over all relevant legislation at national and regional level on equal opportunities in lifelong learning for adults and equal treatment in learning for personal development, democratic citizenship and employment<sup>64</sup>.

<sup>61</sup> Commission staff working paper, *Progress towards the common objectives in education and training 2004 Indicators and benchmarks*, SEC(2004) 73, p. 51.

<sup>62</sup> Communication *A coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training* COM(2007) 61 final.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>64</sup> European Commission, *Report on equality between women and men (2007)* COM(2007) 49 final.

## 1.6. European Projects

In our proposal we offered to review the Calls for Proposal of the EU with regard to gender issues. This was to be restricted to education and training Calls for Proposal, and in particular to Grundtvig projects, i.e. adult education. Since all Calls require the consideration of gender issues (in the specification of the calls, number 7 is: ‘Contribution to transversal policies - In terms of (a) the impact of the project on the target group (section of the educational community ultimately addressed), and (b) participation in the project itself, please specify where applicable how and to what extent the project will actively: 7.1 promote equal opportunities between women and men’), we decided instead to review Grundtvig Projects in the Compendia issued by DG Education and Culture.

Time did not allow for more than an examination of the Compendia for ‘European cooperation projects, training courses and thematic seminars in adult education’ covering 2005, with more than 80 projects, 2004, with more than 70 projects and 2003 with almost 50 projects.

A special evaluation by gender for the old Socrates programme exists; gender was integrated into the evaluation of all new Socrates programmes by the EU. Projects within the Grundtvig programme had very positive results concerning gender.

A large number of very interesting projects in the ‘Grundtvig Learning Partnerships’ are worth exploring further. However, this needs more time, particularly for follow-up: there have been 410 partnerships in 2006 alone. It is highly probable that these partnerships are successful since the requirements for managing funds are not as complex as in other EU-financed projects; they are not required to have a large number of partners and need only cover a minimum of 3 countries; and they are more flexible in the how the partnership can be organised, amongst other features. And they are very close to grass roots level, hence closer to the target groups and end-users than a range of larger projects. An index of ‘Project Areas, Objectives and Target Groups’ at the end of the Compendium 2006 helps in locating relevant partnership initiatives. Nonetheless each project description and final report has to be read carefully: it seems that many partnerships could not decide what their priority aim was. Thus ‘gender issues’ appears in a very large range of projects. Several partnerships seem to be really interesting and might serve as good practice examples, but this needs more careful analysis and possibly follow-up on websites or with project partners or thematic cluster seminars.

As to ‘European cooperation projects, training courses and thematic seminars in adult education’, three projects in **2005** are worth mentioning:

### **Ciao! Women – Communication via IT for Adults Online Women**

This project addresses the specific lifelong learning needs of adult women in relation to information and communication technology (ICT). The increasing need to facilitate the access both of women who have a job and of those who are outside the labour market (because of their age, or because they choose it for family reasons), to educational pathways which are tailored to their specific requirements, respond to their needs, and do not necessarily target employability, may require innovative approaches. Equally, the information revolution must not perpetuate or worsen gender inequality, nor should pre-existing gender inequalities be reflected in perceptions of the differential abilities of men and women to grasp technologies. In fact, the many surveys of the relationship between women and technology conducted in Western and non-Western countries over the last decade, as reflected in the research literature

and papers issued by international organizations, have shown the need to break the unfounded stereotype of a gulf between women and technology, especially in adult literacy schemes.

Website: <http://www.ciaowomen.org/Italiano>

### **DiGe\_E – Managing Diversity and Gender Experts for Europe**

The DiGe\_E Project develops and tests the curriculum for "managing diversity and gender competences"; collates and compares existing concepts (modules, tools, materials) from different European countries; and develops and adapts training modules, addressed to diverse target groups. A Europe-wide pool of diversity and gender experts is being built up to disseminate results and further develop concepts, as well as facilitating the exchange of experience. This 2-year project focuses on practical learning for diversity management and brings together examples of good practice as well as training modules with the aim of improving access to education for diverse, marginalised groups.

No project website available; access via [www.lfq.nrw.de](http://www.lfq.nrw.de)

### **Dialogue Between the Genders**

The development of a course of training for trainers in adult learning to help them and their client groups to:

- implement a real change of "mindset" leading to a more equal sharing of tasks, power and responsibilities within work, family and domestic life;
- explore and understand the roots of the inequalities, stereotypes and prejudices to be found in inter- gender communication;
- take on beliefs and attitudes necessary to develop new models of masculinity and femininity;
- improve communication and understanding between the sexes, specifically both within their work situation;
- implement individual strategic actions to redress the balance of power, responsibilities and tasks between home, work and personal life.

Over 2 years this project proposes to train trainers in adult education to raise their awareness of gender issues and improve their own approaches, irrespective of the subject they are teaching.

Website: <http://www.genderdialogues.org/>

4 projects from **2004** are also worth mentioning:

### **EFID – Europäische Frauen im Dialog der Kulturen und Generationen (European Women in the Dialogue of Cultures and Generations)**

The aim of this 2-year project was to promote gender democracy in the context of enlargement of the EU and growing together. More specifically, the project aimed at strengthening women's position as social actors and citizens, especially in the new Member States.

Knowledge of the life experiences of women of different generations in five European countries (CZ, SK, DE, SE, ES) set in the context of history, culture and society, was shared through gender- and culture-sensitive interactive training courses. Comparisons between countries were designed to show the richness of Europe, as well as stimulating cross-cultural dialogue among the learners.

More information on the German website:

[http://www.owen-frauenetzwerk.de/html/deutsch/projekte/proj\\_efid.html](http://www.owen-frauenetzwerk.de/html/deutsch/projekte/proj_efid.html)

**DELOA – Itinerant Workshops for Assessment, Help, Orientation and Information on Sexual Education, Equal Opportunities and Gender Equality Aimed at Rural Woman**

The project aimed to use, adapt and re-design training modules to be used to initiate peripatetic workshops providing help, sexual education, and awareness of equal opportunities and gender equality to rural women. The project enabled the transfer and mainstreaming of intervention policies on gender equality between women and men in rural areas.

This project seems to be an example of what is needed for women living in the countryside or in remote areas that usually don't have easy access to education and training. Products of this project are, among other, a European Best Practice Guide regarding Intervention in Cases of Domestic Violence; Gender Equality and Rural Women and Sexual and Reproductive Health.

Website: <http://www.blinc-eu.org/index.php?id=944>

An increasingly important disadvantaged target group – migrant women – is the focus of the project **Intercultural Migrant Women Initiatives – IMWI**. It looked into the role that women from different cultures play in intercultural communication and activities. Often it is the women who start their own projects, share experiences and give each other mutual support. They construct strong intercultural bridges for mutual understanding, integration and participation in society.

Website: <http://www.imwiproject.org/>

A side-aspect of gender issues, though an important one in almost all European countries, is violence and its prevention. The project **Gender Specific Aspects of Violence Prevention** aimed at developing and testing a training course in violence prevention considering gender specific aspects, which would enable experts to initiate and implement training programmes that promote communication competences.

Website: [www.tas-koeln.de](http://www.tas-koeln.de)

In **2003** the following three projects focused on citizenship, democracy and empowerment:

**Employing Women's Potential:** a project designed to provide women returners with tools and strategies to overcome barriers to employment and learning, using open and distance learning, tailored materials, action plans and guidance. The project provided insight into the lives of the participants in this adult education venture. It gave them with the wherewithal to voice their own stories. But at the same time it showed the links between civil society, the work place and the participants' learning. It opened access to the life stories of the participants, and showed how adult education can fundamentally change women's lives. It was selected by EAEA in 2003 for the EAEA Grundtvig Award.

**GEcel - Politische Bildung und Lernen für Gender Mainstreaming (Citizenship Education and Learning for Gender Mainstreaming)**

The project aimed at developing a European strategy for gender mainstreaming in training measures and in particular in training for citizenship education. The target group were trainers, and the outcomes were modules for training the trainers and a handbook.

Website: <http://www.bpb.de>; documents: <http://www.bpb.de/files/5484S7.pdf>

In the same year, an excellent project called **WO-MEN: Gender Equality Creates Democracy** began. It sought to promote European values on gender equality and democracy through lifelong learning and to develop quantitative and qualitative instruments to monitor the application of gender sensitive policies in the partner countries involved

The outputs and outcomes were:

- Report: Comparative analysis of gender equality structure (in EN) – which is worth studying.
- The Tools for Change. A Good Practice Guide Promoting Gender Equality through Education & Lifelong Learning (in EN)
- Survey Report on Indicators of Gender Equality
- Needs analysis on lifelong learning training on gender equality for the project's target group
- Curriculum and electronic manual on CD-ROM: Gender equality education for policy and decision makers, adult educators and leaders of NGOs
- Trans-national training course: Gender Equality Education for Decision-Makers, Educators and Leaders of NGOs
- International seminar: Promoting Gender Equality through Social Partnership and Education;
- Conference: Gender Equality Creates Democracy.

Website: <http://www.gender-equality.webinfo.lt/>

### **SHE - Social skills and Healthier self-Esteem**

SHE's target beneficiaries were women in the 40+ age group whose experiences have led them to a low sense of self esteem for a variety of reasons, who may also be without paid work, socially isolated, without social support, and for whom learning environments will be threatening. SHE developed models of learning circles (facilitated peer groups) and disseminated the results in the publication: Facilitating Social Learning Circles on Self-Esteem.

Website: <http://www.eushe.org/default.aspx>

### ***Other projects***

The European Commission, DG Education and Culture, supported a network from 2002: **OASIS** — Gender mainstreaming/Open Activities. Networks are very helpful for women to learn from each other, to exchange experiences and to build up empowerment.

An important, relatively new theme is the focus on **men and their role**. We mention only two projects that seem relevant to the theme of gender mainstreaming in lifelong learning.

**Men's Work and Family Reconciliation in Europe**, carried out by the Work Research Institute, Oslo, Norway. The description of the project says: 'Changes from breadwinner masculinities towards caring masculinities are described on the basis of European labour market trends and a recent 6-country study of men in part-time work. Although gender ideals are changing, working life shows a persistent trend towards preservation of breadwinner masculinities, connected to devaluation of men's care-giving. The results highlight the economic

and material aspects of change and how work-related gender sanctions operate against men in new roles. Men develop more relational forms of masculinity linked to caregiving and family participation but often face a traditional and deeply ingrained organizational masculinity in their job. However, there is also considerable variation among companies, and some may even take pro-equality initiatives when the state is passive.’ The report presents a broader change model with three main stages (initial, middle, and advanced) and discusses possibilities for more change-oriented research.

Website: <http://jmm.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/9/4/425>

And a project financed by DG Research: **Men, Gender and Equality in the Transition of Labour Forms**, the full project title being: **Towards a new organisation of men's lives – emerging forms of work and opportunities for gender equality - Acronym: Work Changes Gender, 2001-2004**

In the first stage, the team looked at **the influence of new forms of work on gender differentiation**. This part of the study was concerned with socio-economic conditions. The goal was to show how working conditions for men and women were unequal, and raise awareness of changes in labour markets.

The second step – under the heading ‘**organisation of time in male life – new institutional models**’ – looked at the structural factors within companies that either foster or hinder new forms of socially secure labour. Is the ‘male breadwinner’ model changing within organisations?

What are the prospects of a new ‘working culture’ for men?

In the third part of the project – ‘**ways of a new positioning of men**’ – the team undertook a socio-psychological study and shifted the focus to individual men coping with pervasive labour market-related changes.

*The key outcomes and conclusions were:*

- Men’s issues still need to be more fully incorporated into gender mainstreaming policies. Whilst gender mainstreaming is still very much biased towards women and their private versus professional life balance, more men are now seeing gender equality as a benefit for themselves rather than a cost.
- Today, men can rely on legislation or company regulations if they are involved in childcare, but they experience no support at a ‘cultural’ level. Alternatives that overcome the classic models of masculinity must be made more attractive, going beyond the equity-oriented policies already in existence. Website: <http://www.work-changes-gender.org>; Website final report: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/finalreport/hpse-ct-2001-00085-final-report.pdf>



## 2. National Level Gender Aspects in Lifelong Learning: A Comparative Study of Lifelong Learning and the Labour Market from Six Member States

National reports from six Member States have provided information on women's participation in lifelong learning, with a particular emphasis on the part played by adult education in integrating women into the labour market and civil society. The authors of the national reports were also asked to consider the relationship between women's learning and access to and progress in the labour market. The countries selected offer **differing geographical perspectives**: Northwestern Europe (United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland), Central/Eastern Europe (Germany and Poland) and Southern Europe (Spain and Greece). The full report from each country is in the *Annexes*, together with a short chapter discussing specific points of interest from the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, which have well-developed adult education systems and have also implemented a range of measures to support gender equality at all levels of society over a long period. Distinctive national characteristics were a further reason for the choice of countries to be examined and the national reports each reveal **specific perspectives and perceptions flowing from the national contexts, differing policy traditions and frameworks for education, and differing economic environments and labour market conditions**. They present a complex picture, with diversity in structures, policies, measures and priorities, but similarities in many of their concerns.

To summarise the characteristics of the six countries chosen for study:

- Republic of Ireland: a high employment rate as a consequence of EU policies and funds and a wide range of adult education programmes for women;
- United Kingdom: a high employment rate, a rapidly decreasing proportion of the labour force without qualifications and a well-developed system of adult education, in particular community education;
- Germany: in some respects a transition country post reunification, with differing role models for women in its Eastern and Western parts, and a well-developed adult education system;
- Poland: a transition country with high investment from the EU, but with a high unemployment rate, limited education and training opportunities for women and highly traditional roles;
- Spain: a transition country in a different way, following the period of dictatorship and its recent dramatic change from an emigration to an immigration country; a high unemployment rate and strong traditional values, but also the considerable impact of adult learning on combating gender discrimination, and women's prominent role in the democratisation process over the last 30 years;
- Greece: an example of the impact of European policies on socio-economic development, but with predominantly traditional role models, and a rapidly developing lifelong learning system.

## 2.1. The Republic of Ireland

The Republic of Ireland is the only country<sup>65</sup> in our sample which has reached **practically full employment** with an 83% increase in the number of women working since 1985. This represents an increase of 67% in the number of women working full time and a trebling of the number of women in part-time work. As a result, the employment rate for women in Ireland aged 15-64 years is now at 59% and has surpassed the EU 25 average of 57.3%. **Policy strategies and society in general therefore no longer aspire to job growth as an end in itself. The quality of employment is becoming more important than the number of jobs.** Policy therefore now focuses on achieving a balanced workforce that has access to education and training beyond job related skills.

Education and training are recognised as important keys to this successful development and have facilitated the increase in female labour market participation over recent years. In particular, a body of legislation has secured institutional support for adults who did not benefit from education at school and a number of measures have been put in place to address the disadvantages experienced by girls and women in the education system. **Women's increasing participation in education is a major outcome of the growth of women's community education groups as providers.** In addition programmes like *Women Returning to Work* or the *Equality for Women Measure* have promoted women's participation in education and the labour market. However, childcare continues to be a barrier to education, training and employment for women in Ireland. More attention needs to be given to the under-representation in the labour market of certain groups such as older women, migrant women and lone parents.

Attention also needs to be given to the difficulties women experience in progressing in the workplace. **The economic growth of Ireland over the past decade has been achieved partly through the huge increase in women's labour market participation.** In turn this economic growth has supported the development of a range of policies to improve social inclusion, which by providing opportunities for education and training have enhanced the lives of those who had been excluded from the labour market. **But there is evidence that employment and training policies have tended to focus on securing access the labour market with less emphasis on education and training for progression within it.** Inadequate training has been identified in the National Women's Strategy 2007 as a major factor affecting the advancement of women. The Forum on the Workplace of the Future 2005 found from a survey of 8000 workers that 'Women receive less training than men, have less discretion over their work, receive less information in the workplace and have high levels of work stress.'

**The successful development of female education and work is essentially an outcome of European policies and programmes,** which were taken up and extended by Irish national government. Gender mainstreaming has become a central part of the key policies. The challenge now is to ensure that the gender aims are fully implemented and to provide real gender equality. Another question for the future is how non formal education and gender mainstreaming will contribute to promoting equal opportunities in the labour market and to changing stereotypes which persist in work place culture.

---

<sup>65</sup> Irish National Report, Annexes, pp. 45 - 66.

## 2.2. The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has in place<sup>66</sup> a significant range of legislative and policy measures designed to mainstream gender equality, both at UK level and with variations for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. **At 67%, the employment rate for women exceeds the Lisbon target of 60% by 2010. However, structural inequalities in the labour market remain stubbornly resistant to change.** Gendered patterns of employment, hours of work, occupational segregation and pay, emerge immediately after compulsory education and continue throughout working life. The gender pay gap in the UK is among the worst in Europe.

The report analyses the statistics for participation in Further Education (59% women), Work Based Learning (42% women) and Adult and Community Learning (77% women) with regard to their impact on social inclusion. Overall the report shows that there has been an increase in employment-related skills and a reduction in the number of employees without qualifications.

This is true for women too. Women in the UK are accessing higher levels of education and more work experience, which means they are increasingly equipped for high level jobs. In particular, female involvement in medicine and law has grown significantly. But women have not accessed key positions in the economy. 23% of the companies in the FTSE 100 do not have a single woman director. Furthermore, those **sectors traditionally dominated by women (the ‘five Cs’ – cleaning, catering, caring, cashiering and clerical work), remain poorly paid and undervalued.**

Although the UK adult population is more qualified and more active in the labour market than ever before, the gap between social classes continues to widen. **Participation rates in learning support this thesis: the proportion of the poorest (and those older than 55) engaging in learning is less than half that of the wealthiest.**

Current adult learning discourse is starting to focus on the **need to retain more women for the labour market, and particularly those of black and ethnic minority origin.** The pattern of women’s integration into the labour market shows a surprisingly complex picture with regard to those from ethnic minorities. **Black Caribbean women have a higher employment rate than women from other minority ethnic groups, even higher than the employment rate of white women and they are similar in this respect to black Caribbean men.** On the other hand Muslim women of working age, in particular those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin are one of the two groups with a persistently very low employment rate (the other is disabled people) and are very unlikely to re-enter the job market once outside. How can these findings be taken into account in lifelong learning strategies for promoting gender equality?

There are numerous examples of good practice in tackling the specific barriers to women’s participation in lifelong learning and employment. Amongst them is a recent EQUAL-funded programme (‘Women into Work: Building Futures’) which clearly identified **a male workplace culture as a major barrier to non-traditional employment.** Current vocational training also perpetuates gendered occupational differences. **A disproportionately high number of participants in work-based training routes are male, with a direct impact on later employment patterns.**

---

<sup>66</sup> UK National Report, Annexes, pp. 89-103.

While macro-level approaches (through government departments, task forces and legislation) are impressive and essential, **the next ‘phase’ of policy to counter gender discrimination must attend to the micro-level and address the detail of women’s lived experiences.** Key recommendations of the above mentioned EQUAL programme concern a change in attitudes, the need to raise awareness, and the lack of practical assistance - issues and challenges which are typically addressed by non-formal adult learning.

### 2.3. Poland

Poland can be taken as an example<sup>67</sup> of the challenges women are facing in transition countries, and not only with regard to the labour market. **Along with a process of rapid economic reforms, which has resulted in relatively high unemployment rates, the Polish educational system has also undergone major transition.** Whilst there has been an enormous increase of higher education, with only slightly higher rates in Sweden and Finland, **Poland has one of the lowest participation rates in educational opportunities focusing on practical job-related skills,** and this is true for young people and especially young women – unlike in most European countries.

Rapid changes in the economy and the labour market, accompanied by substantial changes in social perceptions, entail the challenge of adjusting education and training opportunities to meet the specific needs of both sexes. However, **contradictory trends can be observed: a growing number of very well qualified women but strong traditional role patterns. 47% of Polish women feel there is discrimination in the labour market.**

In contrast, there is not a clearly marked gender difference in lifelong learning behaviour in Poland. In their lifelong learning behaviour, Poles show much **clearer differences according to age, employment status, and educational attainment** than in typical EU / OECD patterns. Young Poles (15-24), are more likely to continue tertiary education than their EU peers; for females these trends are more pronounced than for males, and thus the impact on labour force activity is also probably more pronounced. Poles above 50-55 years of age have a low participation rate. Indeed, the situation of Polish females aged 55-64 looks quite alarming – only 20% of them stay in the labour market. It appears that the problem arises primarily from the combination of two factors, which are typical of the changes in a transition country. First, the skills of persons of that age are quickly becoming obsolete and they would need to invest substantial effort in learning new skills or upgrading. Second, the social policies of the country have provided easy routes to early withdrawal from economic activity via early retirement schemes.

One reason for the very low participation rate of Poles in lifelong learning may also be found on the supply side, where the quality and relevance of some training may be below EU-average. There are hardly any mechanisms for quality control. In fact, the training services market has been completely unregulated and **only recently (with the growing flow of EU funds available for training measures) has a system of voluntary registration of institutions providing training been established.**

**Gender mainstreaming** is a relatively new concept for both public administration and civil society in the country. **Only through the binding obligations of Poland’s membership of the European Union and the remarkable funding opportunities of ESF and EQUAL has a**

<sup>67</sup> Polish National Report, Annexes, pp. 67-76.

**range of activities been introduced. Many of these have directly supported women and overall 62% of the beneficiaries have been women.** Practical implementation of gender mainstreaming has been relatively weak in a number of important respects, despite the provision of specific projects for women. In particular there is **no gender mainstreaming strategy at a national level** and no comparative data are available on lifelong learning participation. **The notion has been slowly introduced by civil society organizations, particularly women's organizations, and has just recently become a field of interest to business and administration.** It will be interesting to observe progress in women-friendly public policies, the breaking down of gender (and all other types of) discrimination and the future impact of educational measures providing gender equality, an objective taken up in the National Strategic Reference Framework from May 2007 and supported with 67 billion Euros EU funding from 2007-2013.

#### 2.4. Germany

Germany is an interesting example<sup>68</sup> of two different traditions which have hitherto influenced women's participation in the labour market and in lifelong learning. In addition, the federal states (Länder) differing in their structures and policy priorities which in turn has an important impact on the educational system(s).

In some aspects Germany, like Poland, has to face the typical challenges of a transition society. **The rapid political, economic and cultural changes post reunification have been a radical turning point for citizens of the so called 'new' federal states.** The former female role model in the GDR was a woman in employment, for a couple that of two wage earners. This did not necessarily mean gender equality. The West German labour market's traditional model was that of the modernized bread-winner.

**Employment structures, tax and social security systems in the united Germany have in principle continued and developed the models of the old Federal Republic of Germany.** However, the picture is more complex and the changes in East and West are not only an outcome of the reunification. Germany - like other European countries - has had to face the transformation from an industrial society to a service-based one and now to a knowledge-based society. In particular the growth of the service sector has raised expectations that significantly more women would have the opportunity of participating in the labour market.

Indeed, **from 1992-2003 the employment rate of women increased continuously (by nearly 60%) whereas the employment rate of men declined from 76% to 70%. But when comparing the full-time-equivalents (FTE) the picture changes: the full-time equivalent of men has stayed at around 70% whereas the FTE of women has remained at 45%.** The percentage indicates that the participation of women in the labour market in Germany is in line with that in Greece, Spain and Poland at the lower end of the scale.

The figures reflect a development which primarily affects women. In 2003, labour market policies introduced so-called 'mini-jobs' in Germany. On the one hand the number of workplaces increased considerably and women benefited from this development. In June 2005 6.7 million people had a 'mini-job', which in general means part-time work, low-paid, with only a minimum contribution to the social security systems. Nearly two thirds of mini-job holders are women. **Throughout Europe part-time work is typical of a gendered labour market.**

---

<sup>68</sup> German National Report, Annexes, pp. 1 - 22.

Women with children look for part-time work. Moreover, in Germany **the employment rate of women with children is lower than that of women without children whereas men without children have a lower employment rate than men with children.**

Female integration into the labour market differs remarkably between East and West. **The participation rate of women in the labour market is higher in the East although unemployment in the new federal states has dramatically increased.** There is still better childcare provision than in the West, because women in the former GDR had almost the same employment rate as men and similar career patterns including the number of years working. As a result older women are on average better provided for than their sisters from the West. Economic independence pays!

All these patterns have an impact on the establishment of gender equality, in particular in education, not only in the quantitative participation of women but also in respect of the structure of provision. **The differences between the two parts of Germany indicate that, despite similar institutional frameworks, attitudes, experiences, and perceptions have a major impact on education.** The higher the formal levels of qualification the better the chances of participating in further education: in 2003 44% of employees with a university degree took part in vocational training but only 11% of unskilled employees. Looking at the topics of vocational training the gender segregation is obvious. Men are much more inclined to undertake training in science and technology (28.7% / women 6.5%), women to undertake training in social skills, communication, or for empowerment (20.1%/ men 11.2%). But men and women show about the same level of interest in training topics such as ICT, economic and industrial administration and career planning.

**Projects funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) have a supporting role in German labour market policies, but they have not the outstanding importance seen in Ireland or Greece.** In 2004 the proportion of ESF assigned to SGB-III, the Laws on Social Protection, did not exceed 3% of labour market activities. The impact of ESF on gender equality is difficult to evaluate although it is a crosscutting objective in all programmes. In 2003 25% of funded projects failed to report data for the crosscutting goals. Only 18% defined themselves as gender-orientated. In 2004 nearly all projects included a gender dimension and 48.5% explicitly emphasized their gender orientation. This is a remarkable change of perspective within a short time. However, there was no requirement for verifiable data and 'gender-orientation' was not defined unequivocally. **European funding is more important for the federal states,** which have only small budgets for an active labour market policy. ESF enables them to identify their priorities according to specific regional needs, thus closing gaps in federal funding.

Gender equality in the labour market as well as in education and training needs institutional support and structures, together with a change in how the sexes are perceived, in order to overcome deep-rooted and persistent gender stereotypes. More than three decades ago non-formal adult and youth education in Germany started to promote awareness-raising for gender equality and developed the educational concept of gender sensitivity, which takes account of the different needs of women and men. The contribution of non-formal adult and youth education provides a basis for change and ensures that gender mainstreaming is built into lifelong learning.

## 2.5. Spain

Spain draws particular attention<sup>69</sup> to the **role of women in the establishment of democracy** after decades of dictatorship in the country. Equal rights and equal opportunities are a substantial part of any democratic culture. In Spain a very active women's movement had an important part in the creation and establishment of institutional structures supporting equal opportunities for both sexes. The National Spanish Institute for Women, an autonomous agency, is (in close cooperation with the National Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) legally responsible for promoting equality and women's participation in political, cultural, economic and social life. In addition, Institutes for Women in 17 Autonomous Regions pursue similar objectives and promote equal rights and equal opportunities in the context of regional needs.

With the support of policies, there has been an enormous increase in programmes and actions initiated and developed by institutions, agencies and organisations such as the Popular Universities, to foster civil society and the equal participation of women. **An important aspect of the report is the role of adult education in democratic awareness-raising, and in implementing and disseminating democratic values as a necessary prerequisite of gender equality.** It illustrates the need for continuing educational efforts to achieve a change in the persistence of gender stereotypes and a change in attitudes. This is an integral objective of lifelong learning, influencing women to trust their personal resources, to accredit their professional skills and participate in the labour market.

**This is a particular need in Spain, which traditionally has one of the highest rates of unemployment with a gender gap of more than 20 percent in participation rates (male 75.2%, women 51.2).** Labour market segregation and inequalities become even more obvious when underground and illegal employment is taken into account. 17% of women work without being registered in the social security system. Most of this undeclared work involves domestic services (30%), followed by business services (16%) and hotels and catering (14%).

**The majority of the women working under illegal employment contracts have a migrant background.** In particular, many migrants from Latin America are female. Spain has experienced in the last few years a dramatic change from being an emigration to an immigration country. **In order to face the challenges of this change, in particular with regard to gender equality and qualifications for entry to the labour market, the specific contribution and the experience of non-formal adult education institutions in lifelong learning programmes are more needed than ever.**

A set of measures for equality at all levels of education has been implemented, supported by significant budgets provided by regional governments and with administration coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science. All partners in the Social Dialogue signed an Agreement on Professional Training for Employment in 2006. In addition, the government has approved a regional distribution of funding for continuing training, providing regional governments with 388 million EURO for training activities. These measures aim at improving participation in the labour market. The percentage of the Spanish population taking part in continuing training more than doubled between 2004 and 2005, from 5.1% to 12.1%. So Spain in this respect is close to the 12.5% target for 2010.

---

<sup>69</sup> Spanish National Report, Annexes, pp. 77-88.

The report refers to the lack of concrete information on the European Social Fund's contribution to different priorities in Spain, although the Spanish Government has developed a joint strategy for the ESF with a focus on promoting employment and continuing training including specific support, guidance and training on gender aspects.

## 2.6. Greece

Greece is an **example<sup>70</sup> of the establishment of promising policies and measures for gender equality without any previous experience**. Gender policies began no earlier than the late 90s, intensifying efforts to combat gender discrimination, promote equal opportunities and close gender gaps. In the current decade policy-makers have initiated a comprehensive and systematic programme of action, including constitutional reform, new legislation, establishment of high level committees and other public bodies charged with promoting gender equality, in order to mainstream gender and positive actions for women.

However, these **policies remain contradictory**. Greece still has one of the biggest gender gaps in the labour market amongst European countries, with **the rate of unemployment of women (2005: 15.3%) being nearly double that of men (8.3%)**. In 2005 the employment rate for women in Greece was 46.1%, whilst the male rate was 74.50%.

The **model of the family is still based on the strong breadwinner** and has not yet been substantially modified especially within the social security systems and the welfare regime, which remain traditional and family-centered, treating women mainly as dependants. **The pension system de facto perpetuates gender inequalities**, being strongly biased towards full-time continuous employment and thus making it difficult for women to obtain an adequate pension of their own. This is somewhat similar to the picture for the majority of women in other national reports, e.g. West Germany. As childcare services and parental leave play a crucial role in achieving equal opportunities Greece has introduced various entitlements to support maternity, paternity and parenthood. Despite these efforts the **lack of child care facilities is evident** (7% for children under 3 years of age, 60% for children between 3 years and the mandatory school age) and remains one of the most significant obstacles to achieving gender equality.

Given this position, education becomes an important tool for change in the direction of gender equality. Along with changes in policies **gender equality principles have been incorporated into lifelong learning policies**. Women are expected to participate in all forms of social life. The National Strategy for adult education in Greece aims to review and redesign the aims of formal, non- formal and informal education, thus providing policy makers with a unique opportunity to increase citizens' access to knowledge, training and education. Greece is also an example of the **decisive impetus given by European legislation, alongside national commitment and funding**, to new gender policies. The European funds offered the means – financial, political and methodological – of strengthening gender equality, and the national government took the opportunity of designing and implementing measures, policies and initiatives to promote gender equality as a horizontal measure encompassing all aspects of public activity and government. However, the budget for the formal education system in Greece is the lowest in the European Union (2.27% of its GDP). In contrast, **a large share of public resources, mainly EU funding, has been channelled into vocational education and training (VET)**, with the main priority being employment and social inclusion. In all training

<sup>70</sup> Greek National Report, pp. 23-44.



programmes for unemployed people run by the Greek Manpower Organization, there is **a quota of at least 60% women**. During 2005 and the first quarter of 2006, 35.000 women benefited from national employment and training programmes. But data on the numbers attending all forms of lifelong learning are not available.

Despite this remarkable development and egalitarian legislation, progress is slow and gender stereotypes still dominate social life and the labour market. It is therefore important to examine what has been achieved so far. Although the educational system in Greece is highly centralised and the budget for education low, the Greek authorities have understood and attempted to incorporate gender equality principles into lifelong learning strategies. Measures for gender mainstreaming in education are promoting substantial change and are a means of empowering all citizens. **The influence of European policies in bringing about a different, non-discriminatory perception of society is of special interest in the case of Greece.**

## **2.7. Gender Evidence in Lifelong Learning from the National Reports**

All member states recognize that participation in the labour market is essential for women achieving economic independence. This in turn enables them to overcome poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion. Evidence from the national reports point to an increase in women's participation in the labour market over the past decade, with Ireland having a particularly large increase. **But there is still a question as to the quality of female participation:** women still lag behind men in participation in employment especially in areas such as the sciences, engineering and construction.

All member states showed evidence that women were stereotyped in their career choices. This is happening even at the early stages of formal education. Whilst females are outperforming males in both formal and non-formal education they are still taking up typical female careers such as education, health, social and retail services.

Figure 1 show the employment rate of female's aged 25–64 by highest levels of education attainment.

## Employment rate of females (aged between 25 and 64 years) by highest level of education attained (2004)

geo	Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education - levels 0-2 (ISCED 1997)	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education - levels 3-4 (ISCED 1997)	Tertiary education - levels 5-6 (ISCED 1997)	Total (ISCED 1997)
<b>eu25</b> European Union (25 countries)	41.4	65.4	80.3	60.4
<b>be</b> Belgium	37.1	63.9	79.8	59.0
<b>cz</b> Czech Republic	39.0	65.8	79.1	63.1
<b>dk</b> Denmark	54.7	74.3	85.2	74.5
<b>de</b> Germany	41.5	64.3	78.4	62.2
<b>ee</b> Estonia	46.6	68.6	78.7	70.4
<b>gr</b> Greece	36.9	53.3	75.3	50.6
<b>es</b> Spain	37.5	60.8	76.3	52.1
<b>fr</b> France	51.2	68.8	78.7	64.8
<b>ie</b> Ireland	37.7	64.1	81.1	60.1
<b>it</b> Italy	32.6	63.6	77.3	49.4
<b>cy</b> Cyprus	49.3	68.0	84.9	65.6
<b>lv</b> Latvia	44.2	66.1	82.1	66.8
<b>lt</b> Lithuania	39.8	68.1	84.8	69.3
<b>lu</b> Luxembourg (Grand-Duché)	47.1	56.3	76.4	58.2
<b>hu</b> Hungary	32.3	63.6	78.9	57.3
<b>mt</b> Malta	18.9	59.1	81.6	28.9
<b>nl</b> Netherlands	46.0	70.9	82.2	65.7
<b>at</b> Austria	44.4	67.1	77.7	63.0
<b>pl</b> Poland	30.6	54.0	79.8	54.2
<b>pt</b> Portugal	62.8	77.2	88.2	68.3
<b>si</b> Slovenia	50.4	70.6	86.1	69.1
<b>sk</b> Slovakia	24.3	62.8	79.4	58.4
<b>fi</b> Finland	53.1	70.5	82.5	71.5
<b>se</b> Sweden	59.5	78.0	86.8	77.8
<b>uk</b> United Kingdom	49.6	74.3	85.9	68.3
<b>bg</b> Bulgaria	35.2	64.0	77.3	59.4
<b>ro</b> Romania	46.3	66.5	84.4	61.3

Source: Eurostat

This table shows that females are more employable the higher their education levels<sup>71</sup>. Education plays a key role in the labour market participation of women. However statistics also show that despite women's access to education, women's position in the labour market is much weaker than that their male counterparts. There are a number of reasons for this highlighted in the national reports, the main ones being:

### Caring responsibilities

Women are much more likely to be engaged in caring roles within the family. There is evidence of this in the reports from Germany (mainly West Germany), Greece, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom. Poland was an exception, as caring roles were not identified as a barrier there. Reconciling work and family continues to be difficult for many women. Women find themselves taking on part-time work below their skills and educational levels in order to continue their caring roles. Lack of adequate, flexible and affordable childcare has been highlighted as the main cause preventing women from accessing and progressing in the labour market. This is both a societal and structural issue.

<sup>71</sup> O'Brien, P. and Paczynski, W., *Poland's Education and Training: Boosting and Adapting Human Capital*, OECD Economics Department Working Papers, No. 495, pp.25, OECD Publishing 2006.

It was clear from the national reports that access to and attaining high education levels does not necessarily lead to satisfying and successful labour market participation for women.

### **Stereotyping of career options**

This has led to a segregated labour market with many kinds of work being seen as female work. The majority of women now participating in employment are accessing work in retailing, social care, health and education. These gendered patterns of employment emerge after education and continue throughout women's lives. Women also make up the majority of low paid and part-time workers with promotion and progression hindered by their caring responsibilities. An EQUAL funded study in the United Kingdom's national report identified the following barriers for women in non-traditional employment: individual perceptions; societal perceptions; practical issues; lack of knowledge and awareness; and a male workplace culture; and found that solutions needed to focus on these areas for change to happen. Similar barriers were addressed in the good practice that came out of ESF supported initiatives in other countries such as Ireland, Greece and Spain.

#### **2.7.1. The Legislative and Policy Frameworks**

The six national reports describe examples of how various legislative frameworks support gender equality and mainstreaming. To summarise, these are:

Equality legislation is built into the **German** constitution. The reunification in 1990 provided an opportunity to emphasize Article 3 'Men and women have equal rights' by adding an essential supplement: 'The state shall support the actual implementation of equal rights for women and men and shall work toward elimination of existing disadvantages.' The Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth is responsible for women and gender policies. As early as the 1980s, offices for equal opportunities, commissioners for women's affairs, and departments for women's issues at federal states, regional and local levels were firmly in place. An equal treatment law was passed in 2006 and is based on the EU guidelines for equality.

**Greece** is still in the process of development, and ESF support has enabled the inclusion of gender equality in state policies. A General Secretariat for Gender Equality is charged with planning, implementing and monitoring policies on equality.

**Poland** is also in the very early stages of developing its equality legislation. ESF support consists of three strands, including EQUAL. Positive action in respect of gender is a key focus of this strand.

**Spain's** main legislation is the Gender Violence Act and the Act for Equality for Women and Men passed in 2007. The National Spanish Institute for Women together with the 17 regional institutes for women promotes and supports a gender perspective at all levels of social life. A wide range of institutions and organisations are also concerned with equality in education.

**Ireland** has two main bodies of legislation to cover equality: the Employment Equality Act and the Equal Status Act. There is also a range of more specific laws governing employment. Gender mainstreaming underpins all national policies and two dedicated Gender Equality Units exist in the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform and the Department of Education

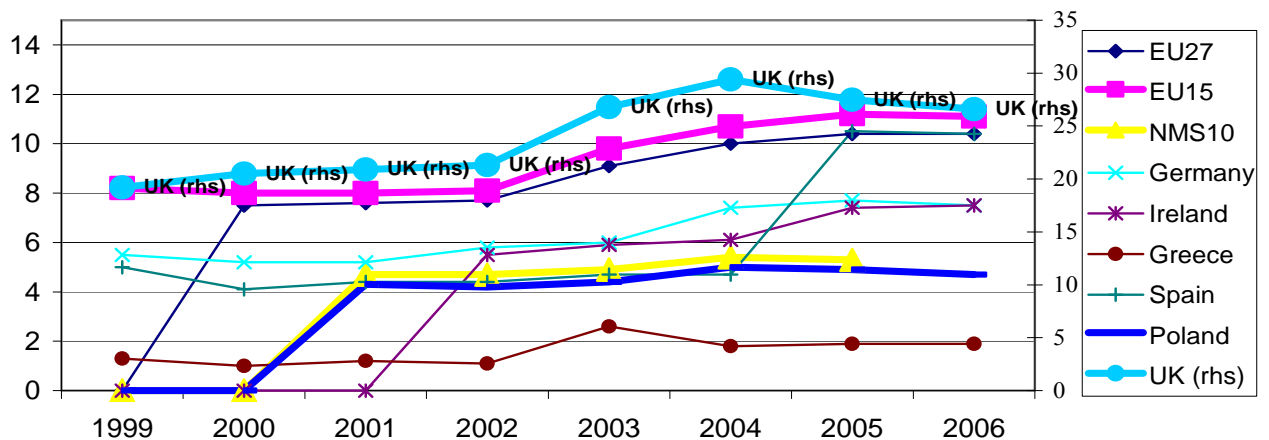
and Science to inform and monitor gender equality. The National Women's Strategy 2007-2016 is the main impetus for gender mainstreaming in Ireland.

The **United Kingdom** has a significant range of legislation and policy measures designed to mainstream gender equality. The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) is funded by government to advise, inform and monitor equality policies and practice. The EOC is responsible to two government minister – the Cabinet Minister for Women and the Parliamentary Secretary for Women and Equality. (From September 2007, the EOC will be subsumed into the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights.)

## 2.8. Conclusion

The six member states chosen for this study reflect great diversity in Europe when it comes to gender. They also offer different geographical perspectives as well as different lengths of time as member states of the EU. Each country highlights the link between lifelong learning and the labour market participation of women. **What has emerged is that education alone does not result in a satisfactory engagement with work.** Women are participating in increasingly high numbers in formal and non-formal education, with some states exceeding the EU targets. However even when women are in the labour force, they are less likely than men to take up training option, as shown in table 2 below, which looks at adult participation in education and training in the population aged 25-64.

**Table lifelong learning - Adult participation in education**



Source: Eurostat

Note: The graph plots the percentage of the respective populations aged 25-64 who responded positively to the question on whether they had participated in any education or training activity in the four weeks prior to survey.

One startling observation is that **participation rates in adult learning are low in most of the countries in this study.** Amongst the countries analysed Greece has significantly low participation rates, with the UK achieving the highest. It must be noted that this information is based on both male and female rates of participation in work-related education and training and does not include non-formal education. For gender issues in lifelong learning and the labour market to be resolved other vital areas in women's lives must also be addressed. **Gender equality is a complex matter and cannot be viewed just as an economic issue.** For example, the caring roles that women engage in are not considered when national strategies are put in place to increase women's participation in the economy. While most of the member states in the

study have made **progress in policies and legislation for equality** there still exists a wide gender gap in employment and training for women. Education alone is not the answer.

The European Social Fund (ESF) has contributed greatly to improving women's access to education and training and consequently to employment in all member states in this study. **EU involvement has led to equality laws and gender monitoring of national policies, in particular in countries with strong traditional role patterns such as Greece and new EU member states such as Poland.** Each country highlighted selected models of good practice in gender equality, as described in each national report. The lessons that have emerged from these are complex. But all models of good practice take a holistic approach that combines lifelong learning and employment and recognizes the cultural and social barriers that women must overcome. Targeted responses and appropriate support are put in place. These lessons have generally not been translated into mainstream national practice for supporting gender equality in lifelong learning and employment.

For gender equality to be addressed and become a reality the following areas must be looked at:

- Individual perceptions of employment and individual educational choices
- A change in attitudes to access and progression
- Practical assistance and recognition of caring responsibilities
- Raising awareness for all possible options
- The mainstreaming of empowering models from ESF programmes, with specific emphasis on the holistic approach to supporting women's access
- Attitudinal change in the present male workplace culture and male-oriented vocational training.

The next phase of policy to support gender equality in lifelong learning and employment must look at the level of practice and address the experiences of women. This will **require positive action initiatives at a micro-level** that address cultural and social issues and not just the economic ones. This entails an integrated approach and greater harmony between the fields of lifelong learning and employment.



### 3. Gender Dimensions of Teaching and Learning Methodology

The analyses of the country reports, and in more detail the country reports themselves, show the range of continuing education and training measures and participation of women. If we want to understand the impact on women we have to go closer into the organisation, methods and contents of training measures.

Our findings are based on the country reports and on documents and studies concerning methods, didactics, organisation and participants in non-formal education as well as sixteen questionnaires completed by organizations in fifteen countries.

#### 3.1. Women-Only vs. Mixed Groups

There are differing approaches with the organisation of training measures: mixed groups vs. gender specific groups.

The educational institutions that prefer mixed groups approach see other factors in the focus: the theme; qualification and certification; the age group; the day of the week or time of the day etc. Some favour mixed groups in any case because they see more benefit in mutual learning and understanding.

The other approach favours gender-specific groups, i.e. women only or men only; however, the claim to women-only groups is much stronger and more often represented, in particular by feminist movements. Statements from interviews with women show that there are fields where women learn better being among other women. This is particularly true for technical and technological subjects where women often feel strongly disadvantaged compared to men. They have low confidence in their own knowledge and understanding and appreciate plenty of time to get acquainted with these subjects and also to ask so-called 'silly questions' which they fear, in a mixed group, men might laugh at<sup>72</sup>.

In a study on 'Women's Learning and Leadership Styles: Impact on Crew Resource Management', Mary Ann Turney found out in 1994<sup>73</sup> that 'men prefer debate-like learning situations, whereas women like to share and learn by interacting in a collegial manner', which is another factor why women only groups are more suitable for many women. This finding and other factors could be confirmed by a later study on Men and Education: men learn in a far more goal-and results-oriented manner and prefer short, compact intensive courses. Other decisive course-related factors are structured discussions, a public space and competitive elements in addition to course accreditation. Too little attention continues to be paid to these specifically male aspects. So-called 'soft' topics and learning methods do not attract men as much. In a 'learning partnership', the project 'MENPART' (Men and non-formal education) - participation and learning of social skills with participants from Denmark, Germany, Finland, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Austria brought about some findings in this regard<sup>74</sup>.

It is interesting to note that the claim for women only courses refers in particular to ICT<sup>75</sup>, technological and technical courses. Evidence of women's success and reported feelings fully

<sup>72</sup> See e.g. *3rd European Symposium on Gender & ICT: Working for Change*: Pirjo Elovaara and Christina Mörtberg, *Design of Digital Democracies - Performances of Citizenship, Gender and IT*: 3.1. WEVH Training Methodology; and Xiang-Yun Du, *Learning Engineering in a Problem-based and Project-oriented Learning Environment - Gendered features of learning and Identity Development*.

<sup>73</sup> Turner, Mary Ann, *Women's Learning and Leadership Styles: Impact on Crew Resource Management*, 1994.

<sup>74</sup> InfoNet, Petra Herre, *Men and Education'- why do men learn less than women?* <http://www.inofnet-ae.eu7content/view/238/49/lang.en>

<sup>75</sup> Compare however to the participation rate in ICT in the German country report.

justify this approach: in the reported interviews<sup>76</sup>: They identified a whole range of factors that affected their learning experience; however, three main factors clearly stood out. These were: ‘peer-to-peer learning, where women were placed in the powerful position of being the knower; recognition of past achievements and redefining skills through recognition of prior experiential learning; and an exploration of social and cultural similarities/differences through group discussions and collaborations.’ Women were ‘inspired by the social, political and cultural awareness that they gained through their experiences with other women (...) and how this empowered them to make other positive choices in their lives.’ A learning platform and community for women teachers on the net shows similar positive results in a domain which usually is related to male characteristics<sup>77</sup>.

We must add to these considerations courses for female migrants. Many of these courses in lifelong learning aimed at migrants would have low success if there were only mixed groups. In particular, women from Muslim countries would not attend courses with men and women learning together<sup>78</sup>.

A consequence of women-only courses is men-only courses. Opponents to gender-specific learning criticise that men, already in a favoured position, again receive special attention thus contributing to more inequality. (Recent developments, indeed, confirm this view: specific courses for men (boys) are intended to help them keep pace with women’s (girls’) development, since men (boys) increasingly risk performing less well than women (girls).)

Moreover, opponents to women-only courses emphasize that this way of training and education does not promote equal treatment for women since it tends to reinforce existing prejudice and stereotypes<sup>79</sup>.

In the field of education the differences between women and men become obvious in different areas. These differences, e.g. with regard to learning mechanisms, behaviour in communication

<sup>76</sup> P. Elovaara and C. Mörtberg op cit. p. 6 and 9; see also other papers from the Symposium <http://ict.open.ac.uk/gender/2005/papers/>.

<sup>77</sup> LeaNet (<http://www.leanet.de>); see also Anna Stiftinger, *Gender in der IKT – Weiterbildung*. Ein Handbuch zur Qualitätssicherung in der Erwachsenenbildung, Büro für Frauenfragen und Chancengleichheit des Landes Salzburg, Salzburg April 2005.

<sup>78</sup> Organizations for migrant women: IMAZ (e. V.), an Intercultural Migrant Women Centre; SAMV, Belgium - The main activity of SAMV is education for intercultural competences; their focus is on youngsters and women projects. SAMV organizes activities based on the needs of migrant girls and women self-organisations and supports processes of emancipation and participation, [http://www.imwiproject.org/partner\\_organization.php?PHPSESSID=ed2cdd03](http://www.imwiproject.org/partner_organization.php?PHPSESSID=ed2cdd03) ...; see the Leonardo da Vinci project PreQual, Methods are based on didactical principles of ‘global learning’ and ‘popular education’ according to Paulo Freire. In an innovative approach to education and training a curriculum for a pre-qualification course for migrant women in the health and care sectors will be developed and tested in 3 pilot courses in Austria, Italy and Germany. A further objective is the empowerment of migrant women in terms of promoting social dialogue and actively confronting discrimination. A further objective is the empowerment of migrant women in terms of promoting social dialogue and actively confronting discrimination. <http://www.prequalonline.org/ingles/01details.htm>; see also the summary of questionnaires concerning methods in the annex.

<sup>79</sup> See e.g.: *Gender Policy – Guidelines Towards Gender Justice*; Association of Churches and Missions in South-Western Germany, Stuttgart, 2006, p. 6, 2.4. Gender and Education (...) b) Objectives: In the field of education the differences between women and men become obvious in different areas. These differences, e.g. with regard to learning mechanisms, behaviour in communication and in groups, must be made visible. Anyone planning, carrying out and evaluating an educational event in all kinds of areas needs to give detailed consideration to the gender dimension.



and in groups, must be made visible. Anyone planning, carrying out and evaluating an educational event in any area needs to give detailed consideration to the gender dimension<sup>80</sup>.

The fact that approximately 75% of participants in general adult education are women seems to confirm the assumption that the approaches chosen in non-formal education match women's needs and interests, and to a lesser extent those of men<sup>81</sup>.

### 3.2. Organisation, Content and Methods of Courses

#### 3.2.1. Organisation of Courses

Requirements concerning the organisation of courses – place, accessibility, organisation of rooms, days of the week, time of the day, inner organisation of the course as to methods chosen (group, peer, plenary or individual work, discussion etc.) – today are not only used in women-specific courses, but are requirements in non-formal education for adults on a general level<sup>82</sup>.

Accessibility is an important factor since women often do not have access to cars. A useful example of accessibility for women practised in Northern Ireland, organised by Castlereagh College (now merged with Belfast Metropolitan College) is a bus with eight computers on board which stops regularly at nurseries for several hours to allow young mothers to learn how to use the computer and internet while their children are in the nursery<sup>83</sup>.

#### 3.2.2. Content of Courses

When looking into the questionnaires<sup>84</sup> that we sent out to EAEA members, the themes chosen by women show, on a general level, that they predominantly participate in language courses (an average of more than 70% compared to men), health and related subjects, community education and creativity; they are less represented in technical and technological courses. Participation rates in different adult education organisations and in two universities show a higher figure of participation for women than for men, from up to 75% women in Spanish adult education centres to 60% women elsewhere; a German organisation is explicitly working with women and therefore produces a 98% rate, while another German organisation, a cooperation between trade unions and adult education centres, has a female participation rate 44% lower than that of men. One reason is the themes treated: among others, work and workplace; work in trade unions and representation of interests on behalf of employees.

<sup>80</sup> See P. Elovaara and C. Mörtberg, op. cit, 4. Results, p. 7: Being female is often equated with being non-technical (Cockburn, 1985) which can be problematic on mixed sex courses (Henwood 1996). Women-only modules in computer studies courses can also be problematic for women because of men's undermining attitudes towards them if they choose to attend them (Henwood, Plumeridge and Stepulevage, 2000).

<sup>81</sup> See MENPART, op. cit.

<sup>82</sup> See e.g. Michael Meuser and Cluadia Neusüss, *Gender Mainstreaming-Konzepte, Handlungsfelder, Instrumente*, Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, Schriftenreihe Band 418, Bonn 2004; Anita Brünner & Susanne Huss, *Didactics – age and gender-sensitive didactics for a training on the job*, University of Klagenfurt, where the results of the qualitative analysis contain some useful recommendations for training /learning with (older) adults. A detailed description of the results (in German) can be downloaded from the webpage of the EQUAL Development Partnership at <http://www.g-p-s.at>. See also comments from the questionnaires (below) from 16 organisations, comment from Spain: 'All the courses are open to everybody. Sometimes the timetable favours a higher participation of women or men in the courses. In the afternoon from 15.00 to 17.00 hours e.g. there are more men than women, and in the evening from 20.00 to 22.00 hours more men than women are attending.'

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/>

<sup>84</sup> See Annexes, pp. 122-128.

Experts and practitioners within organisations and institutions in general adult education answered a questionnaire (a total of 16 responses from 15 countries) concerning, among other items, the participation rate of women and men in different courses. In summary we can say that creative / handicraft courses are a female domain, up to almost 100% in Swiss adult education centres; and more women than men participate in language courses, and in health and creativity courses. Some organisations report no great differences between the sexes (Portugal, Belgium, and Finland, with the exception of drama and dance, and the so-called ‘10th grade’, where there are more male than female students (60% to 40%. The 10<sup>th</sup> grade is a programme meant for young people who have failed their school-leaving exams or who want to improve their results in these exams, and as a rule there are more boys than girls taking the courses). The answers in the questionnaires also show that vocational courses are usually attended by roughly the same number of women and men if they are useful for their job and the workplace.

Some answers relate to women-specific courses which offer technical and technological themes. The German trade union - adult education centres organisation sees a need for training specific for women, as long as gender equality has not been reached. Their themes are, among others, health policy, conflict resolution, rhetoric, and women’s rights.

An empirical investigation in Germany with participants in language courses<sup>85</sup> revealed that women tend to choose language-learning for the following reasons: social motivation – being together with others and doing something useful; personal motivation – doing something useful for themselves and (re-)acquiring self-esteem and self-confidence; family motivation – helping (grand-)children; external motivation – travelling and holidaying; professional motivation – acquiring better knowledge / knowledge at all and/or higher fluency for the existing job or a future workplace.

A further reason for participating in language courses, which was not openly discussed by the women, was the fact that language-learning is a socially accepted theme. This means that husbands or partners would not object to their wives’ being away from home. This – hidden – reason is fading away nowadays, but it still exists in specific social groups. The above-mentioned study showed also that language courses often serve as a first entrance into lifelong learning, thus enabling women to gain self-confidence and find out what they (really) want to learn and to do.

Language courses including knowledge about the country and its structure or values are meanwhile compulsory for migrants in a number of European countries. They combine language learning with useful and practical information about the host country and often with democratic citizenship education; many of these courses are particularly planned for women only, mostly with a specific religious or ethnical background.

---

<sup>85</sup> Detlef Eschmann, Helga Richter-Lönnecke, Karsta Neuhaus, Ulrich Brack, Ulrike Ladwig, *Fremdsprachenlernende an Volkshochschulen*, Ismaning, 2001.

Further comments concerning languages as a first access to learning and hidden motivation of women: oral communication by experts who followed up a small sample of learners in an adult education centre in North-Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, and an expert who investigated motivation, expectation and results of participants in language courses in the same adult education centre.

### 3.2.3. Methods

The questionnaires in our sample show that no specific methods are applied in courses for women. Thus we conclude that the methods used in adult education in general are meeting the interests and needs of participants, independent of gender, and that they also meet, in particular, women's needs.

Some key words describing these methods, which are currently widely applied in adult education in Europe, are: *starting from the needs and interest of the learner; learner-centred; facilitator* instead of teacher or trainer; *learning to learn; autonomous learning; developing self-confidence*, and more.

Spanish Folk High Schools explicitly use these methods in their courses for women while emphasizing that three main areas are envisaged: identity-awareness, empowerment and social projection. Their methods are intended to help women to become aware that they are a fundamental part of society and their active participation is essential for social transformation. Active and participative methods facilitate the intervention of participants in the different phases of the process; group-related methods, with the group as the basic core of action, are based on future social projection and allow participants to experience the reality that teamwork generates solidarity, commitment, respect and reflection; creative methods promote different forms of expression in order to facilitate communication; critical approaches allow the diversity of opinions and enable considering and reasoning, in order to express own opinions and make choices; and finally, flexible methods adapt to the group at different times and in different phases<sup>86</sup>.

Offering women-only courses, in formal and non-formal continuing and adult education, may prove to be an important way of enabling women to participate fully in active learning without feeling inhibited or that they are not understood. The criteria for deciding that methods are appropriate are whether they help women *to interact socially* and are *active and participative, group-related, creative, critical and flexible*.

Such methods are not only appropriate to courses specifically for women; their use should be general in adult education.

Teachers and trainers need to be trained in gender-awareness, and a range of organisations have already adopted training measures to this effect. This field needs, however, to be reinforced; the feedback in our questionnaire to the item 'Do your teachers / trainers / facilitators get special introduction or training for their courses in respect to gender differences?' did not provide evidence of a special introduction or training<sup>87</sup>.

### 3.3. Gender-Appropriate Didactics and Methods

The solution for courses, not only in non-formal education for adults, could be the application of gender-appropriate didactics and methods. This refers to the planning and aims of learning processes, their organisation and evaluation. It is thus seen as a horizontal perspective in teaching and learning processes. Gender-appropriate didactics and methods allow women and

<sup>86</sup> See the very detailed description of objectives, methods, organisation, and evaluation of courses for women in Spanish Popular Universities, Annexes, Appendix to the Spanish Country Report.

<sup>87</sup> See e.g. *Gender in der IKT-Weiterbildung*, Büro für Frauenfragen und Chancengleichheit des Landes Salzburg, Salzburg, 2005.

men fully to bring forward their learning needs; this kind of didactics thus contributes to a democratisation of gender relationships<sup>88</sup>.

Five dimensions are to be respected when applying gender-appropriate didactics and methods:

1. Contents – curricula and concepts have to be analysed in view of the relationships between the genders and the different interests and experiences of women and men; the gender perspective has to be integrated.
2. Facilitators – they need sensitivity concerning their own gender-related behaviour and its consideration and improvement towards a more gender-appropriate approach during courses.
3. Methods – these need to respect different starting points and interests of female and male participants; active methods and changing learning arrangements are important.
4. Organisation – it needs to take into consideration the lives and working conditions of women and men; this relates to schedules, accessibility, and organisation of the learning room. Another issue to consider is the invitation to courses in the programmes.
5. Participants – they have to be seen as individuals and not as one group. This means seeing them against the background of migration/ethnicity, social group, generation, sexual orientation, disabling conditions, etc<sup>89</sup>.

In a paper entitled *Gender Policy – Guidelines Towards Gender Justice*<sup>90</sup> the Association of Churches and Missions in South-Western Germany set out the following instruments for gender support in education and training: gender-sensitive methodology; consideration of gender-specific behaviour of leaders and participants; addressing gender topics; and promoting gender-sensitive general conditions for events/workshops.

Gender-just methodology and didactics require the following:

- Examination of materials and documents with regard to direct and indirect discrimination, stereotypes, and value-bases in language and illustrations.
- Attention to a gender-balanced choice of course instructors (number of male and female course instructors, women and men speaking in turn).
- Working in groups on the basis of gender democracy.
- Using these methods and media as learning possibilities, developing them on the basis of equal opportunities, and differentiating according to gender necessities (offering opportunities for identification for both sexes).
- Taking intercultural differences into account.
- Reflection about gender-specific behaviour of male and female leaders and participants should involve:

<sup>88</sup> Karin Derichs-Kunstmann, *Elemente einer geschlechtsgerechten Didaktik für die Erwachsenenbildung* 1999, p. 185.

<sup>89</sup> See: Gerrit Kaschuba, *Geschlechtergerechte Didaktik in der Fort- und Weiterbildung*, Berlin, 2006, with a useful *Guideline on self-reflection for facilitators*; see also Derichs-Kunstmann, Karin/ Auszra, Susanne/ Müthing, Brigitte, *Von der Inszenierung des Geschlechterverhältnisses zur geschlechtsgerechten Didaktik: Konstitution und Reproduktion des Geschlechterverhältnisses in der Erwachsenenbildung*, Bielefeld, 1999.

<sup>90</sup> *EMS Gender Policy 2.4*, Stuttgart, 2006.

- Sensitivity of male and female leaders in their contribution to gender democracy.
- Reflection on role, behaviour and language of male and female leaders and participants and their impact on mixed groups.
- Possibilities of intervention in order to avoid polarized patterns of behaviour between the sexes.
- Gender democracy as a topic might include:
  - Critical but constructive discussions of gender-specific behaviour and its impact on the group.
  - Talking about how different realities for women and men in society result in different interests and necessities - Critical view of ‘objectivity/impartiality’: male life-patterns as a standard making female life patterns invisible (gender democracy).
  - Talking about gender-polarized value-bases (e.g. objectivity versus emotionality).
- Conditions to be observed for workshops or other training programmes include:
  - Considering male and female life-conditions when offering a workshop etc. (single parents, accompanying programmes for children, finances, accessibility of venue).
  - Considering differences in flexibility, mobility and time resources of participating women and men as well as co-working women and men.
  - Considering gender-just work-sharing at self-catering conferences.
  - Equal access to the workshop etc. (considering both women and men when issuing invitations: do invite target both sexes? Can they both ‘identify’?).

Gender-appropriate methods and didactics would also be a solution for a better performance toward the acquisition of key qualifications. In a project financed by the European Commission on gender and qualifications, focusing on vocational education and training and the labour market<sup>91</sup>, the authors developed a model of key competences related to gender differences, as follows:

- Societal perspective: societal influences, taking into account also possibilities to counteract them;
- occupational perspective: improving opportunities for gainful employment in view of conditions of the current labour market;
- activity-related perspective: managing complex and often multiple requirements, time-management, decision-making;
- subjective perspective: cognitive and emotional striving for self-actualisation and happiness.

Their recommendations for vocational education and training are in the same line as the gender-appropriate methods and didactic:

1. The main efforts should be focused towards encouraging ‘gender autonomy’ in vocational education and training and continuous vocational training rather than trying to equalise the numbers of people from either sex in each occupation.

---

<sup>91</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General Research, *Improving Human Research Potential and the Socio-economic Knowledge Base: New Perspectives for Learning, Briefing Paper 45*.

2. Activities to strengthen and support gender autonomy should be through developing the 'self competences' that create individual autonomy. With regard to occupational life the ability to pursue individual autonomy is sometimes called 'competence to 'shape' one's own occupational biography.
3. Everyone regardless of gender should be given the opportunity to shape one's career path according to individual preferences, as far as possible.
4. To further gender autonomy individuals should:
  - Be encouraged to further develop relevant key competences, particularly competences connected to self-assurance, i.e.
  - Become aware of one's own key competences beyond usual prejudices.
  - Question the conventional perceptions of what is a male or female occupation.
  - Dare to make 'atypical' occupational choices.
  - Develop perseverance in order not to give up at an early stage of an atypical career.
- (...)
6. Vocational education and training systems and recruitment practices need to focus more on providing encouragement for all people, instead of reinforcing barriers, e.g. through recruitment practices according to gender stereotypes.
7. It is particularly important to support people of either gender who intend or have decided to choose an occupation that is atypical for their sex.
8. In vocational education and training including training in companies this means having to:
  - Counteract gender blindness and gender tiredness, as this is a major barrier for the 'exceptional cases'.
  - Provide opportunities to work in gender-mixed classes.
  - Provide mentoring by people who have themselves made an atypical choice.
  - Be aware of prejudices regarding gender-'typical' key competences.
10. Teachers, trainers and HR managers, through continuous professional development need to be made more aware of how to support and encourage gender autonomy.
11. In addition, wages need to be set according to gender equity. There is also a need for provision of childcare and appropriate parental leave.

**Recognition of non-formal and informal learning** is of major importance for the access of women to, and their progress in, lifelong learning. Obtaining accreditation for their knowledge, skills and competences acquired in non-formal or informal learning will enhance women's self-confidence and self-esteem. It will open them ways to find a job or to get a better one. (More details concerning the recognition of non-formal and informal learning see above, chapter 1).

### 3.4. Impact of Lifelong Learning on Women

In comparison to studies and research in education, there is less literature on vocational education and training<sup>92</sup>, and even less in adult education as one important part of lifelong learning.

Little statistical evidence exists of the direct and long-term effects of participation in continuous education and training on the professional situation. Some national studies in vocational education and training were aimed at exploring the short- and long-term effects of the training with regards to the labour market<sup>93</sup>. Studies on the impact of lifelong learning on a general level are still needed.

The statements of Heise and Meyer support the findings of the present study: comparison at European level have to be handled with care since the basis of investigation is not the same for every country; there are more studies in the Northern part of Europe than in the South. In addition, most studies look only into the material benefits of lifelong learning<sup>94</sup>, with a clear focus on vocational education and training or on formal education (schools and universities).

As to labour market related benefits, the authors found that ‘shorter training periods tend to have a more positive impact on in-company mobility whereas longer training programmes rather increase inter-company mobility (...). Off-the-job training after having become unemployed significantly reduces the risk of staying unemployed but only if programmes are medium-term (6 to 12 months). Long-term programmes (over 12 months) in contrast increase the risk of staying unemployed’<sup>95</sup>.

Generally, they identified European-wide benefits of general education and training:

- (a) ‘the nearly universal material benefits of more education in terms of higher entry wages, higher wages throughout the working life, increased job opportunities and a reduced risk of becoming unemployed;
- (b) an indication of potentially high returns of more education for socially disadvantaged individuals who reached only a low level of education’<sup>96</sup>.

Women choose vocational education and training qualifications that lead to lower benefits of education and training; but even with the same level of qualification women earn less than men, as also our country reports have shown.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>92</sup> See Maren Heise, Wolfgang Meyer, *The benefits of education, training and skills from an individual life-course perspective with a particular focus on life-course and biographical research*, in *Third report on vocational training research in Europe: background report*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2004 (Cedefop Reference series, 54), p. 338.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. P. 361 “Measurements of education and training tend mainly to be limited to the level of graduation and the number of years in schooling or training. This creates a considerable gap in the field of life-course research, because too few cross-European comparisons can be made about differences in the type and quality of education and training and of qualifications and skills.”

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. p. 346.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p. 349.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. p. 349.

<sup>97</sup> Heise and Meyer conclude: ‘Measurements of education and training tend mainly to be limited to the level of graduation and the number of years in schooling or training. This creates a considerable gap in the field of life-course research, because too few cross-European comparisons can be made about differences in the type and quality of education and training and of qualifications and skills.’, op. cit. p. 361.

With a view to the life span, the authors state that ‘rates of educational returns do not seem to be constant over the life cycle, especially for women. Though returns clearly rise in the early years of an individual’s working career, the increase slackens in mid career and then stagnate and decline completely in the years leading to retirement’<sup>98</sup>.

Biographical research is scarce and it is difficult to draw comparisons between the existing national or regional studies. There is not yet a study at European level based on a prospective or retrospective survey<sup>99</sup>.

Whereas there are some studies on the impact of learning in vocational education and training as the above mentioned paper shows, studies and research are lacking in the field of non-formal education for adults in view of the long-term impact of lifelong learning, in particular on women.

### 3.5. Evidence from Individual Women

There are only few studies that occasionally look into the impact of lifelong learning, in particular non-formal education, on women. Questions to be asked could be: what is the impact on their lives; is there an improvement in their personal and/or professional situation; do they feel more self-esteem and related questions.

We have received information via a short questionnaire from some women who have gone through continuing education and training. These women come from Poland (4), Italy (2), Germany (2) and France (1). The information testifies to the impact of learning on their professional and personal life. Women’s responses to our questionnaire can of course give only a general impression of the impact of continuing education and training.

The questions referred to the educational background, the current situation, the kind of learning / training undertaken, the number of courses / training, the length of course(s), the impact on personal or private life, the sustainability of the impact, and the importance of specific issues or experiences.

**The Educational background** of the nine women that answered the questionnaire were one with compulsory school level without certification; one secondary school level certification; one high school and medical institute; two each college, university masters and doctorate level.

**Current situation:** Two women are unemployed, one without searching for a job; two women are working half-time in an academic profession; two are working full-time in an academic profession and one in another field; one is working full-time in spite of a three-quarter contract. As to the **kind of learning/training** (multiple marks possible) six studied languages, five social sciences, two business and law, one ICT and accountancy. One woman was attending literacy courses.

**Number of courses/training:** All women have participated in several courses, one with breaks.

**Length of course(s):** The shortest course duration was 6 months; the longest 5 years which two women report. One has participated for 3 years and two for 2 years.

---

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. p. 368.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. p. 362.



The **impact on personal/private life:** Five women state that they have gained more self-reliance and self-respect; two more recognition within society/community. Five had acquired more or better skills and competences for managing their professional life and four reported to have a better salary, one to have a better job. For one woman the learning helped her to develop more or better skills and competences for managing her private life. In one case, the training course was necessary for a job promotion.

**Sustainability of impact:** Seven women are still benefiting from their learning, two of which in particular in their professional lives. One reports no impact because she did not have opportunities for promotion in her or another company due to her age and too few job offers in her region. One woman did not get a job because her skills were not sufficient.

**Importance of specific issues or experiences:** Mentoring and (long-term) support from teachers / trainers as well as from friends and family are mentioned as important by three women. One woman sees as important factors the subject of the course and its relevance to the labour market situation, who the teacher is (male/female) and the length of the course (long – term impact).

One woman points out the need for more training opportunities for women in order to open new sectors for them.

One woman emphasizes the existence of available jobs when motivating people, not only women, to participate in training measures.

Summarising we find that self-reliance and self-respect are a major result of women's participation in learning. Professional or job-related reasons are important since they were either trying to get a better job / salary or wanted to manage their professional lives better.

Almost all the women report that they are still benefiting from their learning; however, one woman did not get a better job as she had hoped because there were none. This can be an alert to lifelong learning institutions not to offer job-related courses if jobs are not available. Vocational training does not and cannot create jobs. The local and regional situation has to be taken into consideration in the planning. The institutions should instead offer learning courses for personal development, for democratic citizenship, for environment and community issues.



## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 4.1. European and National Education and Gender Strategies

The national reports show that the development of a European strategy should not be seen as an inevitable process of alignment with a single concept of education and training. In fact, the construction of European policies takes place at a national level and is based on flexible concepts and processes. As a result they include institutional constructs which were originally quite dissimilar, at national and regional level alike. Even before any possible convergence (which cannot be imposed), what is involved is promoting a common analysis.

The national reports give evidence of the influential role of European policies and funding. National policies follow European policies and measures. National Strategic Reference Frameworks develop national means of implementing gender equality and European gender policies. The imperatives of European policies – to ensure equal rights and opportunities; to ensure that the principles of non-discrimination and gender equality are effectively implemented; and to mainstream them – are taken up specifically in member states' national action plans. Thus both key components of the study – gender equality and lifelong Learning – reflect the close links between European and Member States' policies.

The Lisbon strategy with its twin aims of becoming the most efficient economy of the world as well as promoting and ensuring social cohesion in the countries of the European Union discovered *Lifelong Learning* as a key means of gaining 'flexicurity', the magic combination of a proactive employment policy, flexible contractual arrangements, lifelong learning, and modern systems of social security. Over the past decade, lifelong learning has gradually imposed itself in the European space as an essential point of reference in political discourse on education, skills and competences. The 4<sup>th</sup> cohesion report, published on 30 May 2007, underpins the logic of this system of synergies. For the first time the economic, social and geographical situation of the enlarged Union of 27 Member States and 268 regions has been analysed, with a first assessment of the impact of European cohesion policy in the 2000-2006 programming period, as well as of the preparation for the new period 2007-2013. The European Social Fund (ESF) will then be investing more than 10 billion Euros in European citizens each year, helping them to improve their skills and their employability.

Employment rates in all European countries reveal a significant gender gap. The challenge of ensuring equality between women and men is one of the EU's fundamental tasks, involving the integration of the gender perspective into all EU policies. Between 2007 and 2013 the topic of gender equality will be given greater prominence in European programmes. Policies for gender equality are considered to be essential instruments for economic growth. The ESF and the supporting integrated EU programme *PROGRESS* (September 2006) with a budget of 743.25 million Euros and five fields of action is to contribute to promoting and implementing gender equality. But in respect of implementation, a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of the state of the art of lifelong learning is needed. Among the 20 core indicators for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training there is no mention of the gender dimension of the different indicators proposed (see p.19 of this study).

Equal opportunities will not be achieved, gender stereotypes will not be countered, gender segregation in the labour market will not be overcome, without a tremendous **educational effort**. In principle all protagonists accept the fundamental importance of education and training. The European Union proudly draws attention to the enormous achievement of co-financing

annually the training of 9 million people, more than half of them women. This underlines the role of education and training as the key to the participation and advancement of women in the labour market. But does the number of women participating in training necessarily justify the conclusion that this leads to better conditions of employment and higher income?

#### 4.2. Women in the Labour Market and the Role of Education and Training

Participation in the labour market is an essential precondition for women's achieving economic independence, enabling them to overcome social exclusion and disadvantage. It is therefore not sufficient merely to increase the opportunities for women to get employed. Means must be established to ensure that women do not remain at the lower end of the labour market. At first glance, the integration of women into the labour market seems to be a European success story. According to last the *Annual Report on Equality between Women and Men* from 2000 to date, 8 million new jobs have been created in the European Union; 6 million have been taken by women. This increase of job opportunities for women is amazing. The aim of the Lisbon Strategy to reach a female employment rate of 60% in 2010 seems to be realistic, with a rate of 56.3% in March 2007.

However, the quantity of job opportunities is one matter, the quality of these opportunities another. Despite women's high level of educational attainment – confirmed in the national reports – the labour market is gendered in favour of men. The majority of positions occupied by women are lower paid, although disparities in income and employment across Europe have decreased over the past decade. Most part-time employment contracts are taken up by women. The numbers in the UK are representative: 83% of part-time employees are female.

Until now it has been for women to find employment appropriate to their educational level and their professional competences. The reasons are analysed in the European Commission's *Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men*, which emphasizes the **stubborn state of direct discrimination, of structural imbalances and segregation in education as well as in the workplace, of differing work patterns and differing understandings of work. Job evaluation and salary structures disadvantage women. Last, but not least gender stereotypes still operate.**

The role of education and training in improving the labour market situation of women is complex. On the one hand it is obvious that education is a precondition for the entry into the labour market and career development. **One of the most important reasons for the improvement of female labour market participation is their high level of educational attainment. On the other hand statistics show that despite this, women's position in the labour market is much weaker than that of men. This means that education and training are a necessary but not a sufficient precondition for establishing gender equality in the labour market.**

One of the most important reasons for the gendered labour market is that women are much more engaged in caring, with breaks in their career histories. **Economically active women continue to take responsibility for the majority of domestic work.** Women lose ground in their careers compared to men because of taking up care responsibilities – either for children or aged family members – which limit their availability for work-related activities in terms of time and flexibility. As a result they also have less access to and are discriminated against in continuing education. Statistics demonstrate that female jobs have fewer opportunities for training and

career progression. Undertaking less training has a negative impact on their position and widens the gender gap.

Education and training are crucial to improving women's participation in the labour market during and following phases of caring responsibilities. Educational strategies are needed which promote re-integration for women returning to the labour market. It is no accident that imbalances in further vocational training in favour of men exist across Europe with only slight differences between the countries.

**In contrast, across Europe women comprise around 70% of the participants in programmes in adult and community education, the tertiary, non academic sector of lifelong learning not directly concerned with training for the labour market.** Unfortunately, there is relatively little knowledge and research about this sector's contribution to the employability and labour market participation of women. But the participation rates are evidence that this area of education - which is by definition lifelong learning - matches the interests of women and is essential if they are to improve their quality of life and to exercise their rights as citizens and have a voice, so that they are included and engaged in their communities, families, the workplace and politics.

#### **4.3. Gender Aspects in Lifelong Learning: Adult Education Supporting European Policies**

Combating deeply rooted structural inequalities needs specific efforts in education and training and a long-term perspective. **Adult education as one of the most prominent pillars of lifelong learning plays an important role in achieving change in existing gender hierarchies and breaking down gender stereotypes.** The OECD definition of programmes in the tertiary sector Type B refers to practical, technical or occupational skills for direct entry into the labour market, which defines the classical task of vocational training. But implementing recognition of **gender equality requires a comprehensive educational approach, balancing knowledge, awareness and sensitivity, a change in attitudes and behaviour.**

It has been adult education, in particular in countries with strongly-rooted traditions and understandings of non-formal lifelong learning, like the Nordic countries or Germany, but also, as described in this study, Spain, which has taken up the specific learning needs of women and the pursuit of equal opportunities as a core element of education and training.

**Women's struggle for equal rights has been from the very beginning a – very successful – struggle for equal opportunities in education and training.** Women have long understood education and training as major tools for achieving and securing equal treatment. Learning plays a specific, important role for them: it is of historic significance because it is at the heart of their claim to participate comprehensively in society.

**European gender policies have been their ally in achieving at least a reduction in discrimination.** It is true that women have overtaken men in education, but they still have not done so in power. **European legislation and of course legislation in the Member States ensures equal rights for men and women. But it cannot ensure equal opportunities.** Hundreds of projects aiming at more gender equality, a number of them referred to in this study, have provided a basis for increased participation in the labour market *and* society. They are the promise of more. **'The models of good practice that support women's access to lifelong learning and the labour market'** as the Irish report says, **'have been underpinned by**

**equality legislation in Ireland. However, without European Social Fund support the gender specific nature of these initiatives would not be in place. Ireland's equality legislation covers nine grounds of which gender is one. Without the support of the ESF, gender specific initiatives would be given a low priority over the other grounds.'**

#### **4.4. Gender Aspects in Lifelong Learning: Obstacles and Needs**

The national reports tackle both progress in achieving equal rights and equal opportunities and obstacles to it, and explain the need for a perspective on the gender aspects of lifelong learning:

1. The term 'lifelong learning' places an explicit emphasis on the multiplicity of sources and forms of knowledge. However, lifelong learning in the tertiary, non academic sector in general is still focused on vocational training (VET) and labour-market-related further education and training, demonstrating an understanding in all European countries, despite national differences, of the close connection between education and training and the needs and challenges of the labour market. The six national reports in this study enhance this impression, although there are important differences in the provision of adult learning arrangements beyond VET.
2. **Women dominate –according to the national reports, up to 77% of participants are female – in non-formal, often non-accredited learning programmes for personal enrichment and community development**, but also in programmes for improving the levels of educational attainment of adults. In contrast to vocational training these programmes also attract women working part-time. Few statistics are available for these forms of adult education and hardly any comprehensive sociological research has been carried out on the gender evidence in this field, the application and exploitation of knowledge obtained through these forms of adult education and their social relevance. There is no public discussion about this form of gender-bias.
3. In the countries in this study **the level of educational attainment of women is improving**. The level of women's academic and professional qualifications tends to exceed that of men. The figures show that women tend to have better results in all areas and at all levels of education including higher education at the start of professional life. Women also participate in continuing education, but **the more education and occupation are linked and the higher the occupational level, the stronger the gender segregation**. This finding is supported by the lack of participation in workplace-based learning of those working part-time. Part-time work is one of the strongest indicators of gender segregation in the labour market.
4. It seems that – at least in countries with highly gender structured labour markets and inadequate means of reconciling working life and family - **women themselves, rather than institutions, are the driving force improving participation in employment**. In contrast, decreasing birth rates often reflect persistently bad conditions of work. Even if work and family can be combined, combining a career and family is much more difficult. In contrast, men progress in their career alongside having a family. Combining a career and family for women still means combining caring responsibilities and domestic work. That is why women – even if they are highly educated, qualified and motivated – do not progress in their careers in the same way as men.
5. Gender segregation in the labour market, discriminatory patterns and practices and the absence of opportunity to choose flexible employment patterns – in contrast to the flexibility imposed by employers in response to economic requirements – continue to

limit the extent to which women's skills and qualifications are appropriately rewarded. These are indicators of existing gender hierarchies, with a differential response to achievement in the labour market: employment areas dominated by women contain fewer income, training and career opportunities.

6. Part-time work is mostly women's work. **A majority of part-time workers are women with caring responsibilities, either for children or for elderly relatives.** In particular, caring responsibilities for aged family members will become more relevant in future because of demographic change. In the European Union overall, the employment rate for women falls by 15% when they have a child. In addition, women have disproportionately high recourse to part-time work. The gender pay gap is 15% for full-time jobs, but for part-time jobs it is substantially higher, in Great Britain, e.g., 38.4%. Highly qualified women are the (recent) exception to this rule: they tend to continue working despite having children.
7. As described above, a major reason for the lack of equal opportunities in the labour market are the unsatisfactory circumstances for women who combine family obligations, caring responsibilities and the demands of work. All national reports share this perspective, which reflects a deep-rooted acceptance of different roles for women and men. **Once out of employment schemes, women returners have fewer opportunities of regaining their former position, and the longer the period they spend out of the workforce, the less the likelihood of a successful transition back into employment.** Lifelong learning is therefore especially important to women returning to the labour market after periods of intensive child-care. In particular they need educational and training opportunities which combine **updating professional skills and competences with personal empowerment.**
8. All reports confirm that – as explicitly stated in the UK report – informal workplace cultures and the attitudes of peers and managers turn out to be sometimes even more important than policy initiatives in enabling or preventing women's participation and progression at work. The chance of working women's **reconciling work and family and building a career depend to a great extent on a gender-friendly atmosphere,** the understanding and advice of supervisors and colleagues, and women's networking in workplace.
9. Groups such as lone parents, older women, migrant women or disabled women need particular support to ensure they have the opportunity of engaging in education and training and work. Tailor-made programmes and projects can provide better opportunities for particular target groups of women in the various forms of adult education and vocational training.
10. **All national reports decry the lack of data specifically in gender and gender awareness for at least parts of the lifelong learning system.** The Greek report, for instance, notes a complete lack of data in adult education. Another example is the first German 'Gender-Data Report', published in 2005. It was a historic event, but focused without any explanation exclusively on data for the formal education system and work place-based vocational training. There was a lack of information on non-formal education with social, political, personal and community orientated programmes - an important part of the German educational system for young people and adults. **The gender perspective was limited to the resources of formal qualifications offering men and women equal opportunities in the labour market.** It seems that learning by both men and women is recognized only when it leads to full employment.

11. Considering the high level of women's participation in general adult education, this separation of formal education, vocational training and adult education continues the gender segregation of the labour market into education and training and indicates the lack of awareness of gender equality<sup>100</sup>.

Without gendered statistics on education and training an analysis of gender evidence is impossible. This is one of the preconditions for further analysis.

12. The national reports agree that there is **a lack of gender competences amongst policy makers, senior managers, chief executives etc.** Although **gender mainstreaming** is accepted as a major means of promoting gender equality in the countries of the European Union and as **a crosscutting objective in all educational measures there is a remarkable sensitivity gap between knowledge and practice.** Gender mainstreaming was initiated with a double perspective for good reason: both top down and bottom up. **Often it is adapted and evaluated 'top down' in a simply formal and quantitative way without taking account of special needs, diverse experiences, factors like ethnicity and social background, or male-dominated perceptions of work.** Measures against persistent gender patterns seem to underestimate the low level of awareness of discrimination and gender-competence within male dominated decision-making structures.
13. Finally, work on the gender aspects of lifelong learning must focus on gender-blind structures within the fields of further education, workplace-based vocational education and training and adult education. The EU-funded programme 'Women into Work: Building Futures' which was commissioned to promote gender equality and support job de-segregation, identified the following barriers to non-traditional employment: individual perceptions; practical issues; lack of knowledge and awareness; and male workplace culture. And another UK study states that current vocational training also perpetuates gendered occupational differences which impact directly on later employment patterns<sup>101</sup>. The national reports give evidence of lower participation of women in workplace-based education and technical trainings. The picture is somewhat different in further education and training, and when programmes aim at better vocational qualifications and skills for employment. However, as they point out, educational structures in general are not gender-sensitive.

#### 4.5. Gender Aspects in Lifelong Learning: Recommendations - Issues to Be Addressed

All the national reports give **evidence of the remarkable impact of European policy definitions, strategies and programmes on national developments with respect to making societies more gender democratic. They also demonstrate that Gender Equality as a core objective of the European Union and in all Member States needs effective instruments for implementation and monitoring.** Gender mainstreaming provides for systematic action to secure change and disseminates the perspective of gender equality into all policy areas,

<sup>100</sup> The *Annual Report on the Economy 2007* of the research institute of the Federal Agency of Employment draws attention to the fact that the potential of employment in domestic services is not yet exhausted with a potential of approximately 3 million workplaces / mini jobs in private households. Consideration is to be given to measures to foster legal workplaces in private households, but there is no mention of the fact that this means a further step towards labour market segregation:  
[http://www.bmwi.de/BMWi/Redaktion/PDF/Publikationen/jahreswirtschaftsbericht\\_2007](http://www.bmwi.de/BMWi/Redaktion/PDF/Publikationen/jahreswirtschaftsbericht_2007)

<sup>101</sup> Francis, F., 'Troubling trajectories: Gendered 'choices' and pathways from school to work', in Leathwood, C. And Francis, B. (eds.) *Gender and Lifelong Learning. Critical feminist engagements.* London: Routledge, 2006.



including the challenging area of gender budgeting. **There will be no change of paradigm without binding principles.**

- **But there will also be no change without changing the way of thinking and living.** The European *Roadmap for the Equality of Men and Women* clearly demands the breaking down of gender stereotypes, in particular in education and training, in culture, in the labour market and in the media. Alongside political strategies and effective means of implementation there is an **urgent need for gender education, which has to be an ongoing, continuous, comprehensive, lifelong learning process starting in early childhood education.**
- The first and most important recommendation therefore refers to the **need to establish coherent learning structures**, in which the different areas of education and training benefit from each other, exchange experiences and develop contents and methods, raise gender awareness, strengthen critical judgement, consider the needs of different target groups and stimulate active participation in society. **Special actions and campaigns can contribute to, but cannot substitute the long term impact of education on attitudes.**
- Lifelong learning institutions have to develop learning opportunities in the fields of personal development, democratic citizenship, community education, and vocational education and training. **Synergies** between the existing systems have to be **better used.**
- Lifelong learning institutions have to offer **women-appropriate courses** in the fields of democratic citizenship, general education, mathematics, natural sciences, technical and technological subjects.
- **Policy strategies must be based on the principle that there is no gender-neutral education.** The experiences of adult education confirm this. In particular, the differences in how adult education on the one hand and vocational education and training on the other are perceived reveal a lack of awareness of this fact. Men are considered to be the norm. The German adult education and gender researcher Angela Venth<sup>102</sup> describes two chains of associations: masculinity=employment=learning as qualifying a person for employment and occupation=having priority. Learning for personal development, health and creativity, learning for the family and social competencies=unmanly=of secondary importance. These 'chains of association' have an impact on budgets, funding and access to resources. In addition, this perception is particularly important at a time when the expectations of employment tend to disregard privacy, so that the 'whole' person is preoccupied with the context of employment - something we need to think of when demanding a better work/life balance in the light of demographic changes.
- Therefore: the differentiated recognition accorded to educational structures has to be changed. The hidden message that there are first and second class areas of learning perpetuates gender discrimination. Vocational education and training is considered a major means of opening up discriminatory structures and overcoming inequality. But maybe unawares and unintentionally, **vocational training favours male educational concepts, male occupational fields, and male needs for qualifications. It not only discriminates against women but forces men to limit their perspectives on life and work, too. A change of perspectives is needed.** Of course, societal changes are essential, such as

---

<sup>102</sup> Angela Venth, *Männlichkeit und Bildung. Dialogisches Lernen als Zukunftsangebot an Männer*, p. 120, in: Walter Hollstein/ Michael Matzner (eds.): *Soziale Arbeit mit Jungen und Männern*, München 2007, and Angela Venth, *Arbeiten – Lernen – Leben. Potenziale der Erwachsenenbildung im Kontext geschlechtsspezifischer Arbeitsteilung*, Hessische Blätter für Volksbildung 3/2007, p. 213-220, [http://www.hbv.wb-giessen.de/actionfiles/editions/Editorial\\_3\\_2007.pdf](http://www.hbv.wb-giessen.de/actionfiles/editions/Editorial_3_2007.pdf)

incentives for women (and couples) to stay at work, child care facilities, improvement of public services. But changes will also come from an educational practice which integrates occupational training into more flexible, learner-centred, comprehensive approaches to learning.

- The concept of gender mainstreaming includes positive action programmes for women as integral part of the double strategy for combating inequality. **Women in the workforce and particularly those in low-paid, low-skilled and often part-time employment are disadvantaged not just by their lack of education and skills, but also by the very limited opportunities afforded to them.** For this group of women and for returners, the provision of opportunities for lifelong learning must accommodate both their work within the labour market and their responsibilities outside.
- **Gender education** is needed at all levels of education and training and also has to develop **specific programmes and approaches for men.** In response to the educational initiatives and projects of feminist women's education and training during recent decades there has also been some rudimentary men's education and training, trying to find a different understanding of their role and to change patterns of living. **A critical perception of traditional male patterns cannot be taken for granted and men are not widely aware of the need to learn social skills.** Male groups with such an approach exist in adult education but they are rare. **Provision and incentives are needed to encourage men to reflect on their role,** in particular because there are almost no role models for them which are not based on traditional patterns.
- **Quality in gender education and training requires qualified educators and trainers and appropriate forms of certification.** The provision of further education and qualification opportunities for gender trainers has to be strengthened. **Raising the level of gender education and the range of gender competences will also contribute raising recognition of its importance.** Institutions and organisations for youth and adult education play a major part in gender education.
- **Cooperation and better links between the stakeholders in both action and research** are needed and will help to promote networks for gender education. Thus a gender perspective may be introduced into all areas of education and training, the concepts and methodologies of gendered programmes will improve, and a culture of gender democracy can grow by considering different social backgrounds: migrants and ethnic minorities, different social classes and milieus, different sexual orientations. **Gender education does not mean that men and women learn in a different way per se and therefore have to be addressed differently.** Rather, different biographical experiences, and variation in the condition of life and lifestyles must be taken into account if we are to avoid learning content which does not reflect the realities of different target groups.
- Policy-makers, administration personnel and all public servants **responsible for the implementation of gender mainstreaming** need to receive not only basic information and gender training appropriate to their tasks, but also **regular updating with a focus on their progress in gender awareness.** They are the persons who can be obstacles to a gender perspective or who can facilitate and promote equal opportunities and a gender-sensitive culture at work place. **Gender mainstreaming – by definition – has to be considered at all levels of decision-making** (which often does not happen).

➤ Additional tools and strategies:

- Ministries should carry out a gender equality analysis in their area. Decision-makers at all levels should ensure that all stages of the decision-making process are informed by gender indicators.
- National Plans for Gender Equality should contain clear objectives, quantified goals and actions with clear timescales and defined monitoring procedures.
- Analysis of demand in education and training should integrate a gender perspective, considering male privileges and female disadvantages. Continuing discrimination and lack of resources is not compatible with a gendered view of educational practice.
- Public funding should be provided only for those institutions, programmes and projects which can prove that gender equality is an integral part of their objectives and activities.
- Public funding – following the European policies of social cohesion – should be provided for specific positive actions in education and training for women experiencing multiple disadvantages.
- The reconciliation of work and private life cannot be achieved by women working part-time, but by reducing working hours for both partners and by sharing family, child and caring responsibilities. Obligatory caring months for fathers, better and free childcare, leave for taking care of dependents can all act as incentives. The idea of a gendered work/life balance needs to be developed.
- The structures of social systems, tax systems, and employment are oriented towards the model of the adult male full-time worker. The privilege given to this model must be changed in order to achieve gender equality.
- Advisory structures should be provided at local, regional and national level; good practice (described in manuals and guides) should not only be disseminated, but more effectively drawn together.
- All data collection in adult education must include gender relevant information, with qualitative as well as quantitative information.

#### 4.6. Gender Aspects in Lifelong Learning: Perspectives

To sum up: The European instrument of gender mainstreaming is still not systematically incorporated into national strategic structures, but activities which draw on its principles have increased. It is obvious that activities, in particular in education and training, must be integrated into the gender mainstreaming policy; otherwise gender mainstreaming will be in danger of being marginalised. Continuous monitoring will reveal the progress (or at worst stagnation or regress) towards achieving real gender equality in general as well as in education and training. This study contributes to the analysis of gender evidence in lifelong learning in Europe, pointing out structures and policies, experiences and deficits. However, in-depth and long-term research is necessary and should be commissioned by the European Union with more substantial resources.

A change is needed in the value attributed to different educational areas and the role of non-formal adult education must become more visible. **Adult education has contributed substantially to a change in the perception of equal rights and equal opportunities. Gender policies in the countries in this report have been influenced ‘bottom up’ from adult**

**education in important ways.** All the reports confirm the high participation rates of women in adult learning, leading to the conclusion that the programmes match female needs.

Non-formal youth and adult education took up the issue of gender equality some 30 years ago, developing emancipatory programmes and projects for girls AND boys, for women AND men. These resources may contribute substantially to the progress of gender education across Europe. But they need support, visibility and recognition.

In non-formal adult education the gender perspective has been integrated into methods of teaching and learning as a crosscutting perspective. Gender-appropriate teaching and learning identifies and promotes the specific learning needs of men and women and provides methodological tools to help to develop confidence in individual creativity and the capacity to act, which are important prerequisites for participation in the processes of transforming civil society. These are necessary steps towards gender democracy.

## Bibliography

### European Level

Council of Europe, *Introduction to Human Rights, Equality between Women and Men. Gender mainstreaming*, website: [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int).

Council of Europe, *Gender budgeting*, 2005.

Council of Europe, *Workshop on gender mainstreaming for Chairs and Secretaries of Steering Committees of the Council of Europe*, 2001.

Dybbroe, B. and E. Ollagnier, Editors, *Challenging Gender in Lifelong Learning: European Perspectives*, 2003.

European Commission, *Communication A coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training*, COM (2007) 61 final

European Commission, *Communication Adult learning: it is never too late to learn 2006*, COM (2006) 614 final.

European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, A Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010*, SEC (2006) 275.

European Commission (ed.), *Continuing training in enterprises in Europe - Results of the second European Continuing Vocational Training Survey in enterprises*, 2003.

European Commission, *Report from the Commission to the Council, The European Parliament, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on equality between women and men (2007)*, COM (2007) 49 final.

European Commission, *Progress Towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training. Report based on indicators and benchmarks*, Report 2006 SEC (2006) 639.

European Commission, *Modernising Education and Training: A Vital Contribution to Prosperity and Social Cohesion in Europe*. 2006 Joint Interim Report of the Council and of the Commission on Progress under the 'Education & Training 2010' Work Programme (2006/C79/01).

European Commission, Commission staff working paper, *Progress towards the common objectives in education and training 2004 Indicators and benchmarks*, SEC(2004) 73.

European Commission, completed by London Economics, *Projects in Economics and Education, Study on The Returns to Various Types of Investment in Education and Training*, Brussels 2005.

European Commission in cooperation with EUROSTAT, *Detailed Analysis of Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in Education and Training - 2006 Report. Analysis based on indicators and benchmarks*.

European Commission, Task force report on adult education survey, 2005.

European Parliament, *Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast)*, Official Journal of the European Union 26.7.2006, L 204.

European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), *Adult education trends and issues in Europe*, 2006.

European Association of craft, small and medium sized enterprises (UEAPME), *Position paper on adult learning*, 2007.

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, *Combining family and full-time work*, 2006.

European Research Associates, *Exploring sources on funding for lifelong learning 2003*, 2748 / 001 – 001 LE2 52 STAT, 2004, Luxembourg.

European Women's Lobby, *Gender Budgeting – An Overview by the European Women's Lobby*, 2004.

Eurostat, *Life-long learning – males. Percentage of the adult male population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training*, 2006.

Eurostat, *Statistics in focus; Population and Social Conditions*, 53/2007.

Eurydice, *Non-Vocational Adult Education in Europe. Executive Summary of National Information on Eurydice. Working Document; January 2007* Eurydice, Appendix 6.

Fuente de la, Ángel and Ciccone, Antonio, *Human capital in a global and knowledge-based economy*, 2003.

OECD, *Promoting Adult Learning*, 2005.

Rogers, Alan, *Lifelong learning and the absence of gender*, 2006.

## **National level**

*National Reform Programme 2005 – 2008 Germany. Implementation and Progress Report 2006.*

*The Commission's Assessments of National Reform Programmes for Growth and Jobs, Annual Progress Reports 2006.*

Johnson, G., *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise?* New Zealand Treasury Working Paper, 2004.

*Lisbon Agenda. Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs. Greece – Implementation of National Reform Programme*, Progress Report 2006.

*Lisbon Agenda. Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs. Ireland – Implementation of National Reform Programme*, Progress Report 2006.

*National Reform Programme for 2005 – 2006 to implement the Lisbon Strategy*, First Annual Progress Report 2006.

O'Brien, P., and Paczynski, W., *Poland's Education and Training: Boosting and Adapting Human Capital*, OECD, 2006.

## **Methodology**

Association of Churches and Missions in South-Western Germany, *Gender Policy – Guidelines Towards Gender Justice*; Stuttgart, 2006.

Derichs-Kunstmann, K., *Elemente einer geschlechtsgerechten Didaktik für die Erwachsenenbildung*, 1999.

Derichs-Kunstmann, Kari, Auszra, Susanne and Brigitte Müthing, *Von der Inszenierung des Geschlechterverhältnisses zur geschlechtsgerechten Didaktik: Konstitution und Reproduktion des Geschlechterverhältnisses in der Erwachsenenbildung*, 1999.

Du, Xiang-Yun, *Learning Engineering in a Problem-based and Project-oriented Learning Environment - Gendered features of learning and Identity Development*, 2005.

Elovaara, Pirjo and Christina Mörtberg, *Design of Digital Democracies - Performances of Citizenship, Gender and IT*, 2005.

Eschmann, Detlef and Helga Richter-Lönnecke, Karsta Neuhaus, Ulrich Brack, Ulrike Ladwig, *Fremdsprachenlernende an Volkshochschulen*, 2001.

Heise, Maren and Wolfgang Meyer, *The benefits of education, training and skills from an individual life-course perspective with a particular focus on life-course and biographical research*, in *Third report on vocational training research in Europe: background report*, 2004.

Kaschuba, Gerrit, *Geschlechtergerechte Didaktik in der Fort- und Weiterbildung*, Berlin, 2006.

Stiftinger, Anna, *Gender in der IKT – Weiterbildung*, April 2005.

Turner, Mary Ann, *Women's Learning and Leadership Styles: Impact on Crew Resource Management*, 1994.





## ANNEXES

### Germany

#### 1. The Context for Lifelong Learning for Men and Women

##### 1.1. General Policies on Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming

Equality between women and men is built into the German Constitution (*Grundgesetz*, Article 3; Paragraph 2): *Männer und Frauen sind gleichberechtigt*. (Men and women have equal rights). After German reunification, the article was amended to read: *Der Staat fördert die tatsächliche Durchsetzung der Gleichberechtigung von Frauen und Männern und wirkt auf die Beseitigung bestehender Nachteile hin*. (The state shall support the actual implementation of equal rights for women and men and shall work towards elimination of existing disadvantages).

The equal rights amendment in the German Constitution was used in the 1950s to fight the so-called *Frauenlohngruppen* (women's wage tariffs) which gave women 15% lower wages than men just because they were women. But since that time, the Constitution has not had much influence on equal opportunities for women, and this is reflected in the current labour market position of women and the social and political role of women in society.

Even today, women are not appropriately represented in politics and society. This applies at all decision-making levels in politics, science and the economy. Women only make up 30% of the German *Bundestag* (Parliament), as shown in Table 1 below. Up until 1987, women accounted for fewer than 10% of the members of the German Parliament.

**Table 1: Women in the German Parliament**

Election period	Number of female members of Parliament	in %
1949-1953	28	6,8
1953-1957	45	8,8
1957-1961	48	9,2
1961-1965	43	8,3
1965-1969	36	6,9
1969-1972	34	6,6
1972-1976	30	5,8
1976-1980	38	7,3
1980-1983	44	8,5
1983-1987	51	9,8
1987-1990	80	15,4
1990-1994	136	20,5
1994-1998	177	26,3
1998-2002	207	30,9
2002-	194	32,2

Source: *Genderbericht 2005: 350*.

At federal level women's and gender policies in Germany is the responsibility of a federal ministry that covers a number of groups – the Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (BMFSFJ), the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. In the last few years the BMFSFJ has focused primarily on policies to promote the

reconciliation of work and family. It has also established projects concerned with the job choices of girls, career opportunities for women, and the strengthening of entrepreneurship among women (see Appendix).

Strategies for the implementation of gender mainstreaming were a policy priority several years ago, when a resolution was adopted on the implementation of gender mainstreaming throughout the federal government. A centre of gender excellence was intended to assist in the process of achieving this goal in the different ministries. In 2000, the BMFSFJ established a working group which was responsible for the implementation of gender mainstreaming. Various activities have taken place since then in public relations, changes in programmes, etc. These activities have already resulted in products such as guides and manuals. The establishment of a website [www.gender-mainstreaming.net](http://www.gender-mainstreaming.net) and a gender competence centre will now enable further progress in implementing gender mainstreaming in Germany. The ESF has played an important role in gender mainstreaming in employment policy.

Germany lacked legislation on equal employment opportunities for men and women covering private enterprises until 14 August 2006, when the *Allgemeine Gleichbehandlungsgesetz* (Equal Treatment Act) came into force. This introduces a requirement for equal treatment based on European guidelines. It includes equal treatment in respect of gender, as well as making illegal discrimination on account of age, sexual orientation, race, religion, national origin or disability.

Before this law was passed, there were many objections to regulatory policies requiring equal employment opportunities in private enterprises. The Government therefore decided to rely on companies making their own commitment to take equal opportunities measures, rather than imposing regulation through legislation. During the Red-Green coalition (SPD and Green Party), the final attempt to amend equal opportunities legislation to cover private companies failed. In 2001, the Government therefore encouraged the central associations of German business to reach an agreement. Instead, what resulted was a voluntary agreement between the employers' associations and the Government. This strategy received a positive evaluation by the Federal Government in 2003 and 2006. Objective analysis, however, indicates that this agreement did little to improve equality of employment opportunities for women and men (Klenner 2004).

## **1.2. The Tax System, Social Security and Reconciliation of Work and Family**

The German tax system, in combination with the system of social security, promotes the (updated) male bread-winner model. The German tax system rewards a working couple that consists of a bread-winner and non-working partner or a (marginal) part-time worker (so-called *Zuverdiener*).

In Germany there is a special tax category which advantages couples with just one earner. The non-employment of one member of the couple is further supported by the social security system. The health insurance system allows a spouse who is not working or is working only to a small extent to be insured at no additional cost. For couples, it therefore seems to be a sensible economic decision that one of them should work full-time and that the other should stay at home or work only part-time.

Alongside a policy that promotes the updated male bread-winner model in Germany, provision for child-care is inadequate. Despite the passing of a law to expand child care in Germany, there is still a lack of childcare facilities, especially for children under the age of 3 (see Tables 2 and

3). Between 1994 and 2002, the percentage of children under the age of 3 years provided with childcare rose from 6.3 to 8.6 percent, with significant differences between East und West Germany. While the number of childcare places fell in East Germany, overall there are substantially more places for children under the age of 3 years.

**Table 2: Places in childcare facilities for children under the age of 3 and number of children of that age, 1994 to 2002**

Country	1994			1998			2002		
	Places	Children under the age of 3 years	VQ*	Places	Children under the age of 3 years	VQ*	Places	Children under the age of 3 years	VQ*
	Numbers		In %	Numbers		In %	Numbers		In %
Germany	150.753	2.394.792	6,3	166.927	2.393.836	7,0	190.914	2.232.569	8,6
West Germany	64.242	2.014.187	1,4	37.412	1.968.133	1,9	43.509	1.788.960	2,4
East Germany	59.897	227.404	40,0	94.623	271.971	34,8	108.944	294.615	37,0
City States	26.614	153.201	20,7	34.892	153.732	22,7	38.461	148.994	25,8

\* VQ = The so called Versorgungsquote shows the numbers of places for children under the age of 3 years.

Source: Bildungsbericht 2006: 227.

For children between the ages of 3 and 6.5 years, there are more childcare places. Coverage rose from 78.2 to 90.6 percent, with some differences between East und West Germany. In East Germany, there are more places for children between the age of 3 and 6.5 years than there are children in that age group.

**Table 3: Places in day care for children aged between 3 and 6.5 years, and number of children of that age, 1994 to 2002**

Country	1994			1998			2002		
	Places	Children aged 3 to 6,5 years	VQ*	Places	Children aged 3 to 6,5 years	VQ*	Places	Children aged 3 to 6,5 years	VQ*
	Numbers		In %	Numbers		In %	Numbers		In %
Germany	2.471.688	3.160.293	78,2	2.486.780	2.750.325	90,4	2.550.399	2.773.513	92,0
West Germany	1.835.836	2.453.467	74,8	2.053.175	2.327.466	88,2	2.078.619	2.293.497	90,6
East Germany	503.650	521.210	96,6	308.808	271.716	113,7	341.328	324.693	105,1
City States	132.202	185.616	71,2	124.797	151.143	82,6	130.452	155.323	84,0

\* VQ = Versorgungsquote shows the numbers of places for children under the age of 3 years.

Source: Bildungsbericht 2006: 228.

The main problem for people trying to combine work and family is the lack of full-day care for children (see Table 4). There are big differences between West and East Germany. In East Germany the coverage of childcare facilities is significantly better than in West Germany, where family policy aimed at better reconciliation of work and family has achieved some results in terms of improvements to the childcare situation. In 2005, the Tagesbetreuungsausbaugesetz (Day Care Improvement Law) was amended to provide for an additional 230,000 childcare places in Germany.

**Table 4: Availability of full-time day care for children between the age of 3 and school age, 1998 to 2002**

Country	Full-time day care with lunch		Changes between 1998 and 2002		Places in total	
	1998	2002			1998	2002
	Numbers		Numbers	In %	In %	
Germany	732.208	924.378	192.170	26,2	29,4	36,2
West Germany	335.749	490.394	154.645	46,1	16,4	23,6
East Germany	301.523	334.977	33.454	11,1	97,6	98,1
City States	94.936	99.007	4.071	4,3	76,1	75,9

Source: *Bildungsbericht 2006: 229.*

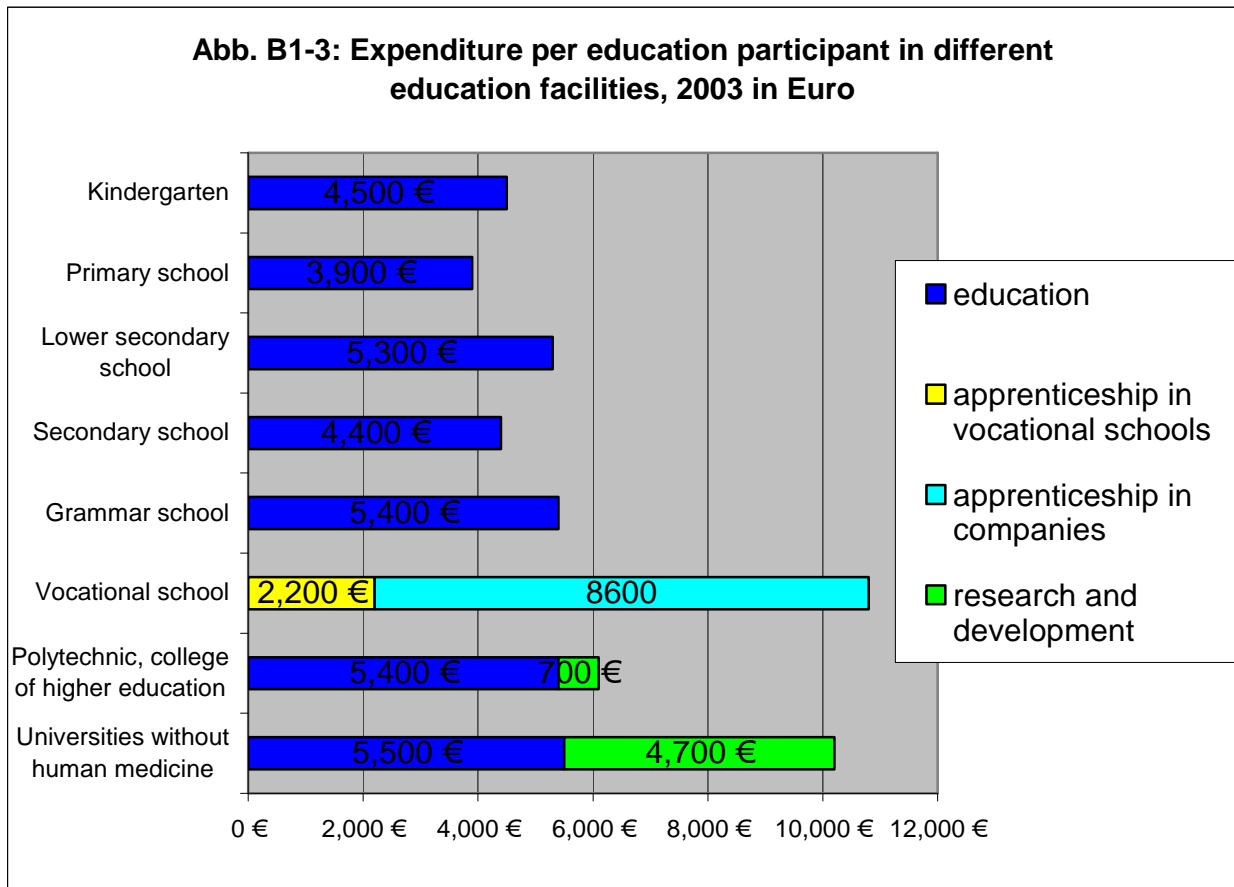
### 1.3. The Education System in Germany

Education policy in Germany is under the jurisdiction and responsibility of the federal states. The education systems therefore differ slightly from state to state. But there are some common principles which characterise the German education system.

Education starts with pre-school, the Kinderkrippe or Kindergarten. In Germany, pre-school education is organised mostly on a part-time basis. Full-time care is a rarity in the German education system. Pre-school education is basically seen as the responsibility of mothers and families. After four (or sometimes six) years of primary school education, usually from 6 to 10 years of age, the education system is divided into three different types of schools (the so-called Dreigliedrigkeit): Hauptschule, Realschule and Gymnasium (lower secondary school, secondary school and grammar school). Each type leads to different examinations with different functions and job prospects. The Gymnasium (grammar school), with the Abitur as its final examination, is the prerequisite for university entrance. This early differentiation is seen as one main reason for the persistence of unequal education opportunities in Germany, as found in PISA studies. Vocational training is mostly organised through the so-called Duales System, which involves a combination of on-the-job training at the place of employment and vocational courses at a vocational school. Apart from this, there is a range of vocational training, especially for 'women's jobs', organised on a full-time school basis.

The following Figure 1 shows expenditure per participant for the different types of education. The expenditure in the Duales System is on average € 10,800, compared with € 10,200 for a university student.

**Figure 1: Expenditure per education participant in different education facilities, 2003 (in €)**

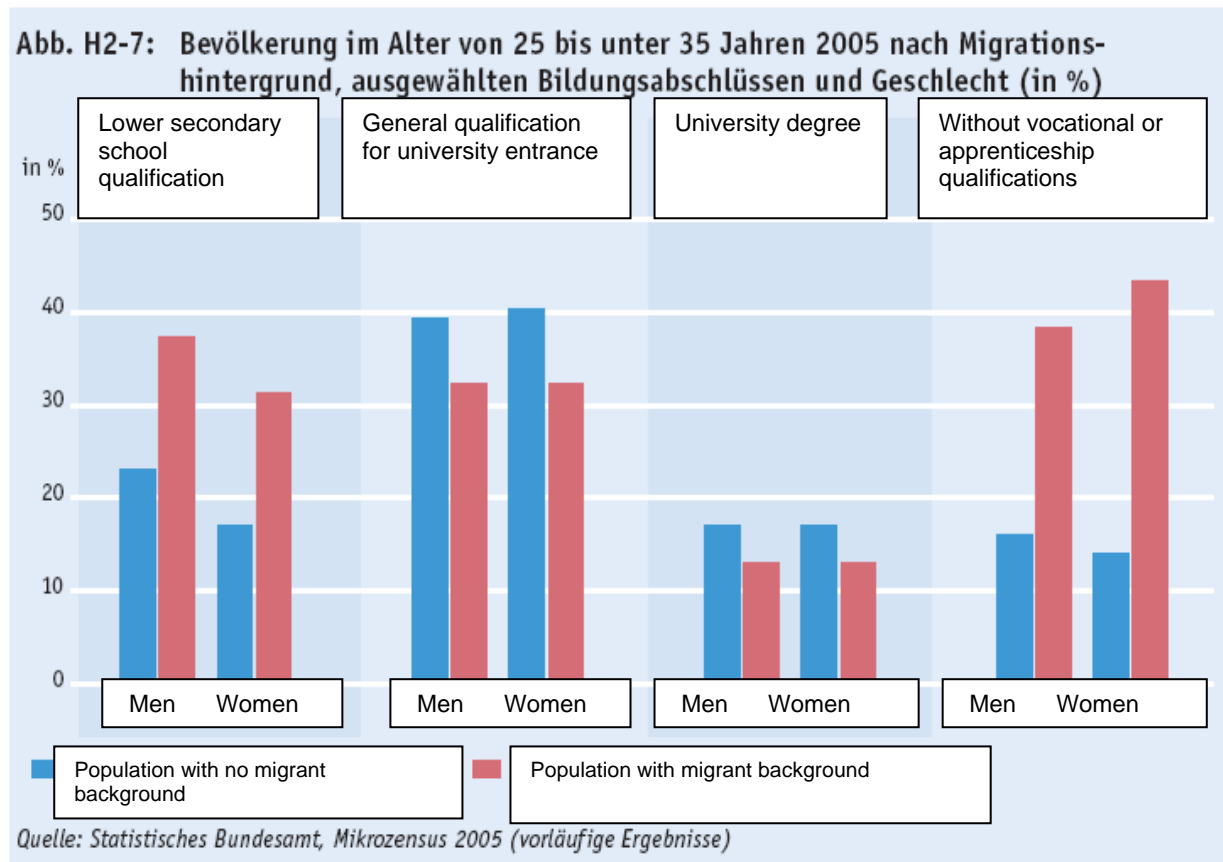


Source: Statistisches Bundesamt Federal Office for Statistics; Bildungsbericht 2006: 23.

The German education system is seen as lacking in equality of opportunities. During the 1960s a discussion started about the poorer opportunities for girls, children from a working class background and children from rural areas. As a result of this debate, a so-called *Bildungsreform* (education reform) was introduced, with the goal of improving access to higher education for previously excluded groups. In general, girls profited a great deal from this education reform and increased their presence in higher education over the years.

Recently, the results of PISA studies have initiated a new discussion about unequal educational opportunities in Germany. Children from migrant families have significantly less chance of gaining a higher education degree, as Figure 2 shows. The blue bar in Figure 2 indicates German-born people, the red those with a migrant background. More than 40% of migrant women and nearly 40% of migrant men have not completed an apprenticeship or vocational training, compared with about 15% of Germans.

**Figure 2: Population, age 25 to 35, by migration background, completion of education and gender, 2005**



Source: Federal Office for Statistics, Mikrozensus 2005, Bildungsbericht 2006: 147.

## 2. Women and Men in the Labour Market

The change from an industrial to a service-based and now to a knowledge-based society has resulted in far-reaching changes in the labour market. The manufacturing sector has shrunk, while employment in the service sector has expanded. This development has – at first glance – often been seen as an opportunity for real improvement in the situation of women in employment because more women than men work in the service sector. But a more detailed analysis shows that women and men in Germany are still unequal in the work force. This chapter presents some indicators of the role and position of women in employment in comparison with men.

Some brief remarks on the labour market background in Germany: since the introduction of so-called ‘mini-jobs’ in 2003, there has been a rapid increase in the number of people in marginal employment. In June 2005, about 6.7 million people had a mini-job. Since 2003, the number of persons in marginal employment has risen by 2.6 million. More than a quarter of them do the mini-job as a sideline. Nearly two thirds of those doing a mini-job as their main job are women, and most of them are socially insured via their partners and do not pay their own contributions to the social security system.

In 2006, there were 276,000 **one-euro-jobs**, that is recipients of basic unemployment benefit (*Arbeitslosengeld II*) working in job-creation schemes without employment contracts for just one euro per hour.

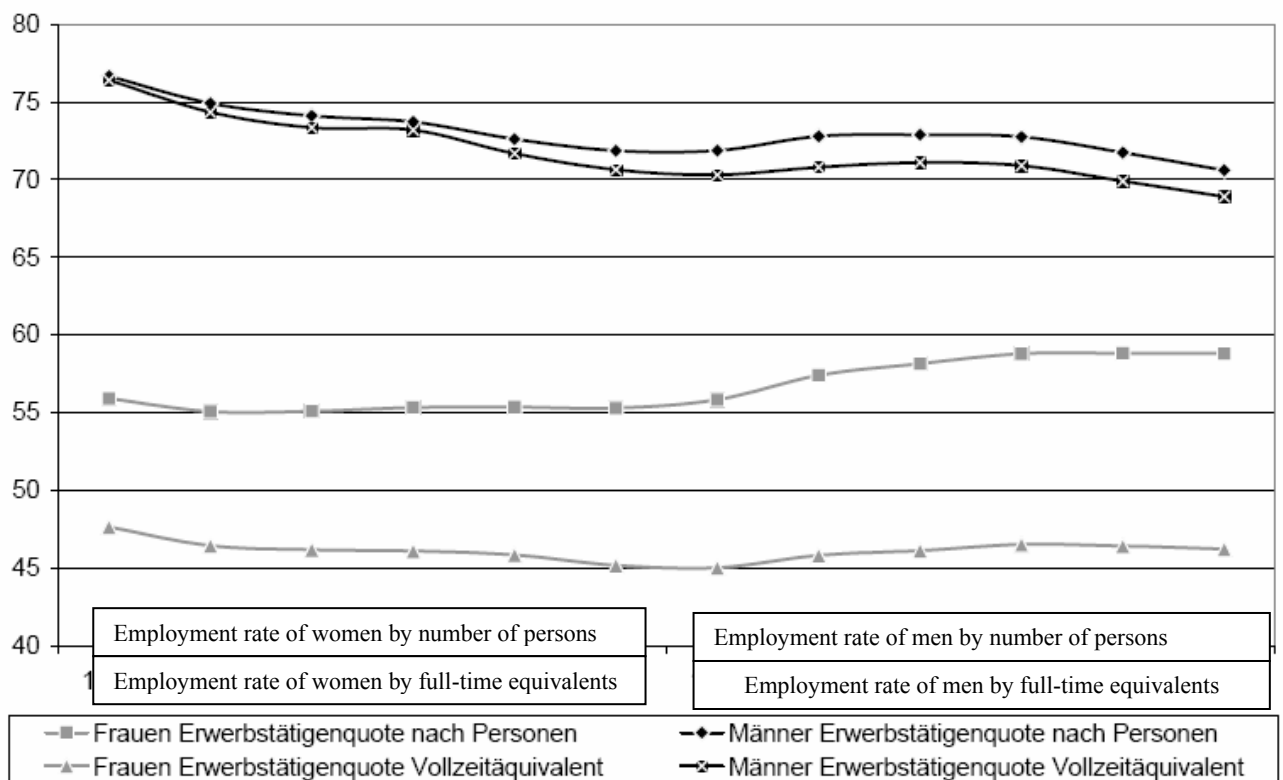
In addition, the proportion of employees working for temporary employment agencies has increased by 60%, from 273,000 to 453,000 employees in the period 2003-2005.

### 2.1. Employment Rates

Over recent years the employment rate of women has increased continuously to almost 60% at present. On the other hand, the employment rate of men has declined from around 76% to 70%. But if one compares the full-time equivalents (FTEs) of women and men, there is still a huge difference. The FTE figure for men hovers around 70%, but the FTE for women remains constant at 45% (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Employment rates<sup>103</sup> of women and men by numbers of persons and by full-time equivalents, 1992 to 2003**

**Abbildung 2.3: Erwerbstätigenquoten<sup>1</sup> von Frauen und Männern nach Personen und Vollzeitäquivalent in Deutschland 1992 bis 2003 (in %)**



1 Erwerbstätigenquote: prozentualer Anteil der Erwerbstätigen an der Bevölkerung im erwerbsfähigen Alter von 15 bis 64 Jahren

Datenbasis: Eurostat, LFS

Quellen: European Commission: 2004; European Commission: 2003

Sources: Eurostat, LFS, European Commission: 2004, European Commission: 2003; Genderreport 2005: 100.

<sup>103</sup> Employment rate: percentage of the population aged 15-64 years and able to work who are in employment.

## 2.2. Reconciliation of Work and Family

One main reason for the difference in employment between men and women in Germany is the presence of children. The employment rate for women with children is lower than that for women without children. Among men, the effect of parenthood is the opposite. Men without children have a lower employment rate than men with children. For women with children from the age of 0 to 12 years the employment rate is 60.4% compared with 91.3% for men and 75.1% for women without children.

The younger the children, the lower are the employment rate of women. Only 52.1% of women with children under the age of 2 years are employed compared with 67.0% of women with children from 6 to 11 years of age.

## 2.3. Unemployment Rates

In 2006, 45% of the roughly 5 million unemployed in Germany were women, and 55% were men. The unemployment rate for men was about 14%, and the rate for women around 13%. For people with a migrant background the unemployment rates are much higher than for native Germans.

There are differences in the way in which women and men experience unemployment. For women, it is far more difficult to find a way out of unemployment: 35% of unemployed women and 46% of unemployed men managed to find new jobs in 2003. The proportion of women among the unemployed in job promotion schemes is, on average, only 42.7% in Germany. The objective of promoting women through labour market schemes proportionate to their percentage of the unemployed population, which is prescribed in law, has failed.

The high relevance of education and qualifications can be seen in Table 5. For women without vocational training the unemployment rate increased from 14.1% in 1991 to 19.7% in 2002; for men without vocational training the increase was even greater, from 15.1% in 1991 to 25.4% in 2002.

At the other end of the spectrum, women and men with university degrees managed to lower their unemployment rates. In 1991, 5.7% of women with a university degree were unemployed; in 2002 their unemployment rate was 4.4%. The unemployment rate for men with a university degree averaged around 3.2%.

In Germany, qualification is a factor with a huge influence on the likelihood of finding a first job or of returning to work after unemployment. This is the result of an education and labour market system in which there are strong connections between vocational training and jobs.



**Table 5: Unemployment rates by qualification, 1991 to 2002**

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Qualification	in %											
Germany												
<b>Women</b>												
Without training	14,1	16,4	19,4	19,9	20,7	22,3	24,6	24,2	21,7	20,6	19,8	19,7
With training	7,2	8	9,2	9,1	8,9	9,3	10,6	9,7	9,9	9,1	9,1	9,3
University degree	5,7	5	5,4	5	4,9	4,5	4,8	4,1	4,2	3,7	3,7	4,4
Total	8,5	9,6	41	10,9	10,8	11,2	12,5	11,6	11,4	10,5	10,3	10,5
<b>Men</b>												
Without training	15,1	17,4	21,3	22,3	23,2	26	29,2	27,5	25,1	23,8	24,4	25,4
With training	4,4	4,6	5,9	6,1	6,2	7,2	8,2	7,6	7,7	7,4	7,6	8,4
University degree	3,2	2,8	3,4	3,5	3,5	3,3	3,5	3	2,9	2,5	2,5	3,2
Total	5,7	6,2	7,7	8	8,2	9,3	10,3	9,6	9,4	8,9	9,2	10
<b>Men and women</b>												
Without training	14,5	16,9	20,3	21	21,9	24,2	26,9	25,8	23,4	22,2	22,1	22,6
With training	5,6	6,1	7,3	7,4	7,4	8,1	9,3	8,5	8,7	8,1	8,3	8,8
University degree	4	3,5	4,1	4	4	3,7	4	3,4	3,4	2,9	3	3,7
Total	6,9	7,6	9,1	9,2	9,3	10,1	11,3	10,5	10,3	9,6	9,7	10,2

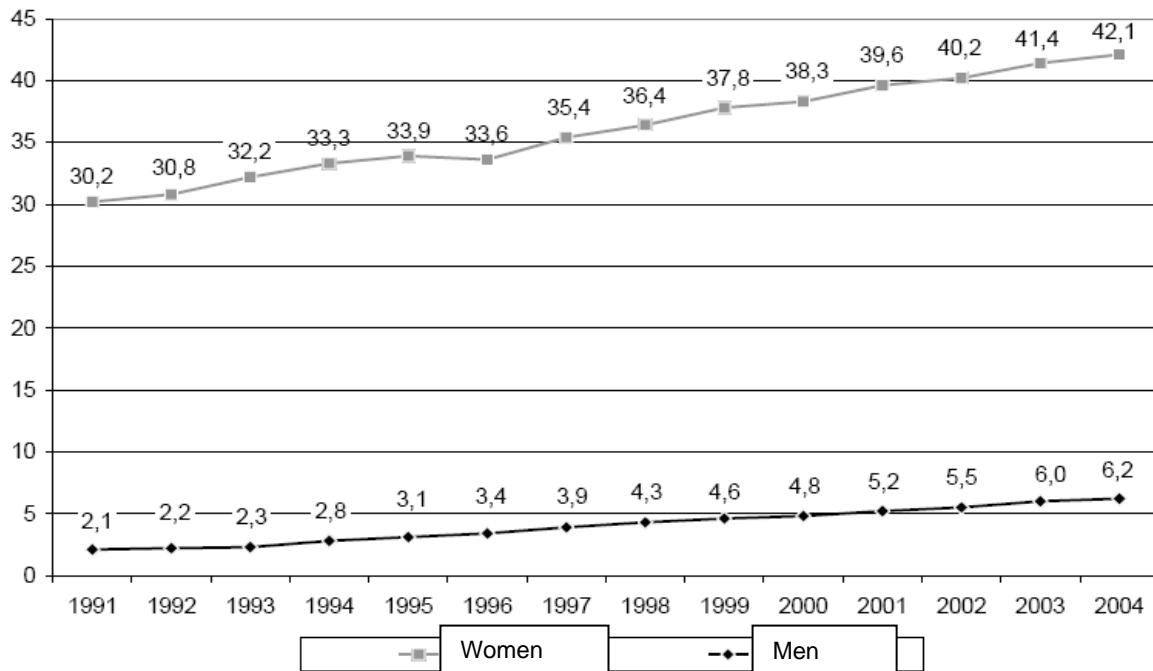
Source: WSI-FrauenDatenReport 2005: CD-Rom.

## 2.4. Working Hours

From 1991 to 2004, working hours in Germany decreased for both men and women. Women worked 34.4 hours per week in 1991 and 30.8 hours in 2004. The decline in the average working hours of men was smaller, from 41.2 in 1991 to 40.2 in 2004. The decline in men's working hours came about mostly as a result of collective bargaining for reductions in working time. The decline in women's working hours resulted mostly from reliance on part-time jobs.

The increasing number of women in paid employment can, to a large extent, be attributed to the enormous increase in part-time work. In 2004, almost eleven million women had a shorter than normal working week compared with 5.5 million in 1991. Women are far less often in full-time work than men (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Proportion of part-time workers among women and men in Germany, 1991 to 2004 (in %)**



Source: Genderbericht 2005: 114.

When asked for the reasons for working part-time, women and men give different answers. The differences between women in East and West Germany are also interesting: 63% of women working part-time in West Germany ‘chose’ this working time because of family commitments. In East Germany only 20% of women give this reason; 13% of West German men and 4% of East German men give family commitments as their reason for working part-time.

‘Involuntary’ part-time work affects 57% of East German women and 46% of East German men. In West Germany, only 23% of men and 9% of women give ‘being unable to find a full-time job’ as the reason for working part-time (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Reasons for dependent part-time<sup>104</sup> employment among women and men in West and East Germany, 2004 (in %)**



Source: Mikrozensus; Federal Office for Statistics: 2005k, Genderbericht 2005: 116.

## 2.5 Horizontal and Vertical Division of the Labour Market

In Germany, the labour market remains divided. Indices by gender for occupational and sectoral segregation show no sign of any significant decline. It would therefore appear that the increase in female employment is being achieved mainly in sectors and in occupations already dominated by women. Nearly four out of ten female salary earners work in the civil service, education, health or social work, and nearly half are clerical workers, sales persons, or unskilled or low-skilled workers.

Women hardly ever make it to the highest managerial level of large-scale enterprises. The proportion of women at the highest and upper managerial levels of large enterprises is about 8%; in medium-sized enterprises it is about 11%. However, the proportion varies greatly according to the sector concerned. Female senior managers can be found mainly in firms operating in the health care and welfare sectors, and in private services (catering, laundering, and cosmetics).

A good example of vertical segmentation is the academic sector. Women account for 51.2% of first-year-students, and 50.2% of all examinations are taken by women. At doctoral level, women are just 39%. At the next qualification level, the *Habilitation* (postdoctoral

<sup>104</sup> Dependent part-time employees include all persons who are in an employee-employer relationship, such as civil servants, clerical staff and apprentices.

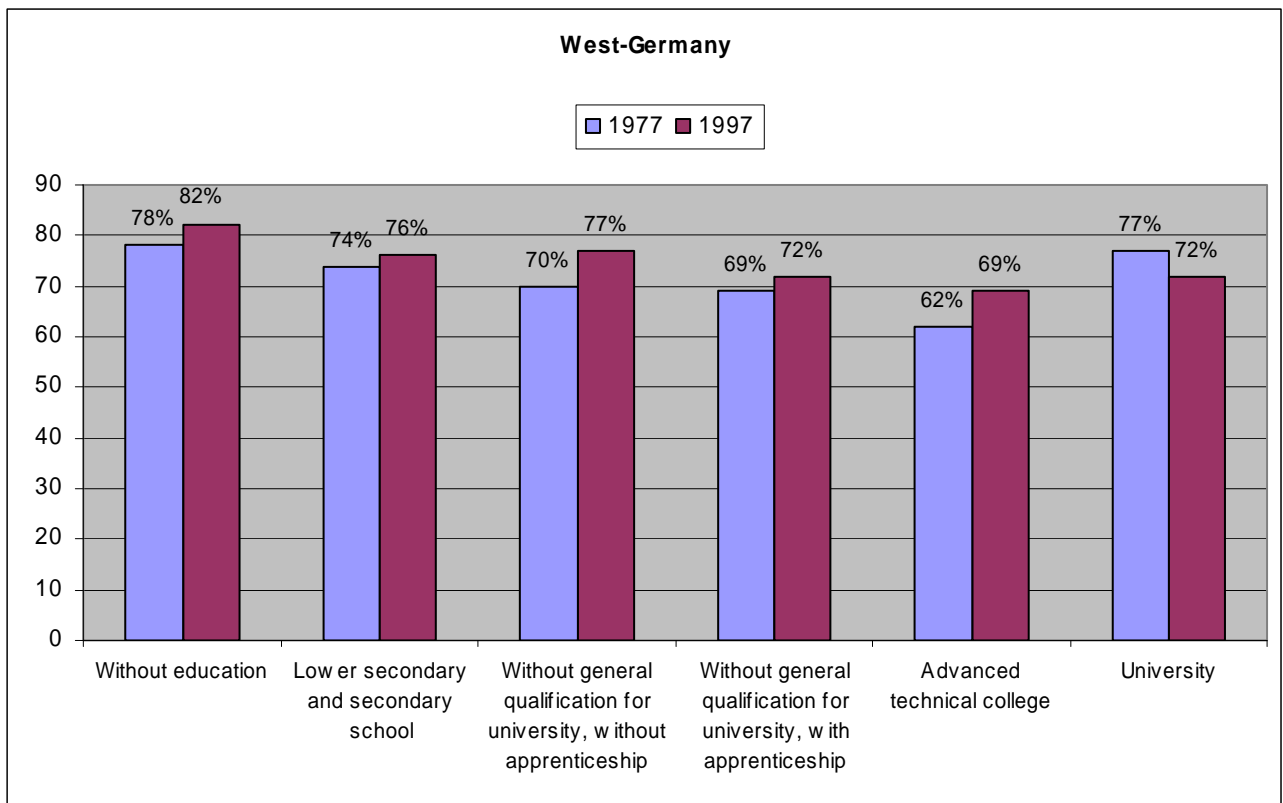
qualification), the proportion of women is only 22.7%. And among professors, only 13.6% are women (at the highest professorial level, 9.2%).

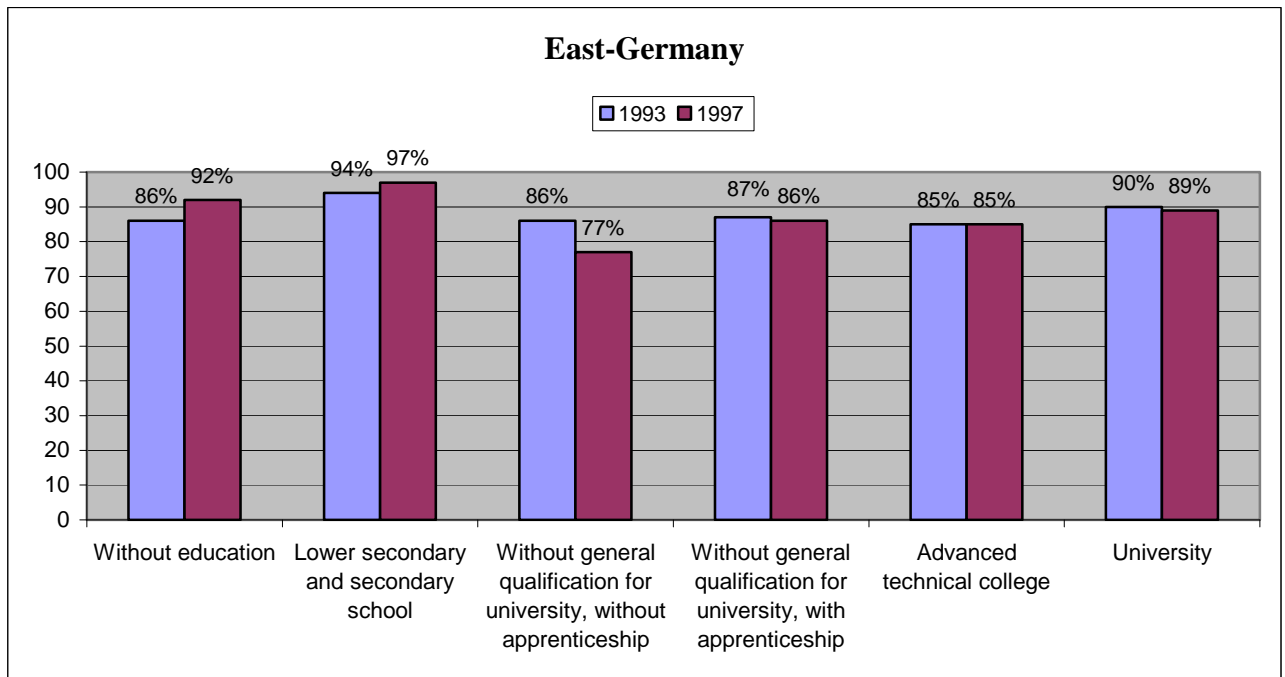
## 2.6. Wage Differences

In Germany, men's incomes exceed those of women by 20% on average. In 'male' sectors such as the chemical industry, construction and print, wages are significantly higher than in the sectors dominated by women.

Qualifications have an impact on the wage gap: the higher the level of training, the greater the gender-specific difference in income. With increasing qualification levels, the income of women and men increases, too. However, women with good educational and vocational qualifications do not reach the same level of income as men with comparable qualifications. In 1997, in West Germany, women with a university degree earned 72% of the income of men with a comparable degree, and in East Germany 89%. Women with no vocational training earned 82% of the income of comparable men in West Germany, and 92% of that income in East Germany (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Wage ratio of women and men, by qualification, 1977 and 1997 (in %)**





Sources: IAB employee sample, WSI calculation; Einkommensbericht 2002: 35.

### 3. Participation of Women and Men in Education and Training

#### 3.1. Data Sources

Two major gender reports on the situation in Germany were completed in 2005 – the *Genderbericht* of the BMFSFJ and the *WSI FrauenDatenReport* by the Hans Böckler Foundation. Both reports include a chapter comparing the situation of women in education with that of men.

An additional major source is the *Bildungsbericht* (2006), which gives an overview of German education. The *Bildungsbericht* provides gender-specific data and also focuses on people with a migrant background. Specifically for vocational training and continuing education there is the *Berichtssystem Weiterbildung*, but this rarely contains gender-specific data. One problem is the difference in the data for participation rates in continuing education. But the main problem in assessing the gender gap in education is that reports such as the *Genderbericht* or the *WSI FrauenDatenReport* are individual studies which are not periodically updated every year or two years. On the other hand, periodical reports such as the *Berichtssystem Weiterbildung* and the *Bildungsbericht* do not differentiate all their data by gender, so that there remains a lack of gender-relevant information.

Some unique information can also be gathered from PISA (Stanat et al. 2002, Prenzel et al. 2004), while information about the vocational training system, and the regulation, organisation and implementation of further training and adult education, can be found on the websites of CEDEFOP. However, only some of this data is gendered, and gender-related questions play a marginal role there.

### 3.2. Education

Today's generation of German women is the best educated and the best trained ever. In respect of school-leaving qualifications, women have even outpaced men. The gender gap, however, starts with the choice of career. Half of all female trainees are to be found in ten out of 360 occupations. Women concentrate on traineeships in the service and welfare sectors. The traditional choice of career reinforces the income gap. So far, numerous promotional programmes such as *Mädchen in Männerberufe* (girls in men's jobs) and 'Girls' Day' have not been able to deter girls from choosing their careers stereotypically.

(West) German girls are the group which has profited most from the *Bildungsreform* (education reform) since the 1970s. Women and girls achieve better examination results than men and proportionately more go on to higher education than do men and boys. Girls and boys with a migrant background are far less likely to gain a degree than those who are native Germans, but even in this group, girls have better prospects than boys.

In 2004, 34.9% of all native German girls and 26.3% of native German boys passed the examination threshold for university entrance (*Allgemeine Hochschulreife*), compared with 10.4% of girls with a migrant background and 8.1% of boys with a migrant background.

On the other hand, only 5.6% native German girls and 9.5% of native German boys dropped out of school, while 19.7% of boys and 12.9% of girls from a migrant background left school without a qualification (*Ohne Hauptschulabschluss* – without lower secondary school certificate) (see Table 6).

**Table 6: Native German and migrant-background graduates from school, by examination and proportion in the examination year 2003 (in %)**

Type of graduation	In total In <sup>105</sup>		Germans				Foreigners			
			Male		Female		Male		Female	
	Quantity	%	Quantity	In %	Quantity	In %	Quantity	In %	Quantity	In %
Without lower secondary school certificate	88.212	8,5	43.028	9,5	23.882	5,6	9.537	19,7	5.765	12,9
With lower secondary school certificate	288.124	29,6	145.879	32,3	101.890	23,8	21.903	45,3	18.452	41,2
With secondary school certificate <sup>106</sup>	499.140	52,2	225.947	50,9	240.377	57,1	15.277	32,2	17.539	40,4
With advanced technical college entrance qualification	123.396	13,2	63.067	14,8	53.399	13,1	3.710	7,5	3.220	6,7
With general qualification for university entrance	263.509	28,3	112.396	26,3	142.116	34,9	4.015	8,1	4.982	10,4
Total	1.256.381	X	590.317	X	561.664	X	54.442	X	49.958	X

Sources: *Bildungsbericht 2006*: 254.

<sup>105</sup> Evaluation of the resident population in specific age brackets: with and without lower secondary school certificate: 15-17 year olds; with secondary school certificate: 16-18 year olds; with advanced technical college entrance and general qualification for university entrance: 18-21 year olds.

<sup>106</sup> Secondary school leaving certificate or a comparable qualification.

### 3.3. Vocational training

Vocational training and certification are highly important for success in the labour market. People with no training at all have a higher risk of unemployment and take longer to find work. In Germany there are strong connections between the kind of vocational training a person has undertaken and the job she or he gets. The ‘correct’ vocational training is generally the main requirement for a particular position.

There are three ways of acquiring the skills and formal qualifications needed for a job: employment-based vocational training (*Duales System*), vocational training in full-time institutions, or study at a university or at a university of applied sciences.

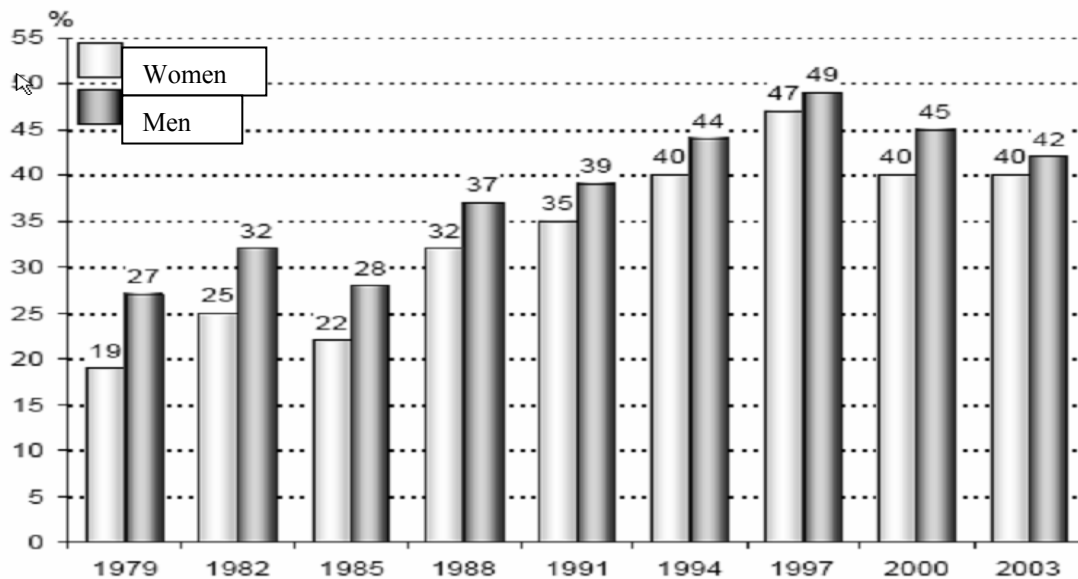
Employment-based vocational training is a German speciality. Complementing the practical training at the workplace, trainees receive theoretical training at a training establishment. If there are insufficient training places in companies, vocational training may also be organised by the federal states.

Men in Germany make up 59.4% of all participants in the *Duales System*, while women account for 80.4% of the learners in training establishments for the health system (*Schulen des Gesundheitswesens*). Labour market segmentation thus starts with the first step into the labour market, vocational training.

### 3.4. Continuing Education

The relevance and importance of continuing education have increased with the new requirements of the knowledge-based society. Many employees participate in some kind of continuing education, formal and informal training. But the participation rates differ according to gender, age and level of qualifications.

Gender, migrant background, age and previous qualifications are the main factors accounting for differences in participation rates in continuing education. Younger, well-educated German men are more likely to profit from some kind of training than women, elderly people or migrants. By 2003, the differences between the participation rates for women and men in Germany had narrowed: 42% of men and 40% of women were then undertaking some kind of continuing learning (see Figure 7). Between 1979 and 2003, the participation rate for women grew more strongly than that for men.

**Figure 7: Continuing education: participation rate of women and men, 1979 to 2003**

Sources: TNS Infratest Sozialforschung 2004: IX: 37.

Further training linked to current employment accounts for the lion's share of continuing learning (*betriebliche Weiterbildung*): 61.6% of women and 72.6% of men participated solely in this. On the other hand, 24.7% of women and 15.6% of men only participated in training outside the workplace. There is thus a significant gender difference in the direct link between the workplace and continuing education. There is also a difference between East and West Germany. Only 64.0% of East German men participated in further training linked to employment, compared with 74.0% of West German men. In the case of women, there was no major difference between East and West.

Another gender difference can be seen in the kind of continuing education in which women and men participate. Only small gender differences exist between men and women in formal continuing education (*formalisierte Weiterbildung*); men tend to participate more in this kind of learning. On the other hand, women take part more in workplace-oriented training (*arbeitsnahe Weiterbildung*) (see Table 7).

There is a significant difference in the rate of participation in conferences and meetings. 42.3% of men but only 31.5% of women. Women therefore have less chance of building up networks and contacts, which are a key benefit of attending conferences.

**Table 7: Participants in vocational continuing education, by kind of training 2002 (in % with multiple mentions)**

Types of continuing education	Germany		West Germany		East Germany	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Formal continuing education	54,9	58,9	55,3	59,2	53,1	57,4
Job-related continuing education	28,2	23,3	27,5	23,9	31,1	19,4
Self-organized continuing education	34	33,6	34,3	33,6	32,8	33,8
Conventions, meetings, trade fairs	31,5	42,3	32,9	44,1	25,5	31,5

Data based on evaluation of vocational continuing education in 2002, source: BIBB; own calculation.

Sources: Genderbericht 2005: 82.



As shown in Table 8, people with a migrant background participate significantly less than native Germans in all kinds of continuing education. In 2003, only 13% of those with a migrant background participated in vocational continuing education, compared with 27% of native Germans.

**Table 8: Participation in continuing education by native Germans and people with a migrant background, 1997 to 2003**

<i>Nationality</i>	<b>Rate of participation in %</b>		
	<b>1997</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2003</b>
<i>Continuing education in total</i>			
Germans	49	44	42
Foreigners	28	27	29
<i>General continuing education</i>			
Germans	32	27	26
Foreigners	20	18	21
<i>Professional development</i>			
Germans	31	30	27
Foreigners	15	12	13

TNS Infratest Sozialforschung 2004.

Sources: Berichtssystem Weiterbildung.

The better the formal qualifications, the greater is the likelihood of participating in continuing education. In 2003, 44% of employees with a university degree took part in continuing education, compared with only 11% of those with no previous vocational training. The group with the highest risk of unemployment thus has the least chance of improving their qualifications and therefore their labour market prospects.

Some gender differences can be seen in the fields and subject areas of continuing education. Men tend to take courses in technical and scientific subjects (28.7% of men compared with 6.5% of women), while women concentrate more on soft skills such as communication and social skills: 20.1% of women compared with 11.2% of men. This difference can be explained by labour market segmentation. Women work in fields which require social and communication skills, whereas men work in fields that need more technical skills.

Informal learning has gained in importance over the years. Considering the relevance of lifelong learning it is no wonder that employees focus on modes of learning which enable them to cope with the requirements of their jobs. Men are slightly more active than women; native German employees participate much more than those with a migrant background.

In 2003, 78% of employees with a university degree took part in some kind of informal learning compared with only 44% of employees with no vocational training (see Table 9).

**Table 9: Participation in informal learning, by selected groups of employees, 2003 (in %)**

<b>Basis: employees</b>	<b>Participation rate in %</b>
<b>Gender</b>	
Men	63
Women	58
<b>Training</b>	44
No vocational training	56
Vocational training	73
Foreman grade, other higher technical training	78
<b>Occupational status</b>	
Manual worker	51
Clerical worker	64
Public servant	71
Self-employed	68
<b>Nationality</b>	
Germans	62
Foreigners	46
<b>Industrial sector</b>	
Industry	59
Craft trades	59
Commerce/ services	59
Public service	68
<b>Size of the company</b>	
1-99 employees	57
100-999 employees	63
1000 and more employees	68
For comparison: employees in total	61

TNS: Infratest Sozialforschung 2004

Sources: Berichtssystem Weiterbildung 2004: 55.

In what kind of informal learning do employees participate? Learning by doing or watching is the major source of informal learning. Nearly 40% of all employees have used this method. Reading of specialist books takes second place, with around 35%. Computer-based training is a relatively new kind of learning used by around 8% of employees.

### **3.5. Labour Market Policies and Education and Training Using ESF Resources**

In contrast to other European Union countries, the ESF has little impact on active labour market policy in Germany. In the year 2004, only some 3% of SGB III funds for active labour market policy measures in Germany were supplied by the ESF. In other words: in Germany, the ESF has a supporting function.

The ESF may have greater significance for the federal states, because the states only have small budgets with which to finance active labour market interventions. The federal states are thus enabled to set their own priorities in labour market policy and to plug gaps in federal funding.

The four Acts on ‘*modern services in the labour market*’ (known as Hartz I to IV) have had substantial consequences for labour market policy in Germany and for the ESF. For example, the policy rationale behind the support provided by the *Bundesagentur für Arbeit* (Federal Employment Agency) has been radically changed: support is directed towards rapid immediate integration into the primary labour market, which also includes ‘atypical’ occupations and entrepreneurship. Labour market policy focuses on efficiency under the slogan of ‘*fördern und fordern*’ (support and demand).

As a result of the first Hartz Act in 2003, further vocational training for unemployed persons changed substantially. The introduction of the ‘*Bildungsgutschein*’ (education voucher) was extremely important: the unemployed now had to look for a training organization themselves instead of being referred by the employment agency. This may have contributed to the fact that so-called ‘problem groups in the labour market’ are still seldom included in training activities. The strategy of the *Bundesagentur für Arbeit* – particularly in SGB III<sup>107</sup> – is determined by the fact that labour market instruments must have a clear objective of integration into the ‘primary’ (not state aided) labour market. It is predominantly short training courses that are funded, and there is a 70% rule, meaning that only those activities which will lead to at least 70% of participants getting a job receive funding.

Finally, it should be noted that the introduction of SGB II (Social Law II – means-tested basic income provision and labour market activation) may lead to a gap in training for unemployed persons who are not entitled to unemployment benefits. This will chiefly affect married women who are not ‘in need’ of income support because of their partners’ income.

It is not easy to assess the gender impact of the ESF. In respect of the provision of data for cross-cutting objectives such as gender, there are clear differences between the years 2003 and 2004. In 2003, 25% of projects gave no data on cross-cutting objectives. In 2004, nearly all projects gave information on these and emphasised a strong gender orientation. In 2003, 18% of projects defined themselves as including a gender orientation; in 2004 the proportion increased to 48.5%. The results can be seen as reflecting increasing sensitivity to the issue. However, it should be noted that the data did not have to be substantiated and that what is meant by ‘gender-oriented’ is defined by the projects themselves. No verifiable criteria were defined for this, nor were agreed at the start.

Evaluation of ESF labour market programmes in Germany provides a satisfactory picture of programme delivery within policy field E / measure 10 (qualifications, information and advice, promotion of employment and business start-up). In 2003, the number of participants was actually around two thirds higher than planned. In 2004 too, the planned number of participants as a whole was exceeded, although the numbers of participants decreased at federal level compared with 2003.

The proportion of women in the EPPD goal 3 area measures was between 42 and 48%, corresponding to their proportion in the relevant population. Only within policy field D (prevention of job losses, further training and education etc.) were women slightly under-

<sup>107</sup> SGB III = Sozialgesetzbuch III (Social Law III) contains all the unemployment laws and regulations applicable to people entitled to unemployment insurance.

represented, which is the result of how the specific projects and measures were categorised. For example, a high proportion of the projects to support women during business start-ups were attached to policy field E. Taking into account the distribution of women across the ESF measures, women accounted, as one would anticipate, for a high proportion in measure 10 (see Table 10).

**Table 10: Proportions of young people, women and the long-term unemployed in ESF programmes, 2001 to 2004**

Programme	Adolescents in %	Women in %	Long-term unemployed in %
Policy field A	69	39	16
<i>Programme 1</i>	95	33	9
<i>Programme 2</i>	16	52	29
<i>Programme 3</i>	23	33	28
Policy field B	39	44	35
<i>Programme 4</i>	42	46	25
<i>Programme 5</i>	14	35	99
Policy field C	76	37	1
Policy field D	17	35	3
<i>Programme 7</i>	22	40	1
<i>Programme 8</i>	4	28	0
<i>Programme 9</i>	6	17	11
Policy field E	25	90	19
Policy field F	56	55	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>13</b>

*Source: RWI, SÖSTRA, Ronning, G., Evaluation of political programs for the labour market of the ESF in Germany, supported period 2000-2006 EPPD, aim 3, mid-term evaluation, ISG 2005: 26.*

Although the proportion of women meets the targets of all measures, no final statement can be given on whether the gender goals have been met. There is no means of drawing any conclusion as to the proportion of women and the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming. It remains open to what extent the programmes use and promote traditional gender roles or work positively against gender stereotyping.

### 3.6. General Adult Education and Gender Training

General adult education in Germany is provided by a large variety of institutions, for example by *Volkshochschulen* (community adult education centres), commercial education institutions, religious education organisations, party-political foundations, and so on. This pluralistic structure is reflected in a broad variety of funding and organisation. Some institutions are recognised and publicly supported by the state (by the Federal Government or the federal states). They number well over 2,000, 50 per cent of these being community adult education centres.

The DIE (*Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung* – German Institute for Adult Education) has recently published some data on general adult education (Weiland/Ambos 2007). This data, based on 2005, is available for the first time in 2007, and is now to be published regularly.

The results show that 16% of all activities with clearly defined target groups were directed explicitly to women, and that 9% of all activities covered the subject ‘Family, Gender, Generations’.

Furthermore, special gender trainings are provided for individuals with managerial responsibilities and in leadership roles, and for senior managers and officials in all fields. These training courses are provided by specialist networks and individuals. Unfortunately, their number is not very high yet. The reason is the relatively low demand for such trainings. This shows that the question of gender mainstreaming is not perceived as urgent and that the existing lack of gender competence is recognised by still too few organisations and companies.

### **3.7. Reasons for Gender Differences in Adult Education**

There are several reasons for the slightly lower level of participation in continuing education among women: In general, the position of women in the labour market is responsible for this situation:

- Women are less likely to be employed than men, and employees participate more in continuing education than people without employment.
- Women are more likely to work part-time than men. Part-timers participate less in continuing education than full-time employees.
- Qualification levels and job status are other factors which influence the likelihood of participating in continuing education. Employees without vocational training and in unskilled jobs have far less chance of receiving training than employees with vocational training or a university degree.
- An important factor is women's family situation. Women with children have a low participation rate in continuing education.

The labour market position of women and the lack of childcare do explain a lot. But of course, there are additional reasons for gender segregation in adult education, which are less often the subject of social research and public discussion. These are, for example, gender stereotypes in the thinking and actions of the various actors in this field, the undervaluing of so-called female competences, etc.

### **3.8. Good practice and national programmes to promote the equality of women and men in education and continuing education**

Various programmes and initiatives have been introduced by the BMFSFJ to promote gender equality in education and employment. For example '*Girls' Day – Mädchen Zukunftstag*' (Girls' Future Day), the programme '*IT-LandFrauen*' (IT countrywomen) and the internet portal '*Frauen machen Karriere*' (Women have careers).

#### ***Girls' Day – Mädchen-Zukunftstag***

The project '*Girls' Day – Mädchen-Zukunftstag*' aims at school girls in classes 5 to 10 (age group 11 to 16 years). The girls are given an insight into technical jobs which are rarely chosen by them. Enterprises, universities and research institutions open their doors to girls who are interested.

The aim of the project is to open up access to technical careers for girls by making contacts and showing alternatives to 'women's jobs'.

***Modellprogramm 'IT-LandFrauen'***

This demonstration programme aims at greater IT participation for women in rural areas; 44 so-called *Landfrauen* were trained as IT tutors to increase the knowledge of IT amongst women in villages and rural areas.

***Portal 'Frauen machen Karriere'***

The internet portal provides information on job start, careers, self-employment and re-entry into the job market after family commitments. The offer includes a mentoring project. The programme is aimed at equal employment opportunities for women and men.

**Gender Qualifizierung in der Weiterbildung (Gender Qualification in Continuing Education).** The aim of this ongoing project is to help improve equal opportunities for women and men by promoting gender mainstreaming in the quality of learning programmes. The project is financed by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research; it is coordinated by Forschungsinstitut Arbeit, Bildung, Partizipation e.V. (Research Institute Labour, Education, Participation) in cooperation with four major associations working in non-formal adult education: Arbeitskreis deutscher Bildungsstätten (Association of German Education Institutions); Bundesarbeitskreis Arbeit und Leben (Federal Work and Life Association); Deutscher Volkshochschulverband (German Adult Education Association) and Vereinte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft (Service Sector Union).

**4. Summary and Conclusions**

Gender aspects of lifelong learning in Germany are closely linked to an institutional framework directed at the (updated) bread-winner model. This is the main reason for gender differences in labour market activities, and is one of the most important factors influencing participation in lifelong learning. Even now there are large differences between East and West Germany in respect of women's participation in the labour market, their working hours and their share in further training. East German women used to be employed even if they were mothers, and they did not change their minds after reunification, when the institutional framework changed.

Even if changes and improvements can be seen, especially the higher participation by women in the labour market and the broad debate about childcare facilities and social responsibility for reconciling work and the family – which explicitly includes the responsibility of employers – there remain large gender differences in the labour market and lifelong learning.

In Germany, women and men are still not equal in the labour market. Women on average work fewer hours are concentrated in 'women's jobs' and earn lower wages than men. This unequal position of women persists even though girls achieve better examination results than boys. It seems that women themselves, rather than institutional measures, are the force driving improvement in women's participation in employment. On the other hand, birth rates are decreasing, which often reflects the persistently bad conditions in the balance between work and the family. Even if work and family commitments can be successfully combined, restrictions are much greater if career and family have to be combined. That is why women, even if they are highly educated, qualified and motivated, do not succeed in building careers in the way men do.

All these gender differences are reflected in lifelong learning: women have lower participation rates in continuing education than men because of their position in employment. Part-timers, mostly women, are less likely to participate than full-time employees. Sectors with a high proportion of women tend also to be those with fewer training activities. And because women

still carry the main responsibility for caring and the family, the time they have for continuing education is more restricted than that of men.

To improve the participation of women in continuing education it is very important to encourage equal employment opportunities for women in the labour market and to provide a better framework for reconciling work and family commitments. This is a matter for Parliament as well as for the social partners (employers' organisations and trade unions), employers and local authorities. Although there is an anti-discrimination law, it still seems that legislation is needed for equal employment opportunities for women and men, with a special emphasis on continuing education, especially for unskilled workers and part-time workers.

Furthermore, there is an urgent need for a change in gender consciousness in organisations and individuals. Adult education can contribute to such a change and will make use of it at the same time. Those with managerial responsibilities and leadership roles, senior managers and officials in all fields, need to be trained in gender questions. Experience shows that even if there is the will, there is often not the capacity to implement gender-appropriate measures. So far there are few offers of specific gender training for these groups.

A precondition for the successful prevention of disadvantage and discrimination is the availability of data. Data is needed to describe the structure of participation by different groups in lifelong learning, to identify possible reasons for disadvantages and discrimination, and to measure the effects of targeted measures to improve participation and quality of education schemes. Currently some improvements can be seen in gender data. However, the sources which currently best describe the gender gap in education are one-off reports commissioned with the particular aim of gender analysis. They are not updated regularly. On the other hand, regular reports such as the *Berichtssystem Weiterbildung* and the *Bildungsbericht* do not differentiate all their data by gender.

## **Appendix: Gender Projects in Germany**

[www.frauen-machen-karriere.de](http://www.frauen-machen-karriere.de)

By providing this internet portal, the Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, and the European Social Fund for Women, support women who wish to plan or create their career or to set up their own business.

[www.gender-mainstreaming.net](http://www.gender-mainstreaming.net)

This portal shows the significance of gender mainstreaming as a strategy and a method of creating more equal opportunities between men and women, and offers helpful advice.

[www.girls-day.de](http://www.girls-day.de)

The project Girls' Day – Girls' Future Day shows girls occupational fields they have not thought of.

[www.idee-it.de](http://www.idee-it.de)

The idee-it network aims to help girls and young women to work in the new and interesting field of IT.

[www.gruenderinnenagentur.de](http://www.gruenderinnenagentur.de)

The 'Gründerinnenagentur' (Founder Agency for Women) exists all over Germany. This project supports women who wish to set up their own businesses. It aims to create a climate which supports female entrepreneurs and offers various services to help them.

[www.neue-wege-fuer-jungs.de](http://www.neue-wege-fuer-jungs.de)

The project 'Neue Wege für Jungs' (New Paths for Boys) is a national platform which links people from schools, education and associations providing projects for boys. The project works closely with universities and the academic community, and its services include help with life planning and job selection during the difficult transition from education to the labour market.

[www.joblab.de](http://www.joblab.de)

joblab offers a variety of programmes for people who need special support, and for equal opportunities for women in the labour market.

[www.kompetenzz.de](http://www.kompetenzz.de)

The 'Women's Input to Technology' association is the project agency of the 'Competence Centre Women in Information Society and Technology' and helps its members to realise projects successfully.

[www.genderkompetenz.info](http://www.genderkompetenz.info)

The Gender Competence Centre is an applied research centre for transdisciplinary gender studies at the Humboldt University of Berlin.

[www.total-e-quality.de](http://www.total-e-quality.de)

Equal opportunities for women and men in business, science, politics and administration.



## Greece

### 1. The Context for Lifelong Learning for Men and Women in Greece

Ever since the late nineties Greece, predominantly through European funding, has intensified its efforts to combat gender inequality and has taken many measures to reinforce women's participation in all forms of social life. But Greece still has one of the biggest gender gaps in the labour market, with the rate of unemployment for women being nearly double that for men. This discrepancy needs further exploration by national experts and European policy makers.

By the end of the eighties Greece had comparatively egalitarian legislation in respect of gender equality (especially in family law). However the inclusion of gender equality in state policies was disregarded. This is why in the current decade policy makers have initiated a comprehensive and systematic programme of action, including constitutional reform, new legislation, establishment of high level committees and other public bodies charged with promoting gender equality<sup>108</sup>, in order to mainstream consideration of gender and positive actions for women<sup>109</sup>.

Greece now participates actively in European initiatives and the ongoing dialogue about the promotion of gender equality in all areas of social and economic life. European funds offered the means – financial, political and methodological – of strengthening gender equality and the national government took the opportunity of designing and implementing measures, policies and initiatives to promote gender equality by horizontal measures encompassing all aspects of public activity and government. The taxation system, for example, now taxes second earners equally<sup>110</sup> resulting in a marriage-neutral tax structure, which is considered a fairer method of taxation<sup>111</sup>.

However, the model of a family based on a 'strong breadwinner' has not yet been substantially modified, particularly within the structures that define social security and the welfare regime. Both have been characterized as traditional and family centered, treating women mainly as dependants (Karamessini 2001a, 2001b, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c<sup>112</sup>, Koukouli- Spiliotopoulou 1995, 2002<sup>113</sup>, Petroglou 1998<sup>114</sup>, Petroglou 2002<sup>115</sup>, Riga 1993, 1996<sup>116</sup>, Symeonidou 1997<sup>117</sup>).

<sup>108</sup> *Application guide for gender equality policies in designing and evaluating actions within the framework of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Community Support Framework*, EYSEKT, 2003.

<sup>109</sup> See Addendum 8.

<sup>110</sup> OECD, 'Going for Growth, Economic Policy Reforms', Chapter 6, *Female Labor Force Participation: Past Trends and Main Determinants in OECD Countries*, Paris, 2005, pp.161-171.

<sup>111</sup> Alm & Melnick, Joint filing by married couples is required; married taxpayers are taxed separately on their earned income, but income generated by other sources is aggregated and added to that of the spouse with the highest income, 2004.

<sup>112</sup> Karamessini, M., *Pensions and Gender Equality*, part A' & B', Epohi (newspaper), 29/4 and 6/5/2001.

Karamessini, M., *Social Security & Gender Equality*, Kiriakatiki Avgi (newspaper), 15/7/2001.

Karamessini, M., 'Gender and the Reform of pension systems: critical comments for the case of Greece', in *Reform of the Pension Systems in Europe: Neo-liberal policies and progressive alternatives*, Etairia Politikou Provlitismou 'Nikos Poulantzas', Ellinika Grammata, Athens, 2002a.

(Karamessini, M., 'Reform of the Pension System and Gender Equality' in *Social Security and Gender Equality, Socialist Group of the European Parliament*, Athens, 2002b, pp. 141-148.

Karamessini, M., 'Gender aspects in the Reform of Pension Systems: the greek case', *Epitheorisi Koinonikon Ereunon*, Vol. 108-109, Athens, pp. 3-32, 2003.

<sup>113</sup> Koukouli-Spiliotopoulou, S., 'Gender Equality in Labour Relations and Social Security' in I. Paraskevopoulos et al. (ed) *Gender Relations, Ellinika Grammata*, Athens, pp 49-66, 1995.

Koukouli-Spiliotopoulou, S. 2002, *Regulation of 'Social Security', real gender equality and real spot of the family: an unbreakable unity' in Social Security and gender equality*, Socialist Group of the European Parliament, Athens, pp.141-148.

<sup>114</sup> Petroglou, A., 1998, *Pensions of divorced women*, Women's Observatory.

The Greek pension system also perpetuates gender inequalities. It is strongly biased towards highly paid full-time continuous employment making it difficult for women to obtain an adequate pension of their own. Moreover, where women are entitled to social security as dependants, for example as widows or mothers, they do not fare particularly well, with low levels of benefits compared to male benefits<sup>118</sup>.

Additionally, social security has a fundamentally centralized structure in Greece, being within the remit mainly of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. Despite the establishment of the Division of Sickness and Maternity and the Department of Gender Equality (Law 1414/84) in the Division of Working Conditions within the Directorate-General of Labour (Ministry of Labour and Social Security) their role is administrative and they lack any access to the actual decision-making process. They neither pursue a consultative role nor engage in policies promoting gender mainstreaming in social security.

As part of the social security system, childcare services and parental leave also play a crucial role in achieving equal opportunities between men and women in employment and training. Greece has put into place various entitlements to support maternity, paternity and parenthood. The length of maternity leave varies from 16 to 18 weeks with maternity allowance equivalent to 100% of one's normal pay. Working mothers also have the right to a reduction in their working time of 1 hour per day for a period of 30 months after the end of maternity leave. In addition, fathers have the right to 2 days paid leave on the birth of a child, while in the public sector fathers are entitled to 5 days special family leave. The right to parental leave is for a total of 3.5 months' unpaid leave before the child is 3.5 years old. Both parents have the right to 4 days paid leave for school- aged children.

On the other hand, Greece is far from reaching the Barcelona target for the availability of childcare. Today, 1,520 services are in operation at a national and regional level, with a capacity of 73,000 children<sup>119</sup>. These meet only 7% of childcare needs for children under 3 years of age, and 60% for children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age<sup>120</sup>. The lack of adequate childcare facilities probably remains one of the most significant obstacles to achieving gender equality in all aspects of social life, forcing women to remain committed to their family-related tasks.

Against this context, lifelong learning (LLL) is perceived as a means of empowering all citizens regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion or any other social grouping. By definition LLL increases social participation, enhances social mobility and helps to combat social inequality such as the gender gap. The national strategy for adult education in Greece has been transformed

---

<sup>115</sup> Petroglou, A., 'Women & the Greek Social Security System', in *Social Security and gender equality*, Socialist Group of the European Parliament, Athens, 2002, pp. 125-140.

<sup>116</sup> Riga, V., 'Pension policy: Theory – practice in the three EU countries, particularities of the Greek case', in (eds) P. Getimis & D. Gravaris, *Welfare State and Social Policy*, Contemporary issues, Themelio, Athens, 1993, pp. 171-202;

Riga, V., 'Women, Labour Market & Pension Policy in Greece', *Synthesis. Review of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, London, 1996, pp. 23-24.

<sup>117</sup> Symeonidou, H., 'Social Protection in Contemporary Greece' in ed. M. Rhodes, *Southern European Welfare States: Between crisis & reform*, Frank Cass, London, 1997, pp. 67-86.

<sup>118</sup> EQUAPOL *State of the Art Report* (Project HPSE-CT2002-00136, funded under the Key Action 'Improving the Socio-Economic Knowledge Base' of FP5 DG Research). Report issued in April 2003 Directorate-General for Research 2004 Citizen and governance in a Knowledge based society EUR 21324 EN, pp. 105-122.

<sup>119</sup> Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations, *Introductory Statement by the Head of the Greek Delegation*, January 2007, p. 10 (1-15).

<sup>120</sup> Eurydice database Eurybase (2003), Eurostat (2004).

by the LLL dimension, which entails the reconsideration and redesign of the aims of formal, non formal and informal education alike, thus providing policy makers with a unique opportunity to increase citizens' accessibility to knowledge, training and education.

The Greek educational system is highly centralized – despite some limited efforts at decentralization (Avdela 2000<sup>121</sup>; Zambeta 2000<sup>122</sup>; Kontogiannopoulou- Polydorides et al. 2000<sup>123</sup>)<sup>124</sup>. There have been many attempts to modernize and re-modernize the educational system (especially in 1964, 1976, 1981–1985, and 1997) in order to bring its various elements into line with the changing wider political, economic and social context<sup>125</sup>.

There have been significant improvements in the quality of education such as better teacher-student ratios. The minimum age for completing compulsory education has been raised to 13 years of age and this has been accompanied by higher participation of female students and students from lower socioeconomic strata. Approximately 97% of Greeks participate in compulsory education. Their participation declines in high schools and reaches a low of approximately 15% at tertiary level (National Centre for Social Research 2002:284)<sup>126</sup>. But educational attainment has risen over the period 1998-2003<sup>127</sup>.

Educational Attainment	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total Population	8,797	8,903	9,009	9,077	9,143	9,258
Received a post-graduate qualification	22	28	25	30	31	37
Received a university degree	785	789	808	812	834	851
Attended a university but did not receive a degree	8	7	6	4	4	2
Received a third-level technical - vocational degree	547	652	675	641	673	725
Completed secondary level education	2,220	2,243	2,301	2,336	2,437	2,481
Completed third stage of secondary education	1,080	1,112	1,089	1,139	1,107	1,077
Completed primary education	3,266	3,148	3,219	3,248	3,181	3,273
Have not completed primary education	563	526	500	463	487	460
Attended no school at all	306	397	386	405	389	353

All figures in '000 individuals

Government spending on public education in Greece is relatively low at 2.27% of its GDP: this percentage is the lowest in the European Union. Greece also has the lowest per capita public expenditure in the European Union, at 259 International Dollars compared to Sweden at 878,

<sup>121</sup> Avdela, E., 'The Teaching of History in Greece.' *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 18(2), 2000, pp. 239-253.

<sup>122</sup> Zambeta, E., 'Greece: the lack of modernity & educational transitions'. In the *World Yearbook of Education 2000: Education in Times of Transition*, edited by David Coulby, Robert Cowen, & Crispin Jones, London: Kogan Page, 2000, pp. 63-75.

<sup>123</sup> Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides, G., Solomon, I., & Stamelos, G., Γεωργία Κοντογιαννοπούλου-Πολυδωρίδη, Ι. Σολομών, και Γεώργιος Σταμέλος, *Ανιχνεύοντας την επίδοση στην Ελληνική εκπαίδευση: Η τρίτη διεθνής έρευνα της IEA για την αξιολόγηση της εκπαιδευτικής επίδοσης στα μαθηματικά και τις φυσικές επιστήμες*. Athens: Metaichmio, 2000.

<sup>124</sup> Anastasios G. and Bagley, B., *Policy, Politics, and Social Inequality in the Educational System*, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Volume 24, p. 6 (1-21), 2006.

<sup>125</sup> See Addendum for a graph of the educational system in Greece.

<sup>126</sup> National Centre for Social Research, Εθνικό Κέντρο Κοινωνικών Μελετών (EKKE), *Πληθυσμός και εκπαίδευση στην Ελλάδα: εξελίξεις και προοπτικές*. Athens, EKKE, 2002.

<sup>127</sup> Ammerman, P., *Achieving the Lisbon Goal: The contribution of Vocational Education and Training Systems*. Country report: Greece, Navigator Consulting Group, 2003, p. 6 (1-33).

England at 649, and Portugal at 370 (Kontogiannopoulou-Polydorides 2000)<sup>128</sup>. Greek public expenditure is intended both to cover nationwide educational costs and preserve open access to all educational institutions at all three levels.

In contrast to spending on the formal educational system, in recent years a high share of public resources, mainly EU funding, has been channelled into vocational education and training (VET), with the main priority being employment and social inclusion. VET policy is particularly characterized by the extensive use of subsidies equivalent to the national minimum wage to trainees as well as employers, and also by the control exercised by the State: whilst private sector VET has been introduced in the upper secondary phase and in continuing training, private education at the tertiary level remains legally impossible<sup>129</sup>.

In all training programmes for unemployed people run by the Greek Manpower Organization, there is a quota of at least 60% women. The same proportion is used as a benchmark for evaluating and ranking all organizations that deliver VET services. During 2005 and the first quarter of 2006, 35,000 women benefited from national employment and training programmes<sup>130</sup>.

No recent data are available on in-company training. However, according to data from the latest European Commission report on employment in relation to gender<sup>131</sup>, women's participation in lifelong learning in 2005 (for the four-week period before the research was carried out) fluctuated at a very low level of around 2%. However, in the study no significant differences between men and women were noted.

<b>EMPLOYEES' EDUCATION LEVEL IN 2005<sup>132</sup></b>				
<b>Women</b>				
Employment	Tertiary education	Secondary education	Primary education	Never went to school
1.676.097	662.314	643.860	360.807	9.116
<b>Men</b>				
2.705.840	782.307	1.268.281	645.067	10.185

Participation in vocational training by older workers is generally very low for those aged 55-64 years (0.1%) and older women are even less likely than men to participate, but gender specific data is not available.

There are no data available on the numbers attending all forms of lifelong learning. Since many institutions including the KEK (Centres for Technical Education), Agricultural Training Centres, the Open University and others explicitly set age barriers at 45 -55 years of age, this

<sup>128</sup> Giamouridis, A. and Bagley, B., op.cit., p. 6 (1-21).

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations, *Introductory Statement by the Head of the Greek Delegation*, January 2007.

<sup>131</sup> Report on Equality between Women and Men, European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, 2006.

<sup>132</sup> Mark Carley, 'Gender perspectives - annual update 2000', in *European Industrial Relations Observatory On-Line*, 2001.

means that older women have very little access to publicly funded vocational training. No research was found on this issue<sup>133</sup>.

Today, as we are near the completion of the Operational Programmes funded by the 3rd Community Support Framework, it is important to examine what has been achieved so far. Our approach aims to highlight the way in which Greek authorities have understood and attempted to incorporate Gender Equality principles in lifelong learning policies. The case of Greece constitutes an example where promising policies and measures were applied without any pre-existing experience; many of the initiatives broke entirely new ground in Greek experience, and it took time for the ultimate beneficiaries – namely women- to understand the aim of the initiatives and the reasoning behind them. For this reason, Greek experience cannot be directly compared with that of countries which have shown more progress and momentum in promoting gender equality. Hence, any analysis needs to adopt a qualitative stance<sup>134</sup> and take into consideration the effect of the social context on any measure, initiative or action plan for the promotion of gender equality.

## **2. Men and Women in the Labour Market (Background)**

### **2.1. Labour Market**

In order to understand the general context for action and the current situation in Greece it is worth focusing on the labour market, one of the social institutions that shape social political and indeed cultural arrangements. Participation rates, employment rates and unemployment rates for Greece diverge from the European average and are still far from the Lisbon targets. We should also examine labour market performance in the light of gender discrimination. The gender pay gap, participation gap, employment gap, and unemployment gap all indicate a strong degree of gender discrimination. Women in Greece have a greater distance to go than women in most other European countries<sup>135</sup>.

### **2.2. Participation, Employment and Unemployment Rates (2005)**

The participation rate, which measures the proportion of the total population aged 15–64 that is economically active (i.e. either in employment or unemployed), stood at 62.4% for women and 77.6% for men in 2005 in the 25 Member States of the EU. In Greece, the respective rates are 54.60% for women and 79.20% for men. The employment rate for women in Greece in 2005 was 46.1% (in the first quarter of 2006 it rose to 47.5%) whilst the male rate was 74.50%. In the EU's 25 Member States the rates stood at 55.7% for women and 70.9% for men. Finally, the unemployment rate for 2005 averaged 8.3% for men and 10.10% for women in the EU's 25 Member States. In Greece, for 2005 the female unemployment rate reached 15.3% while for 2006 it fell to 13%.

### **2.3. Horizontal and Vertical Segregation of the Labour Force**

#### **2.3.1. Sectoral distribution of workers**

A large number of employed women work as unpaid family workers. In Greece 11% of women are unpaid workers. In addition, the percentage of self-employed women with or without employees (21%) lags behind the respective figure of men (36%). Workplaces in the service

---

<sup>133</sup> See Addendum 6.

<sup>134</sup> See Addendum 9.

<sup>135</sup> All statistics and figures presented below are drawn from Eurostat database.

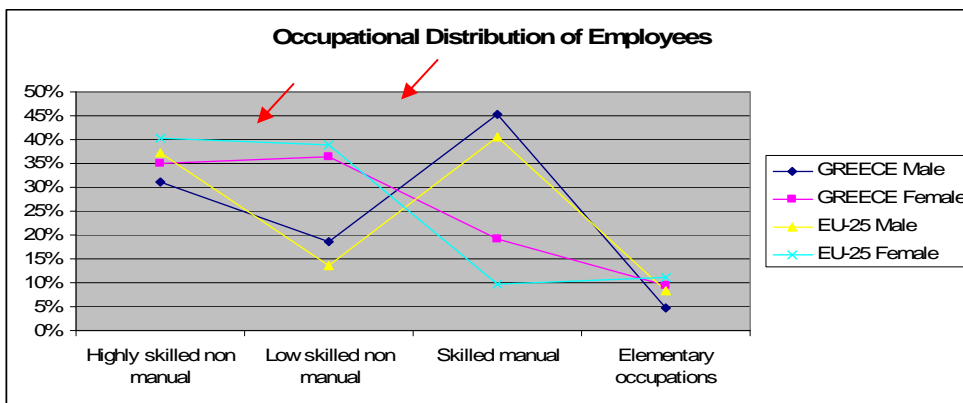
sector are mainly feminine, and the strengthening of the service sector offers more new workplaces for women. With 76.20% of female employees in the service sector, Greece is approaching the European mean of 81.90%.

At EU level, the sectors that have witnessed the greatest expansion in female employment are ‘health and social work’ (9%), ‘education’ (11%) and ‘real estate, rental and business activities’ sectors (8%). In addition, female employment accounts for the majority in the ‘Other Community, Social and Personal Service Activities’ sector (Greece: 4.5%). Finally, it should be underlined that female employment appears to be dominant in the ‘Wholesale and Retail Trade’ sector in Greece (19.00%)

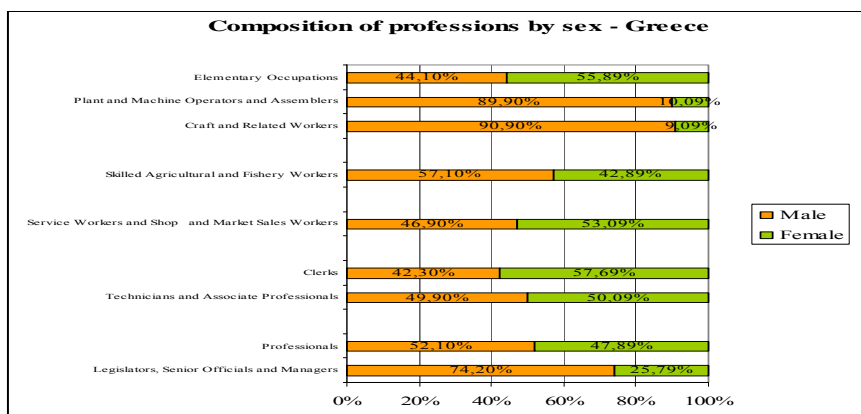
### 2.3.2. Occupational distribution of workers

If we compare the composition of the labour force according to skill levels we will find noticeable differences between the EU as a whole and Greece. In 2005 the occupational structure of the employed population in the 25 EU member states was broadly 40% of total employment in high-skilled non-manual occupations, while in Greece the percentage of high-skilled non manual work is below the European mean (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Occupational distribution of workers**

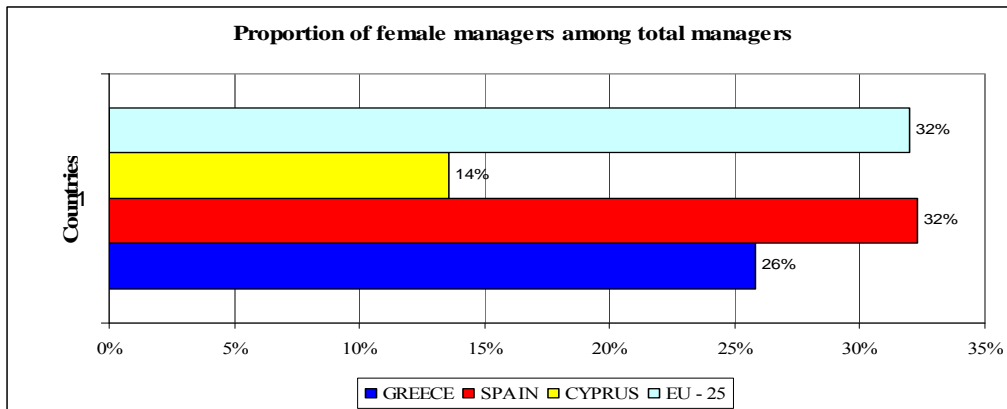


**Figure 2: Composition of professions by sex - Greece**



From a gender perspective women are slightly over-represented in occupations with high-skilled non-manual activities. More specifically, within the high-skilled non-manual group, the proportions of female and male employees are almost equivalent in the ‘professionals’ and ‘technicians and associate professionals’ occupational groups (Figure 2) but the nature of these occupations offer women few opportunities to improve their working conditions and

remuneration, while male employment is dominant in the ‘Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers’ occupational group (Greece: 74.2%) where there are high opportunities to do so. Figure 3 below presents the proportion of female managers compared all managers.



Moreover, female employment seems dominant within the low-skilled non-manual group. As a result, women are over-represented amongst ‘Service Workers and Shop and Market Sales Workers’ and ‘Clerks’.

#### 2.4. Participation, Employment, Unemployment and the Gender Pay Gap

The reduction of the gender participation gap is of major concern as it is one of the two main goals that must be achieved in order to reach the employment rate target set by the Lisbon Council. At EU level in 2005 the disparity between male and female participation rates was 15.2%. For Greece the absolute gender gap in participation rates is 24.60%, which implies that there is a substantial reserve of unused female labour and that there is still much scope for increasing female participation. As for the Employment Gender Gap, despite the continuing reduction in the disparity between male and female employment rates at EU level, considerable gender differences of more than 20% still remain in Greece (28.3%), and Spain (25.2%), whereas in the EU 25 member states as a whole the gap is 15.20%. Additionally, at EU level in 2005 the disparity between male and female unemployment rates was 1.9%. In Greece, there appears to be a relatively higher unemployment gap of 9.40%. Finally, the reduction of the gender pay gap is an important topic on the European political agenda. Nevertheless, the pay gap between women and men remains at unacceptably high levels and shows no significant signs of being closed. In 2005, the gender pay gap was 24% in the EU as a whole. In Greece, the gender pay gap for the private sector was 26%. This rate drops sharply to approximately 10% when data from the private and public sectors are aggregated<sup>136</sup>.

In effect, the statistical data show that, despite the increase in women’s labour market participation, women occupy a large proportion of jobs that are precarious, low-skilled and low in the hierarchy of production (assisting family members, etc.)<sup>137</sup>. Furthermore, even though women’s participation in the workforce has increased, this does not translate into increased participation in important sectors of social and economic life (science, research, decision-making, high-ranking jobs, etc.). Even in the services sector, where a significant increase in

<sup>136</sup> Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations, *Introductory Statement by the Head of the Greek Delegation*, January 2007, p. 1-15.

<sup>137</sup> Ketsetzopoulou, M., ‘Female employment 2002’, in Mouriki, A., et al. (eds.), *The social portrait of Greece*, Athens, National Centre for Social Research – EKKE, pp. 125-128, 2001.

female employment has been noted, a trend towards proletarianisation has emerged, since in the main women are employed in low-ranking, unskilled jobs<sup>138</sup>. This situation has not changed with the development of new forms of employment, since in Greece employment under such schemes (and not only for women) is synonymous with precarious, uncertain, etc. employment. One characteristic example is part-time employment, a comparatively new form of employment for Greece, which does not constitute a genuine choice of employment given the low remuneration. On the other hand, the new forms of employment associated with highly skilled jobs are not sufficiently developed to allow us to talk about a reversal of the traditional career model.

It is obvious that Greece has a long way to go regarding female employment and this should be treated as a high **national priority**. Fortunately, this view is shared by the Government, social partners and enterprises. In 2006, amongst other measures the General Secretariat for Gender Equality took proactive measures in cooperation with the private sector as well as employers' associations. A **Protocol of Cooperation** was signed between the State and the top level Employer Associations of the country. The Protocol aims at mobilizing the business sector in favour of equal professional opportunities for women and men and equal pay in reality. In addition, a **Memorandum of Cooperation** was signed between the General Secretariat for Gender Equality and the Greek Network for Corporate Social Responsibility in order further to promote equal opportunities for men and women amongst the members of the Network.

### 3. Participation of Men and Women in Education and Training

Whereas women contribute greatly to the overall employment rates in the EU, the probability of employment for women continues to be smaller than that for men. The further economic development of the EU requires a competitive environment which needs to include women and men alike. The challenge is to add value to the labour market by raising the qualification levels of both women and men, inasmuch as it is vital that the labour market utilizes the available skills and talents of both women and men.

In all EU countries the employment rate for women and men increases as the level of educational attainment improves. While the employment rates of females are lower than those of men in all EU countries, the differences decrease with as the level of education increases. The employment rate of women with education to tertiary level in Greece reaches 75.3% (EU overall: 80.3%) whilst for women who have been educated to the next level below (3 / 4) the employment rate drops to 53.3% (EU overall: 65.4%) and for women educated to pre-primary, primary and low secondary levels (Levels 0-2) the percentage barely reaches 40% (EU overall: 41.4%)<sup>139</sup>.

Despite this, tertiary education is not without gender inequalities. Although there has been a significant growth in the number of students entering the formal tertiary system in Greece<sup>140</sup> and consequently a growth in the number of graduates, gender differences continue to be embedded in the choice of field of study. The vast majority of EU countries, including Greece, show a similar pattern, in which men outnumber women in science and technical disciplines, with the opposite being true for non-science and non-technical fields<sup>141</sup>. Greece is close to the European

<sup>138</sup> Ketsetzopoulou, M., and Simeonidou, H., 2002, 'Gender equality: the position of women in the public and private sector', in Mouriki, A. et al. (eds.) *op. cit.*, pp. 137-144, 2002.

<sup>139</sup> See Addendum 2.

<sup>140</sup> Their number almost doubled from 42 000 in 1993 to 83 000 in 2002.

<sup>141</sup> See Addendum 3.



average with a rate of 42.8% (ISCED 5) and 32.3% (ISCED 6)<sup>142</sup> of female graduates in science, mathematics and computing and 38.5% (ISCED 5) and 21% (ISCED 6) of female graduates in engineering, manufacturing and construction, showing that under-representation of women in these fields clearly persists.

In addition, in the majority of EU Member States, including Greece, the overall proportion of female students participating in higher education is greater and by graduation women have for the most part increased their lead over men. Yet for students at PhD/Doctorate and equivalent level (ISCED 6), the male/female relativities are reversed. The marked differences in the proportion of females earning a PhD/Doctorate in different subject areas, also, emphasise the persistent feminisation of fields of study such as education<sup>143</sup>. While the female/male ratio in humanities and arts as well as health and welfare has nearly reached equilibrium, the low rate of women's participation in engineering, manufacturing and construction at this advanced educational level is notable in all countries, with the rates in Greece being below the EU average.

#### 4. Methods and Procedures for Mainstreaming Gender in Educational Policies

##### 4.1. Institutional Architecture

The sole competent authority for the design and implementation of educational policy is the *Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (MNERA)*. Current education policy is mainly developed within the 'Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training' (EPEAEK), which uses both positive action and mainstreaming to promote gender equality.

Vocational Training and Education (VET) in Greece is highly centralised and controlled by the state, with the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (MNERA) playing the coordinating role. According to the available statistics women participate very actively in all LLL programmes<sup>144</sup>. In addition to MNERA, a range of other organisations are directly involved in VET. The most important of these is the Greek Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED), which reports to the Ministry of Labour.

Recent reforms in the sector have led to a new framework law: the National System for Linking Vocational Education and Training with Employment (ESSEEKA), which was passed in 2004. This reform is expected to bring the VET system closer to the labour market.

In order to promote mainstreaming gender equality in educational policy, MNERA has created an EPEAEK Management Operation Unit, whose purpose is to design, implement and evaluate actions, measures and programmes funded by the Ministry and the ESF.

---

<sup>142</sup> **ISCED 5** is defined as the first stage of tertiary education and comprises the two categories ISCED 5a and ISCED 5b. The majority of ISCED 5a programmes is largely theoretically based and intended to provide sufficient qualifications for gaining entry into advanced research programmes or professions with high skills requirements. ISCED 5b programmes are practically oriented and the programmes' content is typically designed to prepare students to enter a specific occupation. The qualifications acquired in ISCED 5b programmes do not give direct access to advanced research programmes. The classification **ISCED 6** refers to programmes in the second stage of tertiary education that lead to the award of an advanced research qualification, often at Doctorate or PhD level or beyond. The programmes are devoted to advanced study, original research and prepare graduates for an academic career in institutions of higher education.

<sup>143</sup> See Addendum 4.

<sup>144</sup> See Addendum 5.

The General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) participated (with one representative) in the working group that designed the guidelines of EPEAEK. The purpose of the participation of a GSGE member was to help incorporate positive action measures and develop a mainstreaming approach in the programme. As a result, a gender dimension has been included in four of the six areas of the EPEAEK programme.

EPEAEK II is structured around the following strands:

**Strand 1:** Promoting equality of opportunity and equal access to the labour market (combating social exclusion). EPEAEK II, funds allocated: 13.3%.

**Strand 2:** Improving the quality of education and vocational training systems (within the framework of LLL). EPEAEK II, funds allocated: 61.7%.

**Strand 3:** Encouraging students' entrepreneurial abilities. EPEAEK II, funds allocated: 0.8 %.

**Strand 4:** Improving the access/integration of women in the labour market. EPEAEK II, funds allocated: 2.8%.

**Strand 5:** Developing/upgrading the technical infrastructures of education institutions. EPEAEK II, funds allocated: 20.5%.

**Strand 6:** Technical Support. EPEAEK II, funds allocated: 0.9%. (*EPEAEK II Programme Supplement*)

#### 4.2. Positive Action for Women

**Strand 4, Measure 4.1:** 'Programmes for the education and vocational training of women'. These comprise: (a) programmes to sensitise of teachers to equality issues, (b) programmes concerning the professional orientation of the female student population, (c) development of special teaching materials to introduce equality issues into educational practice, (d) distance learning programmes for women, (e) creation of institutional structures to evaluate equality policies.

**Strand 4, Measure 4.2:** 'Support for women in Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies. Development of Post-doctoral studies and Research programmes for women'. Actions under these measure aim to: (a) develop undergraduate and post-graduate women studies programmes, (b) fund research by female researchers in science and technology, (c) support programmes for female researchers (*EPEAEK II Programme Supplement*, pp 235-257).

#### 4.3. Mainstreaming Equality

**Strand 1, Measure 1.2:** 'Minimising drop-out at compulsory education level'. Specific programmes comprise: (a) supplementary afternoon classes for students who have difficulties in following the curriculum, (b) development of new teaching materials, (c) institution of the All-Day School (Law 2525/98). The evaluation report, by the EPEAEK follow-up Committee, (*2001 Evaluation Report, 2002*) calculated that approximately 30% of the funds allocated to these measures could be considered as mainstreaming equality. Several programmes designed under (a) and (b) aimed at preventing girls from dropping-out in subjects such as information

technology and natural sciences. The All-Day School is considered as ‘good mainstreaming practice’ since it enables parents to take up full time jobs.

**Strand 2, Measure 2.1:** ‘Upgrading the quality of the education system’. The participation of women teachers in teacher training programmes led to the estimate that 15% of the funds under this measure could be considered as supplementary to Axis 4 (*EPEAEK II Programme Supplement*, pp 395-406).

**Strand 2, Measure 2.2:** ‘Reform of programmes of study at compulsory level’. Such programmes target the stereotypical representation of women in education textbooks (*EPEAEK II Programme Supplement*, p.410).

**Strand 2, Measure 2.4:** aims at the development of programmes related to (a) the professional orientation of secondary education pupils, (b) the development of skills that enable better integration into the labour market and (c) the linkage of the education system to the labour market. Several of these programmes target the female population and encourage female pupils to pursue studies in fields where women are under-represented (for example in Technical Vocational Educational Schools-TEE) (*EPEAEK II Programme Supplement*, pp 431- 440)

**Strand 3, Measure 3.1:** This strand consists of one measure aiming at developing the entrepreneurial abilities of students. It is expected that the programmes will help promote mainstreaming (*EPEAEK II Programme Supplement*, pp 215-217).

It should be noted that, according to EU recommendations, formative evaluation has been developed for all measures/actions designed under EPEAEK and there is a follow-up committee that assesses the effectiveness of the funded programmes and the progress achieved. MNERA intends to create a database in the Ministry, which will include, in addition to other educational data, gender disaggregated statistics on education and composite indicators/benchmarks (produced along EU lines). This would facilitate both the design and assessment of policies. Hitherto, such infrastructure has not been in place.

## 5. Summary - Good Practice

‘By and large, we have seen that in Greece the predomination of the traditional occupational careers model, in conjunction with multiple direct and indirect discrimination, creates obstacles to the career development of women and their opportunities to occupy senior management positions in the job hierarchy. Although the statutory framework is quite well developed and affords some protection, the picture in enterprises, organisations, etc. is very different. For the time being, so-called good practice would appear to be an exception to the rule’<sup>145/146</sup>.

It seems that women take advantage of the opportunities provided by the State for LLL and VET; despite their zest and interest in educating themselves, their access to the labour market is still limited leading us to suggest that there are other obstacles that deter them. A closer examination of the educational statistics leads to the conclusion that vertical and horizontal segregation are difficult to tackle, even for women who have a strong educational background. In addition, women are attracted to professional careers that are poorly or moderately rewarded

<sup>145</sup> Karakioulafis, C., ‘Gender and career development — Greece, in European Industrial Relations Observatory On-Line’ INE/GSEE, 2007, *website*:

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2007/country/greece.htm>.

<sup>146</sup> For Good Practices see Addendum 7, pp. 7-9.

and commonly overpopulated, which makes them vulnerable to unemployment and poverty – even the ones who have completed tertiary education.

Many initiatives are taken within the educational system to change gender stereotypes and help women to move from gendered professional choices. Yet these measures take a great deal of time and effort to produce observable and measurable results and it is difficult to evaluate their effectiveness and their impact on social attitudes and beliefs.

Based on findings from a transnational survey concerning needs analysis on LLL training in gender equality was developed.

‘...Most of the respondents are not familiar with national and especially EU legislation and policy on gender equality. Relevant courses should have an overview of both: national and EU legislation. Besides that there should be an introduction to gender regulations. The majority of the respondents have not participated in any training on gender equality issues and most of them think that there are insufficient numbers of such courses.

Before the course takes place, a wide publicity campaign should be launched in order to attract as many potential learners as possible. One of the very important issues is raising awareness of the availability of such courses on the market. ...’<sup>147</sup>.

We must take the opportunity to respond to a crucial necessity: LL training on gender equality.

## 6. Open Questions

For Greece, it is obvious that women are drawn towards education in general, and there is a strong cultural trend of placing great value on any educational activity. There is also evidence that women attend either by choice or by necessity VET programmes as a means of combating unemployment. The resulting labour market data are discouraging, since women remain behind men, especially when it comes to employment and unemployment rates.

This disparity can be attributed to one or more combinations of the following:

- The current infrastructure of the Greek State may be extremely centralized, hard to move and very bureaucratic. Consequently it has difficulty in keeping pace with the micro and macro evolution of the labour market so that any action taken centrally cannot readily be followed up.
- In addition a negative aspect of the entire process of continuing training is the fact that there is still no type of certification or accreditation of knowledge and skills acquired by trainees, with the structure and content of the detailed courses being the responsibility of each Vocational Training Centre. These features, as one might expect, cause differences in the impact of training on the target population and the manner in which trainees are considered by companies and consequently by the labour market, significantly limiting the positive impacts observed in the case of formal education<sup>148</sup>.

<sup>147</sup> Needs Analysis on Lifelong Learning Training on Gender Equality, *Women: gender equality creates democracy*, No. 109771-CP-1-2003-1-LT-GRUNDTVIG-G1, pp. 1-29.

<sup>148</sup> National Accreditation Centre for Continuing Vocational Training – EKEPIS, *The Role of National Qualifications Systems in Promoting Lifelong Learning*, Background Report for Greece, March 2003, pp.1-81.

- Gender stereotypes are extremely strong in Greek culture; as a result no matter how well educated women are, they will always be drawn to career choices that keep them away from secure and highly paid forms of employment.
- ‘...The successful participation of women in education does not challenge dominant ideologies, since the educational and occupational choices of the academically successful girls are still dictated by gendered attitudes (Deliyanni-Kouimtzi & Ziogou, 1995<sup>149</sup>; Maragoudaki, 2004<sup>150</sup>). Similarly, despite the fact that women officially constitute 40% of the work force, the majority of them, are, as elsewhere, in the lowest positions in the professional hierarchy. Moreover, in all occupations and independently of their level of education, they receive lower income than men (Gerogianni, 1998<sup>151</sup>; Raphia, 1999<sup>152</sup>)...<sup>153</sup> ‘
- As far as VET and LLL are concerned there may be a gap between quality and quantity. There are more training opportunities than there used to be, there is clearly a solid evaluation system in place, yet is the context of education up-to-date? Do trainees get enough stimuli to develop skills and competencies that are marketable in the labour market and even more in the local labour market? Do the VET programmes reproduce existing stereotypes by pushing women to areas that are considered ‘appropriate’ or are ‘popular’ with women?
- Are VET programmes a pretext used to lower the unemployment rate? Are they viewed by both the State and trainees as a good-enough alternative to unemployment? If this is so, VET is not used by women as a means of upgrading skills but rather as an alternative to employment (Note: The subsidies for training do not provide a negligible form of income and sometimes, training may be preferred over real employment because it fits in better with the rest of women’s responsibilities like child or elder care, domestic duties etc.)
- Integration of services such as counselling, training, job placement etc. may be a solution to the proper use of VET and LLL by providing women with a context that demands their attention, interest and care. It requires them to be engaged in a process that will allow them to examine the complexity of their lives, offer them skills to tackle their multiple roles and lead them to an informed and well thought out choice of a LLL or VET programme that will be likely to lead them to employment.

<sup>149</sup> Deliyanni-Kouimtzi, V., & Ziogou, S., ‘Gendered youth transitions in northern Greece: between tradition and modernity through education’, in L. Chrisholm, P. Buechner, H.H. Krueger & M. duBois-Raymond (Eds) *Growing up in Europe (Berlin, de Gruyter)*, 1995.

<sup>150</sup> Maragoudaki, H., ‘Gender factor in secondary & tertiary education: aspects of continuity and change’, in V. Deliyanni-Kouimtzi, S. Ziogou & L. Frossi (Eds), *Gender & education in Greece* Athens, Kethi, 2004.

<sup>151</sup> Gerogianni, M., ‘Eight out of ten Greek women are unemployed’, *Public Sector*, 140, 1998, p. 44.

<sup>152</sup> Raphia, A., ‘Where are Greek women employed today?’, *Oekonomikos Tahydromos*, 34, p. 14.

<sup>153</sup> Sakka, D. and Deliyanni-Kouimtzi, V., ‘Adolescent boys' and girls' views of fatherhood in the context of the changing women's position’, *Gender and Education*, 18:1, pp. 51 – 74;  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09540250500195127>

## Appendix - Statistics and Information

### Addendum 1 - Structure of the Greek Educational System

Policy, Politics, and Social Inequality in the Educational System

7

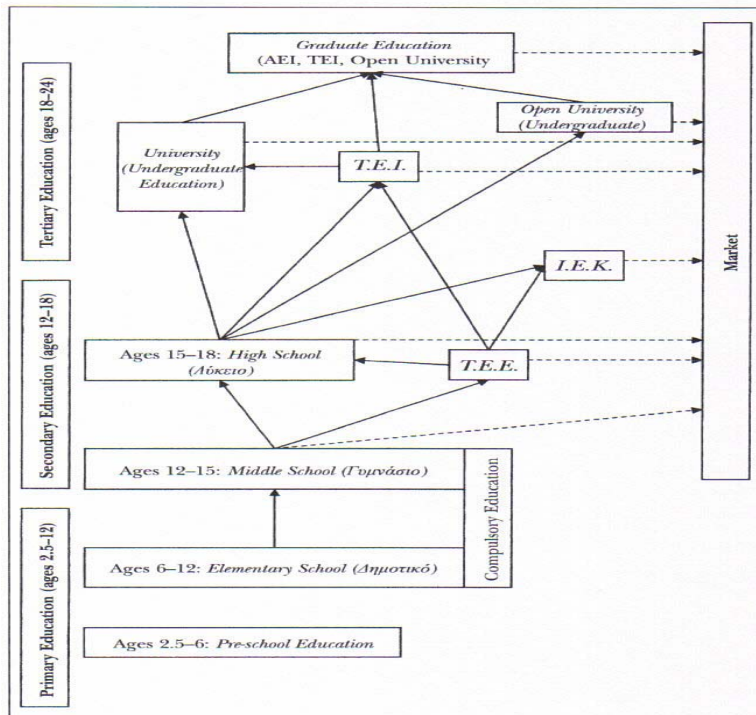


Figure 2. The structure of the Greek education system.  
(Source: Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, (2005))

• The *Eniaio Lykeio* (EL), or comprehensive senior high school, for students from 15-18 years of age. This corresponds to post-compulsory, upper secondary education, which is largely oriented towards a future career in academic tertiary education (university education), although it is possible to move from the EL into post-secondary training.

• The *Technika Epaggelmatika Ekpaideftiria* (TEE), or technical vocational schools, for students from 15-18 years of age. From the TEE, it is possible to enter tertiary education in either further/continuing IVET or higher educational institutions: universities (AEI) or vocational institutions (TEI). There are over 600 TEEs, which are supervised by a number of authorities, including MNERA (448 schools), the Ministry of Health and Welfare (49 schools), the Ministry of Agriculture (12 schools), the Ministry of Development (8 schools) and the private sector (85 schools). Total enrolment in TEEs in the 2003/2004 academic year rose to 118,388 students, which represents a significant increase.

• The *Instituta Epaggelmatikis Katartissis* (IEK), or post-secondary vocational training institutions, for students from 19-20 years of age. The IEK are training institutions which offer training to graduates of both lower and upper secondary VET streams. There are 138 IEKs run by the Organisation for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK), 34 by the Hellenic Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED), and 41 private institutions. Other post-secondary schools are run by the Ministry of Defence, Culture, Mercantile Marine and Development. There are also private IEKs in operation that are regulated by the State. In addition to these three school-based options, students can opt for training apprenticeships with

OAED, which reports to the Ministry of Labour. This provides a mixture of vocational and work-based training provided through 52 Apprenticeship Technical Vocational Schools.’

Source: Ammerman, P. (2003). *Achieving the Lisbon Goal: The contribution of Vocational Education and Training Systems. Country report: Greece, Navigator Consulting Group.*

## Addendum 2

geo	Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education - levels 0-2 (ISCED 1997)	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education - levels 3-4 (ISCED 1997)	Tertiary education - levels 5-6 (ISCED 1997)	Total (ISCED 1997)
eu25 European Union (25 countries)	41.4	65.4	80.3	60.4
be Belgium	37.1	63.9	79.8	59.0
cz Czech Republic	39.0	65.8	79.1	63.1
dk Denmark	54.7	74.3	85.2	74.5
de Germany	41.5	64.3	78.4	62.2
ee Estonia	46.6	68.6	78.7	70.4
gr Greece	36.9	53.3	75.3	50.6
es Spain	37.5	60.8	76.3	52.1
fr France	51.2	68.8	78.7	64.8
ie Ireland	37.7	64.1	81.1	60.1
it Italy	32.6	63.6	77.3	49.4
cy Cyprus	49.3	68.0	84.9	65.6
lv Latvia	44.2	66.1	82.1	66.8
lt Lithuania	39.8	68.1	84.8	69.3
lu Luxembourg (Grand-Duché)	47.1	56.3	76.4	58.2
hu Hungary	32.3	63.6	78.9	57.3
mt Malta	18.9	59.1	81.6	28.9
nl Netherlands	46.0	70.9	82.2	65.7
at Austria	44.4	67.1	77.7	63.0
pl Poland	30.6	54.0	79.8	54.2
pt Portugal	62.8	77.2	88.2	68.3
si Slovenia	50.4	70.6	86.1	69.1
sk Slovakia	24.3	62.8	79.4	58.4
fi Finland	53.1	70.5	82.5	71.5
se Sweden	59.5	78.0	86.8	77.8
uk United Kingdom	49.6	74.3	85.9	68.3
bg Bulgaria	35.2	64.0	77.3	59.4
ro Romania	46.3	66.5	84.4	61.3

Source: Eurostat..

Employment rate of females (aged between 25 and 64 years) by highest level of education attained (2004)

*Addendum 3*

**Female graduates (ISCED 5; ISCED 6) in the fields (a) science, mathematics and computing and (b) engineering, manufacturing and construction as % of total graduates in the respective fields (2004)**

geo	ISCED 5		ISCED 6	
	Science, mathematics and computing	Engineering, manufacturing and construction	Science, mathematics and computing	Engineering, manufacturing and construction
<b>eu25 European Union</b>	39.8	23.6	39.0	23.2
<b>be Belgium</b>	30.4	20.8	28.9	20.2
<b>cz Czech Republic</b>	40.0	24.4	34.9	21.2
<b>dk Denmark</b>	33.7	31.4	26.0	27.9
<b>de Germany</b>	36.1	17.4	29.5	11.8
<b>ee Estonia</b>	48.1	33.1	44.0	37.5
<b>gr Greece</b>	42.8	38.5	32.3	21.0
<b>es Spain</b>	36.4	25.7	48.9	27.9
<b>fr France</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>ie Ireland</b>	42.9	17.3	45.3	28.7
<b>it Italy</b>	53.6	28.6	54.0	31.2
<b>cy Cyprus</b>	42.2	20.2	83.3	-
<b>lv Latvia</b>	39.2	28.2	53.3	38.5
<b>lt Lithuania</b>	43.2	33.3	61.4	33.9
<b>lu Luxembourg</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>hu Hungary</b>	38.0	23.6	32.7	33.3
<b>mt Malta</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>nl Netherlands</b>	23.0	15.4	37.7	23.4
<b>at Austria</b>	35.8	17.1	35.1	18.6
<b>pl Poland</b>	40.7	27.7	52.9	24.1
<b>pt Portugal</b>	50.7	33.8	51.5	35.6
<b>si Slovenia</b>	39.8	21.1	40.9	25.6
<b>sk Slovakia</b>	40.8	31.7	46.3	29.7
<b>fi Finland</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>se Sweden</b>	47.5	28.9	39.1	25.9
<b>uk United Kingdom</b>	37.4	20.0	37.9	21.2
<b>bg Bulgaria</b>	56.4	37.2	55.8	39.2
<b>ro Romania</b>	59.1	32.5	45.7	28.7

Source: Eurostat.



## Addendum 4

geo	Teacher training & Education science	Humanities & Arts	Social Sciences, Business & Law	Science, Mathematics & Computing	Engineering Manufacturing & Construction	Agriculture & Veterinary	Health & Welfare	Total
<b>EU-25</b>	58.7	50.7	44.2	38.4	22.0	49.9	51.7	42.7
<b>Austria</b>	36.3	32.7	41.9	33.1	16.6	33.7	63.2	40.3
Belgium	46.4	36.6	43.6	28.9	20.2	37.3	39.1	33.9
Cyprus	100.0	0.0	0.0	83.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	61.5
Czech Republic	73.0	41.6	46.2	34.9	21.2	33.9	36.2	35.6
Denmark	0.0	50.0	39.1	26.0	27.9	56.2	46.0	35.9
Estonia	100.0	60.7	61.5	44.0	37.5	20.0	80.5	62.2
Finland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
France	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Germany	50.8	48.8	35.0	29.5	11.8	58.9	50.0	39.0
<b>Greece</b>	51.9	51.0	52.1	32.3	21.0	43.6	65.4	38.1
Hungary	66.1	50.0	45.7	32.7	33.3	30.3	39.9	42.9
Ireland	50.0	47.9	53.1	45.3	28.7	47.6	55.0	45.7
Italy	72.5	58.5	50.4	54.0	31.2	54.4	61.5	50.9
Latvia	100.0	50.0	57.9	53.3	38.5	100.0	52.9	58.3
Lithuania	-	77.6	59.4	61.4	33.9	54.5	60.0	57.5
Luxembourg	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Malta	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Netherlands	0.0	42.7	40.9	37.7	23.4	39.0	48.6	39.4
Poland	-	54.9	48.2	52.9	24.1	48.7	51.5	46.9
Portugal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Slovakia	68.1	46.7	50.7	46.3	29.7	35.7	48.5	45.0
Slovenia	50.0	57.5	39.0	40.9	25.6	50.0	53.8	40.6
Spain	57.5	48.8	49.0	48.9	27.9	44.1	51.8	47.5
Sweden	79.3	56.0	43.3	39.6	25.0	45.2	56.9	44.8
United Kingdom	60.4	49.3	50.7	37.9	21.2	47.2	54.5	43.1
Bulgaria	52.6	67.1	42.9	55.8	39.2	63.6	50.0	50.8
Romania	-	67.8	51.7	45.7	28.7	0.0	56.3	49.3

Source: Eurostat..

### Proportion of female PhD (ISCED 6) graduates by broad field of study (2004)

### Addendum 5: Lifelong Learning Structures in Greece, under the supervision of MNERA

**Schools of Second Chance:** offer the opportunity of completing primary and secondary education. There are 48 Schools of Second Chance, co-financed by EU.

	Year	2004-2005*		Year	2005-2006*	
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>Schools of Second Chance</b>	2192	957	1235	3006	1304	1701

**Centres for Adult Education:** Offer educational activities to all citizens regardless of educational, economic and ethnic background. There are 56 Centres for Adult education.

	Year	2004-2005*		Year	2005-2006*	
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>Centres for Adult Education</b>						
<b>1. General population</b>	24798	9115	15683	69531	19982	49549
<b>2. Roma</b>	1086	186	900	1209	200	1009
<b>3. Ex- offenders</b>	2838	2687	172	3786	230	3556
<b>4. Muslims</b>	922	71	851	1199	149	1050

**Parenting Schools:** Offer information and consultation in relation to parenthood, family relations, communication skills etc.

	Year	2004-2005*		Year	2005-2006*	
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>Parenting schools:</b>	5647	466	5181	16323	1240	15083

**Voluntary programme «Protection of Oneself and Others»:** Offers the opportunity to create of a volunteer network that mobilizes in cases of emergency (earthquake, floods etc.)

**Learning Greek as a Second Language:** Offer immigrants the opportunity to learn Greek and participate equally in Greek society.

	Year 2004*			Year 2005			Year 2006		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>Voluntary program «Protection of oneself and others»</b>	348	130	218	819	383	436	660	290	370
<b>Learning Greek as a second language</b>	458	124	334	979	286	693	1998	629	1369

**Adult Education in I.T.:** Offer opportunity for citizens to learn basic computer skills. The programme began in September 2005.

	Year	2004-2005*		Year	2005-2006*	
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>Adult education in I.T.</b>				45265	11769	33496

\*Academic Year September – June

### *Addendum 6*

The Labour Force Surveys show the concentration of women in selected occupations by age. The level of self-employment is the highest in Europe amongst older workers of both sexes (47% of those aged 55-64 and 75% of 60-64 year olds in 1998), and older women are also proportionately more engaged than younger women – 40% of women aged 45-64 were self employed in 1998.

Wage levels are reported by the General Secretariat for Equality based on NSSG Labour Force Statistics 1998. IKA data also show average monthly/hourly earnings by age and gender; it is striking that the older the age the greater the difference between male and female earnings. Thus women over 50 years of age earn only approximately 52% of average male earnings.

Unemployment, though lower than for other age groups, rose for women aged 55-64 from 1.2% in 1990 to 4.4% in 2000. Figures are available for Greece on the average age of transition to inactivity by gender from 1950-2000. IKA data provides the exact age at which women and men take their pension; the average age for women is 57.82 years compared to 60.76 years for men in 2001. Details are available for the exact age at which women receive their pension up to the age of 75 years.

There is one research study on the negative emotional consequences of retirement, related to the perception of the self, which discusses the issue of identity of people in the third age and this includes older women.

Unpaid work in the family: the LFS show that 40% of women overall are estimated to be unpaid family workers, data being available by five year age groups (50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, 75+). Numbers have declined slowly, related partly to the declining participation of women in agriculture. The European Network on Policies for Unpaid and Paid Work has also discussed this issue.

A very brief overview of the situation of women in Greece regarding the provision of care within the home is found in one research report. Reference is made to the traditional model and roles with which women have been raised in Greece, including the provision of care to family members, husbands, children, grand-children, in-laws etc, a model which is still prevalent, though increasing numbers of 50+ work in paid employment outside the home in addition.

#### *Addendum 7 - Good Practice*

What follows is an indicative list of good practice in the promotion of women's employment and facilitating their access to the labour market

**The General Secretariat for Equality** recently took on a coordinating and supervisory role with regard to the implementation and dissemination of gender equality plans in Greek companies. It has already begun to announce relevant calls for action to the country's enterprises. Most of the enterprises that responded to the programme titled '**Positive actions for women in Small and Medium size Enterprises**', preferred to submit proposals for in-house training of women employees and very few of them opted to propose the creation of day care centres and similar facilities. 171 enterprises participate in the programme and 22.079 women are expected to benefit from it. The total budget of the programme is **14.269.040, 16 €**.

**'Protocol to promote gender equality at work' (2006) signed by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality**, the Federation of Greek Industries (SEV), the General Confederation of Greek Small Businesses and Trades (GSEVEE), the National Confederation of Greek Traders (ESEE), the Athens Chamber of Commerce and Industry (EBEA), and the Hellenic Network for Corporate Social Responsibility (EKE NETWORK). "The protocol states that the parties should jointly undertake a political commitment to carry out a range of coordinated actions for the purpose of monitoring, raising awareness of and ultimately addressing the incidence of unequal treatment of men and women in access to employment, certain occupations, vocational training, career advancement, pay levels, and with regard to terms and conditions of employment in general".

**More information can be found at:**

<http://eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2006/07/articles/gr0607019i.html>

**‘Integrated Interventions in Favour of Women’**, Operational Programme **‘Employment and Vocational Training’**. The **GSGE** and **KETHI** as scientific advisor jointly implement this programme for the period 2004-2006. Total number of beneficiaries: 9 018 women, mostly unemployed. The goal of the programme is to create one-stop shops in 13 Prefectures of Greece , which will offer services to women such as specialized information, counselling, social support, participation in training and pre-training programmes and job placement. The programme’s total budget is 13 000 000 €. More information can be found at: [www.draseis-gynaikes.gr](http://www.draseis-gynaikes.gr)

**Equal I Project ‘Andromeda’**, 2002-2005. The project’s objective was to develop effective methodologies to combat horizontal and vertical segregation. The project: trained a group of experts who could function as Equality Counsellors in HR Departments; developed a benchmarking tool for monitoring the ‘glass ceiling’, its size and effect in the advancement of women’s career; created a) a comprehensive guide for introducing Equality Plans in business settings, b) a guide for identifying ‘gate keeping mechanisms’, c) a database for comparing pilot Equality Plans. The project’s budget for these actions was approximately 900.000 Euros.

**‘Providing Equal Opportunities to our employees’** project by Vodafone Greece, 2005-2006. The project covered a specialist information service (Career Path), advice and support in the working environment (HR Help Desk), training, implementing favourable policies for women during the maternity period and flexible working hours. Number of employees affected: 2500. Total budget: 2 000 000 € only for training.

More information can be found at: <http://www.vodafone.gr/live1/page.jsp>

**‘Enforcement of an Equal Opportunity Policy in hiring, placement, promotions and transfers, and in education and training’** project by Emporiki Bank, 2005-2006. The project included services such as the provision of advice and support in the working environment (HR Department), training, implementing favourable policies for women during the maternity period and flexible working hours, career breaks, childcare subsidies. Number of employees affected: 6844. More information can be found at: [http://www.emporiki.gr/cbg/gr/cbg\\_index.jsp](http://www.emporiki.gr/cbg/gr/cbg_index.jsp)

**Addendum 8 – General Public Bodies**

*Name & Summary of the law, conference, action plan, etc:* **General Secretariat for Gender Equality (G.S.G.E.).** The General Secretariat For Gender Equality is the governmental agency charged with planning, implementing and monitoring the implementation of policies on equality between men and women in all sector and functions under the Ministry of the Interior.

*Year/ Date (of edition, realization, etc):* **1985**

*Main objectives:* **Equality between men and women**

*Other descriptors:* Information regarding the General Secretariat for Gender Equality can be consulted at: <http://www.isotita.gr/>

*Name & Summary of the law, conference, action plan, etc:* **Research Center for Gender Equality (KETHI).** The basic aims of KETHI's activities have a dual focus: to conduct social research on gender equality issues and to improve women's status and enable their advancement in all areas of political, economic and social life, within the framework of the policies defined by the General Secretariat for Equality'. KETHI is supervised and funded by the General Secretariat for Equality of the Ministry of the Interior, Public Administration and Decentralisation.

*Year/ Date (of edition, realization, etc):* **1994**

*Main objectives:* **Research Equality issues**

*Other descriptors:* Information regarding the Research Center for Gender Equality can be consulted at: <http://www.kethi.gr>

*Name & Summary of the law, conference, action plan, etc:* **Inter-ministerial Committee for Gender Equality.** The tasks of the committee are: i. to take the decisions necessary to promote the national policy for gender equality along the guidelines of the European Union, aiming at gender mainstreaming. ii. To coordinate the various agencies of the public sector in developing policies and actions for women at the central, regional and local levels. iii. To support ministries and public sector agencies in planning legislative initiatives and in implementing measures specifically concerning women. iv. To prepare and draft the Annual Action Programme for Equality aiming at the development of an integrated policy in the framework of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Community Support Programme and monitoring implementation of actions and measures of this programme. v. To supervise, monitor and perform qualitative and quantitative evaluation of policies implemented. vi. To publish decisions on matters of gender equality.

*Year/ Date (of edition, realization, etc):* **2000**

*Main objectives:* **Equality between men and women**

*Other descriptors:* Information regarding the Inter-ministerial Committee for Gender Equality can be found in the Official Gazette 870/17-7-00 section B

*Name & Summary of the law, conference, action plan, etc:* **Permanent Committee on Equality and Human Rights.** The Permanent Committee on Equality and Human Rights is responsible for research and proposals concerning education, the family and other social institutions. It also seeks to promote the implementation by government of the principle of gender equality, especially as regards issues of employment, and the respect and protection of human rights.

*Year/ Date (of edition, realization, etc):* **2001**

*Main objectives:* Equality between men and women

*Other descriptors:* Information regarding the Permanent Committee on Equality and Human Rights can be consulted at:

[http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/instance/2\\_132.htm](http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/instance/2_132.htm)

*Name & Summary of the law, conference, action plan, etc:* **National Programme for Gender Equality (2001-2006).** The National Programme for Gender Equality sets four strategic goals: a) Promotion of equality between men and women in economic life, b) Promotion of equal participation and representation in the political, social and economic sectors, c) Promotion of equal access and of equal application of social rights for men and women and d) Promotion of change in gender roles and stereotypes.

*Year/ Date (of edition, realization, etc):* **2001**

*Main objectives:* **Action Plans for Gender Mainstreaming**

*Other descriptors:* National Policy Plans on Gender Equality Issues.

### **Addendum 9**

An informal survey implemented in Achaia Prefecture-Western Greece (March 2007) targeting those seeking to work in IT gave us interesting feedback from women employees and the significant obstacles they confront in implementing their career goals.

Significantly 80% of respondents stated that the main obstacles are the lack of time for training, especially for women 25-40 who become full time careers, and the belief that they are too old to learn. Women – especially the older and less educated – do not appreciate the need to increase their IT skills.

The survey found that:

- women continue to be under-represented at management grades;
- women (must) rely on externally developed expertise, burdening their personal time and resources;
- low-skilled jobs are most likely to be held by women (and young people), even where their skills, experience and education exceed the requirements of the job;
- women are still struggling to gain access to heavy industrial jobs because of masculine culture (e.g.: sexist practices, harassment, resentment by male co-workers or family members, or open criticism for not being at home where they belonged);
- flexible or part-time workers experience barriers to promotion, and also fewer opportunities for employer-sponsored training;
- in workplace organizations, everyday social activity carried out by women in relationship-building, conflict mediation, organizing and knowledge communication may be invisible or taken for granted;
- women's lack of access to powerful social networks in the workplace, and gendered perceptions/expectations of their ability and commitment, can exclude them from learning opportunities and resources;
- self-employed women experience continuing difficulty in accessing finance, powerful networks and resources for support and information;
- home-based women's enterprises experience particular oppression in terms of isolation, blurred lines between work and family, low income, the toll of unacknowledged 'emotional' work, and reduced quality of life;
- the mother-centred image of child-care (a career is viewed as secondary to motherhood in women's identity)

## Ireland

The most recent Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS 2006) carried out by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in Ireland states that the participation rate of women in the labour market is now at an unprecedented high of 59.6 %. This figure represents some eight hundred and seventy nine thousand women in employment giving an 83 % increase of women working since 1995 with a 67 % increase in women working full time and a trebling of the number of women working part time.

Education and training is key to the participation and advancement of women in the labour market. International thinking focuses on the importance of the dual approach to achieving economic independence for women and of fostering economic growth through increased participation of women in the labour market<sup>154</sup>. Economic independence enables women to overcome social exclusion and disadvantage while economic growth fosters economic well-being and reduces the chances of poverty. This dual approach is essential for women as it is not enough that more opportunities are created for women to participate in the labour market as part of the countries economic growth we also have to have initiatives that will support women's advancement in the labour market so that women do not remain in the lower end of employment. This chapter will highlight the gender differences in labour market and education participation of men and women in Ireland. It will describe the legislative framework that underpins Irish social and economic policies and will emphasise the importance of positive actions on achieving gender equality in education and training.

After 15 years of successful economic growth Ireland has reached a turning point. Economic policy is no longer concerned solely with the creation of jobs. Ireland is now a country, which enjoys practically full employment a situation virtually unimaginable in the 1980s. With the Irish labour force having increased from 1.64 million in 1997 to over 2 million by the first quarter of 2006<sup>155</sup> policy makers and society in general have more ambitious goals for the Irish economy. Job growth is no longer an end in itself; rather instead the focus is now on the quality of employment rather than quantity. Creation of a knowledgeable economy is central to this thinking.

*Knowledge creation and diffusion are at the core of economic activity. Knowledge is embodied in people and it is the quality of the human resource that will determine the success or otherwise of firms and economies in the years ahead. It is people who create knowledge and it is people who disseminate, adopt and use data, insight, intuition and experience to create distinctive value (ESG 2004)*

Future policy is now focused on achieving a balanced workforce that has access to education and training beyond job related skills. Policy makers realise the importance of taking a lifelong learning approach that recognises the economic and societal values that accrue from education and training interventions at all levels. International research shows that greater educational attainment is linked to better health, lower risks of unemployment and poverty and increases in social cohesion such as reduced crime and greater political participation<sup>156</sup>.

<sup>154</sup> National Women's Strategy, 2007.

<sup>155</sup> EGFSN 2007, p. 18.

<sup>156</sup> Johnson, G., *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise?*, New Zealand Treasury Working Paper, 2004.

The competitiveness of the Irish economy depends on a well functioning labour market. In line with the Lisbon Agenda the main policy objective is the development of our economy into one that is knowledge based and inclusive. Labour market and education policies will play a significant role in achieving this goal.

Ireland has moved from being a country dominated by emigration and unemployment, in 1986 the unemployment rate was over 17 % and almost 45 000 people emigrated<sup>157</sup>. Today our unemployment rate stands at 4.4 %.

To ensure the continued growth in our economy labour force developmental policy will focus on two key areas

- 1) Ensuring an adequate supply of labour to meet the needs of the economy and to sustain economic growth. Labour will be supplied through a number of sources, which include increased female participation rates.
- 2) Ensuring the development of a high skilled, adaptable workforce through continued emphasis on lifelong learning and training.

Lifelong learning is the guiding principle for education and training in the context of the Lisbon Agenda. The Lisbon Agenda provides a framework for the EU and member states to work together in support of sustainable economic growth, more and better jobs, greater social cohesion and respect for the environment. The EU Commission emphasises that investment in lifelong learning is critical for economic success, social cohesion and personal fulfilment. It is within this policy framework that Ireland will develop its socio-economic policies for future growth. This thinking reflects the key aims of the Irish social partnership agreement –Towards 2016, and the National Development Plan 2007-2013.

## **1. The Context for Lifelong Learning for Men and Women**

### **1.1. The Legislative and Policy Framework for Education and Training in Ireland**

Legislation is important in respect of education and training and is the responsibility of the Irish Government. Legislation is carried out through the creation of publicly funded organisations to manage advice on and deliver education and training; through providing a policy framework for public expenditure; through funding systems and regulation and certification systems.

In respect of vocational training and adult education the most important piece of legislation is the Vocational Education Act 1930 and its amendments.

The Education Act 1998 makes specific provision for the promotion of opportunities for adults, in particular adults who as children did not benefit from education in schools.

The Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 set up structures for a national framework of qualifications. The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) were set up under the provisions of the Act. This gives a ten level framework of qualifications for learners covering all aspects of education and training.

---

<sup>157</sup> NDP 2007, p 191.



A range of policy documents drives the policy framework:

The White Paper on Adult Education-Learning for Life, published in 2000

The report by the Taskforce on Lifelong Learning published in 2002

Reports from the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs

Social Partnership Agreement-Towards 2016

The National Development Plan 2007-2013

The National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2006-2008

The National Women's Strategy 2007-2016

These frameworks are delivered through a range of initiatives in Ireland that support men and women's participation in education and training.

Other national legislation some specific to the position of women in Ireland, some more general and applying to all people include:

The Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004

The Equal Status Act 2000-2004

The Maternity Protection Acts 1994 and 2004

The Protection of Employees (Part time Work) Act 2001

The Protection of Employees (Fixed-term Work) Act 2003

The National Minimum Wage Act 2000.

This body of legislation in particular has facilitated the increase in female labour market participation over the recent years. The introduction of the equality legislation has been significant in the achievement of gender equality in Ireland. The enactment of this legislation has established new rights, created the institutional supports for accessing those rights and has enabled an approach to tackling inequalities in an integrated way<sup>158</sup>.

## **1.2. European Union Policy Influences**

The Lisbon and Barcelona Council meetings in 2000 and 2001 agreed new policy guidelines and targets for women's participation in the labour market. The Lisbon Strategy for employment and social policy included specific targets in relation to female employment. The Barcelona Strategy also made advances in the effort to increase and improve the position of women in the labour market. Indicators set by the EU Stockholm Council in 2001 are used as measures for monitoring education and labour market developments.

## **2. Men and Women in the Labour Market**

The European Council in 2000 in Lisbon agreed to a new strategic goal for the Union in order to strengthen employment, economic reform and social cohesion as part of a knowledge-based economy. The Lisbon Council set the employment target of 60 % of women in the age group 15-64 to be employed by 2010.

### **2.1. The Growth in Female Labour Market Participation**

In 1971, there were 275,600 women in employment in Ireland, of whom 38,300 (14%) were married. By 1995, the number of women in employment had risen to 482,900 with about a fifth working part-time. Over the next eleven years, the numbers have increased significantly with

---

<sup>158</sup> For more information see the website: [www.equality.ie](http://www.equality.ie)

almost 400,000 additional women or 879,800 women active in the work force<sup>159</sup>. This represents an increase of 83 % in the number of women working over an eleven-year period with an increase of 67 % in the number of women working full-time and a trebling of the number of women working part-time. As a result, the employment rate for women in Ireland aged between 15 to 64 years is now at 59 % and has surpassed the EU 25 average of 57.3 % as set out by the EU Stockholm Council for 2005. Men's employment rate in 2006 was 77.3 % which is also well above the average EU rate of 71.3 % as in table 1.

**Table 1. Ireland and EU: Employment rate, 1996-2006 - % of population aged 15-64**

Year	Ireland		EU 25	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
1996	67.5	43.2	:	:
1997	69.1	45.9	70.2	51.1
1998	71.1	48.1	70.6	51.8
1999	73.6	51.2	71.0	52.9
2000	75.7	53.2	71.2	53.6
2001	76.2	54.0	71.3	54.3
2002	75.0	55.2	71.0	54.7
2003	74.7	55.3	70.8	55.0
2004	75.2	55.8	70.9	55.7
2005	76.2	58.0	71.3	57.3
2006	77.3	58.8	:	:

Source: CSO, 2006.

The unemployment rate for women has fallen from 10.7 % in 1997 to 3.8 % in 2006. The Stockholm Council also set employment rate targets of 50 % for men and women in the 55-64 year age group in 2010. Ireland already exceeds the male target with 68.4 % but is considerably below the female target with 40.8 %<sup>160</sup>.

**Table 2. Women in employment and enterprise – Some headline statistics**

	Male	Female
Employment Rate 1994	65.9%	40.1%
Employment Rate 2006 (Q4) (ILO Definition)	77%	59%
	Women	
	1995	2006 (Q4)
Number of women in employment	454,000	879,800
Number of women in employment who work full time	365,600	606,700
Number of women in employment who work part time	88,400	273,100

Source: NWS 2007

Looking at the economic growth in Ireland over the past decade shows that the growth has been achieved partially through the huge increase in women's labour market participation. In turn this economic growth has supported the development of a range of social inclusion and policy issues, which have enhanced the lives of those who had been excluded from the labour market by providing opportunities for education and training. Many women have benefited from increased resources to local education and training initiatives, which have supported their transition to work. This trend in female labour market participation has been the result of many

<sup>159</sup> National Women's Strategy 2007.

<sup>160</sup> CSO, (2006) *Women and Men in Ireland*, Central Statistics Office, Dublin.

developments including improved childcare, more flexible working hours and also our high cost of living which forces women to work rather than engage in full-time child rearing.

However there is still a lot to be done to foster the contribution of women and to address the social inequalities, which are still experienced by women in our society especially lone parents, mothers of larger families, older and Traveller women. Women are a large group amongst those marginalised from the labour market. The employment participation rate among older women is lower than for men, largely due to past family responsibilities. The main focus of new policies is to remove disincentives to employment in social protection<sup>161</sup> and other systems and to provide necessary supports such as childcare, general care and education and training.

Migrant workers make up 8% of the Irish workforce, one of the highest in the EU. However the gender perspective applies to migrants similarly to the way it applies to other groups. While female migrant workers share issues with their male counterparts, it is important to acknowledge that a double disadvantage is faced by minority ethnic women and that their situations are shaped by both racism and sexism. Women migrant workers enter a workforce already characterised by gender inequalities. Job segregation where women are the majority in low paid and low skilled jobs has huge implications for female migrant workers.

### 3. Participation of Men and Women in Education and Training

The education field is another in which women are excelling. Females are out-performing their male counterparts in all areas of education, second level, third level and most particularly adult and community education.

Table 3 below shows two important measures: the percentage of girls and boys in a number of age groups, who are still in education and the highest level of educational attainment of men and women who are in the labour market in Ireland.

**Table 3 - Education for women – Some headline statistics**

	Male	Female
	%	%
<b>Percentage of population of specific age, in full-time education 2004/2005</b>		
o Aged 16	91.8	100
o Aged 19	44.6	61.3
o Aged 23	12.9	12.9
<b>Persons in employment by sex and by highest educational attainment 2005</b>		
o Primary or lower	12.5	6.9
o Secondary	48.3	42.8
o Post Leaving Cert	11.2	12.0
o Third level NFQ levels 6-7	9.5	14.8
o Third level NFQ levels 8-10	18.6	23.6

Source: NWS 2007.

Young men are at a higher risk of early school leaving than women. In 2003, 65.1% of the 52,200 early school leavers aged 18-24 years were men. In comparison, 12% of all women in

<sup>161</sup> National Report for Ireland on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2006-2008.

this age group were early school leavers<sup>162</sup>. However it must be noted that the negative impact of early school leaving is more significant for women. Almost three quarters of male early school leavers were employed, compared to over one third of their female counterparts.

The Department of Education and Science put in place a number of measures to address the disadvantages experienced by girls and women in the education system in the 1980s. Areas such as gender stereotyping in relation to subject provision and choice in Irish second-level schools was one area focused on. These measures were further strengthened by the adoption by the EU of a resolution on Equal Opportunities for Boys and Girls in education in 1985.

Other developments at this time included the expansion of provision in the further and adult education service with particular developments in the women's community education sector. The late 1980s and 1990s saw a growth in locally based women's community education groups addressing the education and personal development needs of marginalized women in disadvantaged communities.

Today in adult and community education women comprise of over 70 % of the participants in programmes. Many education initiatives developed in adult and community education over the past ten years have been focused on improving the education attainment levels of adults, not just women. However it is mainly women who have taken up these opportunities. It is widely documented that women's increasing participation in education both formal and non-formal stems from the growth of women's community education groups as providers over the past two decades. The provision of part time, flexible, learner-centred provision encouraged many women to take up locally based learning opportunities. Literature shows that men are less likely to participate in or form such groups, with men more likely to study vocational or technical subjects<sup>163</sup>. One of the reasons for this is often the negative relationship with learning which many men have developed over the course of their lives. For the majority of men they find that they are only motivated to improve their education and skills when it is necessary such as in a work related area.

This trend in participation levels is not unusual and such imbalances are reflected across other European countries. At present, 76 % of participants in adult education in Finland are women with similar situations in Austria and Germany.

### **3.1. Gender Mainstreaming in Education**

Under the Equal Opportunities Promotion and Monitoring Measure of the National Development Plan 2000-2006, a dedicated Gender Equality Unit was set up in the Department of Education and Science in 2001. The remit of this unit is to promote, co-ordinate and monitor the process of gender mainstreaming in the education system.

This unit along with the Gender Equality Unit in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform have been co-funded by the European Social Fund. These two units have produced major bodies of research, which has informed discussion and policy formation.

The challenge for the future is to develop an operational structure in all departments of the government that will ensure policies are gender mainstreamed. For women the main impetus for gender mainstreaming is the National Women's Strategy (NSW) 2007-2016.

---

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> AONTAS, (2004), *Community Education*. AONTAS Policy Series, Dublin.

### **3.2. National Programmes as Examples of Good Practice for the Inclusion of Women and Men in Education and Training**

Positive action has been successful in the past in targeting excluded groups in education and training opportunities. During the 1990s the New Opportunities for Women (NOW) initiatives led to massive developments in the areas of women's work, childcare and community education. Many of the outcomes from this ESF initiative are evident today such as community childcare centres and a range of community education groups across the country.

At present Ireland has some gender specific actions for education and training along with more general actions for the inclusion of men and women.

#### **3.2.1. Models of Good Practice**

FAS-the national training agency in Ireland has developed two programmes, which have been instrumental in supporting a lifelong learning agenda, one of which is specifically aimed at women.

#### **Expanding the Workforce – Women Returning to Work**

The Expanding the Workforce programme (ETW) aims to improve women's access to, and participation in the labour market. The primary focus of the programme is to progress women or returnees into employment as quickly as possible. The process also aims to influence and support employers in examining and improving their work practices.

The target group for this programme are women who have been out of the workforce for a period of 1 year or more and have an interest in returning to work. The ETW programme assists in overcoming the barriers faced by women when considering a return to working life.

The benefits for women engaging in this programme include:

- Meeting with FAS to individually explore development needs for accessing work, to identify training needs and to implement an individual training plan.
- Personal development, career planning and assertiveness training.
- Specific skills training provided on a flexible basis to suit women's needs.
- On the job training as required.
- On going support and mentoring once in employment.

Expanding the Workforce is funded in part by the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform under the EU initiative – Equality for Women Measure (EWM)<sup>164</sup>

#### **One Step Up programme**

This programme began in 2005 in response to the Enterprise Strategy Group's report on the changing nature of employment in Ireland. Through a variety of training programmes, One Step Up aims to develop employee's competency levels and skills. The focus is to provide employees with portable and transferable skills that will help promote them in the workplace. One Step Up works in partnership with employers and the programme is part of a system of lifelong learning initiatives in the employment sector.

---

<sup>164</sup> <http://www.fas.ie>.

### **Equality for Women Measure (EWM)**

The EWM supports work that is specifically focused on improving opportunities for women in Ireland. The measure is funded by the Irish Government and part-financed by the European Union through the European Social Fund (ESF).

There are eight key strands to the measure of which Strand A specifically focuses on access to employment, education and training with a particular emphasis on retraining and up skilling of women.

The EWM is designed to tackle the barriers to equality for women and works to specific objectives including expanding opportunities within the workplace and in business and supporting women's access to the labour market. Projects are funded under this measure and delivered by a range of agencies, third level institutes and community and voluntary groups. Seventy projects were supported in the first phase between 2001 and 2004 with a total allocation of Euro14.1 million. ([www.ewm.ie](http://www.ewm.ie))

### **Community education groups**

These are voluntary community education groups based at local level who plan and deliver learner centred education programmes for mainly women. These programmes are based on personal development and confidence building as well as providing basic education and computer skills. The programmes cover both formal and non-formal learning. These groups have been recognised as the first point of entry to learning for many marginalized women and there are over 1000 groups in existence in Ireland today. The groups are supported to deliver their programmes by a range of government departments and agencies and have abroad remit that includes equality, social inclusion and active citizenship.<sup>165</sup> The processes and methodologies used are learner-centred, based on experiences of people, and participative. This type of education has been successful in up-skilling and developing women's knowledge because of the holistic approach it takes to learning and the supports that are needed for some women.

### **The Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)**

The BTEI is a major contributor to building the capacity of the education sector to meet the changing needs of individuals, communities and society. The overall aim of the BTEI is to increase the participation of young people and adults with less than upper second level education in a range of flexible learning opportunities. These learning opportunities are carried out by a range of statutory agencies and community groups who work in partnership at local level. Supports such as childcare are a core element of BTEI. The BTEI is guided by the following principles:

- Learner Centredness
- Equality
- Accessibility and Inclusiveness
- Recognising and Accommodating Diversity
- Quality Assurance
- Local Consultation and an Area-based Approach
- Innovation

---

<sup>165</sup> AONTAS, (2004), Community Education. AONTAS Policy Series, Dublin.

The BTEI has been part funded by the European Social Fund during 2000-2006.

This initiative provides opportunities for access, participation and attainment in lifelong learning in line with the Government's policy objectives. These objectives are set out in the National Development Plan 2007-2013, the National Partnership agreement, *Towards 2016* and in the recommendations of the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs report, *Tomorrow's Skills: Towards a National Skills Strategy*. This group recommended that 93 % of the Irish labour force should have qualifications at, or above higher second level by 2020. This initiative is particularly supportive for women with low educational attainment levels and who are in part-time work. In 2006, 25,000 people participated in programmes under the BTEI of which 75 % were women<sup>166</sup>. Presently the Department in conjunction with AONTAS, the National Association of Adult Education is developing guidelines for the inclusion of hard to reach groups of men in BTEI as a step towards addressing the gender imbalance.

These examples are all transferable to other European countries as part of socio-economic policies.

### 3.3. Gender Mainstreaming in Ireland

Gender mainstreaming became prominent in Ireland in 1999, when the Government decided that most measures under the National Development Plan 2000-2006 would be gender mainstreamed. The decision went further than the requirement laid down by the European Union, which required only that, the EU co-funded employment and training measures be gender mainstreamed. This decision was underpinned by the establishment of the Gender Equality Unit within the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and of the Education Equality Unit within the Department of Education and Science. Both units were co-funded by the European Social Fund. From the work of these units, gender mainstreaming has become central to the formation of our key policy documents such as the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion and the National Development Plan 2007-2013.

The challenge now is to ensure that all future policies are gender mainstreamed and that the National Women's Strategy 2007-2016 is fully implemented. Under this strategy the Gender Equality Division within the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, together with a small expert team in the Gender Equality Unit will play a central role in encouraging the ongoing development of policies on gender equality and gender mainstreaming; monitoring progress towards real gender equality; identifying and replicating as appropriate good practice from elsewhere; providing guidance to other Departments and agencies; and fostering gender awareness and full gender mainstreaming in other Government Departments<sup>167</sup>.

This approach is recommended by the European Commission and endorsed in the Gender Equality Pact adopted at the EU Council in spring 2006.

Gender budgeting is suggested in the NWS as a mechanism to be considered by the Department of Finance as a tool in formulating the estimates for Public Expenditure. However international evidence shows that for gender budgeting to work gender disaggregated data and specialist staff will be required.

---

<sup>166</sup> Department of Education and Science, *BTEI Discussion Document*, unpublished, 2006.

<sup>167</sup> NWS 2007, p 113.

### 3.4. Issues to Be Addressed

Despite the considerable progress that has been made in women's participation in the labour market and in education, inequalities still exist. The employment rate for women is still far lower than for men. In particular women with low education attainment levels have significantly lower labour market participation rates in comparison to men.

**Table 4. Central Statistics Office 2006**

Lower Second Level Education	%
Females in the Labour Market	50%
Males in the Labour Market	90%

The Irish social welfare system is based on a male bread winner model that hinders the economic independence of women. The system reinforces the idea of women being adult dependants. It does not recognise the unpaid care work of women and the impact this has on women's labour market participation.

Access to pension rights is essential for women particularly older women. Due to policies such as the marriage bar that prevented married women from working in the civil service<sup>168</sup> and other gender roles for married women, it is women who left employment to take up caring roles in the family who now have the least rights to pensions. Many women today who are involved in unpaid care work still do not earn contributions towards a pension. The National Women's Council of Ireland commissioned a study to develop a model of social welfare reform that would advance women's equality in this area<sup>169</sup>.

There is evidence, which shows that women experience difficulty in progressing in the workplace. Employment and training policies have been inclined to focus on ensuring people access the labour market with less emphasis on education and training for progression within. Inadequate training has been identified in the National Women's Strategy 2007 as a major factor, which impacts on the advancement of women. The Forum on the Workplace of the Future 2005 found from a survey done with 8000 workers that:

*'Women receive less training than men, have less discretion over their work, receive less information in the workplace and have high levels of work stress'*

Recent analysis by the OECD in Education at a Glance 2005, shows that some 40% of the labour force in several OECD states such as Denmark, Sweden, Finland and United States take part in non-formal job related education and training each year, compared to just 14 % in Ireland. Ireland ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in the EU 25 for participation in work related education and training.

<sup>168</sup> The marriage bar required women to resign from employment on marriage and married women could not be appointed to jobs in the public sector.

<sup>169</sup> Murphy, M, *A Woman's Model of Social Welfare Reform*, NWCI, Dublin, 2003.



The pay gap also represents a major issue for women's employment. The pay gap between men and women stands at approximately 15 % in Ireland today. It is widely considered that the single biggest factor behind this gender pay gap is women's child bearing and caring roles, which remove them from the labour market at times in their working lives.

Childcare continues to dominate as a barrier to education, training and employment for women in Irish society. The Barcelona Council agreed targets of childcare provision for at least 90 % of children between 3 years of age and the mandatory school-going age (six years in Ireland) by 2010. They also agreed a target of childcare for at least 33 % of children under the age of 3 years by 2010. Progress in this area cannot be measured at present due to a lack of Irish data.

Data from our QNHS gives an indication of the effect that having young children in the family has on female employment rates.

In 2006, the employment rate for women aged 20-44 years was 64.6 %. This rate varied from 88.3 % for women with no children to 53.5 % for women whose youngest child was aged between 4 and 5 years of age (see table 5 below).

**Table 5. Employment rates of persons aged 20-44 by family status**

<b>% of 20-44 age groups</b>		
<b>Family Status</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
No children	94.5	88.3
Youngest child aged 0-3	93	58
Youngest child aged 4-5	91	53.5
Youngest child aged 6 or over	92.9	62.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>93.2</b>	<b>64.6</b>

*Source: CSO 2006*

#### **4. Summary and Conclusion**

The overall position of women in education and the labour market in Ireland is a story of high participation and success. Both in and out of the workplace, the specific needs of women in relation to lifelong learning have been identified. For women not in employment, the role of community based education provision has been documented together with the need for pre-training, support and progression.

Women in the workforce and particularly those on low paid, low skilled and often part-time employment are disadvantaged not just by their lack of education and skill, but also by the very limited opportunities afforded to them. For this group, the provision of lifelong learning opportunities must accommodate both their work within the labour market and their responsibilities outside. Initiatives such as the BTEI, One Step up and the programmes run by the community education groups have the most potential to reach this group. It is essential that the lessons and recommendations from these models of good practice are put in place in mainstream initiatives.

Women returning to the workforce are among the major contributors to labour supply over the past decade. However research conducted by the Equality for Women Measure<sup>170</sup> has highlighted the specific difficulties these women face. Many women returnees find themselves being forced into positions of lower socio-economic status than those in full-time caring work. The research found that many women take up work in the catering, cleaning or childcare areas, as well as the retail and services industry. It is known that the greater the period of time a woman spends out of the workforce; the lower is the likelihood of a successful transition back into employment. Government policies on building up the supply to the labour market must take care not to reinforce this situation. The labour supply needs of the economy will not be met without meeting the socio-economic needs of women.

The examples of good practice given previously play a valuable role in increasing women's access to the labour market. It is important that the emphasis is kept on the needs of women to access high quality skills training and programmes that will increase their educational attainment levels.

Other main areas to be concerned with in the future are the advancement of women within work and the need to provide targeted opportunities for women to access education and training within the workplace and outside. Women such as lone parents and older women need particular supports across a range of areas to ensure they have the opportunity to engage with education and work. One of the stated national priorities under our NDP 2007-2013 is *'focusing on education and training, including lifelong learning to develop a high-skilled innovative and adaptable workforce for the knowledge economy'*. This can only be done by ensuring that there are flexible, learner centred education and training opportunities at the entry stage of the workplace and during people's workforce participation. Recognition must be paid to women's needs as potential workers and as workers; positive action must be the main pillar for policies aimed at attracting women in and progression for women in the workforce.

More attention needs to be paid to the transition from non-formal and informal learning to the labour market especially for women. This will entail new strategies that recognise the skills, knowledge and competences that women have learned from their life experiences and the learning gained in the community groups. Employers and training agencies must recognise these sites as lifelong learning sites and include them in collaborative training initiatives. This way of working was proposed in P2000 Report on Women's Access to the Labour Market as far back as 2000.

State support to address training for women is included among the positive action measures for the achievement of gender equality in the context of the National Development Plan 2007-2013. The National Women's Strategy 2007-2016 suggests that this can be achieved through a number of actions such as publicity campaigns to encourage women to avail of training and education opportunities, incentives to employers to encourage them to provide focused training for female employees and incentives for the women themselves to avail of opportunities. (see Appendix).

The models of good practice that support women's access to lifelong learning and the labour market have been underpinned by the equality legislation in Ireland. However without European Social Fund support the gender specific nature of these initiatives would not be in place.

---

<sup>170</sup> <http://www.ewm.ie>.

Ireland's equality legislation covers nine grounds of which gender is one. Without the support of the ESF gender specific initiatives would be given a low priority over the other grounds.

As stated in the NESF report *Creating a more inclusive Labour Market 2006*, the combination of labour market and social inclusion measures are the only way forward for us to achieve equality in the lifelong learning and labour market arenas. Mainstreaming good practice has to be incorporated into our national policies and resources put in place to ensure policy is truly converted into practice.

## Appendix - National Women's Strategy for Ireland 2007-2016

### Theme One: Equalising Socio-Economic Opportunity for Women

In *Towards 2016*, as in earlier policy documents, the Government and the social partners acknowledge that employment is a major factor for helping people to move out of poverty and that it also influences quality of life and social well-being. A review of economic growth in Ireland over the past decade or so will show that much of that growth has been achieved through the significant increase in women's labour market participation. Over 60% of women aged between 15 and 64 years are now in employment, ahead of the EU average. Nevertheless there is evidence to suggest that women at all levels of income face challenges in the workplace, including a gender pay gap and lack of opportunities for advancement.

Actions are included to improve the socio-economic status of women who are currently disadvantaged or at risk of becoming disadvantaged, including lone parents; women from marginalized groupings and older women who may have no or inadequate pension cover. Education and training are central to the advancement of women as they enter or advance through the labour market and life in general. The availability of quality and affordable childcare and other caring supports has long been cited as a key element to support working mothers and those mothers who wish to undertake re-training to enable them to re-enter the labour market.

This Theme includes Six Key Objectives, each of which has a number of identified actions to be undertaken proactively by one or more Government Departments or Agencies, on occasion with the assistance of the social partners and other external bodies.

<b>Theme one: Equalising Socio-economic Opportunity for Women</b>	
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>Objective 1-A</b> To increase the participation of women in the labour force	1. Mainstream and actively promote the FÁS 'Expanding the Workforce' Process
	2. Strengthen other initiatives which offer supports to enable women to return to the labour market
	3. Undertake survey with a view to developing Action Plan to encourage lone parents to avail of training and re-enter the labour market
<b>Objective 1-B</b> To decrease the gender pay gap	4. Implement recommendations in PPF Partnership Report on Male/Female Wage Differentials
	5. Continue work of National Framework Committee on Equal Opportunities at the Level of the Enterprise to address gender pay gap
	6. Introduce statutory employment records which may facilitate research
	7. Ensure effective monitoring and enforcement of the National Minimum Wage
	8. Continue to review the National Minimum Wage as appropriate in conjunction with Social Partners
	9. Undertake research into international good practice in relation to equality proofing at the level of the enterprise

	10. Extend the programme of Equality Audits to consider and report on the gender pay gap
	11. Consider the establishment of a voluntary 'quality mark' to show commitment on the part of the employer to equality issues, including gender equality
<b>Objective 2</b> To promote the advancement of women in the labour force	12. Expand the range of apprenticeships and, where appropriate, transformation of traineeships into apprenticeships
	13. Develop guidance materials for the preparation of comprehensive gender equality policies in the workplace
	14. Develop initiatives to open debate on, and engage with, planned and systematic approaches to workplace equality
	15. Introduce new projects with business networks and trade unions to develop supports for their members on workplace equality
	16. Introduce cross-functional training programmes for female management trainees to avoid the 'glass walls' phenomenon
	17. Continue to foster the 'Leadership Initiative' developed under the Equality for Women Measure of the 2000 – 2006 National Development Plan
	18. Develop positive action measures to support in-house training for the advancement of female workers
	19. Consider the need for publicity campaigns to encourage women to avail of training opportunities at the level of the enterprise
<b>Objective 3</b> To support more women as entrepreneurs	20. Ensure that training and development programmes meet the particular needs of and are accessed by female entrepreneurs
	21. Promote entrepreneurship amongst women, through initiatives such as 'Start your own Business' courses, award schemes, promotion of appropriate role models, etc.
	22. Ensure that girls are actively participating in schools' entrepreneurship programmes
	23. Further develop the support networks in place for female entrepreneurs
	24. Foster the availability of childcare to support persons who might be working atypical hours as start up entrepreneurs
<b>Objective 4</b> To seek to ensure that girls and women achieve their full potential in the education system	25. Complete the Report of the Science, Education and Technology Committee and present it to the Minister for Education and Science in 2007
	26. Continue to support Teenage Parenting Projects through School Completion Programme
	27. Complete development of guidelines on gender mainstreaming for second level schools
	28. Include gender mainstreaming in subject evaluations and in individual Whole School Evaluations
	29. Provide training on gender mainstreaming to all new and serving school inspectors
	30. Continue to provide supports through further and adult education programmes for 'hard-to-reach' groups of adults, including those who left school without qualifications and who need second-chance educational opportunities
	31. Foster increase in FETAC accreditation for women in further education
	32. Deliver 'Women into Educational Management' Courses as required nationally.
	33. Provide funding for research projects on gender issues within education

<b>Objective 5-A</b> To ensure that childcare services are optimised to meet the needs of parents and children alike	34. Work towards a quality standard for childcare services, taking account of developments across the spectrum of early childhood development and care
	35. Develop and implement the National Training Strategy for childcare
	36. Implement and achieve the targets set for childcare places under the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP), the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) and any successor programme(s)
	37. Implement the EOCP, NCIP and any successor programme(s) in a way which focuses on poverty and disadvantage
	38. Implement and achieve the targets set under the NCIP and 'Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools' (DEIS)
	39. Monitor whether the implementation of the NCIP is impacting positively on working mothers in terms of their continued participation in the labour force
	40. Monitor increasing female labour market participation
<b>Objective 5-B</b> To ensure that the care infrastructure supports women's socio-economic engagement	41. Ensure that payments and supports to carers are efficient and effective, recognising their needs and adequately addressing poverty and social exclusion and are adaptable to the needs of carers in a changing environment (i.e. care sharing arrangements)
	42. Continue to review the scope for further developments of the Carer's Allowance/Benefit subject to available resources
	43. Develop a structured consultation process to inform future policy on care supports
	44. Develop training initiatives for carers as priorities permit
	45. Inter-Departmental Working Group will continue to examine the strategic policy, cost and service delivery issues associated with long term care provision, with appropriate consultation
	46. Devise a National Carers' Strategy in consultation with social partners and all relevant Departments/ Agencies
<b>Objective 6-A</b> To reduce the numbers of women experiencing poverty	47. Ensure that future NAP inclusion continues to address the specific circumstances of vulnerable women and that appropriate policy responses are developed to meet their needs
	48. Review treatment of unemployed persons available for part-time work only in the social welfare system
	49. Social welfare provision for widows to be kept under review and further improvements to be considered, as appropriate in a budgetary context
	50. Increase the Qualified Adult payment to the level of the Old Age (Non-contributory) Pension in accordance with the terms of <i>Towards 2016</i>
	51. Consider proposals for the abolition of qualified adult allowances in social assistance and implementation of decisions arising from Government Discussion Paper 'Proposals for Supporting Lone Parents'
	52. Review increase for Qualified Adult payment for pensioners within the social welfare system so that women can easily access independent payments
<b>Objective 6 - B</b> To reduce the numbers of female lone parents who experience poverty	53. Progress further work aimed at assisting children in families on low incomes including a review of child income supports, which avoid employment disincentives. This work will be informed by the NESC study on second tier child income support

	54. Bring forward proposals aimed at supporting lone parents, and other parents on low income, into employment, with a view to ending welfare dependency and achieving a higher standard of living for themselves and their children
	55. Value of child income support measures for those on social welfare to be maintained as 33 to 35 % of the minimum adult Social Welfare payment rate
<b>Objective 6 – C</b> To reduce the numbers of women experiencing poverty by increasing pension cover	56. In accordance with <i>Towards 2016</i> and having regard to available resources, build on the commitment of €200 per week which was achieved in 2007
	57. Support initiatives to increase participation of women in the workforce
	58. Improve information and awareness among families working together to ensure that they are appropriately insured for social welfare purposes through the preparation of information leaflets and subsequent publicity campaigns
	59. Ensure qualifying conditions for contributory pensions are appropriate and strike a reasonable balance between the level of contributions made and benefits paid
	60. Review the issues and costs associated with a switch to a system of credited contributions and review the backdating of the Homemakers Scheme
	61. Bring forward and implement Budget proposals in relation to pension rates and conditions
	62. Promote extensive, secure and adequate supplementary pension provision, particularly for women, in consultation with the Pensions Board
	63. Increase the number of women, particularly marginalised women, with adequate supplementary pension coverage in line with Government targets
64. Develop women-focused initiatives by the Pensions Board as part of the National Pensions Awareness Campaign	

## Theme 2: Ensuring the Well-being of Women

A sense of personal well-being is usually achieved through a combination of good physical and mental health; access to health and social services, where required; a sense of fulfilment, through employment, family and relationships and usually enhanced by a good work-life balance; well-being for some is also underpinned by a sense of security and protection. In order to reflect the importance of the social environment, the Government has adopted the WHO definition of health, which relies on the social model:

***Health is a state of complete, physical, mental and social well-being.***

Within the National Women's Strategy, well-being includes the sense of fulfilment associated with a good work-life balance (although it would be equally valid to consider work/life balance under the socio-economic theme); the range of health care supports including good physical and mental health and positive and healthy lifestyles. Well-being can be affected negatively by domestic violence, by bullying and harassment and by unacceptable exploitation such as trafficking of women for sexual exploitation which has become prevalent throughout the world and which may well increase in Ireland within the time-span of this Strategy.

This theme contains seven objectives and another comprehensive list of actions, the implementation of which the Government commits to over the coming ten years.

<b>Theme 2: Ensuring the Wellbeing of Women</b>	
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>Objective 7</b> To enhance the work/life balance for women	65. Continue to support work of National Framework Committee on Work/Life Balance
	66. Encourage employers to adopt a wide range of options to enhance the work/life balance of their staff
	67. Review the DSFA Unemployment Benefit and Assistance Schemes with particular reference to the treatment of part-time and atypical workers
	68. Continue to keep under review the treatment of part-time and other atypical workers in the Social Welfare system
<b>Objective 8-A</b> To improve the health status of women in Ireland through gender focused policies	69. Incorporate a gender dimension into health policy planning at the earliest possible stage of development, e.g. the Cardiovascular Strategy
	70. Ensure that the ongoing redevelopment of the health services structures includes representation of women at all decision-making levels
	71. Update women's health structures in light of recent health reform in collaboration with the Health Service Executive and the Women's Health Council target
	72. Put in place health policies and services that allow women full access (e.g. transport, childcare/ eldercare, privacy)
	73. Put in place health policies and services to support carers (respite, counselling, information, financial security)
<b>Objective 8-B</b> To improve the physical health status of women in Ireland	74. Extend Breast Check screening programme nationally
	75. Extend the Cervical screening programme nationally
	76. Treat women with breast cancer at specialist breast centres
	77. The Women's Health Council and the National Cancer Registry of Ireland to conduct a study on older women and cancer in Ireland
	78. Put measures in place to increase awareness about the incidence of cardiovascular disease among women, for both women themselves and for their health care providers
	79. Make women and their health care providers aware of the different manifestations of cardiovascular disease among women
	80. Introduce appropriate gender sensitive diagnostic measures of cardiovascular disease
	81. Use proven methods of treatment for cardiovascular disease to their full extent among women where appropriate
	82. Increase access to cardiac rehabilitation programmes among women
<b>Objective 8-C</b> To improve the reproductive and sexual health status of women in Ireland	83. Ensure that all women have access to information on fertility; contraception and sexual health matters
	84. Develop framework to ensure geographical equity of access to contraceptive services for women
	85. Offer screening programmes for sexually transmitted infections regularly



	86. Provide increased information on sexual and reproductive well-being through the SPHE programme in schools
	87. Ensure that ante-natal care, maternity services and post-natal care are woman-centred
	88. Ensure that information and counselling services are available in cases of crisis pregnancy
	89. Ensure that information is available to all women on health, well-being and other relevant advice in relation to menopause
<b>Objective 8 - D</b> To improve the mental health status of women in Ireland	90. Expand information on mental health in the SPHE programme in schools
	91. Institute a regular community survey to monitor progress on mental health development
	92. Provide counselling services through primary care referrals
	93. Consider the introduction of awareness campaigns relating to mental health among women in the peri-natal period
<b>Objective 8-E</b> To promote healthy life styles for the women in Ireland	94. Emphasise the importance of exercise in life-skills programmes
	95. Tailor and promote physical recreation initiatives specifically for women as a healthy lifestyle option, especially for teenage girls
	96. Promote positive messages about eating more fruit/ vegetables/ fish
	97. Encourage greater participation of women in sports activities at local level and in mass participation events such as mini-marathons through facilitation of year-round training groups
	98. Encourage women in the older age groups to engage in low impact exercise programmes including walking, yoga and pilates to ensure sustained fitness into old age and to diminish the risk of osteoporosis
	99. Increase access to healthier food choices, targeting in particular less well off women and women in the workplace
	100. Introduce media campaigns to reduce smoking and drinking specifically targeting young women
	101. Continue smoking cessation programmes
<b>Objective 9</b> To increase the number of women participating in Sport and Physical Activity in Ireland	102. Undertake research on mass participation events such as Women's Mini-Marathon
	103. Implement recommendations based on findings of this research
	104. Encourage more women to take up volunteer positions in National Governing Bodies (NGBs) in sport
	105. Hold two 'Women in Sport' networking/information-sharing sessions per year
	106. Develop a resource for use in NGBs to encourage women to take up senior positions
	107. Develop 'Women in Sport' coaching projects to advanced coaching levels
	108. Provide targeted funding to NGBs for special initiatives to attract/retain women's involvement in sport
	109. Inform women about their possible participation in mass participation events
	110. Inform women about local sports structures and opportunities to participate in their areas
	111. Increase capacity of organisations to deliver programmes to women and girls
	112. Develop awareness of the 'Women in Sport' brand associated with projects under the initiative
	113. Promote participation of 'Women in Sport' by highlighting opportunities and good practice on Irish Sports Council Website and in mass media.

<b>Objective 10</b> To ensure the health and safety of pregnant and breast feeding women at work	114. Where risks to pregnant and breast feeding women occur, ensure that all employers include an assessment of these risks as an element of the Safety Statement
	115. Continue to create awareness of potential hazards to pregnant and breast feeding mothers within the work place
<b>Objective 11</b> To protect women from bullying and harassment in the workplace	116. Preparation of a revised Code of Practice for employers and employees in the prevention and resolution of bullying at work
	117. Media campaigns to promote awareness of bullying
	118. Further consideration of bullying and harassment under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005
<b>Objective 12</b> To combat violence against women through improved services for victims together with effective prevention and prosecution	119. Identify and gather better statistics and indicators in relation to the incidence of bullying
	120. Establish an Executive Office under the aegis of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to provide a well co-ordinated 'whole of Government' response to violence against women and domestic violence
	121. Augment the research team in the National Crime Council to enable it to provide dedicated research to support the Government response to Violence against Women
	122. Ensure that the voluntary and statutory frontline services address the needs of victims of domestic violence and dependent family members
	123. Ensure that essential supports are available to all recent victims of sexual violence on a 24-hour basis
	124. Personnel of all health services to be trained to fully understand the impact of sexual, emotional and physical abuse
	125. Provide emergency accommodation for women forced to leave their homes because of domestic violence
	126. Implement the recommendations of the National Steering Committee on Violence against Women (NSCVaW) subgroup on treatment services for victims of rape and sexual assault.
	127. Promote effective criminal justice responses, including any necessary legislative responses.
	128. Implement the findings of the 2005 review of Garda policy on domestic violence
	129. Provide funding for the development, operation and ongoing monitoring of effective intervention programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence
	130. Develop and expand Sex Offender Treatment Programmes
	131. Develop appropriate media and other strategies which ensure that victims of Violence against Women (VaW) are aware of the services available in their area
	132. Provide funding to the NSCVaW and to local and regional groups to undertake awareness raising initiatives
133. Develop targeted campaigns to raise awareness of VaW amongst a wide audience, including the general public, service providers and all agencies within the criminal justice system	
<b>Objective 13</b> To address the issue of trafficking of women and children	134. Continue to take a proactive approach to the prevention and detection of human trafficking and prosecution of offenders
	135. Deprive perpetrators of trafficking of the proceeds of their criminal activities
	136. Foster collaboration between Garda Síochána and NGOs in relation to 'intelligence' on trafficking
	137. Bring forward legislation to comply with EU Framework decision on combating trafficking in human beings

	138. Put in place appropriate support mechanisms for victims of trafficking to enable them to re-establish their lives
	139. Undertake media campaigns to promote awareness of trafficking in human beings and its linkages with the 'sex industry'

### Theme 3: Engaging as Equal and Active Citizens

Theme Three includes four key objectives to support the engagement of women as active and equal citizens:

<b>Theme three: Engaging as Equal and Active Citizens</b>	
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>Objective 14</b> To increase the number of women in decision-making positions in Ireland	140. Political parties should develop action plans to increase number of female candidates in General Elections
	141. Political parties should publish gender disaggregated statistics on participation and representation
	142. Government/Ministers will appoint members to State Boards in line with the gender targets set by Government
	143. Other nominating bodies will nominate male and female representatives to State Boards to enable Government/Ministers to make selection to ensure gender balance on Boards
	144. Develop a database of women who might be considered for appointment to State Boards
	145. Develop training programmes to prepare suitably qualified women to participate in the work of State Boards
	146. Develop a database of women who might be considered for appointment to the boards of private sector companies
	147. Develop training programmes to prepare suitably qualified women to participate in the work of private sector boards
	148. Review Civil Service Gender Equality Policy
	149. Develop new Civil Service Gender Equality Strategy based on Review
	150. Develop Gender Equality Strategy for the Public Service modelled on Civil Service Strategy through establishment of working group
	151. Continue to monitor target of 33.3 % for female Assistant Principal Officers within Civil Service
	152. Set target of 27 % for female Principal Officers within Civil Service by Government decision and incorporate target in Departmental Strategy Statements and Annual Reports to reflect these commitments
	<b>Objective 15</b> To increase the number of women involved in the arts in Ireland
154. Establish a forum for women working in the arts which will explore common issues facing them and develop a working agenda to address these issues	
155. Publish guidelines on equality specific to the arts	
156. Offer leadership in the area of equality, through the publication of policy and resource documents	
157. Provide advice and leadership in the area of equality and the arts	

	158. Arts Council will undertake comprehensive survey including people's experiences of the arts in 2006 and 2007
	159. Arts Council survey will include measurement of women's active participation in the arts
	160. Collect data regarding the number of women currently studying to become arts practitioners or facilitators
	161. Provide advice to women who participate, or would like to participate, in the arts.
	162. Examine the current physical infrastructure for the arts and ascertain the level of usage by women
<b>Objective 16</b> To use media proactively to support gender equality and the advancement of women	163. Develop voluntary regulatory mechanisms to promote balanced and diverse portrayals of women in the media
	164. Establish professional guidelines and codes of conduct concerning women in the media
	165. Ensure that professionals working in media are aware of the impact of gender stereotyping on the role of women within society
	166. Promote women's participation in the media at all levels
	167. Ensure that professionals working in media are aware of the contribution they can make to the achievement of true gender equality through their portrayal of women
	168. Make support available for the development of awareness raising on the issue of gender stereotyping and the positive portrayal of women
	169. Increase the number of media programmes made for and by women
<b>Objective 17 - A</b> To foster the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals through Irish Aid	170. Mainstream gender considerations in all development co-operation activities
	171. Undertake specific actions to improve the position and status of women
	172. Increase funding to women's organisations to ensure that women's needs and interests remain on the development and human rights agenda
	173. Promote economic empowerment of women, create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income, ensure greater access to quality education for both boys and girls and support community-based health programmes that enable women's access to reproductive and other health services
	174. Work against gender based violence with national and international partners (See Objective 17 - C)
	175. Support legislative changes that increase women's right to property and other resources
	176. Encourage investment in infrastructure that reduces women's unpaid work burden and thereby enables greater access for women to economic opportunity and decision-making
	177. Continue investment in primary education with emphasis on girls' education and eliminate gender disparity in primary education
	178. Ensure that HIV remains on the agenda through development of new gender specific HIV/AIDS policy and strategy based on 2005 evaluation
	179. Ensure that gender specific HIV/AIDS programming is resourced and improve gender specific HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services
	180. Advocate for further investment in microbicides internationally and maintain or increase current annual investment in the development of microbicides at €3 million

<b>Objective 17 - B</b> To use multi-lateral aid and development policy to promote the role of women and gender equality in developing countries	181. Promote gender equality proposals in European Union external relations fora
	182. Ensure that input into trade agreements takes into consideration the differential impact of trade policy on women and men
	183. Promote the provision of untied aid by other Member States
	184. Promote actions in multi-lateral development aid which foster the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly those which impact upon women
	185. Strengthen analytical capacity at Partner Government level to mainstream gender effectively across government policy and programmes
<b>Objective 17 – C</b> To enhance the capacity of Irish Aid and Development Partners to respond effectively to Gender Based Violence in conflict, post-conflict and developing environments	186. Support policies and operational programmes of EU, UN and Council of Europe on Gender Based Violence
	187. Support the ongoing activity of the Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence
	188. Continue to advocate internationally for greater attention and resources to be devoted to the prevention of gender-based violence
	189. Pursue the inclusion of gender-related measures in the mandates of peacekeeping operations; provision of resources for gender advisers / units in peacekeeping operations; and awareness and enforcement of codes of conduct for peacekeepers
	190. Work to ensure that women are involved at every stage of peace negotiations in the planning, decision-making and implementation at all levels
	191. Press for an increased number of women sent by troop-contributing countries to UN peace missions, and for women to hold 50% of the UNSG Special Representative and Special Envoy positions
	192. Pursue the inclusion of gender-based violence in the statutes of any future ad hoc international tribunals established by the Security Council
	193. Support the exclusion of impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, including gender-based crimes, from post-conflict amnesty provisions
<b>Objective 17 – D</b> To ensure the integration of gender perspectives into all parts of the United Nations System	194. Support for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in the United Nations



## **Poland**

This report focuses on selected aspects of the position of women in continuing education and training and in the labour market in Poland.

### **1. Background Information**

Poland's experience may offer an interesting perspective on the position of women in the transition from building human capital (through education and training activities) to success in the labour market.

During the 1990s, Poland went through a process of rapid economic reform, resulting in relatively high unemployment levels which were partly unavoidable. Economic slowdown after 2000 brought about another wave of worsening labour market conditions. Only around 2003 did this situation start to improve.

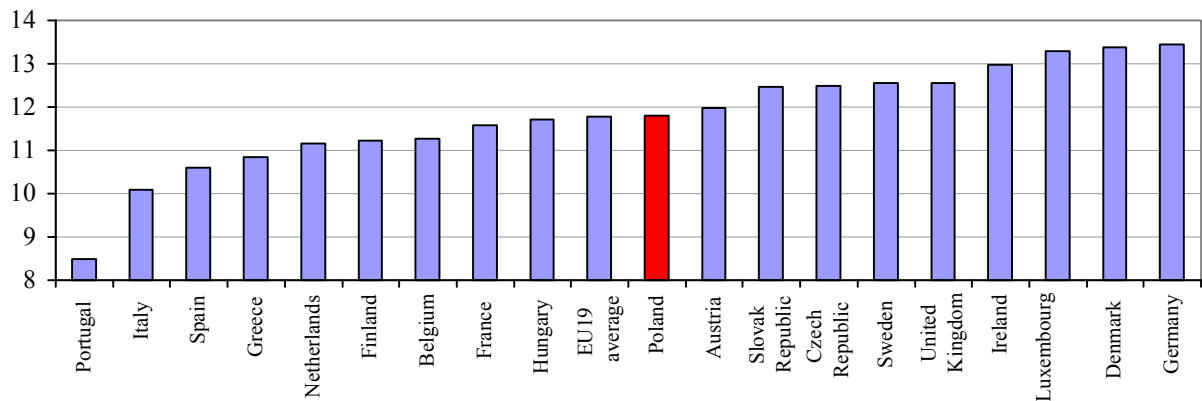
Alongside major reforms in various other spheres, the Polish educational system underwent major changes. One remarkable change concerned the truly phenomenal increase in participation rates in tertiary education. Between 1990 and 2005 the number of students at tertiary education institutions roughly quadrupled, with a substantial proportion of this increase attributable to the newly emerging private higher education institutions that hardly existed before 1990.

Another important fact, which may be worth mentioning before proceeding to the analysis, is the major change in fertility rates, which dropped from around 2 in 1989 to around 1.3 and below in 2002-2006, one of the lowest in the EU.

### **2. Women in Formal Education**

Poland has been characterised by relatively strong indicators for the formal education system and the educational attainment levels. While the proportion of the whole population receiving tertiary education is somewhat below the EU average, average educational attainment among the population aged 25-64 (as shown by the number of years spent in formal education) is at the EU average (Figure 1). The proportion of those with at least upper secondary education is actually above the EU average.

**Figure 1. Educational attainment – number of years in formal education in the population aged 25-64, 2004**



Note: the EU19 group comprises all EU member states that are also members of the OECD.

Source: OECD, *Education at a Glance 2006*.

In 2004, compared to other EU countries, Poland had one of the highest entry rates into type A tertiary education<sup>171</sup>, with 71% of young people choosing this path after completing upper secondary education. Among EU countries for which data was available, only Sweden and Finland had (slightly) higher entry rates. In Poland, the entry rate for women was 76%, compared to 66% for men, broadly in line with the pattern shown in EU19 averages (59% for females and 48% for males). At the same time Poland was characterised by a very low (one of the lowest in the EU) entry rate into type B tertiary education<sup>172</sup> which focuses on more practical occupational skills. It is also interesting to note that the expected length of type A tertiary education participation in Poland is among the highest in the EU at 3.8 years for females and 3.2 years for the whole population, in contrast to the EU19 averages of, respectively, 2.5 and 2.8 years. To sum up, relative to their EU peers, young Poles are more likely to attend type A tertiary education programmes which last a relatively long time; they are also less likely to attend type B tertiary programmes. Females in Poland take particularly long to complete their studies at the tertiary level.

### 3. Labour Force Participation

Despite the recent improvements in the labour market (2003-2007) as shown by rising employment and a declining unemployment rate, Poland is still characterized by a very low labour force participation rate and – therefore – a large inactivity rate. This is exclusively due to the low participation rates of the youngest cohort (under 25 years of age), and older cohort (55+), whereas there is hardly any gap in participation rates amongst those aged 25-54. The gender gap is also not significant. Until 2005, compared to EU15 and EU27 Poland was characterised by higher labour force participation rates of women aged 25-54 (see Figure 2).

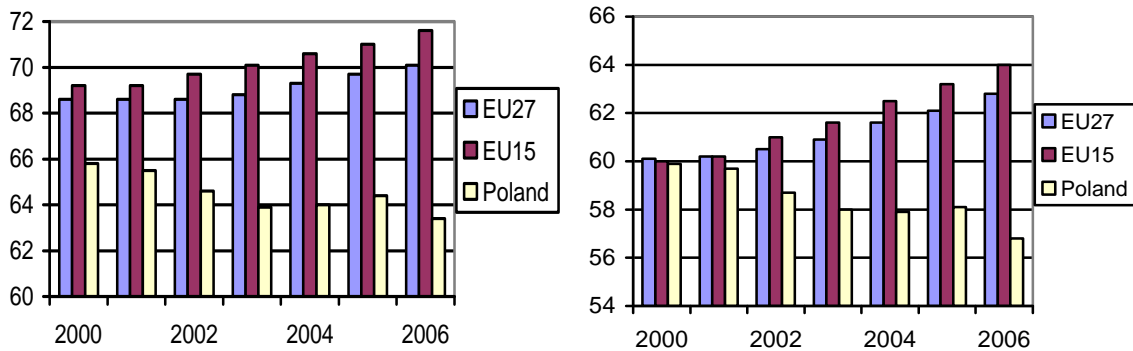
<sup>171</sup> As described in the OECD glossary: 'Tertiary-type A programmes (ISCED 5A) are largely theory-based and are designed to provide sufficient qualifications for entry to advanced research programmes and professions with high skill requirements, such as medicine, dentistry or architecture. Tertiary-type A programmes have a minimum cumulative theoretical duration (at tertiary level) of three years' full-time equivalent, although they typically last four or more years.'

<sup>172</sup> As described in the OECD glossary: 'Tertiary-type B programmes (ISCED 5B) are typically shorter than those of tertiary-type A and focus on practical, technical or occupational skills for direct entry into the labour market, although some theoretical foundations may be covered in the respective programmes. They have a minimum duration of two years full-time equivalent at the tertiary level.'

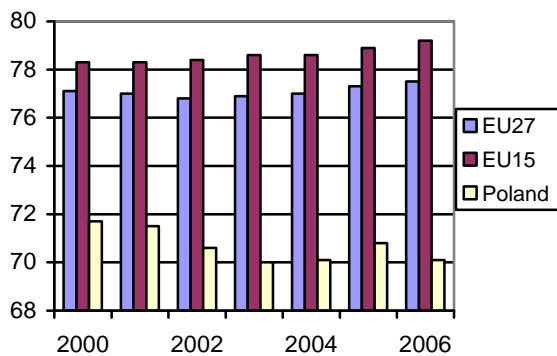


**Figure 2. Labour force participation rates in various groups, 2000-2006**

Poland has a very low labour force participation rate... but the gap for women is less pronounced...

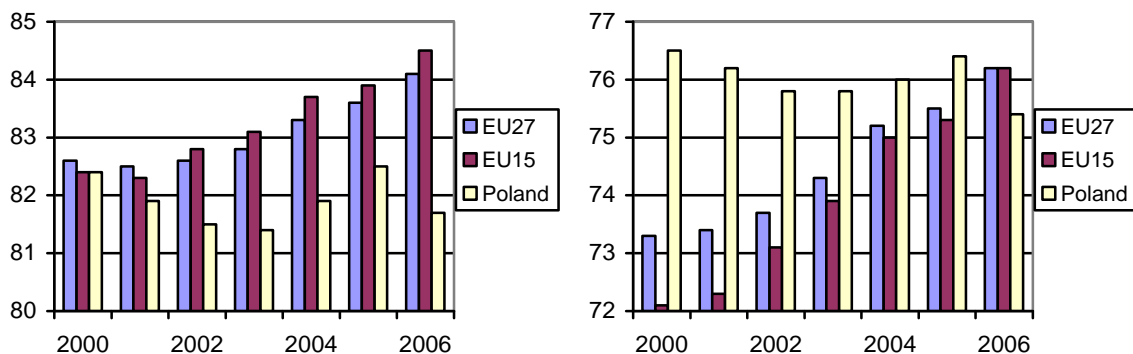


...than for men



Note: The first graph shows activity rates for the whole population aged 15-64, the second one for females and the third one for males. The scale range (difference between the maximum and minimum in percentage points) for all 3 graphs is identical to help make the comparison.

The problem does not really concern people aged 25-54... and certainly not women at this age range in Poland



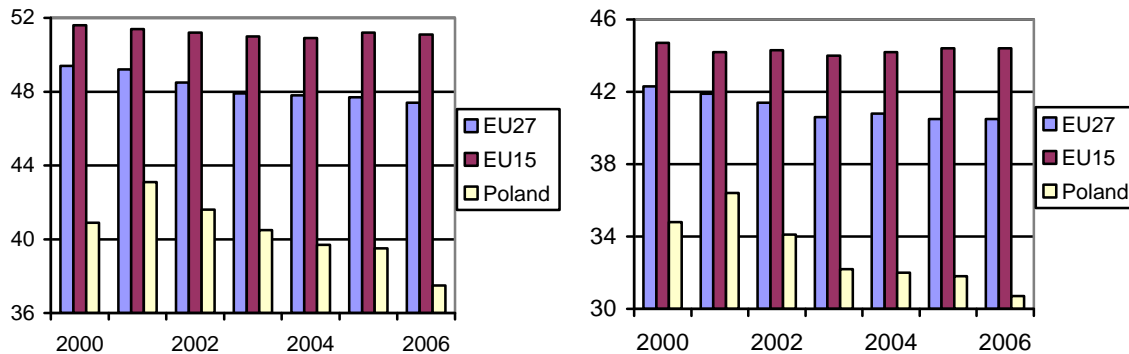
Note: The left-hand graph shows activity rates for the whole population aged 25-54, the right-hand one for the female population in this age range. The scale range for the two graphs is identical to help make the comparison. Source: Eurostat.

The negative characteristics of labour force participation in Poland are partly due to a very low level of activity of the cohort aged 15-24, and particularly young females, although the difference between the sexes is not very pronounced (Figure 3). This can be mainly explained

by the educational behaviour described above – young Poles tend to continue tertiary education more often than their EU peers; they more often choose type A studies, and they spend more time on them. For females, these trends are more pronounced than for males, thus the impact on labour force activity is also probably more pronounced.

**Figure 3. Labour force participation rates for the 15-24 years age group, 2000-2006**

Young males in Poland are much less active than their EU peers... but the gap for young females is slightly higher.



Note: The left-hand graph shows activity rates for males aged 15-24, the right panel for females aged 15-24. The scale range for the two graphs is identical to help make the comparison.

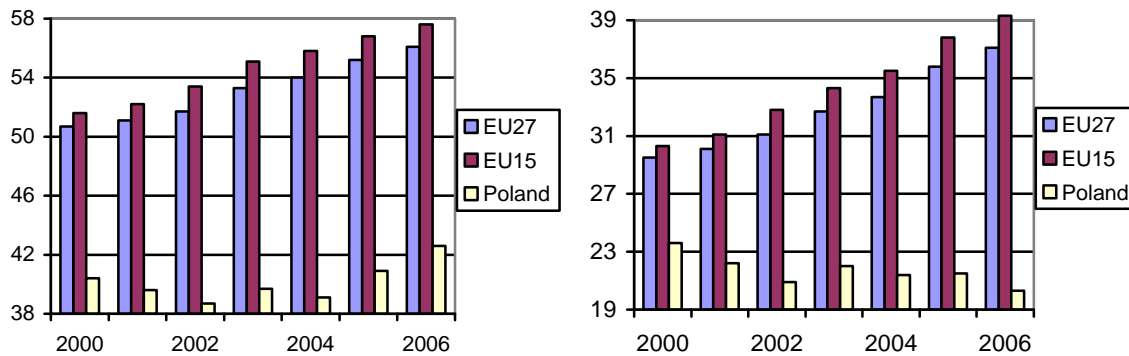
Source: Eurostat..

Another feature, which explains the very low activity rate in the whole population, is the very low participation rate amongst the older cohort over 50-55 years of age. Here again, the gap between Polish and other EU females appears slightly higher than that for males. Indeed, the situation of Polish females aged 55-64 looks quite alarming – only 20% of them stay in the labour market, half the figure for the EU15 (Figure 4). The explanation for the behaviour of the older age-groups in Poland is perhaps somewhat more complex than in the case of young people. It appears that the problem arises primarily from the combination of two factors. First, the skills of this cohort have been rapidly becoming obsolete and in order to stay competitive in the labour market they would need to invest substantial effort in upgrading and learning new skills. Apparently, they rarely do that – we discuss this at more length below. Second, Poland's social policies have provided several easy routes to early withdrawal from labour market participation through various early retirement schemes, added to an already very low retirement age (60 years for women and 65 years for men)<sup>173</sup>.

<sup>173</sup> The interested reader can find a more detailed discussion of these issues in *Employment in Poland 2005*, Ministry of Economy, Warsaw 2005.

**Figure 4. Labour force participation rates of groups aged 55-64 years, 2000-2006**

Males above 55 years in Poland are much less likely to stay economically active than their EU peers... and the gap for females appears slightly higher still– only 20% stay in the labour market.



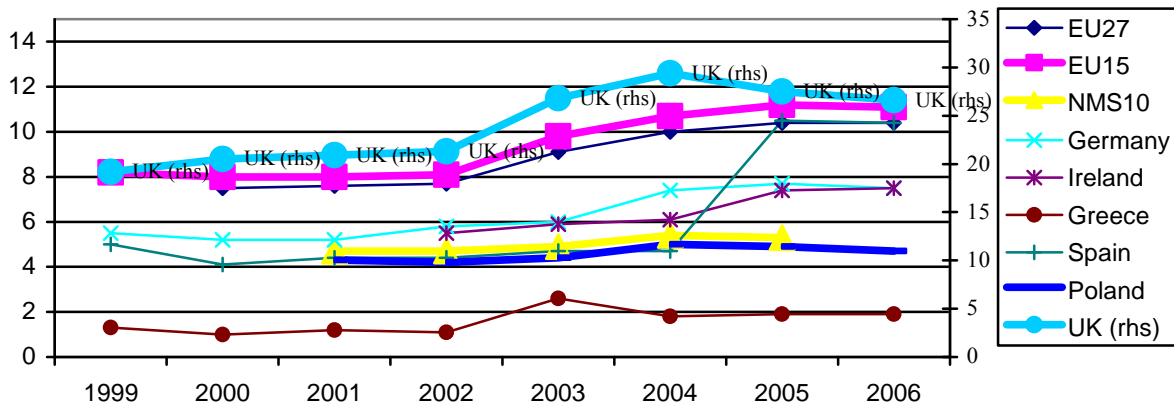
Note: The left-hand graph shows activity rates for males aged 55-64, the right-hand graph those for females. The scale range for the two graphs is identical to help make the comparison.

Source: Eurostat..

#### 4. Continued Education and Training

The educational system in Poland has traditionally relied almost exclusively on education in formal institutions. It is only in recent years that other opportunities for learning and training have increased. However, one striking observation is that participation rates in adult learning seem low compared to other EU economies. Amongst the countries analysed in this report only Greece is characterised by lower participation in lifelong learning. Poland is below, but close to the average participation rate in the new EU member states (the 10 countries that joined the EU in 2004). Generally, there are large differences between EU countries, and some of them (notably the UK which is covered in depth in this report) are characterised by participation rates much higher than those of Poland. In 2006, fewer than 5% of respondents in Poland reported participation in any education or training activity in the four weeks prior to survey, compared to over 25% in the UK (Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Lifelong learning – adult participation in education and training in the population aged 25-64, 1999-2006**



Note: The graph plots the percentage of the respective populations aged 25-64 who responded positively to the question on whether they had participated in any education or training activity in the four weeks prior to survey.

Source: Eurostat.

The difference in lifelong learning behaviour between the sexes is not so marked in Poland. In line with typical trends in the EU, females are somewhat more likely to participate in lifelong learning (although in Germany, for example, the situation is reversed). In 2006, 5.1% of females in Poland disclosed participation in training in the four weeks prior to survey, compared to 4.3% of males. In EU27, the respective figures were 10.4% and 8.8% and in EU15, 12.1% and 10.2%.

In almost all EU countries younger and better-educated people tend to participate in lifelong learning more frequently than those who are older and have less education. Also, employed people typically participate more often in training than those looking for jobs. What differentiates the lifelong learning behaviour of Poles from the typical EU / OECD patterns is that these differences are much more marked in Poland, so that the most disadvantaged groups (in relation to their labour market status) are the least likely to participate in training. The recent OECD study observes that ‘considering participation by employment status, an employed person is twice as likely to receive some training in any given period as an unemployed person in Poland, whereas in the United Kingdom (...) the gap is only about 10%, and the relation is reversed in the Nordic countries, the Netherlands and Germany, and especially in Spain and Portugal. Perhaps even more striking is the link with educational attainment where it is observed that people with tertiary qualifications are 30 or 40 times as likely to be engaged in adult learning as those with few or no qualifications’<sup>174</sup>.

What are the reasons for the very low participation rates of Poles in lifelong learning, and particularly of those with low skills who really need to improve them if they are to stay active in the labour market? Existing evidence does not enable a definitive judgment, but it seems that there is no single explanation, but a combination of factors in respect of both the demand and supply sides of training. On the supply side the quality and relevance of some training may be of a poor standard, especially because there are hardly any mechanisms for any kind of quality control. In fact the training services market has been completely unregulated and only recently (with the growing flow of EU funds that can be spent on training) has a system of voluntary registration of institutions providing training been established.

<sup>174</sup> O'Brien, P. and Paczynski, W., *Poland's Education and Training: Boosting and Adapting Human Capital*, OECD Economics Department Working Papers, No. 495, OECD Publishing 2006.

However, there also appear to be important constraints on the demand side of training. To quote again from the OECD report: ‘(...) the lifelong learning culture has not yet been accepted by older and less educated generations. The understanding of the importance of education in shaping life paths is now much wider than a few years ago, but older adults still tend to believe that this is important for their children, not for themselves (...). Least qualified and older people tend to be rather passive, lack self-motivation, do not see much sense in training and refer to financial and time constraints. When workers do participate in training, it is often due to some form of external pressure, such as an employer’s instruction (in the case of training for employees) or fear of losing one’s current job (...). It also seems to be the case that access to information on training availability can be a problem’<sup>175</sup>.

## 5. Gender Mainstreaming in Poland

Although the labour market situation for Polish women of working age does not appear to be very bad, the situation for both the younger and the older cohorts is much more complicated. And even though women are relatively active in the labour market their wages are somewhat lower than those of comparably qualified men<sup>176</sup>.

When asked about gender discrimination in the labour market, some 31% of women do not see it happening to any significant extent (responses agreeing that ‘nowadays there is no discrimination against women in the labour market’ and ‘there is not much discrimination...’) whereas as many as 47% do perceive discrimination (responses agreeing that ‘there is discrimination against women in the labour market’ and ‘there is some discrimination...’)<sup>177</sup>.

For this and other reasons, tailoring education and training opportunities to meet the specific needs of both sexes is of great importance. This section describes the development of gender mainstreaming in Poland and the current situation. The main message is that whilst the practical implementation of gender mainstreaming has been relatively weak in a number of important respects (this comparatively negative assessment for Poland is probably not very different from that for some other EU countries), there is some hope for a gradual improvement in this sphere. One should not expect too much too soon, but some recent developments do provide grounds for cautious optimism.

Gender mainstreaming is still a relatively new concept for both public administration and civil society in the country. There is no gender mainstreaming strategy at national level. The notion has been slowly introduced by civil society organizations (mostly women’s organizations) and has quite recently become a matter of interest to business and administration. The latter’s interest is related to the rising involvement in EU funded projects, where gender mainstreaming aspects have become a compulsory element. EU funded projects therefore already have significant impact on raising awareness for the tools available for gender mainstreaming, and will do further.

However, the understanding of the concept itself appears limited so far. This can be illustrated by the fact that the coverage of gender mainstreaming issues in the report prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy on the Progress on the implementation of the European

---

<sup>175</sup> Op.cit.

<sup>176</sup> Eurostat data suggest a 10% gender pay gap (the difference between men's and women's average gross hourly earnings as a percentage of men's average gross hourly earnings), one of the lowest in the EU.

<sup>177</sup> The survey was carried out on a representative sample of women aged 18-59, n=3500. For more details see *Aktywność kobiet na rynku pracy*, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Warsaw 2006.

Social Fund appears weak<sup>178</sup>. The manner in which the Ministry describes the implementation of gender mainstreaming in ESF projects in Poland seems to demonstrate insufficient expertise in this field at the Ministry - or that gender mainstreaming is considered as an issue of secondary importance.

The assessment that there are difficulties in the practical implementation of gender mainstreaming is confirmed by the outcomes of the evaluation of the EQUAL Community Initiative. Below we focus on this particular instrument, financed by the European Social Fund, using the author's experience in dealing with several EQUAL projects. This appears to be a particularly good example for the purpose of this report as the EQUAL initiative aims at developing innovative solutions for reintegrating marginalized groups into the labour market – a problem that is particularly relevant in Poland, as discussed above.

Evaluation of the EQUAL Initiative shows that most project teams have heard about gender mainstreaming. Most teams understand it as a legal obligation and some of them claim that it is a very important tool in promoting gender equality. However, when it comes to details and ways of implementing gender mainstreaming it becomes clear that any knowledge of it is somewhat superficial and that sometimes gender mainstreaming is confused with equal representation. The evaluation also shows that there is a great demand for training on gender mainstreaming and for provision of examples of good practice and tools in this field for project staff. In this respect Poland is not alone. The outcomes of the EQUAL CI evaluations in other EU countries<sup>179</sup> and the research done by other international institutions (in particular UNDP<sup>180</sup>) clearly show that understanding of gender mainstreaming is still rather weak and that the concept is unclear to a large proportion of the population.

There is however the possibility of change. The National Support Structure (NSS) of the EQUAL Community Initiative has recently initiated training on gender mainstreaming. NSS started with trainer training, leading to the preparation of 44 qualified trainers. With effect from October 2006 the majority of development partnerships implementing EQUAL projects have taken part in two-day workshops. These have proved that training is needed but have also confirmed that issues related to gender mainstreaming are sometimes disregarded by project staff. The training is obligatory but key project staffs rarely take part in it. However the training content, methodology and materials have been prepared and are being tested, and the idea of providing various types of training on gender mainstreaming for non-profit making organizations, public administration (especially the staff responsible for implementing EU funds) and for business is becoming more popular. Hopefully the training will lead to better understanding and use of gender mainstreaming tools.

## **6. The Role of the European Social Fund**

We have previously discussed the very low level of participation in lifelong learning in Poland. This is partly due to the fact that there is no culture of lifelong learning culture in Polish society and that resources for this kind of education were rather limited during recent years. Poland's accession to the EU changed the position in the latter respect as the relatively large financial resources of the ESF have become available for training activities. In addition to providing

<sup>178</sup> See: *Interim Report on the Progress on Implementation of the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development*, Ministry of Regional Development, Warsaw 2007.

<sup>179</sup> See: *EU-wide Evaluation of the Community Initiative EQUAL 2000–2006, Second Interim Report*, Bernard Brunhes International, 2005 and *EQUAL Operational Programme. Final Report*, Fitzpatrick Associates, 2005; *Update to the Mid-Term Evaluation of the UK-GB EQUAL Community Initiative 2000-6*, GHK, 2005.

<sup>180</sup> *Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming*, Evaluation Office, UNDP, 2006.

significant financial resources, the ESF – by referring to Community policies related to gender mainstreaming – additionally provides specific opportunities for women who need to upgrade their skills. By the same token the ESF might have helped to improve access to and interest in training amongst disadvantaged groups which have previously participated very little in any kind of training (see the discussion above).

Unfortunately, the 2005-2006 data do not bear this out. On the contrary, Eurostat data show that the level of participation in lifelong learning in Poland has stayed the same or even slightly decreased. A similar negative trend can be observed in several other new EU member states (e.g. Hungary, Czech Republic, Latvia, and Lithuania). One explanation of this phenomenon may be that the impact of ESF support is not immediate but that the benefit will be visible with a few years' perspective. Little can also be said about the quality of the training as there is as yet no overall evaluation of the training organised within the ESF framework – the evaluation report will be available by the end of 2007.

Faced with a lack of aggregate data to enable a more in-depth analysis, we briefly present below some micro-level information on training funded by the ESF or – more precisely – by one of its main components.

The ESF (2002 - 2006) programme in Poland consisted of 3 major schemes:

1. Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2004-2006 (SOP HRD) – ESF: 1 470 million Euro, total: 1 960 million Euro
2. Integrated Regional Operational Programme 2004-2006 (IROP) – Priority 2 human resources development in regions – ESF: 438 million Euro, total: 598.6 million Euro
3. EQUAL Community Initiative Programme – ESF: 174 million Euro, total: 178 million Euro.

Overall ESF financial support: 2 082 million Euro.

The SOP HRD has 3 priorities:

- Priority 1: Active labour market and professional and social inclusion policy
- Priority 2: Development of knowledge-based society
- Priority 3: Technical assistance.

For the purpose of this report the activity 1.6 *Equal opportunities for women in the labour market - vocational integration of women* under priority 1, activity 2.1 *Lifelong learning - promoting access to education, improving the quality of education and its labour market relevance, capacity building in public administration* and activity 2.2 *Improving education quality and relevance to labour market needs* under priority 2 are most relevant and so we focus only on them.

Under Priorities 1 & 2, a total of 872 900 people were covered by the programme's activities, of which 61% were females. The fact that women made up a higher percentage of the ultimate beneficiaries results from the provision of special support directly to women under activity 1.6 and from activity 2.2 mostly involving actions aimed at raising teachers' qualifications (the majority of teachers in Poland are females).

In activity 1.6, equal opportunities for women on the labour market - vocational integration of women - 322 projects were implemented with the total value of 252.4 million PLN (66.9 million Euros). 299 000 women have so far benefited from these projects. They are complex and consist

of many parallel activities. The most typical activities are: training aimed at improving women's vocational qualifications (203 projects), vocational advice and training aimed at reintegration into the labour market (106 projects).

The prevalence of projects in these categories may be perceived as a relative weakness. One would perhaps expect more activities pursuing more ambitious and innovative approaches. Examples of these, rather limited in number, include: creating local partnerships aimed at creating new workplaces for women (4 projects), pilot projects providing women with know-how on how to establish women's organizations (2 projects); training for entrepreneurs (1 project only).

One worrying sign regarding projects targeting women is that the progress in implementing activity 1.6 (*Equal opportunities for women...*) appears by far the slowest among all the SOP HRD. The reasons for this are as yet unclear.



## Spain

### 1. Framework Conditions of Lifelong Learning for Men and Women

#### 1.1. Legislation

The present government is an egalitarian government of 50% women and 50% men with a male president and a female vice-president. Gender mainstreaming is a major theme to be implemented at all levels of decision-making; the procedure of implementing gender mainstreaming, however, is still being discussed.

New laws such as the one against Gender Violence Act (violence against women is still a big problem in all European countries), and the 'Effective Equality of Women and Men Act', approved on March 15, 2007 in the Spanish Parliament, have a direct impact on social reality in an attempt to destroy what prevents women from being really equal to men.

This law establishes the principle of equality and the elimination of all discrimination against women by providing a series of general measures applicable to all aspects of political, legal and social life. It recognises the right to balance one's professional and personal life and fosters more consistency between men and women when fulfilling family obligations. It also establishes a balanced representation of women and men in public administration and on the boards of directors of firms as well as a balanced composition of men and women on electoral lists. Labour and social security measures are the result of a basic agreement with social agents such as the CCOO and UGT trade unions.

It establishes the integration of the principle of equality in all health education policy objectives and actions, access to new technologies, to goods and services, housing, culture, sport, artistic creation and cooperation for development.

Women mostly take care of children; in order to give women more opportunities to remain in employment, a law approved in 2006 provides fathers with 13 days of paternity leave which is to be extended to up to 4 months of unpaid leave by 2013<sup>181</sup>. New parental laws in Spain also provide for the possibility of a shorter fixed workday for those parents with children up to 12 years of age<sup>182</sup>. Certainly these new law and others like it, will be an influential factor going forward, but as of now Spain is following the pattern of most EU states that sees a sharp decline in employment rate of women after the birth of a child. More legislation is needed throughout Europe to encourage Men to partake in household duties including the rearing of children.

#### 1.2. Institutions involved in Spain

The institutions involved in equality between men and women and education include, among others:

**'Instituto de la Mujer' (National Spanish Women's Institute)** - It is an autonomous agency pertaining to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. According to the law by which it was created, law 16/1983 of October 24, and the second article of royal decree 774/1997, of May 30, establishing its new regulation, it is responsible for promoting and fostering conditions enabling

<sup>181</sup> Fraerman, A., *Spain: No turning back from to gender equality*, in: Iter Press Service March 2007.

<sup>182</sup> Meseguer, P., Agreement on work-life balance in the public sector, in *European Industrial Relations Observatory On-Line* 2006.

the social equality of the two sexes and women's participation in political, cultural, economic and social life.

**Autonomous Regions - CC.AA - In 17 regions: Institutes for Women** - These are responsible for promoting and fostering conditions enabling the social equality of the two sexes and women's participation in political, cultural, economic and social life, on the regional level.

**Women's departments in the Provinces and Municipalities** - In many cases, in the localities and provinces it is usual to have a woman responsible for women's promotion and gender equality among the members of their governments.

**Women's associations, Municipal Women's Councils and organized groups of women** - In Spain there is a strong feminist movement who works to defend and promote women.

**Universities:** A lot of Official Universities in Spain have feminist seminars such as, for example, the feminist seminars of Complutense University and Autónoma University of Madrid, etc.

**230 Popular Universities (adult education centres), with the support of their local councils and the Spanish Federation of Popular Universities (FEUP)** have a long history of collaboration with the National Women's Institute. As a Popular University network, FEUP develops programmes of 'education for women as a process of identity, capability-enhancing and social development' (social cooperation programmes with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Affairs, for education, professional training and integration of young people and women from 1990 to date, collaborations in activities and events, dissemination of materials, etc). Popular Universities have a high participation of women (70%).

## 2. Women and Men on the Labour Market: Spanish Statistics.

Strong economic growth has been accompanied by substantial job creation: 900 thousand new jobs in 2005 and 850 thousand in the first half of 2006. Despite the rapid increase in the labour force, robust employment growth is reducing the unemployment rate to levels close to the European average. **The incorporation of women into the labour market**, a key factor driving Spain's growth in recent years, accelerated in 2006; the figures at the end of the first trimester in 2007 (see 'Active Population Survey in Spain' - EPA) were as follows:

	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Activity rate</b>	<b>48.61%</b>	<b>68.93%</b>	<b>58.58%</b>
<b>Occupation rate</b>	<b>43.08%</b>	<b>64.57%</b>	<b>53.62%</b>
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	<b>11.39%</b>	<b>6.32%</b>	<b>8.47%</b>

According to the Women's World Bank, 24% of the Spanish women working outside the home have created their own businesses. This figure is four times greater than the 6% average for European women.

A study by the Women's Institute (Instituto de la Mujer) entitled 'The presence of women in illegal employment' ('La presencia de las mujeres en el empleo irregular'), showed that 17% of women work without being registered in the social security system (Seguridad Social). Most of this undeclared work involves domestic service (30%), followed by business services (16%) and hotels and catering (14%). These inequalities are even greater for immigrant women. An

interesting research project has shown major differences in the working conditions of immigrant women, who are subject to a triple discrimination: most of them have precarious, temporary and underground jobs, receive less pay and suffer from gender discrimination, according to Sonia Parella ('Mujer, inmigrante y trabajadora: la triple discriminación', Barcelona: Anthropos, 2005)<sup>183</sup>.

Generally speaking the labour force in Spain is poorly qualified: 30% of economically active persons are without secondary education, 46% have completed a course of secondary education, and 24% have completed post-secondary education. The qualification standards among the non-working population are lower than among the working population.

In sectoral terms, services employ fewer people than on average across the Community. Within the service sector, most jobs are provided by services requiring a medium qualification level, such as the distributive trades, the hotel and catering industry, and public services.

With regards to education for Spanish women over 16, the following table shows the educational level completed:

**% percentage of women relative to the total (men and women) in each category:**

- Illiterate 68.89%
- Primary education 54.67%
- Secondary education (1<sup>st</sup> stage) 46.88%
- Secondary education (2<sup>nd</sup> stage) 49.44%
- Professional training 43.15%
- Higher education 50.45%
- Doctorate 34.00%

The website of the Spanish Women's Institute shows updated information, from 1998 up to the first quarter of 2007, concerning men and women in Spain and a comparative analysis of the evolution in the last few years with indicators such as demographics, use of time, balancing of professional and personal life, educational levels, ICT, employment, professional training, salaries, power and decision-making, violence, immigrants and an important equality observatory providing relevant documents and studies on the situation of men and women in Spain<sup>184</sup>.

The incorporation of women in the labour market is now an irreversible process, in spite of which the rate of female unemployment is considerably higher than its male counterpart. Many women continue to join the labour market with part-time contracts and in positions requiring few qualifications. On many occasions, women continue to be paid less than men for the same job.

One of the obstacles to improving the integration of women in employment is still the difficulty of reconciling work with personal and family life. Some figures provided by the Women's Institute show that the family workload is still borne by women. For example, childcare leave was requested in 2003 by 96.3% of mothers, compared with 96% in 2002. Maternity/paternity leave is still also mainly taken by women. In 2000 it was requested by 99% of working mothers,

<sup>183</sup> Martin Artiles, A., Empleo y conciliación de la vida laboral, personal y familiar (Reconciliation of work, and family life for women in Spain), in *European Industrial Relations Observatory*, On-Line, 2005.

<sup>184</sup> See more on the Spanish Women's Institute website <http://www.mtas.es/mujer/mujeres/cifras/index.htm>.

compared with 98.4% in 2003. In other words, the roles and distribution of the domestic workload are mostly unchanged.<sup>185</sup> (See above: new legislation)

The new laws concerning parental leave will have an impact; but it is not only legislation to change the situation of women. The incorporation of women in the labour market necessarily involves a change in the traditional system of values. Balancing personal, family and professional life and a fair and equalitarian distribution of household chores are basic issues which inevitably have to be contemplated in our social structure.

### **3. Participation of Women and Men in Education and Training**

#### **3.1. Data**

Although slowly, women themselves have been preparing the terrain for their own transformation, establishing their priorities and becoming active and autonomous members of society. The principle of equality between women and men is legally recognised in Spain, but ways have to be developed to guarantee equality in situations affecting women in their professional, social and daily lives. Many of the difficulties related to equal opportunities in practice are essentially derived from the traditional idea of roles of men and women in society. In this respect, a large number of women are relegated to a private rather than the public scenario, which has traditionally been reserved nearly exclusively for men. Private family responsibilities are obstacles hindering women's progress in public life.

Education and training may help develop a critical perspective of reality, leading to action aimed at its transformation. The idea of lifelong learning means not only to make basic education universally accessible, but to empower the individual to develop more competences and autonomy.

Lifelong learning for women is essential if they are to improve their quality of life and to help them exercise their rights as citizens and have a voice, favouring social insertion in their communities, families, the workplace and politics. A primary objective of lifelong learning for women would be to be the agents of their own change from a global and comprehensive point of view.

Rapid modernisation and the new information and communication technologies are important aspects of society today. For women, they represent major obstacles for their active participation, as the lack of training that most of them suffer makes it difficult for them to use these technologies. This factor could increase the risk of women's exclusion, as many women with low educational levels openly admit their unfamiliarity with ICT, fear and reluctance, in addition to curiosity and willingness to learn.

Women continue to be particularly affected as, in spite of the changes, they continue to be the backbones of their families and this is not socially acknowledged.

A major role is played in the education and social insertion of women and the process of socio-educative intervention by development and training in basic skills, to favour and improve their personal, family, social and professional lives.

---

<sup>185</sup> Meseguer, P. Agreement on work-life balance in the public sector, in European Industrial Relations Observatory On-Line, 2006.

Societies are facing completely new situations requiring the use of new techniques and new approaches which present new risks for us all, as this emerging complexity is forcing us to reconsider the role to be played by education in the new reality of women.

On a worldwide scale, emphasis is being given to the importance of educating women more and better. It is acknowledged that women's education involves better children's and family welfare. It has a positive impact on reducing poverty and is associated to increased productivity and development. Women are also entitled to obtain the instruments they need to enjoy full citizenship.

In the experience of the Spanish Popular Universities, joint women's programmes are very important, in collaboration with town councils and other organisations. The joint action of state authorities, autonomous regions, councils and others working with women has been seen to be decisive in progressing in the process of women's participation in all aspects of society.

There has been an increase in the policies, programmes and actions developed by different institutions, agencies and organisations, such as Popular Universities, to foster the equal participation of women in society.

### **3.2. Stock-taking**

A set of measures have been implemented to ensure that the education system works properly and to guarantee a quality education at all levels of the education system plus better life-long training for all citizens, regardless of their employment situation. Since education has been devolved to the Regional Governments, these initiatives have been designed and implemented in cooperation the Regional Government and have significant budgetary support. The Ministry of Education and Science has made a considerable effort to coordinate all the administrations involved in the education system.

A number of major measures to reform the system were adopted so as to provide a quality education and remedy the weaknesses on the education system that were analysed before. These actions addressed all levels of education, from nursery school to third level. The environmental conditions for children and young people are also being improved out of the conviction that it is necessary to reconcile work and personal life so that children develop properly and women can enter the labour market without any discrimination<sup>186</sup>.

One of the strategic objectives in the area of education and employment was the creation of a new, more efficient model of professional education and training by improving quality, allowing for decentralisation by devolution to the Regional Governments and further improving institutional management. Important in this context is the Agreement on Professional Training for Employment 2006, signed with the social partners in the framework of the Social Dialogue.

---

<sup>186</sup> Extract from: *Spain national reform programme*, 2006 Progress Report, Community Support Framework 2000-2006, Spanish Prime Ministers Economic Office, 2006.

The main features of this Agreement on Training are as follows:

- Integration of Occupational and Continuous Training: It seems inappropriate to distinguish between training for the unemployed and training for the employed. The new system provides an integrated vision of training and employment within the current reality of the labour market.
- Foster participation by workers in the training process so as to converge on European Union levels of participation and investment in training (still clearly insufficient in Spain).
- The principle that training should be free of charge.
- Strengthening coordination between the social partners and the Government while enhancing the Regional Governments' management capacities.
- Combining the decentralised nature of the State with the fact that training is covered by collective bargaining at national level, thus creating a single framework of reference.
- Finally, enhancing the quality of training in a search for stability so as to address, from the standpoint of training, the challenges faced by our economy within the European Strategy of attaining full employment.

The percentage of the population receiving continuous training, i.e. that is taking some form of training independently of their labour situation, more than doubled between 2004 and 2005, from 5.1 % to 12.1 %. The latter figure means that Spain is very close to the 12.5 % target for 2010.

To progress further towards this goal, in 2006 the Government approved a territorial distribution of funding for continuous training, based on an agreement with the Sectoral Conference, which will provide the Regional Governments with 388 million Euro for training activities aimed at the employed<sup>187</sup>.

### 3.3. European Social Fund<sup>188</sup>

For the period 1995-1999 there was no concrete information on the European Social Fund's contribution to the different policies in Spain. Following the progress report, the Spanish government developed a joint strategy for the ESF.

The human resource policy instruments are presented as a wide range of measures and programmes which lack, to a certain extent, any strategic order. In many cases, existing instruments could be better defined and coordinated, determining the objectives more clearly and thus allowing for greater concentration of effort on priority activities.

The two main activities described in the Plan are employment promotion and continuing training; it notes that there is substantial scope for improving the provision of technical vocational training to the working population as a whole.

---

<sup>187</sup> Extract from *Spain national reform programme, 2006 Progress Report*, Community Support Framework 2000-2006, Spanish Prime Ministers Economic Office, chapter on 'Continuing Education and Training System', 2006.

<sup>188</sup> Extract from *Spain national reform programme, 2006 Progress Report*, Community Support Framework 2000-2006, Spanish Prime Ministers Economic Office, chapter on 'European Social Fund', 2006.

The problems with education centre on the inadequacy of the curriculum offered; the limited spread of new technologies; the lack of guidance for those pupils unaware of all the options on offer and the lack of connections between the worlds of school and work. All of the Autonomous Communities are adopting measures to combat these problems.

As regards equality of opportunity, the Plan presents specific support, guidance, training and employment promotion measures. The focus of these measures, centred on direct employment promotion, is adequate. However, insufficient emphasis has been placed on the horizontal approach. Nor is enough detail provided on the barriers faced by women entering employment (for example: lack of childcare facilities, unstable jobs).

### **3.4. Good Practice Examples in Adult and Women's Education**

The good practice examples come from Popular Universities (adult education centres) in Spain which define themselves as 'a cultural development project operating on a municipal level with the objective of promoting social participation, education, training and culture, to enhance the quality of life'.

From the 1990s to date, there have been numerous meetings between professionals working with women in order to analyse the importance of good practices, develop educational materials and educational strategies with women.

The good practice examples, systematised materials and progress in projects aimed in particular at improving the situation of socially excluded women. These processes focus on three major areas:

- Identity-awareness.
- Empowerment.
- Social projection.

### **3.5. Women at Spanish Popular Universities and General Objectives of Lifelong Learning for Women**

In Spain, many women have problems and disadvantages when it comes to developing basic skills to facilitate their social inclusion. This, which is one of the indicators of access to education, shows how women have been systematically sidelined from education and learning opportunities over time. The lack of training and education of mature and older women, who were unable to receive suitable schooling as children, is the principal problem of a large number of women, as it directly excludes them from the labour market and indirectly isolates them from reality, limiting their participation in public affairs and their personal development. In these cases, their families become their only point of reference.

The overall objective is to foster equal opportunities for women from a gender-based perspective, supporting processes promoting their awareness, motivation and learning, developing a comprehensive plan to act as a framework for a transformation process enabling the awareness, motivation and capability of women for their personal development and progress as a group.

The fundamental objective is to improve the quality of life of women in order to contribute to their dignity and happiness through social, educational, cultural and labour insertion.

### 3.6. Methodology and Evaluation

In adult education, activities and methods are developed which are consistent with the measures contemplated in the recent pact for equality of gender to combat gender stereotypes, favour employability and the development of basic skills, promote more equality between the sexes, strengthen the power of women and favour their personal development and social, political and economic participation.

Methods are based on the following criteria: socialising - helping women become aware that they are a fundamental part of society and their active participation is essential for social transformation; active and participative - facilitating the intervention of participants in the different phases of the process; group-related - the group is the basic core of action based on future social projection; teamwork generates solidarity, commitment, respect and reflection; creative - promoting different forms of expression to facilitate communication; critical - because it favours diversity of opinions and leads to considering and reasoning information to express opinions and make choices; flexible: because it adapts to the group at different times and in different phases.

The emphasis is clearly on empowering women to be their own agents of change; however, the same or similar methods are used in mixed groups.

Popular Universities use evaluation as an essential methodological instrument in the development of programmes for women. The objectives of the evaluation process are to measure the level of: Suitability - defined as the adequacy of the objectives relative to actual needs; efficacy - with regards to compliance with the defined objectives; and efficiency- related to the use of resources in relation to the results obtained.

## 4. Summary and Conclusions

The most important obstacle to changing women's roles in the Spanish society is to overcome the traditional, male-dominated stereotypes of social and family life. Spain has already made enormous progress in the past decades; there remains, however, much to do. Legislation is an important tool in achieving equality; attitudes, however, will only slowly change, and this can be mainly done in education and training. Women are representing far more than 50% of the participants in adult education; the focus here has to be made on empowerment of women.

Another way is to emphasize women's role in the development of democracy in Spain. In this sense, the 'Congress of Dignity', organised by the Spanish Federation of Popular Universities in May 2007, was designed as a major encounter to pay tribute to the women and feminist movement which have, in the last century, successfully progressed in relation to equality of gender in Spain<sup>189</sup>.

---

<sup>189</sup> For more information see the website of feup: [www.feup.org](http://www.feup.org).



## Appendix

### Objectives, Methodology and Organisation of Courses for Women in Spanish Popular Universities

The general objectives developed by pus with reference to the creation of a new lifestyle based on a culture of proximity, neighbourliness and solidarity, include:

- contributing to personal development;
- promoting sustainable development;
- promoting equal opportunities between men and women;
- Promoting access to and the creative use of information and communication technologies.

The subjects emphasised by Popular Universities for the development of basic skills include, among others, reading and writing, mathematics, languages, self-esteem, autonomy, creativity, evaluation of information, comprehension/communication/expression, conflict-solving, decision-making, teamwork, capacity for innovation, cultural values, etc. There has been significant progress but there is still a long way to go before these skills reach their full potential and education becomes free of stereotypes.

PU's promote female participation through formative, cultural and leisure activities to facilitate their social insertion.

According to the development of the priorities established in programmes for women by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, FEUP has promoted the work of Popular Universities (PUs) in relation to the education and social insertion of women. This currently involves, among others, objectives shared by national and international organisations (UNESCO, European Commission, MEC, MTAS, etc.) In female education and the development of lifelong learning, such as:

- Education and social integration of women
- Basic skills and active citizenship
- Health
- Employability
- Promotion and motivation of lifelong learning.

Popular Universities work to ensure equal opportunities between women and men, to provide access to cultural and educational assets and to contribute to personal development and happiness through participation processes, ongoing learning and the development of attitudes.

### Methodology

Spanish Popular Universities work on the local level. In most of their locations, they are promoted by the local government. They are defined as a municipal cultural development project, the objective of which is to bring education and culture to citizens in order to enhance their quality of life and contribute to their personal and social development. UUPP / PUs operate in different parts of Spain. They all share the same approach and orientation and they are organised in a network in which feup is the focal point.

It is important to promote, develop and coordinate education, training, information and diffusion to promote women, as part of a process of identity, capability and social development.

With adult education, Spanish Popular Universities, develop activities and methods which are consistent with the measures contemplated in this recent pact for equality of gender to combat gender stereotypes, favour employability and the development of basic skills, promote more equality between the sexes, strengthen the power of women and favour their personal development and social, political and economic participation.

They apply methods based on the following criteria:

- **Socialising:** helping women become aware that they are a fundamental part of society and their active participation is essential for social transformation.
- **Active and participative:** facilitating the intervention of participants in the different phases of the process.
- **Group-related:** the group is the basic core of action based on future social projection. Teamwork generates solidarity, commitment, respect and reflection.
- **Creative:** promoting different forms of expression to facilitate communication.
- **Critical:** because it favours diversity of opinions and leads to considering and reasoning information to express opinions and make choices.
- **Flexible:** because it adapts to the group at different times and in different phases.

### Phases of intervention

- **Situational study**

The objective is a participative investigation with the involvement of women (UUPP / PUS students, local women) and social agents through:

- The collection of statistical data (census, unemployment lists).
- The conduct of specific studies on education, employment, etc., obtaining information about specific demands.
- Visits to and interviews with associations and other social agents involved.
- The collection of information about available resources.

The most important aspect of this phase is:

- To detect the sources of interest demanded by women.
- To detect instrumental shortcomings.
- To become aware of the level of awareness of the problems of women

- **Motivation**

- Activities to increase the awareness of the teams of professionals at each PU of the need for specific programmes for women (seminars, debates, discussion groups, etc.).
- Occasional activities responding to the needs detected in the first phase.
- The creation of workshops, courses, etc., responding to the shortcomings detected in the situational study (if necessary, eliminate courses and workshops which do not correspond to the demand and which also belong to the female stereotype).

- **Capabilities-awareness**
  - Give priority to learning and group interrelation processes over the acquisition of content.
  - Provide basic educational instrumentation courses, such as tools providing access to other formative areas (occupational, civic rights and duties, creative possibilities etc.).
  - Create document and teaching material libraries to support the development of women's programmes.
- **Social projection**
  - Train and inform about the different types of association and the techniques required to promote their democratic and participative organisation.
  - Perform activities enhancing security and providing the confidence required for possible job opportunities, getting more employability, by:
    - . Fostering occupational training.
    - . Teaching job seeking techniques.
    - . Teaching employment rights.
  - Involve women in all the processes affecting society.

### **Organisation**

The application of this programme will be complete if it takes the following aspects into consideration:

- A. It must be a programme accepted by the persons responsible for the popular university:
  - assigning a budget;
  - assigning responsibilities;
  - providing human and material resources.
- B. There must be a team comprising a leader and monitors, who are responsible for:
  - increasing the awareness of the rest of the popular university staff related to the problems of women;
  - programming;
  - programme monitoring;
  - organisation of recycling courses for PU professionals working with women;
  - evaluation.
- C. There has to be a permanent instructor training programme related to working with women's groups, including:
  - status of women in history;
  - status of feminist groups;
  - status of women in the area in which the programme is developed;
  - content of the programme;
  - group theory;
  - group dynamics applied to groups of women;
  - methodology;
  - other communication techniques (audio visual, manual, etc.);
  - programming and evaluation techniques;
  - motivating techniques for groups of women;
  - social skills techniques.

### **Methodology of evaluation**

Evaluation is an essential methodological instrument in the development of an intervention programme. It is based on the collection and systematic analysis of information (formative evaluation) useful for change, adjustment and decision-making.

Although each intervention project responds to a given context and characteristics and evaluation cannot be generalised, a basic system can be established with the basic points to be considered.

UU.PP / PUs pay special attention to the development and use of evaluation systems supporting the programme's quality and attaining the respective targets.

Evaluation is an essential methodological instrument in the development of an intervention programme. It facilitates decision-making and improves the quality of the work.

FEUP evaluates Popular University teams and participating groups. Considering both positive and negative aspects and considering the alternatives selected in case of possible difficulties.

The objectives of the evaluation process are to measure the level of:

- Suitability: defined as the adequacy of the objectives relative to actual needs.
- Efficacy: with regards to compliance with the defined objectives.
- Efficiency: related to the use of resources in relation to the results obtained.

The monitoring and evaluation process to be developed in this programme ultimately aims to facilitate the decision-making process related to the programme and its activities, etc. It should therefore provide useful information and be oriented towards action.

#### **Evaluation of needs**

- Who is involved in the analysis of reality? (the technical team, other social agents...which?)
- Do the focal points respond to the needs detected in the situational analysis?

#### **Evaluation of the programme design**

- Is the analysis of reality consistent with the general and specific objectives, the activities and the methodology?
- Do the objectives respond to the needs detected?
- Are the objectives consistent with the 'philosophy' of the PU?
- Are the specific objectives well formulated in relation to the general goals?
- Are the objectives correctly hierarchised?
- Do the priorities respond to actual needs?
- Do the activities correspond to the hierarchisation of objectives?
- Are the necessary resources available or expected?
- Is a methodology of intervention planned: sequencing of tasks, schedule and timetable, control and feedback mechanisms?

#### **Evaluation of the process and development of the programme**

##### ***With regards to the programme in general:***

- Was the programme or activity performed as planned or were there changes?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the activity or programme?
- On which factors does the development of the programme depend?

##### ***With regards to the participants:***

- How are the participants attracted to the programme?
- Is the expected group formed?

- How does the group evolve?
- Do all the participants benefit equally?
- What level of participation and satisfaction is achieved?
- Is there a demand? Is it covered? How and why does it fluctuate?

***With regards to the content/activities and methodology:***

- Is the relative importance given to each activity or session appropriate?
- Are the chosen phases of intervention applied with the greatest possible efficacy?

***With regards to the resources:***

- Do we have the necessary resources?
- Are the resources (economic, material and human) used appropriately? Could they be put to a better use?

***With regards to the basic team:***

- Does the team function properly? How does it work in the meetings? Are they productive?
- What flows of information are there?
- Is the work well organised and distributed?
- Does each member of the team accept his/her responsibility?
- Is there overlapping or vacuums in the distribution of functions?
- Are there conflicts? Are they solved constructively?
- How does the team relate to the participants?

***With regards to the beneficiary groups:***

- Do they involve learning difficulties (retention, memorisation, oral/written expression, oral/written comprehension, relations, communications, respect, attention)?
- Are there attitudes of participation, respect, relations and integration?
- Is there full development of the following capabilities?
- Assimilation: content, etc.
- Concentration.
- Organisation of work.
- Critical capacity.

**Evaluation of results**

- What are the products of the programme?
- Where they as good as expected?
- Were there unexpected products?
- Who passed through the programme? What are their characteristics?
- Was the final group as expected?
- Did all the participants benefit equally?
- Could the same have been achieved with less money, effort and time?

**Evaluation of impact**

- What were the effects of the programme?
- What was the impact in the media?
- Was there a change of attitude and opinion in the participants? And in the community, in general?



## United Kingdom (UK)

### 1. Introduction

This chapter offers a range of quantitative data outlining broad levels of women's participation in the UK labour market and adult learning. It identifies key issues affecting their participation and contextualises these within a framework of legislation and policy for education and training, and gender mainstreaming. It concludes with a series of examples of effective and instructive practice.

Women in the UK are accessing higher levels of education and greater amounts of work experience, which means they are increasingly equipped for high level jobs. However, although female involvement in some professions is significantly greater – medicine and law, for example – high-earning jobs remain male dominated. 23 % of the companies in the FTSE 100 do not have a single woman director<sup>190</sup>. Furthermore, those sectors traditionally dominated by women (the 'five Cs' – cleaning, catering, caring, cashiering and clerical work), remain poorly paid and undervalued<sup>191</sup>.

Occupational segregation, discriminatory practices and an absence of flexibility in employment patterns continue to limit the extent to which women's skills are appropriately rewarded<sup>192</sup>. However, barriers to women's economic and educational progression are complex and interrelated. Age and gender discrimination are linked and operate throughout the life course, and their impact is compounded by other factors such as ethnicity and socio-economic class. As a consequence, anti-discriminatory policies and initiatives that are insufficiently differentiated, and that subsume the diverse experiences of women into an homogenous 'gender' category, are less likely to be effective.

### 2. The Context for Lifelong Learning for Men and Women

#### 2.1. The Legislative and Policy Framework for Education and Training in the UK

The structures and arrangements for policy formulation and legislation vary across the UK's member countries – England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Until very recently (see below), the government department responsible for continuing education and training in England (and aspects of Wales) was the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). In Wales, although laws passed in Westminster still apply, since 2006 the devolved powers of the National Assembly for Wales entitle it to make its own legislation on certain matters, including education. The responsibilities of Welsh Assembly Government Ministers include 'Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills'. Similarly, the Scottish Parliament is able to pass laws on a range of devolved matters, including education. Within the Scottish Executive, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning has responsibility for further and higher education, training and skills. In Northern Ireland, the Department for Employment and Learning has four key areas of activity. These include: enhancing the provision of learning and skills, including entrepreneurship, enterprise, management and leadership; and helping individuals to acquire

<sup>190</sup> Equal Opportunities Commission, *Mums blow the whistle on 'pregnancy at work' knowledge gap*, Press release [online], London, EOC, 29 March 2007.

<sup>191</sup> Equal Opportunities Commission, *Mums blow the whistle on 'pregnancy at work' knowledge gap*, Press release [online], London, EOC, 29 March 2007.

<sup>192</sup> Walby, S., *Gender (in)equality and the future of work*, Equal Opportunities Commission, 2007.

jobs, including self employment, and improving the linkages between employment programmes and skills development.

Since 2001, responsibility for post-16 education and training (other than Higher Education) in England sits with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Since its inception, the LSC's mission and strategic objectives have been redefined to reflect changes in national policy related to learning and skills, and DfES priorities. In turn, these priorities reflect the need to respond to compelling evidence of significant skills shortages across the UK population. Out of 30 countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the UK is seventeenth for low skills, twentieth for intermediate skills and eleventh for high skills, with an estimated seven million adults lacking functional numeracy and five million lacking functional literacy.

Pursuing the twin aims of building a competitive economy and an inclusive society, DfES policy has centred on delivering a range of performance targets designed to improve levels of basic (language, literacy and numeracy) skills and reduce the number of adults in the workforce without a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at Level 2 and Level 3, by 2010. In addition to the two White Papers<sup>193</sup> that set out the priorities for adult learning, the UK government has implemented major strategies to improve basic skills<sup>194</sup>, to raise the aspirations of 14-19 year olds (2005), and to improve the quality and responsiveness of provision (2002).

More recently, a government review of the UK's future skills needs<sup>195</sup> set out challenging new targets and priorities for 2020, delineating the policy landscape for the foreseeable future: 95% of adults to achieve the basic skills of functional literacy and numeracy; a shift in the balance of intermediate skills from Level 2 to Level 3; and 40% of adults to be qualified to Level 4 or above. Employers are to be given control over training by routing all public funding for adult vocational skills in England through the 'Train to Gain' skills brokerage service, and by making approval by business-led Sector Skills Councils a prerequisite for receipt of public money for vocational skills courses. The implementation plan for these recommendations is expected imminently. This fluid policy environment has been further unsettled by recent Departmental changes introduced by the new British Prime Minister. DfES is to be replaced by a new Department for Children, Schools and Families (which will assume responsibility for pre-19 education policy), and a new Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (which will be responsible for driving forward policy around science, research, innovation and delivering a world-class skills base). At the time of writing, the policy, strategic and institutional implications of these profound changes are still unclear.

### **3. Men and Women in the Labour Market**

#### **3.1. Overall Employment Trends**

The UK adult population is more qualified and more active in the labour market than ever before. Within this, there has been a long-term rise in female employment. Since 1975, it has increased from around 60% to 70% for women of working age (16-59). At the same time, male

---

<sup>193</sup> Department for Education and Skills, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, *Realising our Potential*, London, DfES, 2003, and Department for Education and Skills, *Getting on in Business, Getting on at Work*, London, DfES, 2005b.

<sup>194</sup> Department for Education and Skills, *The Skills for Life Strategy*, London, DfES, 2001.

<sup>195</sup> Department for Education and Skills and the Learning and Skills Council, *Delivering World-Class Skills in a Demand-led System*, London, DfES/LSC, 2007.



employment has declined from around 90% to 79% for men of working age (16-64).<sup>196</sup> For both women and men under the age of 65, employment rates are higher for the 25-44 age group: around 75% of women and nearly 90% of men aged 25-44 are in employment (see Table 1).

**Table 1 Employment by age 2005: people aged 16 or over, Great Britain**

	In employment (1) % full-time	In employment (1) % part-time	Employment rate	Unemployment rate
<b>Women</b>				
<b>16 – 24</b>	56	44	57	10.0
<b>25 – 44</b>	60	40	74	3.6
<b>45 – 64</b>	55	45	63	2.3
<b>65 or over</b>	18	82	4	
<b>All aged 16 – 64</b>	58	42	67	4.1
<b>Men</b>				
<b>16 – 24</b>	72	28	60	13.4
<b>25 – 44</b>	96	4	88	3.9
<b>45 – 64</b>	91	9	77	3.3
<b>65 or over</b>	37	63	9	2.1*
<b>All aged 16 – 64</b>	91	9	79	5.1

(1) Employees and self-employed

— Not shown as based on small sample

\* High relative standard error, estimate may be unreliable

Source: ONS (2005) *Labour Force Survey Spring 2005 dataset*, from EOC, 2006, p.12.

### 3.2. Women and Labour Market Participation

There is widespread agreement that the UK jobs market will continue to grow, but less consensus about the probable gender balance within it<sup>197</sup>. In order to address demographically induced labour shortages (due to an ageing population), current adult learning discourse is starting to focus on the need to retrain more women for the labour market, and particularly those of black and minority ethnic (BME) origin.

At 67%, the employment rate for women exceeds the Lisbon target of 60% by 2010<sup>198</sup>. However, despite the fact that young women and girls are now generally out performing boys at

<sup>196</sup> Equal Opportunities Commission, *Facts about women and men in Great Britain 2006*, Manchester, EOC, 2006.

<sup>197</sup> Walby, S., *Gender (in)equality and the future of work*, Equal Opportunities Commission, 2007.

<sup>198</sup> HM Treasury, *Lisbon Strategy for Job and Growth*, UK National Reform programme, London, HM Treasury, October 2005.

school, college and university, discrimination and structural inequalities in the labour market remain stubbornly resistant to change. Gendered patterns of employment, hours of work, occupational segregation and pay, emerge immediately after education and continue throughout the life course<sup>199</sup>.

Women are disproportionately represented in low-paid and part-time work. The latter is the most common alternative working arrangement, accounting for 42% of female and 9% of male employees; 83% of part-time employees are female<sup>200</sup>. Overall, 57% of female employees and 23% of male employees use one or more of the following approaches: part-time work, flexitime, annualised hours, term-time working, job sharing and home working<sup>201</sup>. However, employment flexibility is linked to occupation, occupational level, sector and the nature of job roles. Women workers in lower-level, part-time jobs are less likely to access flexible working. Those who do, can experience disadvantage in terms of subsequent promotion and career progression as a result of undertaking more routine job<sup>202</sup>.

Although the full-time gender pay gap has decreased since 1975 by 12 percentage points and by 3 percentage points for part-time work, overall, the gender pay gap in the UK is the worst in Europe<sup>203</sup>. In 2005, the full-time gender pay gap was 17.1%, while for part-time women workers it was 38.4%<sup>204</sup>. Three factors help to perpetuate this – occupational segregation, part-time working, and parenting<sup>205</sup>. Additionally, research suggests that legislation to eliminate discrimination in this area is less effective due to its complexity, poor enforcement, a focus on cure rather than prevention, and a failure to tackle deep-rooted causes<sup>206</sup>.

Occupational profiles are also gendered. Men are more likely to be managers or senior officials or workers in skilled trades, while women dominate administrative, secretarial and personal service occupations (see Table 2).

---

<sup>199</sup> Perrons, D. and Sigle-Rushton, W., *Employment transitions over the life cycle: a literature review*, Equal Opportunities Commission, 2006.

<sup>200</sup> Wattis, L., Yerkes, M., Lloyd, S., et al. (2006), *Combining work and family life: Removing the barriers to women's progression. Experiences from the UK and the Netherlands*. [online], Liverpool, John Moores University, 2006.

<sup>201</sup> Equal Opportunities Commission, *Facts about women and men in Great Britain 2006*, Manchester: EOC, 2006.

<sup>202</sup> Perrons, D., and Sigle-Rushton, W. (2006), *Employment transitions over the life cycle: a literature review*, Equal Opportunities Commission.

<sup>203</sup> HM Treasury, *Lisbon Strategy for Job and Growth*. UK National Reform programme, London, HM Treasury, October 2005.

<sup>204</sup> Equal Opportunities Commission, *Facts about women and men in Great Britain 2006*, Manchester, EOC, 2006.

<sup>205</sup> Thompson, J. 'Back to the future', in *Adults Learning 17 (8): 18-19*, Leicester, NIACE, April 2006.

<sup>206</sup> Bellamy, K. and Cameron, S., *Gender Equality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: modernising the legislation*. London: Fawcett Society, April 2006.

**Table 2 Industry Sectors**

Sector	% women	% men
Health and social work	79	21
Education	73	27
Hotel and restaurants	56	44
Manufacturing	25	75
Construction	10	90

Source: ONS (2005) *Labour Force Survey Spring 2005 dataset*, adapted from EOC, 2006, p.18

### 3.2.1. Ethnicity

Analyses of gendered learning and employment opportunities must also take account of other inequalities. BME groups are more than twice as likely as their white counterparts to be unemployed. In 2004, 25.4% of men and 43.8% of women of working age from BME communities were economically inactive compared with 15.8% of white men and 25.2% of white women<sup>207</sup>.

Although the employment rates for women in most BME groups are rising - which is expected to continue, especially in groups where these are currently low<sup>208</sup> - in general, women are less likely to be employed than men. However, there are significant differences between BME groups. Black Caribbean women have a higher employment rate than white women and women from other minority ethnic groups and are similar in this respect to Black Caribbean men. Bangladeshi and Pakistani women have particularly low rates which have hardly changed in 30 years. Unemployment amongst Pakistani women is five times that of white women and more than twice that of Pakistani men<sup>209</sup>. Over two-thirds of Pakistani and Bangladeshi women of working age are not in the labour market. Non-employed Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are also much less likely to re-enter employment than other non-employed women<sup>210</sup>. Muslim women are one of the two (the other is disabled people) most persistently non-employed groups and are very unlikely to re-enter the job market once outside<sup>211</sup>.

Occupational profiles among BME communities are also gendered. Women are much more likely to work in public sector services than men. More than half of Black Caribbean, Black African and Bangladeshi working women have jobs in this area but they tend to be concentrated in lower grade positions<sup>212</sup>. This is a key issue for the UK government's policy to modernise public services. The success of these reforms will be linked inextricably to appropriate and sufficient investment in workforce training and development, and particularly to upskilling

<sup>207</sup> CRE, 2006.

<sup>208</sup> Walby, S., *Gender (in)equality and the future of work*, London, EOC, 2007.

<sup>209</sup> CRE, 2006.

<sup>210</sup> Berthoud, R., and Blekesaune, M. *Persistent employment disadvantage*, Research Report No 416, London, DWP, 2007.

<sup>211</sup> Berthoud, R., and Blekesaune, M., *Persistent employment disadvantage*, Research Report No 416, London, DWP, 2007.

<sup>212</sup> CRE, 2006.

female employees: in the social care sector, 90% of home-care workers and care assistants are women<sup>213</sup>.

### 3.3. Issues Affecting Women's Labour Market Participation

A recent Equal-funded programme ('Women into Work: Building Futures') that was commissioned to promote gender equality and support job de-segregation, identified the following barriers to non-traditional employment: individual perceptions; societal perceptions; practical issues; lack of knowledge and awareness; and male workplace culture. Its key recommendations focused on: attitudinal change; organisational adaptability; practical assistance; awareness raising/effective marketing; and empowering models<sup>214</sup>.

#### 3.3.1. Gender Bias in Vocational Training

Current vocational training also perpetuates gendered occupational differences. Work-based training routes are disproportionately highly subscribed by men, and Modern Apprenticeships are strikingly gendered (see Table 3). This type of bias in course uptake impacts directly on later employment patterns<sup>215</sup>.

**Table 3 Apprenticeship starts**

Occupation	% women	% men
Early years care and education	97	3
Hairdressing	91	9
Health and social care	87	13
Business administration	77	23
Engineering	3	97
Construction	1	99
Plumbing	1	99

Source: Learning and Skills Council (2005) *Apprenticeship date: Report 2 – Quarterly cumulative starts and in learning August 2004 to April 2005, from EOC, 2006, p.10*).

However, although women exhibit a continuing adherence to traditional vocational areas, they are more likely than men to consider learning a job normally done by the opposite sex<sup>216</sup>. Challenging the restricted opportunities available to young women, and removing access barriers to male-dominated occupations, is a matter of economic good sense as well as social justice. It is estimated to be worth between £15 billion and £23 billion to the UK economy<sup>217</sup>.

<sup>213</sup> Equal Opportunities Commission, *Mums blow the whistle on 'pregnancy at work' knowledge gap* [online], Press release, London, EOC, 29 March 2007.

<sup>214</sup> O'Keeffe, C., et al., *Moving Mountains: Identifying and addressing barriers to Employment, Training and Education from the voices of women (ex) offenders*, 2003.

<sup>215</sup> Francis, F., 'Troubling trajectories: Gendered 'choices' and pathways from school to work', in Leathwood, C. and Francis, B. (eds.), *Gender and Lifelong Learning. Critical feminist engagement.*, London: Routledge, 2006.

<sup>216</sup> Beck, V., Fuller, A. and Unwin, L., 'Increasing risk in the 'scary' world of work? Male and female resistance to crossing gender lines in apprenticeships in England and Wales', in *Journal of Education and Work* 19 (3), 2006, pp. 271-289.

<sup>217</sup> Hannon, C., Keck, S. and Shandro, A., *Mind the Gap: The women that policy forgot*, London, DEMOS, 2006.

### 3.3.2. Caring Responsibilities (Child and Dependant Care)

The majority of part-time and flexible workers are women with caring responsibilities – either for children or older dependants. These jobs have fewer opportunities for training and career progression, weaker tenure, lower salaries and less access to social benefits. In the UK, the part-time pay penalty is relatively large and strongly associated with long-term earnings. Even one year of part-time work can have a negative impact on earnings 15 years later<sup>218</sup>.

Increasingly in the UK, women are having children without interrupting their paid work, especially if they have higher educational qualifications and are in professional occupations<sup>219</sup>. However, from an employment perspective, mothers are amongst the most disadvantaged groups in the UK. Recent research shows that women's work opportunities and wages fall as soon as they become mothers and that their pay prospects never recover fully, even when their children leave home<sup>220</sup>. Many women who return to the labour market end up in female dominated part-time jobs working considerably below their potential<sup>221</sup>. Amongst women who previously worked full-time, 21% move to part-time work and 24% leave the labour market altogether within a year of childbirth<sup>222</sup>; women with the least education are most likely to take long breaks<sup>223</sup>. This reflects the fact that economically active women continue to take responsibility for the majority of domestic work. It is also due to the discrepancy between school and working hours, the high cost of childcare and the demands made on parents (largely women) to become involved in their children's schooling<sup>224</sup>.

Care for older dependants is a significantly gendered issue. Across the UK, 58% of carers are female, and over 70% of women will become carers during their lifetime (compared to around 60% for men). Women over 50 are three times more likely to be providing substantial care (for 20 or more hours per week)<sup>225</sup>. Substantial caring has a significant impact on access to both employment and learning. Around 60% of those engaged in substantial caring are compelled to give up paid work, with immediate consequences for household income and longer-term implications for pensions and savings (and therefore poverty in later life). Research shows a correlation between caring and part-time, lower paid work, lack of free time, isolation, higher levels of ill health (for carers), less disposable income (to pay fees for learning) and periodic crises that make sustained commitments (for example, to learning) extremely difficult<sup>226</sup>.

### 3.3.3. Early Patterns

Educational selections made by school children impact on later occupational distributions and gender segregation – the more education and occupation are linked, the stronger the effect on

<sup>218</sup> Perrons, D., and Sigle-Rushton, W., *Employment transitions over the life cycle: a literature review*, London, EOC, 2006.

<sup>219</sup> Walby, S., (2007), *Gender (in)equality and the future of work*, London, EOC, 2007.

<sup>220</sup> Thompson, J., 'Back to the future', in *Adults Learning 17 (8): 18-19*, Leicester, NIACE, April 2006.

<sup>221</sup> Perrons, D., and Sigle-Rushton, W. (2006), *Employment transitions over the life cycle: a literature review*, London, EOC, 2006.

<sup>222</sup> Jones, G., *Career Interruptions and Labour Market Outcomes*, London, EOC, 2006.

<sup>223</sup> Walby, S., *Gender (in)equality and the future of work*, London, EOC, 2007.

<sup>224</sup> Thompson, J., 'Back to the future', in *Adults Learning 17 (8): 18-19*, Leicester, NIACE, April 2006.

<sup>225</sup> Turner, C., and Casey, L., *Tackling barriers to learning for vulnerable adults: A local government contribution*, unpublished report for the Local Government Association, 2006.

<sup>226</sup> Turner, C., and Casey, L., 'Tackling barriers to learning for vulnerable adults: A local government contribution', unpublished report for the Local Government Association, 2006.

gender segregation<sup>227</sup>. Curriculum preferences in the UK persistently reflect gender stereotyping, particularly in relation to pupils' least favourite subjects. Gender differences are strikingly apparent in non-mandatory subjects and when choice is reintroduced post-16 (and possibly later with the forthcoming extension of compulsory education to 18). This is linked to gendered discourses of selfhood and appropriate behaviour that impel both sexes to follow particular routes, reproducing and perpetuating inequalities in later life<sup>228</sup>. Most young people continue to express a preference for jobs in which their own gender is strongly represented<sup>229</sup>.

### 3.3.4. Work Environments

Informal workplace cultures and the attitudes of peers and managers emerge from research as more important than policy initiatives in enabling, or preventing, women's progression in the workplace<sup>230</sup>. For example, the long hours culture in the UK can discourage women from taking up 'family friendly' arrangements<sup>231</sup>, and lack of imagination among employers can also deny part-time and flexible workers the chance to develop their responsibilities. Research into part-time working concluded that 5.6 million of the UK's seven million part-time workers have the skills and aspirations to perform well in higher-level jobs. This impacts disproportionately strongly on women, raising issues about economic independence, career development, and access to training<sup>232</sup>. It is also argued that employers are sometimes reluctant to offer training to lower qualified (predominantly female) workers because they might then have to pay them more<sup>233</sup>.

## 4. Participation of Men and Women in Education and Training

### 4.1. General Trends

According to the most recent survey evidence<sup>234</sup>, one in five adults are currently learning, with 41% having participated in some learning activity during the last three years. This is slightly lower than for 2006 (42%). However, just over one third of adults (34%) say they have not participated in learning since leaving full-time education. This figure has remained relatively constant since 1996.

Data from the Office for National Statistics on participation in post-16, LSC-funded education and training in England (2005/06), highlights the types of learning involved.

<sup>227</sup> Beck, V., Fuller, A., and Unwin, L., 'Increasing risk in the 'scary' world of work? Male and female resistance to crossing gender lines in apprenticeships in England and Wales', in *Journal of Education and Work* 19 (3), 2006, pp. 271-289.

<sup>228</sup> Francis, F., 'Troubling trajectories: Gendered 'choices' and pathways from school to work', in Leathwood, C. and Francis, B. (eds.), *Gender and Lifelong Learning. Critical feminist engagements*, London, Routledge, 2006.

<sup>229</sup> Perrons, D., and Sigle-Rushton, W., *Employment transitions over the life cycle: a literature review*, London, EOC, 2006.

<sup>230</sup> Wattis, L., Yerkes, M., Lloyd, S., et al., *Combining work and family life: Removing the barriers to women's progression. Experiences from the UK and the Netherlands* [online], Liverpool, John Moores University, 2006.

<sup>231</sup> Wattis, L., Yerkes, M., Lloyd, S., et al., *Combining work and family life: Removing the barriers to women's progression. Experiences from the UK and the Netherlands* [online], Liverpool, John Moores University, 2006.

<sup>232</sup> Thompson, J., 'Back to the future', in *Adults Learning* 17 (8): 18-19, Leicester, NIACE, April 2006.

<sup>233</sup> Leathwood, C., 'Gendered constructions of lifelong learning and the learner in the UK policy context', in Leathwood, C. and Francis, B. (eds.) *Gender and Lifelong Learning. Critical feminist engagements*. London: Routledge, 2006.

<sup>234</sup> Aldridge, F., and Tuckett, A., *Green shoots? The NIACE Survey on Adult Participation in Learning 2006*, Leicester, NIACE, 2006.

- 3.63 million learners were involved in Further Education (FE), of these 59% were female, 41% male;
- 486,000 participated in Work Based Learning (WBL), of these 42% were female, 58% male; and
- 786,000 participated in Adult and Community Learning (ACL), of these 77% were female, 23% male (ONS, 2006).

These figures reveal that more men than women are participating in vocational work-based learning (WBL) and that women dominate the take up of ACL opportunities (covering more informal, often non-accredited, learning for personal enrichment and community development).

Whilst there has been an overall increase in the skills of the UK workforce and a reduction in those without qualifications, the gap between social classes continues to widen. Overall participation in learning amongst the poorest socio-economic groups is less than half that experienced by the wealthiest. Participation has increased among professional and managerial groups and skilled workers (aged 45 and 54), but has fallen among semi-skilled and unskilled workers and retired people. Age also continues to be a significant factor. Generally, the older people are, the less likely they are to participate in learning - the decline becomes particularly steep amongst those aged 55 and over. Over one-half of all adults aged 65 reports no participation in any learning since leaving full-time education.

There has been a marked reduction in participation reported by people in employment and, in particular, by part-time workers (a loss of 15% of learners working part-time). This is significant in terms of future economic competitiveness: 70% of the 2020 workforce will be adults who have already completed their compulsory education<sup>235</sup>.

#### 4.2. Women's Participation in Adult Learning

Women are slightly more likely to have participated in learning during the past three years (42%) than men (41%) – but the difference is not statistically significant (see Table 4).

**Table 4 Participation in learning 2007, men and women compared**

	Total %	Men %	Women %
Current learning	20	21	20
Recent learning (in the last three years)	21	20	22
<b>All current or recent learning</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>42</b>
Past learning (more than three years ago)	25	26	24
None since leaving full-time education/don't know	34	34	34

Source: Aldridge, 2007, p. 11.

<sup>235</sup> Aldridge, F., and Tuckett, A., *Green shoots? The NIACE Survey on Adult Participation in Learning 2006*, Leicester, NIACE, 2006.

However, whilst men's participation has stayed unchanged since 2006, the rate amongst women has fallen from 44 to 42%. This might reflect a concurrent reduction in public non-target driven, non-accredited provision, and learning for personal development and enrichment - curriculum areas that women have traditionally enjoyed in greater numbers. However, this is at odds with the trend for the last decade as a whole, during which women's participation has increased while men's has declined. The increased feminisation of the workforce, and of work itself, makes it likely that women's involvement in learning will continue to rise compared with men's<sup>236</sup>.

## 5. Legislative and Policy Framework for Gender Mainstreaming

The UK has a significant range of legislative and policy measures designed to mainstream gender equality. Currently, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) (an independent, non-departmental public body) is funded, primarily by government, to:

- offer advice and information to members of the public about their legal rights;
- take legal cases under the Sex Discrimination Acts (1975 and 1986) and Equal Pay Acts (1970 and 1983);
- publish research and statistics about gender issues;
- campaign to secure legislative and cultural change; and
- investigate instances of persistent discrimination, supported by legal powers of enforcement.

The Women and Equality Unit (WEU) in the DCLG leads on several key policy areas:

- the Women and Work Commission (WWC) which was set up in 2004 to investigate the causes of the gender pay gap and improve opportunities for women at work – the resulting Action Plan (2006), offered a comprehensive range of cross-governmental measures to tackle job segregation and the gender pay gap, including a programme of exemplar employers, more support for trades union Equality Representatives, a fund to support initiatives to increase the availability of quality, part-time work, and a £20 million package to train woman in London to intermediate skill levels (Level 3);
- the Gender Equality Duty which (from April 2007), requires public authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote gender equality in employment practices to challenge occupational segregation; and
- the Gender Equality Public Service Agreement which works towards mainstreaming gender equality across government through targets to bring about measurable improvements by 2008.

In response to the relatively low levels of female entrepreneurship (less than half the rate of male entrepreneurial activity)<sup>237</sup>, the government launched a Strategic Framework for Women's Enterprise in May 2003 and subsequently established the Women's Enterprise Panel. The Panel's Action Plan set a target of 20% female business ownership by 2006. In the same year, the Task Force on Women's Enterprise became operational, offering leadership to accelerate

<sup>236</sup> Aldridge, F. and Tuckett, A., *Green shoots? The NIACE Survey on Adult Participation in Learning 2006*. Leicester: NIACE, 2006.

<sup>237</sup> HM Treasury, *Lisbon Strategy for Job and Growth*, UK National Reform programme, London, HM Treasury, October 2005.



women's enterprise development. Five Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) have established Women's Enterprise Units to pilot different approaches to the issue.

Other key steps by government include:

- introducing the National Minimum Wage – 70% of the beneficiaries are women and it has contributed to a 2% drop in the general pay gap since 1997;
- introducing new rights for working families – employees with children under six, disabled children, and adult dependants, now have the right to require employers to consider requests for flexible working seriously;
- introducing the Work and Families Act (2006), extending maternity and adoption pay to nine months (from April 2007), with the aim of increasing it to a full year by 2010 – around 400,000 women annually are expected to benefit;
- launching the National Childcare Strategy, enhancing parental choice and opportunities by expanding good quality, affordable childcare, and giving all three and four year olds an entitlement to free government-funded, early education;
- introducing the Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act, allowing positive measures to increase women's participation; and
- from 2010 to 2020, equalising Women's State Pension Age with that of men at 65.

Unfortunately, research suggests that low levels of awareness and take-up of both Parental Leave and the Flexible Working Request undermines their effectiveness in tackling access barriers. It also reveals the issue of women who 'work for nothing' after paying for childcare in order to stay in work<sup>238</sup>. While macro-level approaches (government departments, task forces and legislation) are impressive and essential, the next 'phase' of policy to counter gender discrimination must attend to the micro-level and address the detail of women's lived experiences<sup>239</sup>. *'This includes appreciating how cultural, practical, and social issues join up to create significant barriers that severely hinder their [women's] economic mobility'*<sup>240</sup>.

## 5.2. European Contribution

### 5.2.1. European Social Fund: Objective 3, Priority 5

One of the five key aims of European Social Fund expenditure (ESF) is to improve women's participation in the labour market. Around £3.7 billion in total was available in England as part of the 2000 – 2006 programme, of which around £154 million was used through Priority 5 of the ESF Objective 3 programme to: reduce the level of disadvantage faced by women in the labour market; and improve equal opportunities for women in the labour market. The funding was focused particularly on tackling the gender gap and encouraging men and women to enter non-traditional occupational sectors. Of the two main measures within Priority 5, Measure 1 focused on improving access to learning and removing barriers to employment; while Measure 2 funded research into employment issue such as recruitment, pay, segregation and progression<sup>241</sup>.

<sup>238</sup> Wattis, L., Yerkes, M., Lloyd, S., et al., *Combining work and family life: Removing the barriers to women's progression. Experiences from the UK and the Netherlands* [online], Liverpool, John Moores University, 2006.

<sup>239</sup> Hannon, C., Keck, S. and Shandro, A., *Mind the Gap: The women that policy forgot*, London, DEMOS, 2006.

<sup>240</sup> Hannon, C., Keck, S. and Shandro, A., *Mind the Gap: The women that policy forgot*, London, DEMOS, 2006.

<sup>241</sup> Department for Work and Pensions and Department of Education and Skills, *Improving employment opportunities for women – ESF priority 5*, London, DWP/DfES, 2006.

Under Measure 1, the funding was targeted at women working in areas of under-representation (e.g. engineering or construction) and in part-time or job share employment, women starting or expanding businesses, employers delivering ‘family-friendly’ practices, and lone parents, women returners, female prisoners, and women from disadvantaged communities and groups. Actions include: improving the quality and flexibility of local training, tackling dependant care barriers, and providing vocational training, mentoring and other support to challenge gender segregation. Evidence suggests these measures have had a beneficial impact on women’s employment rates<sup>242</sup>.

### **5.2.2. European Social Fund: Equal**

The Equal initiative is funded through ESF to test and promote, through transnational cooperation, new ways of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in the labour market. The scope includes people in work and also those seeking work. It operates across identified thematic fields which embrace the four pillars of the European Employment Strategy. The Women into Work programme was commissioned by the Equal Fund to work towards combating discrimination and inequality experienced by women who have been disadvantaged, particularly by experiences of the criminal justice system. Barriers identified through the peer research carried out for Phase One of the programme include: disclosure of convictions, limitations of vocational and Entry to Employment (ETE) training in a prison context, perceived employers’ attitudes, and managing the transition from prison to community. The recommendations included: ETE opportunities should be actively marketed to prisoners; and relevant ETE advice and information should form a key part of resettlement packages (O’Keeffe, 2003).

## **6. Examples of Practice**

### **6.1. Routes into Learning and Employment: Parents from BME Communities**

The Adult Education Service for Birmingham has introduced a highly effective way of engaging BME parents in learning and then supporting their progression into employment. At its Quinborne centre, parents are offered generic, introductory courses in childcare before choosing from a range of options (Teaching Assistant, Classroom Assistant, or Children’s Care Learning and Development) all at NVQ Level 2. These provide the first steps towards a career working with children. The childcare courses have also pioneered embedded language, literacy and numeracy skills with additional support in those areas<sup>243</sup>.

### **6.2. Routes into Learning and Employment: Women in Rural Areas**

ESF funding has supported the ‘Releasing Skills Potential of Women in Rural Somerset’ project which aims to empower women in rural areas to move from low paid, part-time or unpaid work into better paid, full-time positions. It offers information, guidance and support for training (including non-traditional careers), a learner support package that includes financial help with the costs of dependant care, travel and time away from work, and a network of women instructors and assessors. Training is delivered in local, familiar settings at times to suit the learners. The curriculum offer is diverse and challenging, including equine first aid, tractor driving and handling, and telescopic and industrial fork lift truck driving<sup>244</sup>.

<sup>242</sup> Department for Work and Pensions and Department of Education and Skills, *Improving employment opportunities for women* – ESF priority 5, London, DWP/DfES, 2006.

<sup>243</sup> White, L. and Weaver, S., *Curriculum for Diversity Guide*, Leicester, NIACE, p. 45, 2007.

<sup>244</sup> Department for Work and Pensions and Department of Education and Skills, *Improving employment opportunities for women* – ESF priority 5, London, DWP/DfES, p.7, 2006.

### 6.3. Routes into Learning and Employment: Women Refugees

‘Refugees into Jobs’ is a London-based voluntary sector organisation that provides advice and guidance on education, training and employment opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers in nearby boroughs. It has developed a particular focus on supporting the active participation of women refugees in local governance and democracy with the aim of creating individual progression routes to volunteering and employment, as well as contributing to community cohesion and development. The resulting programme, ‘Pathways to Participation’, offers an intensive, residential learning experience, covering different aspects of community involvement, including the structure and dynamics of government, the voluntary and community sector and community networks, and the skills needed for advocacy and effective engagement with public authorities and services. Its four key components are: social justice, participation, equality and diversity, and co-operation. Making the course residential, with childcare provided, was a response to the difficulties women experience in organising or funding childcare themselves, and in sustaining attendance over a lengthy period of time<sup>245</sup>.

### 6.4. Routes into Learning and Employment: Focusing on Women

Solent Women’s Training Partnership, in partnership with other local training providers, has used ESF (matched with their own resources and support from other funders) to develop ‘Ngenda’, a two-year project to test different ways of helping women across the Solent area into employment and training. The project currently provides: community development training in disadvantaged communities; outreach advice and support to help Bangladeshi women join the labour market; advice, taster training and support to help women living in social housing gain new skills; and childcare play work and administration training in a rural community. Training tasters include NVQ programmes at Level 3. Childcare and other support is available to carers and outreach is conducted in local community languages. One-to-one advice is also available. Since the project began in January 2006, around 6,500 women have undertaken training or advice sessions, 60% of whom were not in work. Around 50% of those had not worked for over three years<sup>246</sup>.

### 6.5. Challenging Occupational Segregation: Fire Fighters

The Fire Service Research and Training Unit has used ESF money to support ‘Fireworks; melting the glass ceilings and walls’. This two-year project (started February 2004) aimed to tackle the significant under representation in the workforce of both women (2001: 1%), and BME communities (2001: 1.2%). Its final recommendations will focus on how to strengthen the gender and ethnic balance of the workforce at all levels. They will be shared with the police, military and prison services, all of which face similar challenges<sup>247</sup>.

### 6.6. Challenging Occupational Segregation: Road Haulage/Logistics

It is estimated that the logistics industry needs around 50,000 new Long Goods Vehicle (LGV) drivers to meet current demand, and that over 90% of existing LGV drivers are male. The ‘Wheels in Motion’ project, run by City College Manchester, addresses both the unmet demand and occupational segregation by attracting women aged 21 plus into a career in road haulage/logistics. It upskills employed and unemployed women and supports their progression

<sup>245</sup> Refugees into Jobs, 2006.

<sup>246</sup> Solent Women’s Training Partnerships, 2007.

<sup>247</sup> Department for Work and Pensions and Department of Education and Skills, *Improving employment opportunities for women* – ESF priority 5, London: DWP/DfES, p. 6, 2006.

into higher skilled positions in the driving, transport office and management sector. It offers various Level 2 qualifications including LGV and warehousing, as well as support with literacy, numeracy. A creative marketing campaign used to raise awareness included a large pink LGV training vehicle and direct marketing, radio advertising, road shows and seminars. The project has helped 59% of participants achieve a full qualification, while a further 65% have a partial qualification and are working towards full achievement<sup>248</sup>.

### **6.7. Access to Work-Based Learning**

The UK government's flagship work-based, vocational training initiative, 'Train to Gain', delivers personalised support in the workplace, arranged through a network of independent skills brokers, focusing particularly on hard-to-reach employers. In one English region (London), in response to the Women and Work Commission Report, the Train to Gain offer includes a Level 3 women-only trial. This will provide opportunities for low skilled women to train towards work-related Level 3 qualifications and is supported by an investment of £10 million for 2006/07, and a further £10 million for 2007/08<sup>249</sup>.

### **6.8. Promoting Women Leaders**

The Women's Leadership Network (WLN), supported by the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL), was launched in May, 2007. WLN aims to recruit women who hold, or aspire to hold, leadership roles in further education, and who wish to challenge gender-related factors in career progression. Guidance and experience-sharing strategies within the network are intended to address some of the issues revealed in a CEL/WLN Report launched concurrently with the network, that highlight a persistent 'glass ceiling' in the further education sector within senior management and governing bodies<sup>250</sup>.

### **6.9. Working with Young Women**

The National Youth Agency (NYA) has published a Resource Handbook for youth workers, teachers and careers advisers, amongst others, to help them engage with, motivate, and meet the needs of young women in a women-only environment. It offers a range of activities and projects that build confidence as well as new skills. Issues covered include body image, positive relationships, gender stereotypes, personal values, conflict management, and action planning<sup>251</sup>.

---

<sup>248</sup> NIACE, 2007.

<sup>249</sup> Learning and Skills Council, 2006b.

<sup>250</sup> Centre for Excellence in Leadership, 2007.

<sup>251</sup> Rogers, V. *Work with Young Women. A Resource Handbook for Youth Workers, Teachers and Connexions Personal Advisers*, Leicester, NYA, 2006.

## Women in the Nordic Countries - Snapshots

There is what could be called a ‘Nordic model’, but at the same time there is not. The Nordic countries are indeed five different countries: Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland, with different politics, different regulations etc.

Women in the Nordic countries have the same problems as elsewhere: they do not earn as much as men do; women are discriminated in the labour market because they are seen as potential mothers; women do work more part-time than men; women take more time of parental allowance etc.

And yet, in many cases the Nordic countries have come very far when it comes to gender equality. All five countries do have gender statistics.

### 1. Trends in the Nordic Countries

- Validation for free in all 5 countries. Adult Education Initiative in recent years. Adult education and folk high schools are for free in some countries. University is for free in Sweden.
- Possibilities to have a study loan (in all 5 countries, though the rules are very different in the 5 countries).
- Special folk high schools for women in some countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden).
- In general in all Nordic countries, there is not a problem to get women to study; the question is rather how can the Nordic countries attract men to study?
- Parental allowance, for both mother and father in all 5 countries.
- Childcare is available; in some countries for all children.
- New family constellations, single parents, divorce rate high, cohabiting.
- In all 5 countries, there is a high percentage of women working.
- There are big public sectors and these are among the most gender segregated workforces in Europe.
- Many women work part-time; there is a rate of hidden unemployment.
- Women earn less than men.

### 2. Combining Working Life or Studies and Family

Society in the Nordic countries is built up around the idea that everybody should have a paid job. To stay at home is not ‘accepted’ as something a woman ‘should’ or ought to do. This is even the case when it would be possible economically for the mother not to work. The general idea is for everybody to work even with young children, and it should be possible to combine working life with a family. In order to do so the governments in the Nordic countries try to make it possible to combine working life and a family.

One important aspect is the kindergarten system which is very well established; the general idea is to have children in kindergarten. The first public kindergarten in Finland was established already in 1890<sup>252</sup>.

Another important legislation is generous parental allowance. It is a way to push, or at least make it possible for men to be parents. It also enables everybody in the labour market to be a parent, and not only women. Sweden was the first among the Nordic countries to introduce parental allowance instead of maternal allowance in 1974. A Swedish dissertation called '*Göra pappa med barn*', which means '*Make daddy pregnant*', states that even though parental allowance has been possible in Sweden since 1974 most of the parental days are used by women. Economic interests (growth) have been in conflict with the idea of equal parenthood, both on family and societal level. Even with the law of parental allowance, it has always been viewed as a freedom for men and as a necessity for women. So far it has mainly been the kindergartens that have made possible for women to combine work and family, not the parental allowance<sup>253</sup>. The situation is changing as men stay at home more frequently and for longer time than before, but still women use the major part of the parental allowance.

In order to make fathers use parental allowance to a greater extent, some months are nowadays reserved for each parent in order to 'push' fathers to use their right in order to make women's situation in the labour market more equal and to make parenthood crucial for both parents. In Iceland the fathers simply would not use their parental allowance until a three-part parental allowance was introduced. Since 2000 Iceland has had a parental allowance with 1/3 reserved for the father and 1/3 for the mother and 1/3 it is up to the parents to decide themselves how to use it. Before 2000 and before the new legislation men did not take parental allowance to a great extent. Today 87% of the fathers use their paternity allowance<sup>254</sup>.

The recent debate in Sweden is about shaping even more parental allowance. The Icelandic model described above is discussed. The liberal party in Sweden has suggested a shared sick leave for taking care of children in order to strengthen women's position in the labour market. In Norway it already exists<sup>255</sup>.

### 3. Parental Allowance – A Comparison between the Nordic Countries

There is a relatively long history of maternity allowance in the Nordic countries. The first laws on maternity allowance were introduced around 1900 in all Nordic countries (Norway was the first in 1892); Iceland introduced the law only in 1946. It gave rights to women working in factories to stay at home, unpaid, 4-6 weeks depending on the country. The maternity allowance was changed afterwards. It was extended, paid and available for all women. The greatest reform by far is the change from maternity allowance to parental allowance. Maternity allowance was first introduced to secure health for mother and child. In between the years 1946-64 paid maternity allowance was introduced in all Nordic countries with the right to stay at home from work between 10 to 14 weeks depending on the country. In these days the debate existed in all Nordic countries whether women, especially married women, should be at the labour market or if men alone should bring income to the family. In the sixties there were already very many

<sup>252</sup> Even children of the Royal families go to public kindergartens nowadays. At the occasion of the princes of Denmark going to public kindergarten, the press release states that having children at kindergarten is normal in the Danish society; see: Article on the prince of Denmark from 2007-04-19, '*Satte prinsen pa dagis- Australien rasar*', <http://www.aftonbladet.se/vss/nyheter/story/0.2789.1049638.00.html>

<sup>253</sup> Review of the dissertation '*Göra pappa med barn*' on webpage: [www.barnsidan.se](http://www.barnsidan.se), from 2004-2006.

<sup>254</sup> <http://www.iceland.org/se/Nyheter-och-evenemang/nr/2384>, May 2006.

<sup>255</sup> [http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/inrikes/did\\_15172198.asp](http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/inrikes/did_15172198.asp), April 2007.

women working outside the home, so kindergartens were needed if women should continue working outside their home. Women's movements were strong and the arguments for kindergarten were: women's emancipation; women's right to both family and paid job outside the home, but also a pedagogical argument. Kindergarten provided a new modern pedagogic that went along with the modern project and the welfare state. The modern project was two parents in the labour market and new ways of raising children.

The laws to secure that mother could not be fired from work for being pregnant or being on maternity allowance was introduced in 1939 in Sweden. The rest of the Nordic countries introduced the same law in the seventies and eighties (Denmark as late as 1989)<sup>256</sup>.

The major standpoint in the Nordic countries has for a long time been that kindergarten is good for children. The right to actually **claim** kindergarten is not too old though<sup>257</sup>.

The parental allowance in the Nordic countries has been either a right for the parents to share as they like, or some months were reserved for the fathers. Sweden was the first country in the world to introduce parental allowance in 1974 which means that the parents themselves could decide how they wanted to share the, at that time, 7 months paid allowance.

Even when paid maternity allowance was introduced in Iceland in 1946 it only compensated women for the costs of delivery at hospital which was not free since giving birth to a child was not seen as an illness (treatment of illness was free). Iceland is the latest country to introduce maternity allowance and later also parental allowance. At the same time Iceland has the most controversial laws on parental allowance. In 2000 the right to 9 months paid parental allowance was introduced, 3 months for each parent and 3 months for the parents to decide themselves. Also unpaid allowance has been introduced for the parent who wishes to stay at home for a longer time. Iceland has had a law on general childcare since 1973 but it has been mainly for single parents or parents that are studying. Only recently has kindergarten or childcare been built up to a greater extent. The idea has never been to support childcare at home (like in Finland), but rather to provide childcare so parents can work or study<sup>258</sup>.

A home care allowance (get paid and stay at home) until the child is 3 years old exists in Finland. This means that Finland has not focused on providing kindergarten for all children; therefore it is difficult to find kindergarten for children younger than 3 years old in Finland.

Sweden has the most generous parental allowance with 480 days. 60 day (2 months) are reserved for each parent and the rest of the time (360 days) the parents share between themselves as they want. The parents can also save time and use it until the child is 8 years old and parents can also use the parental allowance and work or study part time. Sweden has since the 80ies tried to provide kindergarten facilities to every child. Today parents have a right to a kindergarten place for their children no matter if the parents are working, studying, or are unemployed; in the latter case it is to enable them to look for a job.

<sup>256</sup> 'Nordiska erfarenheter av föräldrarledigheter och dess inverkan på jämställdhet mellan kvinnor och män' Frida Ros Valdimarsdóttir, Published by the Centre for Gender Equality, Akureyri, Iceland, 1995, [http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/Files/foreldraledighet\\_sluttrapport.pdf](http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/Files/foreldraledighet_sluttrapport.pdf).

<sup>257</sup> 'Nordiska erfarenheter av föräldrarledigheter och dess inverkan på jämställdhet mellan kvinnor och män' Frida Ros Valdimarsdóttir, Published by the centre for gender equality, Akureyri, Iceland, 1995, [http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/Files/foreldraledighet\\_sluttrapport.pdf](http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/Files/foreldraledighet_sluttrapport.pdf).

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

Denmark is currently also discussing the paid leave for parents to take care of children at home. The response is two-fold: Many families say it is a good option, others say it is a trap for women. The government has not said the final word yet. (Similar proposals are currently being discussed in Germany.)

### 3.1. Use of Parental Allowance by Men in the Nordic Countries

#### Percentage of fathers using parental allowance<sup>259</sup>:

Year	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
1995	45%	37%	0%	33%	40%
2002	56%	47%	61%	44%	71%
2003			85-90%		

The figures do not deliver information about the length of time staying at home; it may be a day or 3 months.

The next table shows the percentage of the parental allowance that fathers use

#### % of time in the parental allowance used by fathers<sup>260</sup>:

Year	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
1995	4,5%	3,6%	0,1%	5,8%	10,3%
2002	5,5%	4,8%	19,6%	8,6%	16,6%
2005					20% <sup>261</sup>

Fathers in Sweden do use their right to have paternal leave to a greater extent every year and the number has been increasing during the last seven years (figures from 2005). Calculations show that, with the same speed as today, it will take another 22 years before men and women take out equally much parental leave in Sweden<sup>262</sup>. In Iceland the situation has changed drastically from almost no fathers being on parental leave to almost everybody due to the individualisation of the parental allowance with reserved months for each parent. In Sweden, too, fathers have increased their share of the parental leave due to the two reserved months (before it was only one month).

### 3.2. Experiences from the Nordic Countries on Parental Allowance - What Works and What Does not Work?

#### *Problems:*

In Norway the paid parental allowance is connected to the mother's salary. If the mother is unemployed the father can use the parental allowance but does not get paid and if women work part time in Norway, the men only get part-time payment for parental allowance.

Also in Finland parental leave is conditional. For example the parental allowance must be used all at once (it cannot be saved) and working part time is conditioned. The Finnish system is not very flexible and the system does not encourage men to use the parental allowance, however, it does exist for men.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Statistics Sweden (SCB), *Women and men in Sweden 2006*.

<sup>262</sup> <http://www.iceland.org/se/Nyheter-och-evenemang/nr/2384>, May 2006.



If the legislation makes it difficult for persons to really use their rights, then it is more likely that fewer persons will claim their rights.

Although fathers have had the right to have paid time off from work for a very long time (since 1974 in Sweden), there is a general problem to get fathers to claim their rights.

*Successful:*

What seems to be successful if the aim is to have parents share parental allowance:

- to allow flexibility in time and how to use parental allowance;
- to make paid parental allowance individual and not relate the payment to the mother's activity in the labour market;
- to provide high parental allowance, between 70-100% of the salary the person had before having a child;
- to reserve special rights for each individual (reserved time for each parent);
- when the parental leave is short, women take out most of the time. When a longer time can be claimed, men are more likely to use part of the parental leave.

In the Nordic countries where parents can stay at home as they decide – some months at a time; all at once; part-time; save time and use whenever it suits them – life situation makes it easier for parents to combine working/studying and being a parent. This is even more important to fathers in order to combine work and parenthood. In some of the Nordic countries parental allowance can be used until the child is 8 years old.

More women and men work part time. In Norway, where paid allowance is based on the mother's activity in the labour market, it is sometimes difficult for fathers to claim their rights because of the economic situation of the family.

Sweden and Iceland are the countries where most fathers use their right to parental allowance. The reserved months for each parent have indeed increased fathers' use of parental allowance. Fathers tend to use their right if the right is individual and earmarked for each parent.

In all Nordic countries paid leave is generous both in time and money. This of course determines how much a family can allow a parent to stay at home and, of course, this is strongly related to the economy of each country.

What is also important is how work/studies and children can be combined in the long run, not only when the child is newborn. The general solution in the Nordic countries is childcare, but the solutions differ between the countries<sup>263</sup>.

#### **4. Childcare – All Nordic Countries**

Childcare is available in all Nordic countries but accessibility varies. In Finland, Norway and Iceland public childcare is not provided in evenings and nights and most adults study in the evenings in these countries. In some folk high schools or other adult education institutions in Norway and Denmark childcare is provided, but this is not always the case. In Sweden it is possible to have childcare at evenings and nights.

<sup>263</sup> Dit. [http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/\\_Files/foreldraledighet\\_sluttrappport.pdf](http://www.jafnretti.is/D10/_Files/foreldraledighet_sluttrappport.pdf).

In Sweden and Denmark there is a well set up childcare system, also for very young children (starting at the age of 1 year in Sweden). In Norway the political goal is to offer childcare for everybody. Until now part-time childcare has been common and parents can get paid for staying at home with a child (mainly women use this possibility). Also Finland pays if parents want to stay at home with their children (here, too, mostly women stay at home). Sweden, Denmark and Iceland do not pay parents that want to stay at home and take care of their children.

Sweden has a long history of public childcare which dates back to the early 1930ies. In Finland and Norway kindergarten provision is not as common as in Sweden and Denmark.

#### 4.1. Sweden

Since 1943 kindergartens have been financed by public means. In the 1970s the kindergartens were built up to a great extent. Kindergarten is not only seen as a place where children can spend their time when parents are away, it is also seen as pedagogically important for children's development<sup>264</sup>.

#### The kindergarten development in Sweden 1972-2005<sup>265</sup>

1.6.1.1. Age	1.6.1.2. Year	1980	1990	2005
	<b>1972</b>			
1-6	12%	36%	57%	84%
7-9	6%	22%	50%	76%
10-12	1%	3%	7%	11%

Today kindergartens are rather the rule than the exception and many parents have themselves been to kindergarten when they were children. There is a great variety of childcare providers. Childcare is provided for all children in need of childcare aged 1 to 12 years old if the parents are working or studying. Since 2001 childcare is also possible some hours per week if the parents are unemployed so they can look for a job. Childcare is also provided for children when parents are on a parental leave for a younger child. It is also possible with public childcare in the night or evening if the parents are working or studying. The cost for childcare is based on the income of the household (with an upper limit). The standard rule is that childcare is available from the age of 1 year, though exceptions can be made. Within four months from the parents request the municipal authorities should provide childcare<sup>266</sup>.

#### 4.2. Norway

The current government in Norway is aiming for childcare for everybody that asks for it. They have considerably increased the number of childcare centres, but so far there are not enough places for every child. This is due to, among other things, 1) lack of construction workers that can construct the needed building for childcare; 2) lack of skilled (trained) childcare workers (nurses)<sup>267</sup>. During 2006, the number of children attending day care centres increased by 5.1%

<sup>264</sup> [http://www3.ur.se/ombarn/templates/Page\\_5555.aspx](http://www3.ur.se/ombarn/templates/Page_5555.aspx).

<sup>265</sup> Statistics Sweden (SCB), *Women and men in Sweden 2006*.

<sup>266</sup> *Förskoleverksamhet och skolbarnsomsorg regleras i Skollagen*, chapter 2 a, <http://www.hagfors.se/download/18.ec9441106cee33a4880001115/Regler+f%C3%B6rskole-+och+fritidsverksamhet+2005.doc>.

<http://www.linkoping.se/InformationOm/Utbildning/barnomsorg/Allmaninformation.htm>.

<sup>267</sup> Interview with a representative at Vox, Norway.

in Norway, that is 11,500 more children in kindergarten compared with 2005. In 2005, 80,4% of children aged 1-5 attended kindergarten. For younger children aged 1-2: 62% attended kindergarten and between 3-5 years nearly 93% attended kindergarten<sup>268</sup>.

### 4.3. Finland

In Finland public childcare is not equally common for children under the age of three. Only about 30% of women work when the youngest child is under 3 years old.<sup>269</sup> In Finland it is possible to stay at home with children until the child is three years old and still keep the job. It is mostly women that use this right. The parent staying at home with the child(ren) also gets home-care allowance. In 2004 only 29.6% of the women were employed when the youngest child was under the age of three. But when the children are older than three years, women go back to work. 75.4% of the women were employed in 2004 when the youngest child was 3-6 years old. For men (youngest child under three) 88.8% were employed and 90.1% when the youngest child was 3-6 years old.<sup>270</sup> In Finland parental allowance is not very flexible. For example, it is not possible to get parental allowance and to work-part time. The choice is often either to stay at home and get home-care allowance or to work full time. Part-time is possible but not paid.

### 4.4. Iceland

According to oral information of a representative for validation of non-formal learning, childcare in Iceland is available, but only during daytime. Most of adult education, however, is taking place in the evenings and there is not childcare in the evenings.

## 5. High Participation in the Labour Market

In the Nordic countries women's participation in the labour market is among the highest in Europe. Although women often work on the same level as men, they earn less than men. In Norway, women are paid about 60 % of men's income<sup>271</sup>. Part-time work is common for women in the Nordic countries and the labour market is very much gendered. Men do not work in the same places as women.

### 5.1. Sweden

75% of women in the age of 20-64 were working in 2005 compared with 81% for men. The statistics show figures only for the full-time unemployed, not for the part-time unemployed; a large number of women thus do not appear in the statistics because they often work part-time<sup>272</sup>. The labour market in Sweden is highly gendered. For women it is built on part-time jobs, especially in the sector of health and care<sup>273</sup>. Unemployment is much higher for women if the hidden unemployment (working part-time) is taken into consideration. Only 49% of the women labour force worked full-time in Sweden in 2005 (men: 72%). Women work in some professions, men in others. Only 16% of the women work in professions in which both genders are occupied and only 14% of the men. Men work in the private sector, women work equally in

<sup>268</sup> [http://www.ssb.no/barnehager\\_en/](http://www.ssb.no/barnehager_en/).

<sup>269</sup> Statistics Finland, 'Women and Men in Finland 2005.'

<sup>270</sup> Women and Men in Finland 2005, table 3.22.

<sup>271</sup> <http://www.gender.no/Topics/12>.

<sup>272</sup> SCB, *På tal om kvinnor och män 2006*, Sweden.

<sup>273</sup> Research made by Anita Nyberg, newsletter nr 2, 2005, National Institute for Working Life: [http://www.arbetslivsinstitutet.se/perspektiv/whole\\_news\\_sok.asp?ID=398](http://www.arbetslivsinstitutet.se/perspektiv/whole_news_sok.asp?ID=398).

the private and the public sector. Even when women work in the same professions as men they receive lower payment. In 2004 women earned 92% of men's income<sup>274</sup>.

## 5.2. Iceland

74% of the women aged 16-74 were employed in 2004 and 82% of the men (economy activity rate, 76% women and 85% men, including self employed). Women in Iceland, just like in the rest of the Nordic countries tend to work part-time. Only 63% of the female work force work full time compared with 90% of the men working full-time. Women working in the public authorities earn 88% of what men earn and in the private sector women are paid 77% of men's payment. In academic associations the situation is slightly better with 90% of men's salaries, and female teachers in the upper secondary level get 97% of their male counterparts<sup>275</sup>.

## 5.3. Finland

In Finland the employment rate for women aged 15-64 in 2004, was 65.5% and for men 68.9%. 18.2% of women working in Finland in year 2004 worked part-time. Out of these 10% said that childcare was a reason for their part-time job. Women more often than men also say that the reason for a part-time job is that there is no full-time work available. The labour market is gendered, men and women do not work in the same jobs, and men are more often employed in the private sector than women (men 84% private sector, women 60%). On the average women earned 80% of men's income in 2004<sup>276</sup>.

Women in the political sector: Finland has just installed the first government in the world with more women than men. In 1995 Finland introduced quotas for official government committees and councils and state-owned corporations. The reason for introducing a quota was to ensure democracy in leadership. In 10 years time this has led to major changes and women now make up almost 40% in these boards<sup>277</sup>.

## 5.4. Norway

In Norway 68.3% women were in the labour force in 2006 and 75.6% of the men<sup>278</sup>. 42% of women work part-time; 73 000 women working part-time wish to work more<sup>279</sup>. Women's income is about 60% of men's income in Norway; on the average the monthly salary for women in 2005 was 84.7% of men's salary<sup>280</sup>.

## 5.5. Denmark

In Denmark in 2005, 69.3% women were in the labour market and 75.8% men. In Denmark, just like the other Nordic countries, the labour market is highly gendered with about 60% of the workforce working in gendered jobs dominated by one sex. The payment gap between women

<sup>274</sup> SCB, *På tal om kvinnor och män 2006*, Sweden.

<sup>275</sup> Statistics Iceland:

[http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1290&src=/temp\\_en/Dialog/view.asp?ma=HEI11103%26ti=Labour+market+++%26path=../Database/heilbrigdismal/kklykiltolur/%26lang=1%26units=number,%20percent](http://www.statice.is/?PageID=1290&src=/temp_en/Dialog/view.asp?ma=HEI11103%26ti=Labour+market+++%26path=../Database/heilbrigdismal/kklykiltolur/%26lang=1%26units=number,%20percent).

<sup>276</sup> Statistics Finland, *Women and Men in Finland 2005*.

<sup>277</sup> <http://www.europeanpwn.net/what-is-europeanpwn/editorials/first-female-government-a-fact/>

<sup>278</sup> [http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/06/01/aku\\_en/tab-2007-05-04-02-en.html](http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/06/01/aku_en/tab-2007-05-04-02-en.html).

<sup>279</sup> <http://www.ssb.no/arbeid/>.

<sup>280</sup> <http://www.ssb.no/likestilling/>.

and men for the years 1997-2001 was in gross figures 12-19%. The gap is smaller if we just look at the figures without statistical explanation, then it is 'only' a gap of 2-6%<sup>281</sup>.

In the Nordic countries a very high percentage of women work outside their home. They also have one of the most gender segregated labour markets in the world. Women also work part-time to a great extent. Part-time work is by some researchers seen as an obstacle for equality. The gender segregated labour market with a big public sector where women work is in a way built up for part-time jobs, especially the health sector. The employment rate for women is much lower than the statistics tell us if we take part-time work into consideration. Many people that work part-time want to work more, which means that hidden unemployment exists in this group. Another point of view is to say that the gender segregated labour market and especially the possibility to work part-time has actually made it possible for women to work. Part-time work makes it possible for women to work and combine working life and a family. In many countries women have only the alternative to work or not to work, which has resulted in women not having children at all (e.g. Italy). When women work part time they earn less than men and the career possibilities are more limited. A solution for a society with economic gender equality is not to change working habits for women, but for men. The way to go is to create a working life where men can take more responsibility for children and care<sup>282</sup>. In Norway, just like in all other countries, women do more of the unpaid labour, although men today do more housework than before. It is stated in the gender statistics in Norway that the division of care work and household responsibilities has negative effects for both men and women. For women it has a negative effect on their position in the labour market and for men it has a negative effect in the relation to their children<sup>283</sup>.

---

<sup>281</sup> *Facts on gender equality 2006*, [http://www.lige.dk/files/PDF/facts\\_equality.pdf](http://www.lige.dk/files/PDF/facts_equality.pdf)

<sup>282</sup> Hilde Bojer, researcher at the University of Oslo, oral communication, April 2007.

<sup>283</sup> <http://www.gender.no/Topics/12>.



## Women in Business – An International Perspective

This part of the study deals with the different measures adopted by corporations to promote women's employability and career development. It also looks into the hurdles women encounter when climbing the corporate ladder and gives examples of initiatives put in place by the business world to deal with these problems.

This chapter seeks to establish the link between women's continuing education and their chances of finding suitable employment and enjoying a fulfilling career.

### 1. Diversity

#### 1.1. Definition of Diversity

The corporate world has been experiencing unprecedented changes. Employees are searching for meaning in their work as well as for ways to express who they really are and how to contribute in a significant way to the big picture. Companies are being asked to open up to new approaches and perspectives. Employers are expected to pay more attention to cultural and personal differences and honour them.

This is where diversity comes in. Diversity is a set of strategies employers around the world have been using to foster employee retention and improve customer loyalty. There are several definitions of diversity. Here is one from Shell's global diversity policy: 'At Shell, diversity means all the ways we differ. It includes visible differences such as age, gender, ethnicity and physical appearance; as well as underlying differences such as thought styles, religion, nationality, and education. It means respecting, valuing and harnessing the richness of ideas, backgrounds and perspectives, i.e. a new source of creativity<sup>284</sup>.'

IBM considers diversity one of its key values: 'Attracting, welcoming, developing, promoting and retaining all people regardless of factors unrelated to job performance is our way of life<sup>285</sup>.' IBM has been one of the pioneers of diversity. When Lou Gerstner became CEO in 1993, he 'took a look at his senior executive team, and felt it didn't reflect the diversity of the market for talent or IBM's customers and employees. To rectify the imbalance, in 1995 Gerstner launched a diversity task-force initiative that became a cornerstone of IBM's HR strategy<sup>286</sup>.' The initiative included eight task-forces dealing with the needs and concerns of the following groups: Asians, Black people, People with Disabilities, White Men, Women, Gay/Lesbians/Bisexuals/Transgender Individuals, Hispanics and Native Americans.

The most pressing issues for the Women Task-force were: networking, career advancement, succession planning, work/life balance, flexibility as a business strategy, executives' personal commitment to advancing women, and target advertising and marketing.

As part of its contribution to the diversity debate, the Belgium/Luxembourg operation of IBM conducted a survey in 2005 of hundreds of women in management positions in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the two countries. The aim of the study was to 'get the inside view on issues crucial to the modern workplace, such as: business strategies, gender

<sup>284</sup> *Diversity and Inclusiveness at Shell*, produced by the Global Diversity Practice, <http://www.shell.com/diversity>, © Shell International Limited, 2002.

<sup>285</sup> *Women in Business – Perspectives on gender diversity on the workflow- A White Paper* by IBM, Belgium/Luxembourg – Women Leadership Council, July 2005.

<sup>286</sup> David A. Thomas, *Diversity ad Strategy*, Harvard Business Review, September 2004.

diversity, work/life balance and networking<sup>287</sup>.’ One of the findings was that ‘little is known about diversity policies, as they don’t seem to be built into general company policy<sup>288</sup>’.

According to the European Professional Women’s Network (EuropeanPWN), an association that promotes women’s employability and career development, diversity programs have not always produced the results women in business wish for: ‘... despite a great deal of effort, numerous gender diversity programs are showing disappointing results because the company hasn’t taken the time to think and act differently<sup>289</sup>’.

Both European PWN and the IBM Belgium/Luxembourg study agree that, in order to work, a diversity policy has to have the same status as a change program. It has to have a long-lasting impact on a company’s culture. ‘It is important to involve different levels in the company gradually... This means securing political commitment from the executive committee, adapting your HR processes, changing your management structure and methods of measuring progress<sup>290</sup>’.

## 1.2. The business case for the female dimension of diversity

In today’s complex environment, companies need people with different sensibilities to be able to process different realities and appeal to various publics. ‘The more a firm diversifies its sources of knowledge and sensibility at every level..., the greater its ability to anticipate and respond to changes in its environment and markets<sup>291</sup>’.

Diversity is therefore much more than a nice gesture a company has to make for the sake of political correctness. It makes perfect sense from a business point of view.

Catalyst, a research firm specialising in the advancement of women in business, conducted a study in 2004 to test the existence of a link between gender diversity and financial performance. It analyzed the performance of 353 Fortune 500 companies in the second half of the 1990s on the basis of their Return on Equity (ROE) and Total Return to Shareholders (TRS). It found out that ‘the group of companies with the highest representation of women on their top management teams experienced better financial performance than the group of companies with the lowest women’s representation<sup>292</sup>.’ This is due to their ability to attract educated women and promote their careers. More than half of all bachelor’s (57.3%) and master’s (58.8%) degrees in the United States are earned by women<sup>293</sup>.

A large part of the debate on modern business strategies centres on the ability of companies to become more flexible, encourage creativity and understand the way of thinking of new markets and customer groups. More and more corporate mission statements mention traditional feminine values like inclusiveness and cooperative leadership. According to IBM Belgium/Luxembourg, ‘feminine values are based on teaming and collaborative relationships<sup>294</sup>.’ This management

<sup>287</sup> IBM Belgium/Luxembourg, *dit.*, p. 16.

<sup>288</sup> IBM Belgium/Luxembourg, *dit.*, p. 16.

<sup>289</sup> Laurence Dejouany and Mirella Visser, *Alice in Business-Land – A concise manual on diversity*, Women@Work No. 5, European Professional Women’s Network, 2006, p. 7.

<sup>290</sup> Dejouany and Visser, 2006, p. 61.

<sup>291</sup> Mark Hunter, *The business case for diversity*, INSEAD Quarterly 2005.

<sup>292</sup> *The Bottom Line: Connecting Corporate Performance and Gender Diversity*, © 2004 by Catalyst, [www.catalystwomen.org](http://www.catalystwomen.org), p. 2.

<sup>293</sup> *The Bottom Line: Connecting Corporate Performance and Gender Diversity*, © 2004 by Catalyst, p. 2.

<sup>294</sup> IBM Belgium/Luxembourg, *dit.*, p. 14.



style has also been called ‘social-expressive’<sup>295</sup>. It is characterized by cooperative behaviour with personal attention paid to subordinates and strong emphasis on a harmonious work environment. ‘Women have a preference for a more equal, transformational leadership style, supporting and nurturing others, sharing information, and leading from within’<sup>296</sup>.

Women may also have particular capabilities that are unique to them, and ‘these capabilities, if properly valued and employed, also confer a competitive advantage’<sup>297</sup>.

### 1.3. Examples of Diversity Initiatives (Good Practices from the Corporate World)

#### 1.3.1. Total

The multinational energy company Total signed France’s Diversity Chapter in 2004 and set up a Diversity Council with the task of ‘eliminating in-house barriers to the career development of women and non-French nationals’<sup>298</sup>.

The Council defined indicators and targets for 2006 and 2010:

#### Increase the number of women employees (% women)<sup>299</sup>

	2003	2004	2006	2010
Recruitment	20	24	26	33
High potentials	12	15	16	25
Senior executives	4	6	7	12
Management training	20	12	20	25

Total is aiming at hiring more women and at facilitating women’s access to management positions. Recruitment has been identified as a key element of this process. ‘In 2005, 30% of the Group’s new hires and 26.6% of the managers hired under permanent contracts were women, up from 24.5% in 2004’<sup>300</sup>.

The Council for Diversity has been advising Total’s executive committee on policy. It sets targets, develops indicators and monitors implementation. Both the HR and the communication departments have a Social Innovation and Diversity division<sup>301</sup>.

Another example of a gender diversity initiative is a lunch that was organized for a group of twelve women with Total’s chairman. The women had been selected with the help of career managers and heads of recruitment to ensure the presence of different age groups. The lunch

<sup>295</sup> IBM Belgium/Luxembourg, *dit.*, p. 15.

<sup>296</sup> Vinnicombe, S., and Singh, V., ‘Locks and keys to the boardroom’, *Women in Management Review*, Volume 18, Number 6, 2003.

<sup>297</sup> Mark Hunter, *INSEAD Quarterly*, 2005.

<sup>298</sup> <http://www.total.com/en/corporate-social-reponsibility>.

<sup>299</sup> [http://www.total.com/en/corporate-social-responsibility/Challenges\\_actions/Social-Responsibility/Diversity-opportunity\\_9104.htm](http://www.total.com/en/corporate-social-responsibility/Challenges_actions/Social-Responsibility/Diversity-opportunity_9104.htm).

<sup>300</sup> [http://www.total.com/en/corporate-social-responsibility/Challenges\\_actions/Social-Responsibility/Diversity-opportunity\\_9104.htm](http://www.total.com/en/corporate-social-responsibility/Challenges_actions/Social-Responsibility/Diversity-opportunity_9104.htm).

<sup>301</sup> Dejouany and Visser, 2006, p. 63.

provided the opportunity to discuss such issues as networks, affirmative action, mentoring, women in male professions and the lack of role models. The chairman briefed the executive committee about the content of the discussion and used the opportunity to reiterate the importance of gender diversity<sup>302</sup>.

### 1.3.2. Microsoft

The technology giant Microsoft has made a commitment to attract talented women to the company and the high-tech sector as a whole. Its work/life balance program includes ‘health benefits, parental leave programs, and strong networking groups’<sup>303</sup>.

Each Microsoft division is given a diversity indicator, which is being monitored by the Diversity Manager in the respective country. Every six months, managers receive a report with feedback from members of staff on how they have contributed to diversity through both their behaviour and their way of working<sup>304</sup>.

## 2. Career Facilitators

There are more and more tools available to women for career development. Here are some of the strategies that can be used to increase women’s employability as well as their visibility in the business world.

### 2.1. Role Models

Most role models in corporate environments are male. This phenomenon confuses and intimidates women who tend to use a different management style. While men receive confirmation of their identity as leaders through their male peers, women need ‘appropriate role models to develop their managerial identity’<sup>305</sup>.

There are many reasons for the lack of female corporate role models. It could be the culture of the organization or the reluctance by older male senior executives to be more flexible and accept different management styles<sup>306</sup>.

The IBM Belgium/Luxembourg study found out that 70% to 80% of women in lower and middle management (90% in top management) ‘rate communication, collaboration, organization, decisiveness, enthusiasm and leadership as very important or important skills for a manager’<sup>307</sup>. However, they also feel that these competences are not always valued by companies. It is therefore crucial to provide women with female points of reference to help them develop their career without having to emulate male leaders. A woman may find it difficult to identify a role model in her immediate business environment. In such cases, she could benefit from joining a network.

<sup>302</sup> Dejouany and Visser, 2006, p. 70.

<sup>303</sup> <http://members.microsoft.com/careers/women/default.aspx>

<sup>304</sup> Dejouany and Visser, 2006, p. 67.

<sup>305</sup> Vinnicombe, S., and Singh, V., ‘Locks and keys to the boardroom’, *Women in Management Review*, Volume 18, Number 6, 2003.

<sup>306</sup> Wark, P., ‘With prejudice’, *Times2, The Times*, May 22 2007, p. 4.

<sup>307</sup> IBM Belgium/Luxembourg, *dit.*, p. 12.

## 2.2. Networks

Although women are inclined to interact in groups and create communities, in the past, professional women have had an ambivalent relationship with networks.

Networking used to be perceived as something that only men did and that women could not afford due to lack of time or to other priorities. While men have traditionally used professional and other networks for support and career advice, women have tended to rely on family and friends. Women have been reluctant to approach senior people in their organizations for advice, which has contributed to isolate them and make them less visible.

IBM researched career development strategies in eight European countries and found that, whilst men network from the very beginning of their career, women are much less consistent in their approach to networking<sup>308</sup>.

However, in the past ten years professional women have come to view networks in a different way.

### 2.2.1. What Women Expect From Professional Networks

The survey conducted by IBM Belgium/Luxembourg in 2005 revealed that women expect topics such as communication and leadership (63%), sector-specific information (25%) and issues such as work/life balance and diversity policy (13%) to be addressed by networks<sup>309</sup>. Its findings also established a link between level of education and propensity to network: women with a university degree participate significantly more in networks (39%) than their colleagues.

Female networking also seems to have a generational component: while 29% of the top managers surveyed participate actively in networks, only 10% of the middle managers engage with strategic networks<sup>310</sup>. There are several reasons for this phenomenon. Younger female professionals sometimes believe that networks are only for women with some years of seniority. Another problem might be the lack of exposure to networking. Young female employees want to understand how a network functions and what it can do for their career development before they commit hours of their time to engaging with other women.

### 2.2.2. Corporate Networks

An increasing number of multinational companies have been launching or sponsoring women's networks<sup>311</sup>. Employers benefit from these networks in different ways. They can use the women's contacts to recruit talent from outside the company. By getting together within the network, women meet with colleagues from other departments and widen the scope of the company's projects<sup>312</sup>.

General Electric (GE) launched its network in 1997. 'The Women's Network was formed to support the professional development of women in GE. It provides mentoring and coaching across GE and within its businesses<sup>313</sup>'.

<sup>308</sup> IBM Belgium/Luxembourg, *dit.*, p. 21.

<sup>309</sup> IBM Belgium/Luxembourg, *dit.* p. 22.

<sup>310</sup> IBM Belgium/Luxembourg, *dit.*, pp. 21 and 22.

<sup>311</sup> Dejouany and Visser, 2006, p. 45.

<sup>312</sup> Dejouany and Visser, 2006, p. 46.

<sup>313</sup> <http://www.gecareers.com/GECAREERS/html/us/ourPeople/women.html>.

What the [GE] Women's Network Is/Is Not<sup>314</sup>

The Network IS...	The Network is NOT...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women helping women excel</li> <li>• Voluntary</li> <li>• A vehicle to foster leadership skills</li> <li>• An opportunity to network with other women and business leaders</li> <li>• Information sharing</li> <li>• About benefits for GE and women...retention</li> <li>• A way to engage senior leadership</li> <li>• About personal development</li> <li>• A mechanism to promote the professional image of women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About replacing Company practices, policies and procedures</li> <li>• A forum for resolving personal issues</li> <li>• A replacement for Diversity initiatives</li> <li>• An excuse for senior leadership to abdicate responsibility for mentoring women</li> <li>• Intended to be overwhelmingly time-consuming</li> <li>• Limited to women...participation is open</li> </ul>

**2.2.3. External Networks**

According to an article published in 2006 by EuropeanPWN, 'external networks...are a sign that women are cross-fertilising ideas and spreading best practices at grass-roots level<sup>315</sup>.'

EuropeanPWN is an example of a well-established women's network with some 3,000 members all over Europe. It acts as an umbrella organization for local networks in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Brussels, Geneva, London, Madrid, Milan, Oslo, Paris, Sophia Antipolis (France), Stockholm and Vienna. EuropeanPWN's mission<sup>316</sup> is about:

- Promoting the development of women's careers with the help of training, mentoring and networking.
- Sharing information about sustainable professional career paths.
- Carrying out advocacy work to convince companies to adopt diverse management approaches, more favourable to women's needs.
- Raising awareness of women's issues in the media.

EuropeanPWN organizes regular events in the cities covered by its network with high-level speakers and trainers. It also operates an online networking platform that provides members with access to a pan-European discussion forum, a message board and a searchable membership directory<sup>317</sup>. In 2006, over 3,000 messages were posted on its message board.

<sup>314</sup> Women's Network – GE Developing External Relationships.

<sup>315</sup> <http://www.europeanpwn.net/think-tank/women-leading-change/>.

<sup>316</sup> <http://www.europeanpwn.net/what-is-europeanpwn/mission/>.

<sup>317</sup> <http://www.europeanpwn.net/joining-europeanpwn/>.

### 2.3. Training

Corporations these days are experiencing a shift from the delivery of training to the strategic development of learning. This trend is seen as a move from a command-and control style of training to a facilitating and coaching style. A considerable effort is in place to allow employees to manage and solve their own problems through knowledge-sharing in an open and conducive environment.

In order for this to happen, corporations have to create the right setting. Training activities need to be aimed at raising the acceptance of team roles and responsibilities. They also need to be endorsed and supported by senior management.

The distinction between performance improvement, learning through training and knowledge-sharing is becoming blurred. More and more employees, women in particular, are looking for personal development and career orientation rather than traditional training. This is the reason why mentoring has begun to play an important role for women working in corporations.

Companies lack training programs specifically designed for female employees and their needs. This is why they have been developing mentoring programs as a solution for women who want to continue learning. Mentors act as facilitators of learning rather than instructors. This is an approach that better suits the management style of female employees.<sup>318</sup>

### 2.4. Mentoring

Mentoring is defined as ‘a relationship that is created to share knowledge and experience for learning in a purposeful way<sup>319</sup>.’

Whilst the traditional model of mentoring implies that an older and more experienced professional takes a younger woman under her wing and shares her knowledge and insight with her, newer forms of mentoring no longer require the mentee to be younger or less experienced. New types of mentoring have been surfacing thanks to the technological challenges companies are facing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Younger employees are more familiar with the way young consumers use technology and their advice can be turned into a competitive advantage for the employer. This is called reverse mentoring and technology giant Cisco has been using it to make its Vice-Presidents more aware of women’s experiences in the company. Cisco’s Vice-Presidents are mentored by women from all levels in the organization, with the aim of improving their understanding of women’s needs<sup>320</sup>; Half of Cisco’s workforce is female.

Another new form of mentoring is buddy mentoring, which envisages an employee being assisted by a colleague and taught how to navigate the practices and culture of a company. This kind of mentoring is used to keep women in touch with their workplace during periods of absence due to maternity leave, post-graduate studies, personal health issues, and so forth.

<sup>318</sup> It is also difficult to judge the quality of women’s participation. When it comes to quantity, the CVTS 2 cites ‘The overall conclusion must be that there is very little unequal treatment of the sexes in terms of participation in continuing training in enterprises ...’ but the purely quantitative analysis seems insufficient – a gendered and qualitative approach which analyses the cost, length and quality of the training courses for men and women would give a much needed clearer picture. See Continuing training in enterprises in Europe - Results of the second European Continuing Vocational Training Survey in enterprises, p. 24.

<sup>319</sup> Stevens, N., and Visser, M., ‘What is mentoring?’, *Mentoring – A Powerful Tool for Women*, Women@Work, No. 7, European Professional Women’s Network, p. 19, 2007.

<sup>320</sup> Stevens and Visser, p. 21, 2007.

## 2.5. Recruitment

Recruitment plays a crucial role in increasing the percentage of women hired by corporations every year. The right recruitment policy needs to be in place in order to guarantee a proper gender mix on recruitment panels.

The technology company Hewlett-Packard (HP) has introduced a policy whereby women can participate in recruitment panels even when the recruitment is not related to their business unit<sup>321</sup>. This practice helps to ensure that the woman on the panel is not necessarily the HR representative. HP keeps a list of women managers who have volunteered for this role.

Air Liquide, the world leader in industrial and medical gases, has increased its number of women in positions of responsibility. In 2005, 17% of all engineers and managers hired by the company worldwide were women, representing 28% of all hires in this category<sup>322</sup>.

Twenty to twenty-five percent of the 10,000 unsolicited job applications that Air Liquide receives every year are from women. The HR department guarantees that 50% of the applicants to be interviewed will be women<sup>323</sup>.

Air Liquide also believes that the presence of young women in a corporation is bound to attract other women. This is why it uses recent female managerial recruits to maintain special relationships with the schools they attended and to organize recruitment events<sup>324</sup>.

## 2.6. Work/Life Balance

EuropeanPWN conducted a survey in 2007 and asked its members to identify the factors that help them to achieve work/life balance<sup>325</sup>. The answer was:

1. Interacting with friends (more than 25%)
2. Learning something new every day (more than 20%)
3. Sports (17%)
4. Culture (12%)

Social interaction is certainly vital for women who feel isolated in their professional life due to a new job or because they work in a male-dominated environment.

Learning has always been high on professional women's list of priorities. As the Cranfield School of Management pointed out 'women tend to receive less training than men, despite the evidence that they value it highly<sup>326</sup>.'

Talented individuals are often spotted by companies in their early thirties and offered career development opportunities. At this age women begin to face family responsibilities. According to EuropeanPWN, 'there are fewer women than men in the training programmes set up at this time to boost career development<sup>327</sup>'.

<sup>321</sup> Dejouany and Visser, 2006, p. 81.

<sup>322</sup> <http://www.airliquide.com/en/corporate/sustainable/dd-women-men.html>.

<sup>323</sup> Dejouany and Visser, p. 82, 2006.

<sup>324</sup> Dejouany and Visser, p. 83, 2006.

<sup>325</sup> <http://www.europeanpwn.net/think-tank/poll-results/poll-debrief-social-interaction-crucial-for-work-life-balance->

<sup>326</sup> Vinnicombe, S., and Singh, V., 'Locks and keys to the boardroom', *Women in Management Review*, Volume 18, Number 6, 2003.

<sup>327</sup> Dejouany and Visser, 2006, p. 93.

Companies often run the risk of losing talented women by the time they reach their thirties. In her latest book *Off Ramps and On Ramps*, Sylvia Ann Hewlett identifies a number of reasons why women leave the workplace: ‘family commitments such as childcare ...and, increasingly, elder-care pressures; and work-related factors such as an unsatisfying job – a complaint of 52% of women in business – or a stalled career<sup>328</sup>.’

‘This age often noticeably represents a breaking point for women in their careers<sup>329</sup>.’

This is where the ‘post-geographic’ solution comes in. With the help of telecommuting, companies now give women the opportunity to live in the countries where their families live while being responsible for other geographic areas.

Here is an example collected by EuropeanPWN:

*‘Several months ago, I accepted a job in Southern Europe. The post is based in Madrid...I spend two days a week there and the rest of the time I work from La Défense [in Paris], as before. This was a responsible decision taken by two parties, my boss and me. I get up early on Tuesday and get home late on Wednesday. When I go to Madrid they’re delighted to see me and when I’m there, I work very hard. The nanny helps out in the mornings. My husband looks after the kids in the evening. They do sports, and are more than happy to hand out together without me. Then, when I come home, they are over the moon<sup>330</sup>!’*

---

<sup>328</sup> Director, ‘Why women leave’, June 2007, p. 51.

<sup>329</sup> Dejouany and Visser, 2006, p. 93.

<sup>330</sup> Dejouany and Visser, 2006, p. 98.

## Appendix Chapter 3

### Summary of Questionnaires to Institutions

The questionnaire with 6 questions was sent to a number of EAEA members; 16 completed questionnaires from 15 countries, most of them representing general adult education centres or associations, contributed to the statements in chapter 3. In most of the cases the persons that answered the questionnaire are also practitioners.

#### 1. Which is the (approx.) percentage of women and men in the courses of your institution/organisation?

**AT** – Association of folk high schools/adult education centres: 76% Women - 24% Men  
(Statistics: <http://www.adulteducation.at/de/struktur/statistik/auswertungen/7/page8/>).

**BE** – Literacy Centres in Wallonia and Brussels (Lire et écrire): 60% women – 40% men  
In some centres in Brussels partner organisations of ‘Lire et écrire’ organise women-only courses. All literacy centres in Wallonia and Brussels : 64% women – 36% men

**CH** – Association of Swiss folk high schools/adult education centres: ca. 75% women

**CY** – Association of adult education: the main non-formal education programme is the adult education centres of the Ministry of Education and culture; 75% of the participants are women

**DE** – Vocational training centre for women: approx. 98% women

**DE** – Trade union & adult education centres cooperation - 44% women 56% men

**ES** – 6 adult education centres: between 70% and 75% women

**FI** – Adult education centre: approximately 85% women and 15% men

**HR** – Adult education centre: - 65% F 35% M

**HU** – University:

Total number of students: ( A+B+C+D+E+F+G) 35117

Men- 13413 (Rate: 38.19%) - Women – 21704 (Rate: 61.8 %)

A.) Upper secondary training: Total number: 1450

Men – 423 (Rate: 29.17%) - Women – 1027 (Rate: 70.82%)

B.) College-level: Total number: 10287

Men – 3930 (Rate: 38.20%) Women – 6357 (Rate: 61.79%)

C.) University-level: Total number: 13391

Men – 4956 (Rate: 37.00 %) - Women – 8435 (Rate: 62.99%)

D.) Basic-level: Total number: 5873

Men – 2395 (Rate: 40.77%) Women – 3478 (Rate: 59.37%)

E.) Non-Bologna (5 years) courses: Total number: 1209

Men – 549 (Rate: 45.40%) Women – 660 (Rate: 54.59%)

F.) Post-graduate degree courses: Total number: 1641

Men – 535 (Rate: 32.60%) Women – 1106 /Rate: 67.39%)



G.) PhD, DLA Courses: Total number: 1266  
 Men – 625 (Rate: 49.36%)      Women – 641 (Rate: 50.63%)

**IT** – Adult education centre: 60% women, 40% men

**Nordic Network for Adult Learners:** 2005: 38% men and 62% women; 2006: 36% men and 64% women

**PT** – Training agency for disadvantaged persons: 98%

**RO** – University, department continuing education: 51% women; 41% men

**SK** – Organisation with a series of adult education centres: 62% women (1<sup>st</sup> half 2007),

**UK** – Adult education centre: women 65%, men 35%

**2. Are there differences of these percentages in specific subjects? If so, in which subjects and which are the percentages?**

**AT** – Association of folk high schools/adult education centres: There are different percentages of participation in different subjects:

Citizenship / Politics, Society and Culture: female 72.8%, male 27.2%

Second Chance - Basic Education: female 54.3%, male 45.7%

Natural Sciences, Technology and Environment: female 63.3%, male 36.7%

Vocational Education: female 66.8%, male 33.2%

Languages: female 71.3%, male 28.7%

Creativity: female 75.7%, male 24.3%

Health: female 86.2%, male 13.8%

Total: female 76.5%, male 23.5%

(Statistics: <http://www.adulteducation.at/de/struktur/statistik/auswertungen/7/page19>)

**BE** – Literacy Centres in Wallonia and Brussels (Lire et écrire): The courses are generally mixed in all centres; therefore the content/themes are identical.

**CH** – Association of Swiss folk high schools/adult education centres: All courses that are ‘useful’ for the job / workplace / labour market have the same percentage of women and men. In creative courses almost 100% of the participants are women.

**CY** – Association of adult education: there are subjects where women are 100% such as cooking, gymnastics, beauty therapies; there are no subjects where there are 100 % men.

**DE** – Vocational training centre for women: We are offering vocational training courses for women returners and unemployed women in the clerical and IT sector. In the last few years in each course 16 –18 women participated. - We are realising a European project to implement a vocational training centre for immigrant women in the northern district of the city of Dortmund. In the vocational orientation courses for young persons up to 25 years males und females participate on an average of 50 %.

**DE** – Trade union & adult education centres cooperation: Gender related themes, family: 55% women 45% men; Culture, Communication, Creativity: 60% women 40% men; Languages, Intercultural competence: 59% women 41% men; Work, Workplace, Representation of employees/workers: 39% women, 61% men

**ES** – 6 adult education centres: There are only mentally disabled persons that receive special attention. There are however specific courses / treatments for immigrants who don't know our culture and language.

**FI** – Adult education centre: There are no significant differences in specific subjects, with the exception of drama and dance, where the percentage of male students is 0 this year (it has generally been like this, with few exceptions over the years). Another exception is the so-called '10<sup>th</sup> grade', where there are more male than female students (60% vs. 40%). This programme is meant for young people who have failed their school-leaving exams or who want to improve their results in these exams, and as a rule there are more boys than girls taking the courses.

**HR** – Adult education centre: foreign language, more female participation (75%)

**HU** – University: We do not have a statistical breakdown of the figures related to the subject.

**IT** – Adult education centre: Handicraft works courses more women, technical courses more men

**Nordic Network for Adult Learners**: Not really, when it is a conference more men attend; when a seminar with a more practical programme – more women attend.

**PT** – Training agency for disadvantaged persons: There are no differences in these percentages in specific subjects.

**RO** – University, department for continuing education: No

**SK** – Organisation with a series of adult education centres: Hairdresser, Cosmetic Care, Beautician – colorist, Basics of Manicure and Pedicure, Manicure and Nail Design, Domiciliariship and Caretaking, ... almost 100% women

**UK** – Adult education centre: No

**3. Do you offer courses/subjects only for women? If so, which are the themes and what are the reasons?**

**AT** – Association of folk high schools/adult education centres: Some. There no exact figures. There are areas, where offers for women make sense (social fields of feminist education or others)

**BE** – Literacy Centres in Wallonia and Brussels (Lire et écrire): There are themes in the courses that are quite often discussed such like inequality between men and women. The concrete examples deal with salaries/wages, voting rights for women etc.

**CH** – Association of Swiss folk high schools/adult education centres: This differs from one adult education centre to the other. About a third of adult education centres in Switzerland offer

also women-only courses; these are usually practical courses that are seen as ‘masculine’ such as ‘car mechanics and repair for women’, ‘if the drain is blocked’, ‘carpentry for women’; ‘Wine tasting course for women’. On the other hand communication courses are often organised for women only; another theme is self-defence.

**CY** – Association of adult education: No.

**DE** – Vocational training centre for women: In computer skills, the clerical sector and vocational orientation courses for immigrants we are offering courses only for the target group of women. The main reasons are the objective of our association to promote the employability of women. Our organisation is organised by women.

**DE** – Trade union & adult education centres cooperation: Yes, as long as there is no real gender equality we offer specific courses for women. Themes are, among others, health policy, conflict solution, rhetoric, women’s rights, Europe.

**ES** – 6 adult education centres: No, there are no specific courses for women. The courses are open to all people independent of gender. Sometimes the time of the day brings more women or more men into the courses; e.g. in the afternoon courses from 15.00 to 17.00 hours more women participate; in the evening from 20.00 to 22.00 hours more men participate.

**FI** – Adult education centre: No, all our courses are open to both genders and all ages.

**HR** – Adult education centre: Yes, various types of hobbies, painting on silk and similar

**HU** – University: There are no courses specifically offered to women in Hungarian higher education! However, there are some courses dealing with gender issues.

**IT** – Adult education centre: Our courses are all open both for men and women

**Nordic Network for Adult Learners:** No

**PT** – Training agency for disadvantaged persons: We do not offer courses / subjects only for women.

**RO** – University, department for continuing education: No

**SK** – Organisation with a series of adult education centres: Course and training ‘Women for women’ (gender studies, social work, home violence, gender mainstreaming, family politics, legislation, communication...)

**UK** – Adult education centre: Yes. Usually specific thematic groups, eg Muslim women, women returners to work. Reason = demand

**4. Do you use specific methods in courses for women? If so, which are these methods? Could you give some typical examples?**

**AT** – Association of folk high schools/adult education centres: Yes; more information at [http://www.rmc.ac.at/cms/front\\_content.php](http://www.rmc.ac.at/cms/front_content.php)

**BE** – Literacy Centres in Wallonia and Brussels (Lire et écrire): No

**CH** – Association of Swiss folk high schools/adult education centres: No

**CY** – Association of adult education: There are special methods used for teaching women. In mixed groups there is no any difference in teaching men or women.

**DE** – Vocational training centre for women: Our methods are orientated at the learning circumstances and habits of women: it means that the topics are taught in an application-orientated way. In general we experience that it is important for women to know why they are learning something and what they need it for. We are teaching in practical orientated methods like projects or role play.

**DE** – Trade union & adult education centres cooperation: No

**ES** – 6 adult education centres: No

**FI** – Adult education centre: N/A

**HR** – Adult education centre: No

**HU** – University: This question is not relevant in higher education!

**IT** – Adult education centre: No specific methods

**Nordic Network for Adult Learners**: We do not offer courses. Our activities are conferences, seminars, network meetings, on-line meetings.

**PT** – Training agency for disadvantaged persons: We Don't use specific methods in courses for women.

**RO** – University, department continuing education: No

**SK** – Organisation with a series of adult education centres: For example in ‘Women for women’ we use:

- lecture with discussion
- brainstorming,
- participatory methods,
- video training
- exemplification and case study,
- excursion,

**UK** – Adult education centre: No

**5. Do you distinguish methods according to gender in mixed courses? If so, how do you do this?**

**AT** – Association of folk high schools/adult education centres: Yes.

**BE** – Literacy Centres in Wallonia and Brussels (Lire et écrire): No

**CH** – Association of Swiss folk high schools/adult education centres: No

**CY** – Association of adult education: -

**DE** – Vocational training centre for women: Last year we started teaching in a more individually oriented way. We also use more computer based training programmes.

**DE** – Trade union & adult education centres cooperation: We do not have different methods for courses concerning gender / gender mainstreaming. Our working basis are gender-appropriate didactic and methods that involves comprehensive consideration of gender differences in learning and training courses (e.g. no specific attention for one gender, a positive learning atmosphere for both sexes, developing sensitivity for gender discrimination, contributing to overcome hierarchic gender relationship).

**ES** – 6 adult education centres: NO

**FI** – Adult education centre: No, the methods used are the same irrespective of gender.

**HR** – Adult education centre:

**HU** – University: This question is not relevant either!

**IT** – Adult education centre: No (teachers are usually female!)

**Nordic Network for Adult Learners**: No, we do not.

**PT** – Training agency for disadvantaged persons: We do not distinguish methods according to gender in mixed courses.

**RO** – University, department continuing education: NO

**SK** – Organisation with a series of adult education centres: Teachers do.

**UK** – Adult education centre: No

**6. Do your teachers/trainers/facilitators get special introduction or training for their courses in respect to gender differences? If so, is this introduction or training compulsory? Do you get any feedback from your teachers/trainers/facilitators as to gender specific methods?**

**AT** – association of folk high schools/adult education centres: Yes

**BE** – Literacy Centres in Wallonia and Brussels (Lire et écrire): No

**CH** – association of Swiss folk high schools/adult education centres: No

**CY** – Association of adult education: Training the teachers: there is no information about gender differences in methodology. Maybe there is ignorance on the methods of gender teaching

**DE** – Vocational training centre for women: Our teachers are women; they are participating in different postgraduate training courses in different topics: suggestopedia ('superlearning'), managing gender and diversity, organizing distance learning courses and others.

**DE** – Trade union & adult education centres cooperation: There is permanent continuing education and qualification for trainers. The courses are not compulsory for working in our association.

**ES** – 6 adult education centres: NO

**FI** – Adult education centre: There is no specific training regarding gender issues for our teachers, neither compulsory nor optional. There have been only informal discussions around the issue with respect to gender roles in different cultures, considering that over the past couple of years there have been a limited number of students from different cultural backgrounds

**HR** – Adult education centre: no (unfortunately)

**HU** – University: We do not train teachers/trainers in respect to gender differences, they can take the indicated courses optionally!

**IT** – Adult education centre: No differences

**Nordic Network for Adult Learners:** No, special training to facilitators is not provided. They always work in mixed groups. No specific gender related difficulties have been observed.

**PT** – Training agency for disadvantaged persons: Our teachers / trainers / facilitators get special introduction or training for their courses in respect to gender differences. We make it in Training of Trainers which they have to receive every 3 years to re-validate their Certificate as Trainers. We permanently receive feedback from our Trainers in different aspects of training, namely in exercises that may facilitate the integration of the very few men in training (our courses are mainly for unemployed people that are being prepared to work in the social net with children or elderly people).

**RO** – University, department continuing education: NO

**SK** – Organisation with a series of adult education centres: Some of them have special training but it is not compulsory. Teachers discuss their methods during 'Teachers development days'.

**UK** – Adult education centre: No

### **Evidence from Individual Women**

A short questionnaire with an accompanying letter was given to a number of women who had participated in some kind of non-formal learning or continuing education. We received feedback from 9 women, four from Poland, two from Italy, two from Germany and one from France.

The summary of the completed questionnaire can only give an impression of what women experience and feel; more information by more women is needed to provide a basis for a more thorough analysis.

*Example 1*

**Educational background** – College level

**Current situation** – Academic profession, full-time

**Kind of learning / training** – Social sciences

**Number of courses / training** – Several courses

**Length of course(s)** – 3 years up to completing university entry level

**Impact on personal / private life** – More self-reliance, self-respect; more recognition within society / community; better salary; better job

**Sustainability of impact** – Still benefiting

**Importance of specific issues or experiences** – Mentoring; without my mentor I would never have dared to take up further education. She supported me for the whole 3 years; my boyfriend then was not convinced of my ability.

*Example 2*

**Educational background** – Secondary school level certification

**Current situation** – Academic profession, full-time

**Kind of learning / training** – Languages; business and law

**Number of courses / training** – Several courses

**Length of course(s)** – 5 years up to completing university entry level, with some breaks within that

**Impact on personal / private life** – More self-reliance, self-respect; more recognition within society / community; access to the labour market

**Sustainability of impact** – Still benefiting

**Importance of specific issues or experiences** – Mentoring or peer-group support (in my own case) as well as family support. I am from a migrant background; the role of women in my family is strong only within the family, not outside the home.

*Example 3*

**Educational background** – College level

**Current situation** – Unemployed, not searching for a job

**Kind of learning / training measure** – Business and law – similar

**Number of courses / training** – 2 courses related to proficiency in my job

**Length of course(s)** – 6 months each

**Impact on personal / private life** – More / better skills for managing professional life

**Sustainability of impact** – No impact because there were no opportunities for promotion in my company or with other companies: no chance because of age; few jobs available in my region

**Importance of specific issues or experiences** – Don't urge people to do further training if there are no jobs available or if at your age you will never have a chance.

*Example 4*

**Educational background** – Compulsory school level without certification

**Current situation** – Keeping house, without children; unemployed, searching for a job

**Kind of learning / training:** Literacy and numeracy; trying to pass the compulsory school-leaving examination

**Number of courses / training** – Several courses, with breaks

**Length of course(s)** – Some 5 years in total

**Impact on personal / private life** – More self-reliance, self-respect; more / better skills for managing private life

**Sustainability of impact** – No real impact: I did not get a job because my skills were not developed enough. I had and still have problems with my husband since I learned to read and write and started doing my own thing; he is not satisfied with this situation

**Importance of specific issues or experiences** – Support from teachers and others and continuing support over a long period, not just during the courses.

*Example 5*

**Educational background** – Doctorate level

**Current situation** – Academic profession, half-time post

**Kind of learning / training** – Languages; social sciences

**Number of courses / training** – Several courses

**Length of course(s)** – As planned for each course

**Impact on personal / private life** - More self-reliance, self-respect; more / better skills for managing professional life

**Sustainability of impact** – I still benefit from the learning experiences

**Importance of specific issues or experiences** - The subject of the course and its relevance to the labour market situation, who the teacher is (male/female) and the length of the course (long-term impact).

*Example 6*

**Educational background** – University Masters level

**Current situation** – Full-time job employment

**Kind of learning / training** – Humanities and arts programmes; languages; social sciences

**Number of courses / training** – Several

**Length of course(s)** – 2 years

**Impact on personal or private life** – More / better skills for managing professional life; better salary

**Sustainability of impact** – I still benefit from my learning, especially in my professional life

**Importance of specific issues or experiences** – None stated.

*Example 7*

**Educational background** – High school and medical institute in Volgograd (RU)

**Current situation** – When I was married I was a house wife for 10 years. When I separated from my ex-husband I had great difficulty in finding a job. After a few months I found a job in an NGO. I work full-time, not  $\frac{3}{4}$  as my contract states. I work in administration. I have one child. He is 13 years old.

**Kind of learning / training** – When I was a house-wife I took several courses (languages, decoupage, computer programmes) When I started working I took one Open University course but didn't complete it. I am a single mother and I didn't have enough free time for the course.

**Number of courses / training** – Several

**Length of course(s)** –

**Impact on personal/private life** – The training course was mainly for promotion in my job.

**Sustainability of impact** – I am still benefiting.



**Importance of specific issues or experiences** – We women in employment are still concentrated in a few sectors. It is better to have a very large proportion of women in the labour market and to give them more training opportunities in lifelong learning.

*Example 8*

**Educational background** – Doctorate level

**Current situation** – Half/part-time job academic profession

**Kind of learning / training** – Languages, social sciences

**Number of courses / training** – Several

**Length of course(s)** – Until they ended

**Impact on personal/private life** – More self-reliance, self-respect; More / better skills for managing professional life; better salary in the future (hopefully)

**Sustainability of impact** – I still benefit from the learning experiences

**Importance of specific issues or experiences** –

*Example 9*

**Educational background** – University Master level

**Current situation** – Full-time job worker

**Kind of learning / training** – Humanities and arts programmes; languages; social sciences

**Number of courses / training** – Several

**Length of course(s)** – 2 years

**Impact on personal/private life** – More / better skills for managing professional life; Better salary

**Sustainability of impact** – I still have benefits from my learning, especially in my professional life

**Importance of specific issues or experiences** –



## Bibliography and References

### Germany

Antoni, M., Dietrich, H., Jungkunst, M., et al., *Jugendliche. Die Schwächsten kamen seltener zum Zug*. IAB-Kurzbericht Ausgabe Nr. 2, 30.1.2007.

*Bildungsbericht*, Konsortium Bildungsberichterstattung: Bildung in Deutschland. Im Auftrag der Ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung. Ein indikatorengestützter Bericht mit einer Analyse zu Bildung und Migration, Bielefeld, 2006.

BLK, Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsförderung: *Strategie für Lebenslanges Lernen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Bonn, 2004.

böckler impuls 20/2005, *Kluge Frauen, erfolgreiche Männer*, p. 2.

Brüning, G., *Lebenslanges Lernen und Benachteiligung in der Weiterbildung*. Manuskript o. J., 2003.

*Chancengleichheit in der Bildung!*, Dokumentation des deutsch-schwedischen Dialogforums vom 11. Juni 2004 in Berlin. Eine Veranstaltung der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Kooperation mit der Schwedischen Botschaft. Herausgegeben von der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Forum Politik und Gesellschaft, Redaktionelle Bearbeitung Katja Meyer, Berlin, 2004.

Deeke, A., *Das ESF-BA-Programm im Kontext der arbeitsmarktpolitischen Neuausrichtung der Bundesagentur für Arbeit. Zur Umsetzung des Programms von 2000 bis Anfang 2005*, IAB Forschungsbericht, Nr. 26, Nürnberg, 2005.

*Einkommensbericht*, Bericht der Bundesregierung zur Berufs- und Einkommenssituation von Frauen und Männern. 24. April 2002. darin: Anhang III. Wissenschaftlicher Bericht im Auftrag der Bundesregierung. Bericht zur Berufs- und Einkommenssituation von Frauen und Männern im Auftrag des Bundesministeriums für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend. - Kurzfassung - erstellt von der Bietergemeinschaft WSI in der HBS, INIFES, Forschungsgruppe Tondorf, Juli 2001, Düsseldorf, Stadtbergen, Berlin, 2002.

*Fällt die Gesellschaft auseinander?*, Herausforderungen für die Politik, Auftaktveranstaltung des Projektes 'Gesellschaftliche Integration' am 28. September 2006 in der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Forum Berlin, Herausgegeben von der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Berlin, 2007.

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Gesprächskreis Arbeit und Qualifizierung / Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung der Bundesagentur für Arbeit, *Übergänge zwischen Schule und Beruf und darauf bezogene Hilfesysteme in Deutschland*. Herausgegeben vom Wirtschafts- und sozialpolitischen Forschungs- und Beratungszentrum der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Abteilung Arbeit und Sozialpolitik, Bonn, Juni 2006.

*Genderbericht, 1. Datenreport zur Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Herausgeber: Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, Berlin, Oktober 2005.

Granato M., and Schittenhelm, K., 'Junge Frauen: Bessere Schulabschlüsse - aber weniger Chancen beim Übergang in die Berufsausbildung', in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte B 28*, Arbeit: Ausbildung-Beruf-Qualifizierung, 2004.

Puxi, M., and Dolze, L., *Umsetzung der Politik zur Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern im Europäischen Sozialfonds 2007-2013. Endbericht im Auftrag des BMFSFJ*, erstellt durch das ISG-Dresden Institut für Sozialforschung und Gesellschaftspolitik GmbH, 05. Dezember 2005.

*Lebenslagen in Deutschland*, der 2. Armuts- und Reichtumsbericht der Bundesregierung, Bericht, Berlin, 2005.

Nägele, A., *Praktische Probleme bei der Umsetzung des ESF aus Sicht von Zuwendungsempfänger/innen*, Manuskript vom 07.04.2007

*Report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on equality between women and men.* Brüssel, 7.2. 2007.

TNS Infratest Sozialforschung, *Berichtssystem Weiterbildung IX. Ergebnisse der Repräsentativbefragung zur Weiterbildungssituation in Deutschland*, durchgeführt im Auftrag des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung, Vorgelegt von TNS Infratest Sozialforschung (Federführung des Gesamtprojektes) und Helmut Kuwan, Sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung und Beratung München, November 2004.

*Viele Welten leben. Lebenslagen von Mädchen und jungen Frauen mit griechischem, italienischem, jugoslawischem, türkischem und Aussiedlerhintergrund*, Herausgeber: Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, Sommer 2004.

*Handbuch zur wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Situation von Frauen*, WSI-FrauenDatenReport, (Forschung aus der Hans-Böckler-Stiftung 66), Berlin, 2005.

## Greece

*Application guide for gender equality policies in designing and evaluating actions within the framework of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Community Support Framework*, EYSEKT, 2003.

Ammerman, P., *Achieving the Lisbon Goal: The contribution of Vocational Education and Training Systems*, Country report, Greece, Navigator Consulting Group, 2003.

Anastasios, G., and Bagley, B., *Policy, Politics, and Social Inequality in the Educational System*, Journal of Modern Greek Studies, Volume 24, 2006.

Carley, M., *Gender perspectives - annual update 2000*, in European Industrial Relations Observatory On-Line, 2001.

EQUAPOL, *State of the Art Report*, Directorate-General for Research 2004 Citizen and governance in a Knowledge based society EUR 21324 EN, Report issued in April 2003.

Ketsetzopoulou, M., *Female employment 2002*, in Mouriki, A., et al. (eds.), *The social portrait of Greece*, Athens, National Centre for Social Research – EKKE, 2001.

Ketsetzopoulou, M., and Simeonidou, H., *Gender equality: the position of women in the public and private sector*, in Mouriki, A. et al. (eds.), 2002.

Karakioulafis, C., *INE/GSEE*, Greece, 2007.

Karakioulafis, C., 'Gender and career development — Greece', in *European Industrial Relations Observatory On-Line*, 2007.

Needs Analysis on Lifelong Learning Training on Gender Equality, *Wo-men: Gender Equality Creates Democracy*, n°. 109771-cp-1-2003-1-lt-Grundtvig-g1.

'National Accreditation Centre For Continuing Vocationaltraining – EKEPIS', *The Role of National Qualifications Systems in Promoting Lifelong Learning*, Background Report for Greece, March 2003.

OECD, *Going for Growth, Economic Policy Reforms*, Chapter 6, *Female Labor Force, Participation: Past Trends and Main Determinants in OECD Countries*, Paris, 2005.

Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations, *Introductory Statement by the Head of the Greek Delegation*, January 2007.

Sakka, D., and Deliyanni-Kouimtzi, V., *Adolescent boys' and girls' views of fatherhood in the context of the changing women's position*, *Gender and Education*, 18:1, pp. 51-74.

## **Ireland**

AONTAS, *Community Education*. AONTAS Policy Series, Dublin, 2004.

CSO, *Women and Men in Ireland*, Central Statistics Office, Dublin, 2006.

Department of Education and Science, *BTEI Discussion Document*, unpublished, 2006.

Department of Finance, *National Development Plan 2007-2013: Transforming Ireland*, Government Publications, Dublin, 2007.

Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform, *National Women's Strategy 2007-2016*, Government Publications, Dublin, 2007.

Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, *Report of the Partnership 2000 Working Group on Women's Access to the Labour Market*, Government, 2000.

Department of The Taoiseach, *Towards 2016: Ten year Framework Social Partnership Agreement*, Government Publications, Dublin, 2006.

Enterprise Strategy Group, *Ahead of the Curve: Ireland's Place in the Global Economy*, Dublin, 2004.

Expert Group on Future Skills Needs, *Tomorrows Skills: Towards a National Strategy*, Dublin, 2007.

Johnson, G., *Healthy, Wealthy and Wise?* New Zealand Treasury Working Paper, 2004.

NCPP, *Report from the Forum on the Workplace for the Future*, Dublin, 2005.

NESF, *Creating a More Inclusive Labour Market*, Report 33, National Economic and Social Forum Office, Dublin, 2006.

OECD, *Education at a Glance*, 2005.

Owens, T, *Men On the Move: Barriers to Male Participation in Education and Training Initiatives*, AONTAS, Dublin, 2000.

## **Poland**

Bernard Brunhes, *EU-wide Evaluation of the Community Initiative EQUAL 2000–2006. Second Interim Report*, 2005.

Eurostat, *Lifelong Learning report 2006*.

Evaluation Office UNDP, *Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming*, 2006.

Fitzpatrick Associates, *International 2005 and EQUAL Operational Programme*, Final Report, 2005.

GHK, *Update to the Mid-Term Evaluation of the UK-GB EQUAL Community Initiative 2000-6*, 2005.

Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, *Aktywność kobiet na rynku pracy*, 2006.

Ministry of Regional Development, *Interim Report on the Progress on Implementation of the Sectoral*, 2007.

*Operational Programme Human Resources Development*.

Ministry of Economy, *Employment in Poland 2005*, 2005.

O'Brien, P., and Paczynski, W., *Poland's Education and Training: Boosting and Adapting Human Capital*.

OECD, *Economics Department Working Papers, No. 495*, 2006.

OECD, *Education at a Glance 2006*, 2006.

## Spain

Martín Artiles, A., 'Empleo y conciliación de la vida laboral, personal y familiar' (Reconciliation of work, and family life for women in Spain) in *European Industrial Relations Observatory On-Line*, 2005.

European Commission, *Report from the Commission to the Council, The European Parliament, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on equality between women and men (2007) COM(2007) 49 final*.

ESF in the Member States, Success Stories, Country: Spain on <http://ec.europa.eu/>

Sanz Fernandez, F., Lancho Prudenciano, J., *Thematic overview on Adult Learning. Spain Background Report 2001*, published by OECD, 2002.

Fraerman, A., 'Spain: No turning back from path to gender equality', in *Inter Press Service*, March 2007.

Meseguer, P., 'Agreement on work-life balance in the public sector' in *European Industrial Relations Observatory On-Line*, 2006.

Spanish Prime Ministers Economic Office, *Spain national reform programme. 2006 Progress Report*, 2006.

*Community Support Framework 2000-2006*.

*Transnational Co-operation to Promote New Means of Combating all Forms of Discrimination and Inequalities in Connection with the Labour Market*, 2002, at:

<http://www.mtas.es/uafse/equaluk/default.htm>.

## United Kingdom

Aldridge, F., and Tuckett, A., *Green shoots? The NIACE Survey on Adult Participation in Learning 2006*, Leicester, NIACE, 2006.

Aldridge, F. and Tuckett, A., *The Road to Nowhere? The NIACE Survey on Adult Participation in Learning 2007*, Leicester, NIACE, 2007.

Beck, V., Fuller, A., and Unwin, L., 'Increasing risk in the 'scary' world of work? Male and female resistance to crossing gender lines in apprenticeships in England and Wales', in *Journal of Education and Work* 19 (3), 2006, pp. 271-289.

Bellamy, K., and Cameron, S., *Gender Equality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: modernising the legislation*. London: Fawcett Society, April 2006.

Berthoud, R., and Blekesaune, M., *Persistent employment disadvantage*, Research Report N 416, London, DWP, 2007.

Centre for Excellence in Leadership, *Leadership network Launched for women in further education*, May 2007, online available:

<http://www.centreforexcellence.org.uk/?Page=nomenuReadNews&id=355> [accessed 18<sup>th</sup> June 2007].

Commission for Racial Equality, *Factfile 1. Employment and Ethnicity*, London, Commission for Racial Equality, 2006, online available:

[http://www.cre.gov.uk/downloads/factfile01\\_employment\\_and\\_ethnicity.pdf](http://www.cre.gov.uk/downloads/factfile01_employment_and_ethnicity.pdf) [accessed 26<sup>th</sup> June 2007].

Department for Communities and Local Government, *Government Action Plan: Implementing the Women and Work Commission recommendation*, London, DCLG, September 2006.

Department for Education and Skills, *The Skills for Life Strategy*, London, DfES, 2001.

Department for Education and Skills, *Success for All: Reforming Further Education*, London, DfES, 2002.

Department for Education and Skills, *21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills: Realising our Potential*, London, DfES, 2003.

Department for Education and Skills, *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper*, London, DfES, 2500a.

Department for Education and Skills, *Getting on in Business, Getting on at Work*, London, DfES, 2005b.

Department for Education and Skills and the Learning and Skills Council, *Delivering World-Class Skills in a Demand-led System*, London, DfES/LSC, 2007.

Department for Work and Pensions and Department of Education and Skills, *Improving employment opportunities for women – ESF priority 5*, London, DWP/DfES, 2006.

Equal Opportunities Commission, *Facts about women and men in Great Britain 2006*, Manchester, EOC, 2006.

Equal Opportunities Commission, *Mums blow the whistle on 'pregnancy at work' knowledge gap*, Press release, London, EOC, 29 March 2007, online available:

<http://www.eoc.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=20149> [accessed 26<sup>th</sup> June 2007].

Equal Opportunities Commission (no date) 'Employer Case Studies', London, EOC, online available: <http://www.eoc.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=18837> [accessed 5<sup>th</sup> July 2007].

Francis, F., 'Troubling trajectories: Gendered 'choices' and pathways from school to work', in Leathwood, C. and Francis, B. (eds.) *Gender and Lifelong Learning. Critical feminist engagements*, London, Routledge, 2006.

Hannon, C., Keck, S., and Shandro, A., *Mind the Gap: The women that policy forgot*, London: DEMOS, 2006.

HM Treasury, *Lisbon Strategy for Job and Growth. UK National Reform programme*, London, HM Treasury, Octobre 2005.

Jones, G., *Career Interruptions and Labour Market Outcomes*, London, EOC, 2006.

Learning and Skills Council, *Further Education, Work Based Learning and Adult and Community Learning – Learner numbers in England 2005/06*, Ref: ILR/SFR11, Coventry, LSC,

2006a, available online: [http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/SFR11\\_fullyear0506.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/SFR11_fullyear0506.pdf) [accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2007].

Learning and Skills Council, *Train to Gain: Requirements for Funding Level 3 Women Only Trials 2006/07*, Coventry: LSC, 2006b.

Leathwood, C., 'Gendered constructions of lifelong learning and the learner in the UK policy context', in Leathwood, C. and Francis, B. (eds.) *Gender and Lifelong Learning. Critical feminist engagements*, London, Routledge, 2006.

Lindley, J., Dale, A., and Dex, S., *Ethnic differences in women's, demographic, family characteristics and economic activity profiles, 1992 to 2002*, Labour Market Trends, April 2004, available online:

[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/articles/labour\\_market\\_trends/ethnic\\_differences.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/articles/labour_market_trends/ethnic_differences.pdf) [accessed 21<sup>st</sup> June 2007].

NIACE, *In the spotlight. A NIACE briefing on participation in learning by adults from minority ethnic group*, Leicester, NIACE, 2006.

NIACE, 'North West Adult Learners' Week Award Winners 2007'. available online: <http://www.niace.org.uk/ALW/2007/learners/NW-winners.htm> [accessed 20<sup>th</sup> June 2007].

Office for National Statistics, *Focus on Gender*, HMSO, London, October 2006, available online:

[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme\\_compendia/fog2006/gender\\_summary.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_compendia/fog2006/gender_summary.pdf) [accessed 24<sup>th</sup> June 2007].

O'Keeffe, C., et al., *Moving Mountains: Identifying and addressing barriers to Employment, Training and Education from the voices of women (ex) offenders*, 2003, available: <http://www.equalworks.co.uk/resources/contentfiles/427.pdf> [accessed 20<sup>th</sup> June 2007].

O'Keeffe, C., Wilkinson, K., Christian, A., et al., *'I ain't no tea lady': Identifying and addressing barriers to non-traditional employment, training and education from a female perspective*, SOVA, 2006, available online:

<http://www.wiw.org.uk/pub/I%20Ain't%20no%20Tea%20Lady.pdf> [accessed 4<sup>th</sup> July 2007].

Perrons, D., and Sigle-Rushton, W., *Employment transitions over the life cycle: a literature review*, London, EOC, 2006.

Rogers, V., *Work with Young Women. A Resource Handbook for Youth Workers, Teachers and Connexions Personal Advisers*, Leicester, NYA, 2006.

Tett, L., 'Community education: Participation, risk and desire', in Leathwood, C. and Francis, B. (eds.), *Gender and Lifelong Learning. Critical feminist engagements*, London, Routledge, 2006.

*Refugees into Jobs*, Pathways to Participation: December 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> 2006, London, Project Futures, 2006.

Solent Women's Training Partnership, *Ngenda Spring Newsletter*, March 2007.

Thompson, J., 'Back to the future', in *Adults Learning 17 (8): 18-19*, Leicester, NIACE, April 2006.

Trades Union Congress, *Black Women and Employment*, London, TUC, 2006.

Turner, C., and Casey, L., 'Tackling barriers to learning for vulnerable adults: A local government contribution'. Unpublished report for the Local Government Association, 2006.

Walby, S., *Gender (in)equality and the future of work*, London, EOC, 2007.



Wattis, L., Yerkes, M., Lloyd, S., et al., *Combining work and family life: Removing the barriers to women's progression. Experiences from the UK and the Netherlands*, Liverpool, John Moores University, 2006, available online:

[http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/SOC/SOC\\_docs/WorkFamily\\_Web.pdf](http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/SOC/SOC_docs/WorkFamily_Web.pdf) [accessed 4<sup>th</sup> July 2007].

White, L., and Weaver, S., (2007) *Curriculum for Diversity Guide*, Leicester, NIACE, 2007.

### **Nordic Countries**

Frida Ros Valdimarsdóttir, *Nordiska erfarenheter av föräldrarledigheter och dess inverkan på jämställdhet mellan kvinnor och män*, Published by the Centre for Gender Equality, Akureyri, Iceland, 1995. *Facts on gender equality 2006* available at:

[http://www.lige.dk/files/PDF/facts\\_equality.pdf](http://www.lige.dk/files/PDF/facts_equality.pdf).

*Satte prinsen på dagis- Australien rasar*, 2007-04-19 available at:

<http://www.aftonbladet.se/vss/nyheter/story/0,2789,1049638,00.html>.

*Göra pappa med barn*, review on the dissertation.

Förskoleverksamhet och skolbarnsomsorg regleras i Skollagen.

SCB, *På tal om kvinnor och män 2006*, Sweden.

*Women and men in Sweden 2006*, Statistics in Sweden 2006.

*Women and men in Finland 2005*, Statistics in Finland 2005.

### **Women in Business – An International Perspective**

Global Diversity Practice, *Diversity and Inclusiveness at Shell* produced by the Global Diversity Practice, [www.shell.com/diversity](http://www.shell.com/diversity), © Shell International Limited 2002.

Thomas, D. A., *Diversity ad Strategy*, Harvard Business Review, September 2004.

*Director, Why women leave*, June 2007.

Dejouany, L., and Visser, M., *Alice in Business-Land – A concise manual on diversity*, Women@Work N° 5, European Professional Women's Network, 2006.

Mark Hunter, *The business case for diversity*, INSEAD Quarterly, 2005.

IBM Belgium/Luxembourg – Women Leadership Council, *Women in Business – Perspectives on gender diversity on the workforce- A White Paper*, July 2005.

*The Bottom Line: Connecting Corporate Performance and Gender Diversity*, © 2004 by Catalyst.

Stevens, N., and Visser, M., *What is mentoring? Mentoring – A Powerful Tool for Women*, Women@Work N°. 7, European Professional Women's Network, 2007.

Vinnicombe, S., and Singh, V., *Locks and keys to the boardroom*, Women in Management Review, Volume 18, Number 6, 2003.

## Weblinks

### Germany

[www.frauen-machen-karriere.de](http://www.frauen-machen-karriere.de)

Mit diesem Internetportal unterstützen das Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend und der Europäische Sozialfonds Frauen gezielt bei der Planung und Gestaltung ihrer Karriere und Existenzgründung.

[www.gender-mainstreaming.net](http://www.gender-mainstreaming.net)

Dieses Portal zeigt die Bedeutung von Gender Mainstreaming als Strategie und Methode für mehr Chancengerechtigkeit zwischen den Geschlechtern und gibt praktische Hinweise.

[www.girls-day.de](http://www.girls-day.de)

Das Projekt Girls' Day - Mädchen-Zukunftstag bietet Schülerinnen im Prozess der Berufsorientierung Einblick in Berufsfelder, die Mädchen nur selten in Betracht ziehen.

[www.idee-it.de](http://www.idee-it.de)

Das idee\_it -Netzwerk möchte Mädchen und junge Frauen unterstützen, sich für die neuen und spannenden IT-Berufe zu entscheiden.

[www.gruenderinnenagentur.de](http://www.gruenderinnenagentur.de)

Die bundesweite gründerinnenagentur (bga) ist das erste deutschlandweite Projekt zur Unterstützung von Existenzgründerinnen. Mit ihren Aktivitäten setzt sich die bga für ein gründerinnenfreundliches Klima in Deutschland ein. Diese Seite ist ein Serviceangebot für alle, die Unternehmerin werden möchten, bereits selbständig tätig sind, Existenzgründerinnen beraten oder sich auf andere Weise für die Verbesserung der Startchancen von beruflich selbständigen Frauen einsetzen.

[www.neue-wege-fuer-jungs.de](http://www.neue-wege-fuer-jungs.de)

Das Vernetzungsprojekt Neue Wege für Jungs ist eine Plattform für Akteure aus Schule und Bildung, Jungenarbeit und anderen Verbänden als überregionale Vernetzung von Multiplikatorinnen und Multiplikatoren vor Ort. In enger Zusammenarbeit mit Wissenschaft und Hochschule begleitet das Service-Büro Praxisangebote für Jungen zur Berufs- und Lebensplanung wissenschaftlich und veröffentlicht Erkenntnisse zum jungenspezifischen Bedarf an Unterstützungsleistungen im Übergang Schule-Beruf.

[www.joblab.de](http://www.joblab.de)

joblab und diversity entwickelt verschiedene Programme für Personen mit zusätzlichem Förderbedarf und für die Chancengleichheit von Frauen auf dem Arbeitsmarkt.

[www.kompetenzz.de](http://www.kompetenzz.de)

Der Verein Frauen geben Technik neue Impulse e.V. ist Projektträger des Kompetenzzentrums Frauen in Informationsgesellschaft und Technologie und engagiert sich mit seinen Mitgliedern für die erfolgreiche Umsetzung aller dort angesiedelten Maßnahmen und Projekte.

[www.genderkompetenz.info](http://www.genderkompetenz.info)

Das Genderkompetenzzentrum ist eine anwendungsorientierte Forschungseinrichtung im Zentrum für transdisziplinäre Geschlechterstudien an der Humboldt Universität zu Berlin

[www.total-e-quality.de](http://www.total-e-quality.de)

Chancengleichheit von Frauen und Männern in Wirtschaft, Wissenschaft, Politik und Verwaltung

**Ireland**

<http://www.fas.ie>

<http://www.education.ie>

<http://www.ewm.ie>

**Nordic countries**

<http://www.iceland.org/se/Nyheter-och-evenemang/nr/2384>

[http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/inrikes/did\\_15172198.asp](http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/inrikes/did_15172198.asp)



## The Team

Dr. Silvia Cambié, Director of Chanda Communications, United Kingdom,  
[silvia@chandacom.com](mailto:silvia@chandacom.com)

Dr. Hannelore Chiout, International Officer, AdB (Arbeitskreis deutscher Bildungsstätten),  
Germany chairperson of the DARE network for Democracy and Human Rights Education in  
Europe, Belgium

Dr. Ellinor Haase, Secretary General, EAEA (2001-2007), Belgium

Isabel García-Longoria, Secretary General FEUP, Spain

Maureen Kavanagh, National Co-ordinator, CEF Training and Support Programme, AONTAS  
(The National Association of Adult Education), Ireland

Peter Kavanagh, BA, proof reading, Ireland

Adriana Longoni, APICE (Associazione per l'Incontro delle Culture in Europa), Italy

Antigoni Mertika, independent expert and psychologist, Greece, [antimer@otenet.gr](mailto:antimer@otenet.gr)

Agnieszka Paczynska, President, Paideia Educational Centre, Warsaw, Poland

Vasiliki Tsekoura, Director, DAFNI KEK, Patras, Greece

Dr. Cheryl Turner, Development Officer, NIACE (National Institute for Adult Continuing  
Education), United Kingdom

Dr. Alexandra Wagner, researcher and Director of FIA (Labour Market Research Team),  
Germany

Dr. Christiane Lindecke, researcher and consultant (working time, human resource management,  
life long learning), Germany

Judith Summers, independent consultant, linguistic and editorial work, United Kingdom

Peter Sutton, linguistic and editorial work, United Kingdom

Bonnie Dudley Edwards, linguistic and editorial work, United Kingdom, [bonnie.dudley-  
edwards@ed.ac.uk](mailto:bonnie.dudley-edwards@ed.ac.uk)

### **EAEA main office:**

Valentina Chanina

Marta Lottes

Åsa Hult

