



The EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality

Gender Segregation in the Labour Market and Education

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Summary Report



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Introduction

This seminar, hosted by Denmark over the 29th and 30th September 2015, focused on the issue of gender segregation in the labour market and education, with a particular focus on promoting male pedagogues in early childhood education and care (ECEC) and women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Northern Ireland and the Netherlands acted as associated countries. Representatives and experts attended from further 14 countries.

The presentation of a recent European Commission study on gender segregation in European labour markets¹ provided an overview of the situation in the EU Member States on a comparative level. The presentation pointed out that gender segregation in occupations is falling overall, but slowly and in some countries, it is even increasing. This is not because of neglect but because it is rooted in stereotypes which is the hardest issue to impact on. Segregation matters because it narrows employment choices, reinforces gender stereotypes, limits access to higher-level jobs, reflects the unequal division of unpaid work and family responsibilities and facilitates the undervaluation of women's work. The report points out that existing indicators capture only part of the picture and thus introduces a new approach to examining data on this issue.

1. The good practices of the host and associated countries

1.1. Denmark: Men Employed in Kindergartens

In 2013-2014, about 30% of the students in the 'Social Educator' BA programme were men but 2013 figures show an average of only 7.1% male pedagogues in kindergartens. The objectives of the five pilot projects in different municipalities were to promote greater gender diversity in the day care sector by attracting more male pedagogues; create new knowledge in the field; and disseminate this.

The work done in two of the municipalities was presented:

- In Fredensborg, there was an emphasis on building greater respect for the field and presenting it as characterised by a high degree of professionalism that would be attractive to skilled men and skilled women. There was a significant focus on stimulating self-reflection among staff about themselves and their practice from a perspective of combating gender stereotypes. An 'ambassador group' of staff was established to take a lead in building a gender perspective into pedagogical practice. An initiative was piloted to bring three male pedagogues together to work with older kindergarten children to explore whether staff composition has an impact. The project enabled increased knowledge of how gender perceptions affect professional work relations, professional

¹ For further information, see European Union 2014: A new method to understand occupational gender segregation in European Labour markets, ENEGE report, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/150119_segregation_report_web_en.pdf

assessments and the learning opportunities for children alongside a new view of diversity as the presence of many different kinds of men and of women rather than just the presence of women and men.

- In Skanderborg Vest, the goal was to achieve 20% male employees in kindergartens. This involved action to attract male applicants by talking to male students prior to the recruitment process; to adapt the recruitment procedure to reflect the approaches of men and women to job searching; and to address the internal culture of the organisations to prepare staff for the change in staff composition, including a focus on gender roles and the need to offer a different narrative to children. Activities on organisational culture led to reflection and changes in daily work. They included a tactic of 'wobbling', challenging staff to leave their comfort zone as a means of changing inherent patterns. A 17% rate of male pedagogues was achieved.

The projects were small scale and implemented over a short period but change did happen. As was demonstrated, small steps can make a difference. Three main issues were identified:

- Rationale: Diversity and male pedagogues may offer the children a broader palette of adult identification opportunities. It could contribute to a more varied picture of men and what men can do. A more diverse work environment may contribute to a good working environment.
- Gender, body and abilities: Everybody involved has been challenged in their views and expectations of gender, body and abilities. Men are met with specific expectations and prejudices and some expectations were stereotyped. The idea of diversity, gender and gender roles has to be constantly challenged. Abilities must not be gender assigned and daily regimes were challenged to change.
- Recruitment: The language of job advertisements and the unwritten practices in selecting applicants were challenged. Prior contact with male students allowed histories carried by men and any sense of feeling unwelcome in the kindergarten to be explored. Male recruitment was pursued as a matter of constructing a professional identity attractive to all rather than as a matter of gender. It was important to explain the job, the opportunities, and the prospects to men.

The discourse in attracting men into early childhood education is challenging. There is a temptation to appeal to categories already in place, that often reflect gender stereotypes, in order to get short term results. A transformative approach, however, would seek to undo gender. It is a long-term strategy and can generate significant resistances. However it stimulates necessary change not just at the level of the individual but also at the level of the institutions and, ultimately at the level of society.

There are particular barriers to attracting men into female dominated fields. Jobs in these fields tend to be low status and low paid. In Denmark the pay is not particularly at issue, it is more the status. The focus on professionalism was deployed to address this. In other jurisdictions, where low pay is the core barrier, it was challenged as to why such fields should still be attractive to women. As it seems, the jobs do not have low status among women.

There is a challenge to explore further the motivations of men and to address different groups of men if male pedagogues are to be recruited. More research is needed to examine the choice by men to do the 'Social Educator' BA programme.

1.2. Northern Ireland: Women in STEM Employment

The initiative in Northern Ireland grew out of the "Success through STEM Strategy"² produced by the Government. Five of the twenty recommendations were assigned to a Business Sub Group and the Department for Employment and Learning funded a seconded post of STEM Business Coordinator. One of the recommendations taken on by the subgroup was to address gender bias especially within the physical sciences and engineering. The STEM Business Coordinator initiated a partnership with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to address this.

The core work in this initiative was centred on developing an infrastructure to stimulate better gender balance in the STEM field, including:

- Good practice guidelines³: These emphasised the importance of role models prior to and post recruitment, supportive personnel policies, networking and career development opportunities, and mentoring.
- A STEM Charter⁴ for CEOs: This included commitments to implement an equality policy, take appropriate positive action measures, challenge gender stereotypical attitudes, benchmark against good practice and monitor access to all policies. So far, it has been signed by 37 companies.
- STEM Employer Equality Network: Topics discussed include benchmarking and needs identification, mentoring, networking, and unconscious bias.

Activities developed include: an event to engage STEM employers; a report with case studies, the good practice guidelines and the STEM Charter for CEOs; supplements in all regional newspapers featuring women role models; and launch of a STEM Employers Equality Network.

Partnership was an important element in this initiative, the partnership with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and the partnership with STEM employers. Over 100 STEM businesses and delivery agencies have been engaged with though it has been difficult to involve SMEs. The Government has been an important partner with provision of the initial finance to employ the coordinator. Personal contact was important to engage STEM companies.

² Source: <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/10407/>

³ Source : Addressing Gender Balance- Reaping the Gender Dividend in STEM, STEM Business Group November 2013
<http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/STEM-Report-Addressing-gender-balance-in-STEM.pdf>

⁴ Source:
http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/STEM_Charter.pdf

Attention has been given to ensuring the creation of a culture positive to equality within the STEM businesses involved to ensure retention of women. Commitment at the highest level within the companies has been important.

1.3. Netherlands: Women in STEM Education

The policy framework for the project involves a general initiative to stimulate STEM participation driven by the National Platform for Science and Technology and a specific initiative to increase participation by women in STEM implemented by a NGO, VHTO. The aim of the work is to shift perceptions and combat stereotypes, inform girls about STEM possibilities and introduce role models, and train parents and teachers in gender awareness.

The most significant element of this initiative was its focus across all levels of education – primary, secondary, and tertiary. It seeks to include students, parents, teachers, school guidance counsellors and schools themselves.

- At primary level activities include: ‘Talent Viewer’ lessons to eliminate stereotypes; an online database about women role models⁵; a girls day to visit STEM business and research institutions; and in-service teacher training to promote gender aware teaching of STEM subjects.
- At secondary level activities include: speed dating events with women STEM professionals, work with students and parents to strengthen decision making on STEM subjects; training for STEM teachers and study advisors; and policy discussions with school administrators, study advisors and STEM teachers. A database of 2,000 women role models has also been developed.
- At tertiary level activities include: information activities with women STEM students to inform them of follow-up programmes and professions; guidance for women STEM students; training of teachers and guidance counsellors; policy advice on handling gender diversity within education programmes; and work meetings in which so-called gender contact/monitoring staff meet, discuss and exchange developments and results in addition to working on the development of joint projects.

The involvement of STEM businesses is an important feature. Their participation in the Girls Day is vital. Women role models are a key element of this initiative. STEM businesses need to give them time to participate but many still have to take leave to participate. A lot of time and effort goes into organising the participation of the role models and the engagement of STEM businesses.

There is a rising proportion of girls in STEM education at all levels since 2000. Schools where VHTO activities have been implemented perform better in this regard but measurement of individual impact is hard to monitor.

Participation by schools is voluntary as they have a lot of autonomy. There is no sanction for poor performance on this issue. There is a challenge to get more STEM businesses involved. Motivation for business involvement is not purely financial gain. They have values around gender equality and it is important to tap into this.

⁵ Online database This Is What I Do: www.ditdoeik.nl

The content and methodology of STEM education needs to be a focus. Increased entry of girls into STEM subjects can be undermined by high drop-out rates.

1.4. Conclusions

The main common theme of the presented practices was the issue of gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes lead to gender segregation and segregation reinforces gender stereotypes. Tactics to address gender segregation can, however, inadvertently call on gender stereotypes in seeking short-term gains.

A second common theme was that addressing gender segregation has to go beyond getting individual women or men into particular employments or education courses. This was not going to be sufficient to secure lasting outcomes. Institutional change within businesses or educational establishments emerged as a feature of the initiatives. Societal change in terms of sharing of domestic and caring work and of stereotypical societal expectations of men and women has to be addressed.

Finally, it is important that all parts of the chain are addressed in challenging gender segregation. The chain stretches from kindergarten to primary, secondary and tertiary education and on to the labour market. The projects were all located on this chain and most took on more than one part of the chain in seeking change.

2. The situation in the other participating countries⁶

The trends in most participating countries were generally similar: low rates of participation by men as male pedagogues at pre-school level, with small numbers studying in entry programmes for the field; low pay and low status of female dominated jobs as a barrier to addressing segregation; young women are better educated than young men, but young men continue to dominate in fields such as computing, science, engineering and technology, despite increasing participation by young women; over-representation of men teaching these subjects; young women increasingly predominating in mathematics and architecture; labour market segregation with men concentrated in STEM areas and women in areas such as health and education; and vertical segregation with men concentrated in management positions, even in female dominated areas.

There is limited action reported in addressing gender segregation in kindergartens and in seeking to shape or influence educational and career choices made by men.

- In Germany, the Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth organise the 'More Men in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)' programme. This includes a coordination office⁷ to advise policy makers and ECEC organisations on the issue, an ESF funded programme of model projects⁸ to raise the number of men working in ECEC, and a European Social Fund

⁶ For more information on the single countries, please refer to the respective comments papers available at: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/other-institutions/good-practices/review-seminars/seminars_2015/gender_segregation_en.htm

⁷ <http://mika.koordination-maennerinkitas.de/about-us/about-the-coordination-centre-men-in-ecec/>

⁸ Some good practice examples of the programme are also available in English, see: <http://mika.koordination-maennerinkitas.de/about-us/publications>

(ESF) funded programme to create new forms of paid ECEC worker training courses for male and female career changers.

- Sweden has taken a range of measures including a study and analysis of measures to increase the number of men in preschools over previous years, courses to prepare unemployed men for work in preschools, and networks for men in education or employed in female dominated professions.
- The wide ranging Valtava⁹ project in Finland included projects on training women and men for gender atypical occupations and a 'Manual to Men' to help teachers and workplaces in the social and health care sector to recruit male students.

There is wide-ranging action reported to address gender segregation in education, particularly in STEM, but less on gender segregation in female dominated subjects.

- A significant number of activities to promote careers in STEM are reported.
 - Girls' Days to give some exposure for girls to the potential of STEM careers are popular and were reported in Austria, Croatia, Germany, Luxembourg and Slovenia. Austria also organises a Boys' Day¹⁰ and Luxembourg's "girls' day-boys' day"¹¹ could be become a national day of equality between boys and girls in Luxembourg.
 - Croatia has a Day of Women and Girls in ICT and a State Festival of Student Work at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing in the University of Zagreb.
 - In Sweden, projects by the National Agency for Education to increase interest in STEM include summer courses in technology for girls. A Delegation for Technology with a remit to increase participation in mathematics, natural science and technology presented a range of projects including events, festivals, competitions, discovery centres and technological museums, with a number of these targeting girls. The National Agency for Education and the Royal Swedish Academy developed the 'Technological Leap' to increase trainee posts for young people in the technology sector and 40% of applicants were women.
 - Luxembourg developed a card game, Megaspil¹², for children at second and third cycles of fundamental education, to enable new choices by girls and boys.
 - The wide ranging Valtava project¹³ in Finland included projects to raise general awareness of gender equality in education including developing tools such as card games, marketing campaigns, producing and testing materials

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https://www.tem.fi/ajankohtaista/julkaisut/julkaisujen_haku/good_practices_from_valtava_gender_m_aistreaming_programme.98249.xhtml

10 <http://www.boysday.at>

11 <http://www.girls-day.lu/>

12 The link to the game: <http://www.mega-spill.lu>

13 <https://www.tem.fi/valtava>. For English information: <http://www.tem.fi/valtava/tulokset>

for higher comprehensive schools, and designing and implementing online courses for students in secondary and higher educational institutions.

- The NGO sector in Poland has been to the fore with a range of campaigns promoting women in STEM and with mentoring programmes¹⁴.
- In Romania, initiative has come from schools, universities, and research institutes themselves, sometimes in partnership with companies, especially IT, and civil society.
- Specific supports are made available such as scholarships to encourage women into STEM areas, as reported in Croatia and Slovenia.
- The 'Go MINT'¹⁵ initiative in Germany aims to strengthen the effectiveness of local, regional and national cooperation networks, foster the exchange of experience and spread best practice, make successful programmes visible, and enhance the presence of STEM women in public perception
- Attention has been given to informing teachers, teacher trainers, and guidance counsellors about good practice free of gender bias.
 - In Portugal, CIG has developed and disseminated Educational Guides for Gender Equality and Citizenship¹⁶ that are geared to the intersection of gender equality with key thematic areas of the national curriculum.
 - A programme in Cyprus includes actions to develop educational guides for educators at all levels of education, a manual for vocational counsellors promoting the integration of a gender dimension in vocational education, career guidance and counselling, and a guide for parents on the role of families in the educational choices of boys and girls. Training is provided to educators, school based career counsellors, and parents.
 - The Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs supports schools to implement a respective career choice counselling and launched a website on the topic of 'Women in Technics'¹⁷.
- Institutional structures have been established or adapted to advance the participation by women in STEM subjects.
 - In Slovenia the Commission for the Promotion of Women in Science is an expert body established by the Ministry of Science. It has contributed to the collection of data, the elimination of discrimination in research funding and in the evaluation of women applicants, and the adoption of policies for gender equality in the membership of professional bodies.

¹⁴ For more information see:

http://www.perspektywy.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=38&Itemid=34

¹⁵ MINT is the German definition of STEM. Website: www.komm-mach-mint.de, English information is available at: <http://www.komm-mach-mint.de/Komm-mach-MINT/English-Information>

¹⁶ See: http://www.cig.gov.pt/pdf/2014/Education_Guide_Pre_school.pdf and

http://www.cig.gov.pt/pdf/2014/Education_Guide_3rd_Cicle.pdf

¹⁷ <https://www.meine-technik.at/>

- In Lithuania, the ESF supported 'Promotion of Gender Equality in Science' project aimed to create an empirical-informative background to the introduction of gender equality structural change in science institutions. The Minister of Science and Education passed an order in 2014 on 'Recommendations for ensuring equal opportunities for women and men in Lithuanian science and education institutions' to encourage such change.

There was limited action reported on gender segregation in STEM employment.

- Legal obligations are found to be helpful:
 - Finland has placed a legal obligation on employers and higher educational institutions to prepare gender equality plans.
 - In Estonia, all administrative levels are obliged to mainstream gender equality into policies, strategies and action plans. Educational institutions, research institutions and employers are obliged to promote equality. Employers are required to gather gender-disaggregated statistics.
- The wide ranging Valtava project in Finland included a focus on guiding higher comprehensive school pupils to choose atypical placements for their introduction to working life and on giving women planning a career change a two month training course to familiarise themselves with the technology industry.
- In 2012 Italy proposed a tax reform with a 50 % tax reduction to employers for hiring workers from the under-represented gender where segregation was high.

The projects presented by the host country and the two associated countries were seen as **transferable** by many participating countries, whether in part or adapted. Interest in transferability was stimulated by a concern that progress has been slow, despite wide-ranging efforts and a sense that additional and, particularly, new forms of action are required. Some participating countries, such as Sweden, saw these projects as analogous to action already being taken. This suggested a value in stimulating and supporting more intense exchanges of experience.

There are challenges seen in implementing the Danish project given the dangers of reinforcing gender stereotyping and the threat to women's employment in this area. However, there is a strong need expressed for further action in this area and the pilot nature and municipality level of the work are seen as attractive. The integrated multi-level nature of the Dutch approach addressing gender segregation in education was identified as particularly attractive. The STEM Charter for CEOs and the STEM Employer Equality Network in Northern Ireland are seen as particularly transferable and the private sector focus is valued.

3. Key issues discussed during the seminar

Action on gender segregation needs to promote and secure change not just at the level of the individual woman or man moving into a sector dominated by the other gender. Change needs to be secured at the organisational level and at the societal level. Organisations need to implement effective equality practices in a systematic manner promoting diversity and addressing work life balance. Segregation within STEM industries needs to be addressed. There has to be a concern about the

content and methods used in educational establishments as well as on who gets the jobs. At a societal level change needs to be stimulated by promoting shared care and domestic work, as well as the affordability and quality of childcare services.

Participants valued the Dutch initiatives that aim to promote girls in STEM, covering the entire chain from primary education to the labour market. In the latter there needs to be a concern for both recruitment and retention if gender segregation is to be effectively tackled. Multi-level interventions were also suggested in terms of the need for action at national, regional and local level. The local level was valued as the point that policies were implemented, where stakeholders engaged, and that was closest to the reality for people.

There was concern that the messages used to attract men into female dominated sectors and women into male dominated sectors could reproduce gender stereotypes. Language was seen as important in that it can all too easily be gendered in a manner that acts as a barrier to eliminating gender segregation and gender stereotyping. This was noted in how jobs were labelled or advertised. The gendered message inherent in separate girls' days and boys' days to visit sectors dominated by the other gender was also challenged and the use of small mixed groups to do both visits was put forward.

The motivation of different stakeholders was a significant theme. There was concern that the motivations of men and women to engage with sectors dominated by the other gender could be analysed in gender stereotypical forms. It is important to explore motivations with men and women so as to pose the appeal of these sectors in a useful manner that also challenges stereotypes. Motivations of women and men could also be changing with new generations and it is important not to be locked into old ways of thinking. The business case was seen as important but the approach to employers should not rest solely on a business case and could call up more altruistic motivations including their commitment to equality. Placing obligations on schools was not seen as eliciting the best response and more persuasive and voluntary approaches were emphasised. The importance of identifying and working with individual champions within organisations was noted.

There was concern at the project basis for many of the interventions. This left the measures as ad-hoc and without any guarantee of sustainability. More systemic approaches to this issue are required in STEM related policy areas, in educational policy and in gender equality policy. The practice of gender mainstreaming needs to be implemented effectively in all these areas. The value of building on a lively and active civil society in this field was emphasised.

Barriers that lie in the wider culture of society were identified. The impact of advertising and media on gender stereotypes, concepts of male and female identity, and gender roles was noted. This has to be contested if gender segregation is to be effectively addressed. Societal values need to encompass caring and caring work as the capacity of people regardless of gender. These gender equality values need to be stimulated and reinforced.

Policy implementation emerged as a challenge in some of the Member States. Progress was made in developing policies, introducing legislation and signing up to international agreements. However, when it comes to actual implementation the will and/or the capacity is lacking and the reality on the ground does not change.

The importance of partnership was emphasised. Partnership needs to involve different stakeholders working to address gender segregation. These include public, private and civil society organisations. It is important that each partner gains from the relationship, that the values of gender equality are shared across the partnership, and that all relevant voices are heard within the partnership.

The problem of gender segregation was explored in the seminar for men in early childhood education and for women in STEM industries. There are similarities in the barriers posed by gender stereotyping and by what are seen as the typical or traditional capacities of men and women. However, at times it appeared easier to focus on the issues for women moving into STEM industries given the complexities that emerged for men moving into early childhood education. In STEM, work is high status and well paid and women could be considered to want to work in such an area, employers too want women to work in the area given skills shortages, and the issues is largely understood in terms of discrimination. In early childhood education, where work often does not have high status and can be low paid, men could be considered as not wanting to work in this area, employers could be seen as wary of men and even unwelcoming, and the issue is not seen as one of discrimination. The debate focused on the need to change low status and low paid work to secure better conditions for women and men and to address gender segregation in this manner.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

The seminar noted the links between gender segregation in the labour market and in education and training, the issue of a leaky pipeline along the way, and the manner in which segregation draws from and reinforces gender stereotypes. The European Commission is most active on this issue in the fields of education, research, and ICT. It has now invited the Advisory Committee on Equality between Women and Men to prepare an opinion on gender segregation and will make further funding opportunities available in order to fight gender segregation and gender stereotyping.

This commitment of the European Commission provides a vital stimulus for the further and deeper action required on gender segregation in the labour market and in education. EU funding for action on gender segregation continues to be important.

Gender segregation in these areas needs to be addressed in an integrated manner with gender segregation in the sharing of housework and care work and in participation in societal and leisure activities.

Action on gender segregation needs to be comprehensive in seeking change for individual women and men in the labour market and education alongside seeking change in institutional cultures and practices by employers and educational providers, and seeking societal change, particularly, in relation to the generation and transmission of gender stereotypes.

There is a limited tradition of action to increase men's participation in female dominated sectors. The work that has been done needs to be analysed, disseminated and expanded.

Private sector employer involvement in addressing gender segregation both in terms of individual opportunities and institutional change needs to be further developed.

Gender mainstreaming needs to be implemented effectively in educational policy and programmes and policies and programmes stimulating STEM employment.

Action on gender segregation in the labour market needs to be coordinated with action on improving the quality of work and on addressing low pay, given that these characterise many female dominated areas of employment.