



# The EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality

## Gender segregation in the labour market and education

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Justice

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# Gender segregation in the labour market and education in Germany

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Gender segregation in the German labour market

Just like most of the other European countries, the German labour market is highly gender-segregated. This becomes evident in the fact that e.g. the participation of women in STEM is relatively low (e.g. in 2014 the proportion of women starting a study of electrical engineering was 13.5 %; the proportion of women starting a study of computer sciences was 22.7 %) and that men are highly underrepresented in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) (in 2014 the proportion of professional male ECEC workers working with children from ages 0 to 6 was 3.8 %; 4.4 % if one includes interns and other young men doing their voluntary national service). However, in Germany for many years the number of women studying STEM has been rising continuously. Between 2008 and 2014 the number of female starters in STEM increased from approximately 60.000 to 100.000 which corresponds to a rise of 70 % (see: <http://www.komm-mach-mint.de/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/PM-MINT-Studiengaenge-Frauen-beliebter>). In contrast, the proportion and number of male ECEC workers is rising on a lower scale. Between 2010 and 2014, the proportion of men in the profession working with children from ages 0 to 6 increased from 2.7 % to 3.8 %. The number of male ECEC workers even doubled in this period; from 9,979 to 17,644. The percentage of men working with children from ages 6 to 12 in after school-institutions is higher and was approximately 12 % in 2014 (see: <http://mika.koordination-maennerinkitas.de/forschung/forschung>). For a number of years now, there has been a rise in the proportion of men studying to be “educator”<sup>1</sup> at vocational training schools in Germany. During the academic years 2009/2010 to 2013/2014, the proportion of male trainees increased from 13.8% to 16.3%, which corresponds to a rise of 2.5 percentage points. Since educators trained in Germany can also work with youths and young adults (for example in group homes), this increase does not necessarily correlate with an increase in the number of male ECEC workers (see: <http://mika.koordination-maennerinkitas.de/forschung/maenneranteil-fachschulen/>)

### 1.2. Policy to encourage girls and women to choose STEM

The German policy to encourage STEM participation among girls and women is based on two pillars: The National Pact for Women in MINT-Careers „Go-MINT“<sup>2</sup> and the “Girls' Day – future prospects for girls”. Both programmes are carried out by

<sup>1</sup> In Germany the term “educator” (“Erzieher”) describes qualified personnel who work in ECEC facilities or in other areas of child and youth services. The training lasts usually between four and five years at a vocational training school. Over the past years, an increasing number of universities and colleges have introduced educator degree programmes as well.

<sup>2</sup> MINT is the German definition of STEM.

the non-profit organisation “Competence Centre Technology-Diversity-Equal Chances” and financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

### **1.2.1. The National Pact for Women in MINT-Careers “Go-MINT”**

"Go MINT" – the National Pact for Women in MINT Careers brings together politics, business, science and media and is designed to change the image of STEM professions in society. It is part of the federal government's qualification initiative and was launched in 2008 at the instigation of the Federal Ministry for Education and Research, with the aim of increasing young women's interest in scientific and technical degree courses and attract female university graduates into careers in business. The National Pact was established in 2008 with 46 partner organisations. In 2015 the network already includes more than 200 partners. All of them already signed a memorandum and are supporting this aim with a wide range of activities and initiatives to advise young women on their studies and careers (see: [www.komm-mach-mint.de/Komm-mach-MINT/English-Information](http://www.komm-mach-mint.de/Komm-mach-MINT/English-Information)).

The main objectives of the “National Pact for Women in MINT-Careers” are:

- To further strengthen the effectiveness of local, regional and nationwide cooperation networks;
- To foster the exchange of experiences and the spread of best practice;
- To make successful programmes visible – often they are barely known by the target audience;
- To enhance the presence of STEM-Women in the public perception;
- The “Go Mint” website is the first to address the subject of women and STEM. The map on [www.komm-mach-mint.de](http://www.komm-mach-mint.de) currently offers more than 1,000 projects through a nationwide overview of long-term projects, internships, mentoring, and contests for students and professionals in STEM.

The funding amount of the National Pact from 2014 to 2017 is 2,400,000 Euros.

### **1.2.2. Girls' Day - future prospects for girls**

Like the Girls’ Day in the Netherlands, the Girl’s Day in Germany is an annual event organised for girls from the fifth grade on to give them the opportunity to be a guest at a STEM business or research institution for a day and thus give them a broader image of STEM professions. Girls’ Day is the biggest nationwide project regarding occupational orientation for girls and gets a lot of attention, from the girls partaking in the organisations and schools, as well as from the interested public (see: <http://www.girls-day.de/english>).

- More than 100,000 girls, about 9,000 companies institutions take part per year.
- In the years 2001 to 2014, companies and institutions offered about 100,000 activities for approximately 1.5 million girls.
- Nationwide engagement from stakeholders in many social areas: A network of 350 Girls’ Day-commodity teams - regional alliances between, employers’ associations, unions, departments for gender equality, employment agencies and many more work together all over Germany for Girls’ Day.
- Huge media response with up to 3,500 detailed reports in print media and about 6,350 online-articles every year, more than 250 TV- and more than 200 radio

contributions and a media equivalent value of 11.7 million per year was reached in print media alone.

The funding amount for the Girls' Day from 2014 to 2017 is about 1,200,000 Euros and is funded by the Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and the Ministry for Education and Research.

### 1.3. Policy to increase the proportion of men in ECEC

Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the German equality policy has increasingly aimed at addressing boys and men. One important goal of German gender equality policy addressing boys and men is to widen outdated and increasingly dysfunctional male role models and to attract more men and boys to work in so-called "women's professions".<sup>3</sup> The federal programme "More Men in Early Childhood and Care (ECEC)" launched in 2010 is part of this German equality policy.

#### 1.3.1. The German Federal Programme "More Men in ECEC"

Two main aspects led to the "More Men in ECEC programme" by the Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth; first, the decision to explicitly address boys and men with specific work programmes and second, the encouraging results of the 2008/2009 study "Male ECEC workers in Early Childhood Education Facilities" (Cremers, Krabel and Calmbach 2010). The study results show the existence of a very positive climate for integrating more men into ECEC facilities. Providers, programme directors and administrators of ECEC facilities would like to see more male ECEC workers and are motivated to take part in measures designed to increase the percentage of men in the profession. The main components of the "More Men in ECEC programme" are:

- In 2010 the Ministry founded the Coordination Office 'Men in ECEC' which – among other things – advises policymakers and organisations in the field of ECEC to help develop and implement sustainable strategies and measures to encourage men to become ECEC workers (see: <http://mika.koordination-maennerinkitas.de/about-us/about-the-coordination-centre-men-in-ecec>). The funding for the Coordination Office is approximately 350,000 Euro per annum.
- From 2011 to 2013 the Ministry launched the ESF-funded programme MORE Men in ECEC, in which 16 model projects aimed to raise the percentage of men working in ECEC and to start gender-sensitisation processes in the field of ECEC. To achieve these goals, model projects carried out a wide range of strategies and projects in different field of actions, like e.g. career and occupational orientation projects, public relations measures or further gender training for ECEC workers and trainees<sup>4</sup>. The funding amount for the programme was around 13 million Euros.
- From 2010 to 2014 the Ministry funded the so called 'Tandem Study' which pursued the aim of comparing the behaviour of male and female ECEC workers in every-day routine pedagogical situations (Brandes, Andrä, Röseler and Schneider-Andrich 2015).

<sup>3</sup> See for example the federal initiatives "New Paths for Boys" launched in 2005 (see: <http://www.neue-wege-fuer-jungs.de/Kontakt-Impressum/New-Paths>) and the 'Boy's Day' (see: <http://www.boys-day.de/english>) launched in 2011.

<sup>4</sup> The coordination office translated some best practices examples of the programme into English, see: <http://mika.koordination-maennerinkitas.de/about-us/publications>.

- From June 2015 to the end of 2020 runs the ESF-funded programme “Career Change – Men and Women in ECEC” which aims to create new forms of paid ECEC worker training courses for male and female career changers and to increase the proportion of men in ECEC training and facilities. The funding amount for the programme is around 33.8 million Euros (see: <http://www.chance-quereinstieg.de/modellprogramm/modellprogramm-quereinstieg/>).

## 2. Policy Debates

### 2.1. Policy debates regarding girls and women in STEM

#### 2.1.1. Still not enough women in STEM despite all measures

A frequent criticism of previous measures to motivate more women for STEM professions is that those measures are only punctual and not long-lasting. Even though the current measures might lead to a change in attitude more permanent projects and programmes are necessary to make STEM more attractive for women in the long run. Successful projects need to have a long term effect. Hence, the main goal of the “National Pact for Women in MINT Careers” is making successful projects known among experts and to anchor them in the long term (Augustin-Dittman and Gotzmann 2015).

#### 2.1.2. Do projects and measures addressing girls and women reproduce gender stereotypes?

The advantages of measures that address girls or young women exclusively are amongst other things that girls/young women can find out about and enhance their competences in STEM and that they find appreciation for these competences in a “safe atmosphere” of a girls’ group. Especially when it comes to practical work with tools or computers, gender homogeneous groups can help to avoid the frequent behavior pattern that boys take the active part while girls just watch. However, experiences with education projects addressing only one gender show that they can further enhance gender stereotypes. E.g. to give girls a special role can enhance the preconception that they need a special role because they have fewer competences in STEM than boys (Bath 2015).

#### 2.1.3. Better coordination of STEM-projects

The challenge of the next years will be to coordinate education in STEM: from ECEC and school up to vocational training and the university-system. Networking-initiatives like the National Pact for Women in MINT-Careers „Go-MINT” are expected to make a major contribution to this task.

### 2.2. Policy debates regarding men in ECEC

#### 2.2.1. Sustainability of strategies to increase the proportion of men in ECEC

The federal programme “More Men in ECEC” is a long-term programme with different components which seeks a sustainable increase of male ECEC workers in Germany. The current programme “Career Change – Men and Women in ECEC”, which will run until 2020, aims – among other things – to increase the number of male ECEC trainees and workers. Nevertheless, experiences show that local (and

regional) projects aiming to increase the number of men working in ECEC hardly find financial support. Also notable is that most projects which were financed through the federal programme „MORE Men in ECEC” continued on a smaller scale or didn’t continue at all. Mostly, this is due to a lack of (local) funding. The future challenge for projects aiming to increase the number of male ECEC workers, is therefore receiving local funding and not being dependent only on national/federal financing.

### **2.2.2. Paid/remunerated ECEC worker Training**

The current federal policy aimed to increase the proportion of male ECEC workers is (deeply) connected with policies to establish ECEC worker training courses which are better suited for adults and more gender equitable. For example, the new programme “Career Change – Men and Women in ECEC” not only aims to increase the number of male ECEC trainees but also seeks to establish more remunerated training courses. The German training system is seen as a gender inequitable system, as trainings at vocational training schools (where mostly women get trained for non-academic care or education professions) are usually not remunerated, meanwhile training in the so called “dual training system” (where mostly men get trained for non-academic technic or skilled manual professions) are remunerated.

### **2.2.3. Reproducing or overcoming gender stereotypes by running “More-Men-in-ECEC”-projects**

Over the last few years, there has been a scientific and expert debate whether “More-Men-in-ECEC”-projects are contributing to reproduce or to overcome gender stereotypes. The central arguments which are expressed by those who think that “More-Men-in-ECEC”-projects are helping to overcome gender stereotypes are:

- Male ECEC workers are important role models for boys and girls and can show them the diversity of (existing) male roles (Rohrmann 2012);
- Male ECEC workers and the public debate about male ECEC workers show that men are able and interested in being (professional) care-givers and thus are (public) symbols of a caring masculinity (Cremers, Krabel and Calmbach 2010),
- The integration of male ECEC workers in ECEC teams can initiate gender reflections about gender stereotypes among the team, children and parents (Neubauer 2012).

The central arguments which are expressed by those who think that “More-Men-in-ECEC”-projects are reproducing gender stereotypes are:

- As soon as men enter in ECEC facilities, ECEC teams tend to allocate the professional tasks in a gender-typical way, cultivate gender-typical working styles and offer children the corresponding modes of play (Cremers and Krabel 2012a; Neubauer 2012);
- The public debate and the whole programme “More Men in ECEC” use public relations strategies which highlight male ECEC workers as ‘other’, special and a benefit for ECEC facilities. This leads to the danger that relationships on mixed ECEC teams become marked by gender differences and that the professional work by female ECEC workers is devalued (Schulte 2013).

#### **2.2.4. Focusing on Diversity instead of Men, or Gender respectively**

In recent years it has been pointed out that ECEC workers lack diversity competencies and that the topic “diversity education” only plays a minor role in ECEC training courses. The important point came up that programmes or projects should focus more on the diversity/heterogeneity of ECEC teams rather than only on men or gender respectively (Cremers and Krabel 2014). The federal programme “Early Childhood Facilities as a learning place” (2013 – 2016) for example is already also focusing on male trainees, trainees with migration background and career changers (see: <http://www.fruehe-chancen.de/was-politik-leistet/lernort-praxis/>).

#### **2.2.5. Generalised suspicion against male ECEC workers**

Experiences and research in Germany show that male trainees and ECEC workers are mentioned again and again in connection with sexual abuse of children. Remarkably, this generalised attitude of suspicion has little effect on the high level of public acceptance of male ECEC workers in ECEC facilities. But the generalised suspicion even though has a real effect on the work of male ECEC workers. As a result, many male trainees and qualified ECEC workers develop individual strategies in ECEC facilities for dealing with generalised suspicion and are very careful in their work, for example, not changing a diaper with the door closed, not comforting children for too long and not taking them to the toilet. Therefore there is an ongoing debate about how ECEC facilities and ECEC teams can deal with this topic in a professional and non-gender-stereotypical way (Cremers and Krabel 2012b; Rohrmann 2014).

### **3. Transferability issues**

#### **3.1. Denmark**

As mentioned above, the percentage of men in Germany working in ECEC is lower than in Denmark but the data show similarities. As in Denmark, in Germany there are also large differences between the percentage of male ECEC workers in the different sectors of ECEC facilities or after school institutions, respectively. Furthermore, as in Denmark in Germany the percentage of male ECEC trainees in ECEC training institutions (vocational training schools in Germany and University Colleges in Denmark, respectively) is much higher than the percentage of men working in ECEC facilities. Since 2010 there are (federal) policies in Germany to increase the proportion of male ECEC workers, but – as mentioned above – currently there is a lack of local funding. The Danish example shows that also small projects with relatively little funding can have positive effects and initiate gender debates on municipality level. The partnerships between municipalities and ECEC institutions cooperating with the Danish Union of Early Childhood and Youth can also serve as an example, as in Germany the Unions in fact welcome men in ECEC but usually don't participate actively in projects aiming to increase the number of male ECEC workers.

Against the background of the German policies to increase the proportion of ECEC workers it is to state that Germany shares a lot of similar experiences and results with the Danish project. The following results – based on the German experiences – seem to be of particular importance:



- Men in ECEC-projects should not only focus on male ECEC workers but should also involve female ECEC workers in a very appreciative way. Furthermore it is to reflect whether Men/Gender-ECEC-projects should widen their focus and integrate other diversity categories.
- Men in ECEC-projects are not only a question of “quantity” but rather a question of strengthening the professional profile of ECEC facilities. Often apparent gender issues turn out to be professional issues and are challenges for the whole ECEC team.
- Men in ECEC projects should always also initiate gender reflection among the gender-mixed ECEC team to avoid reproducing stereotypes (see above).
- Prospective Men in ECEC-projects should also be accompanied by research projects to understand in a better way their (gender) effects on the professional work of ECEC teams.

### 3.2. The Netherlands

Against the background of the German policies to interest young women for STEM it would be interesting for Germany to share the Dutch “Spegelbeeld” experience. A kick-off database with female STEM-experts, organised by the German Association of Engineers already exists in Germany. The Dutch Experience shows ways of how to exploit the already existing database more intensively. And for a younger target group the database can be used to build up an online pool with attractive information for younger female pupils and parents. On a more general level the German and Dutch measures and projects to interest girls/young women for STEM show a lot of similarities. More intense exchange of experiences and best practices on stakeholder level seems to be very valuable.

### 3.3. Northern Ireland

More women will be reached if practical knowledge is used effectively and successful models are disseminated. In this context, the share of experience with the STEM Charter and the STEM Networks in Northern Ireland would be very valuable as these measures show similarities to the German National Pact for Women in MINT-Careers “Go-MINT”. For example the partners of the National Pact also have signed a so called “Memorandum” that – like the STEM charter in Northern Ireland – contains commitments for the partners. In the “Memorandum” not only the partners obligate themselves to foster girls and women for STEM activities but also the German government to obligate itself to carry out certain measures to facilitate girls and women the access to STEM activities.

## 4. Recommendations for action

- 1) Establishing a European Girls’ Day. Meanwhile, the Girls’ Day or similar actions take place in seventeen European countries. A Girls’ Day on a European level could bundle the widespread efforts and make them more visible and therefore more successful.
- 2) Developing measures to raise the awareness of policy makers on national and EU level for the gender-segregated labour market and its implications on gender equality.

- 3) Raising the gender awareness and consciousness of teachers in secondary schools as they already have influences on the self-perceptions of girls and boys.
- 4) As drop-out rates of male ECEC trainees and workers are quite high in some countries it seems to be important to develop sustainable measures to keep and retain men in ECEC training in the long term.
- 5) Establishing sustainable (cooperation/exchange) platforms on national and EU level where different politicians, practitioners and researchers working for the increase of women in STEM professions and men in care professions could share their experiences and examples of best practice to learn more from another.
- 6) Designing more comparable research projects about the situation of women in STEM and men in care professions and about the effects of strategies/measures to overcome the gender-segregated labour market to better understand differences and similarities of the national strategies.

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