

## TRANSNATIONALITY – DRIVING POSITIVE CHANGE

### TACKLING GENDER SEGREGATION IN GROWTH SECTORS

The [Gender@Work](#) Transnational Partnership (TP) has really lived up to its name. This TP has put gender and equality issues to work in a very successful cooperative venture involving EQUAL Development Partnerships (DPs) from [Latvia](#), [Spain](#) and the [United Kingdom](#). The three DPs have joined forces to tackle the massive gender segregation in growth sectors such as science, engineering, construction and technology (SECT) and the repercussions of this segregation on the gender pay gap. The partner projects shared their knowledge and good practices of supporting women entrepreneurs in the science, engineering and technology sector. They also raised gender awareness by training existing staff and introducing new practices within the education sector. This endeavour was based on outreach work with school teachers, university lecturers and career advisers. The main feature of Gender@Work is its emphasis on import-export activities and, in the course of the last few years, it has exchanged gender mainstreaming tools and also up-to date statistics and research on gender segregation in SECT and the labour market, in general.

### FIVE STRANDS OF THEMATIC ACTIVITIES

Gender@Work adopted a well structured plan of over 20 meetings and events that would take place from 2005 to 2007 and all of these were coordinated by the TP's steering group. This plan was reinforced by an even wider variety of activities that were organised in all three countries, across the five thematic strands which were at the heart of the TP.

#### Supporting female entrepreneurship in SECT

This strand was led by the Latvian project whose title mirrors its aim of "Reducing the causes for professional segregation." The overarching objectives of this aspect of transnational cooperation were to create links and networks between key players, to develop a knowledge base on female entrepreneurship and to exchange good practices that would underpin the successful delivery of support measures within education, local government and the relevant industrial sectors. These objectives were achieved and now, there is a large pool of resources that can be exploited by potential and existing business women in Latvia. As a result of tapping into existing networks for female entrepreneurs in Spain and into the UK's Women in Science Network, effective and profitable online cooperation has been established. The partners are now searching for financial support that would enable them to create a new entrepreneurship portal and to extend the EQUAL achievements in this field.



#### Professional guidance and raising gender awareness in education

The Spanish partner both led and fed this thematic activity. Products developed in Spain were assessed by the transnational working group and this enabled the other DPs to consider how they might best be imported and adapted to their respective national contexts. The first Spanish product was a travelling exhibition that outlined the history of women in SECT and explained the discrimination that women have faced and continue to face when entering these male domains. Another product was an educational game designed to broaden vocational choice which was distributed widely on the Canary Islands and particularly appreciated by male pupils. The UK DP also made a contribution to the working group by introducing its series of technology summer camps that had widened the perceptions of both boys and girls about the vocational options that are available to them.



The Latvian DP has imported the concept of the game and is using parts of the Spanish model to create its own tool. A recent study has shown that female role models are very rarely featured in educational and training materials in Latvia and so the project is trying to make women's contribution to science more visible. The game is part of this strategy, as is the bilateral cooperation with the UK partner. This cooperation culminated in Latvia using the English

experience of summer camps to encourage girls to investigate careers in male dominated occupations.

### **Working with employers**

Cooperation with employers is one of the success stories shared by many of the national partners in the JIVE DP. Through EQUAL, some of these good practices have made their way from the UK to Latvia and Spain. This is particularly true for the Cultural Analysis Tool (CAT), which is a key element in JIVE's approach to supporting companies that intend to integrate a gender and/or diversity perspective into their management and operational practices.



CAT is essentially a questionnaire that has been designed to assess the factors that are, or may be, counterproductive to any enterprise's attempt to make gender equality a reality. CAT helps to

identify the "hard" factors such as the lack of changing rooms and toilets for women or working hours and patterns that are unsuitable for people with children. It also points up the "soft", more intangible factors that can contribute to a discriminatory culture in the workplace. CAT is always introduced as part of a broader process of investigation and the first step is to invite all employees to complete the questionnaire. After having analysed the responses, JIVE offers to work with the company and to help it draw up an action plan to address its shortcomings in the promotion of gender equality. To convince employers of the value of CAT, JIVE presents the "business case" for gender equality that demonstrates how companies have achieved increased productivity and competitiveness by releasing un-tapped female potential.

The first step to export the CAT took shape as a workshop in the UK whose aim was to train Latvian and Spanish partners in its use. The most important element of the event was practical advice about how to deal with employers. To this end, both a JIVE employer co-ordinator and an employer were invited to talk about first contacts with companies as well as delivery and value of the CAT. Participants came to understand the concept well and looked for ways in which they could introduce the idea to employers. There was some concern that the whole issue of the under representation of women was still very new in Latvia and certainly not accepted as a priority. This is why at a second seminar that took place in Riga, the EQUAL partners opted for pilot schemes that would transfer the UK experience. In Latvia the DP reached out to interested companies that were willing to undertake the CAT exercise. The gender experts trained earlier played a major part in the transfer process which was rolled out as follows:

- Attending training;
- Starting test runs in six Latvian companies;
- Analysing the CAT results and providing feed-back to the enterprises involved;
- Participating in an exchange seminar with UK partners;
- Organising seminars for the companies and other interested stakeholders to review the findings and consider the next steps;
- Evaluating, and reporting on, the seminar;
- Supporting companies in launching action plans.

The CAT training was extremely well received in Latvia. Participants came to accept that the under-representation of women can have a negative impact on economic development and that diversity management is a useful tool to capture an increased share of European and international markets. People appreciated the fact that, in the workshop, this concept was applied to concrete aspects of any company's HR operations such as recruitment, working conditions, employee relationships and career development and the large number of practical examples presented by the UK partner was particularly welcome. The exercise resulted in 12 companies following the cycle of developing, testing, adapting, and then implementing the CAT. Later, training courses also involved career guidance personnel from Latvia, staff from the municipalities of the Spanish Canary Islands and organisations that had applied the CAT in the UK. The test runs in Latvia and the good practices exchanged at the transnational training workshops were fed into a jointly-produced set of recommendations that were very much targeted at improving practices. The resulting recommendations entitled "[How should employers change their working culture?](#)" were widely disseminated.

## Creating a network for gender research

As a newcomer to the EU, Latvia was very keen to get an overview of the state-of-the art in gender research from the old Member States and it led the discussion amongst all participating countries. Latvia brought together researchers in both face-to-face and virtual exchange events and the outcomes of these encounters are available on the website of the UK Resource Centre on Women in SECT ([www.setwomenresource.org.uk](http://www.setwomenresource.org.uk)). They include statistics, studies and action research projects with abstracts in English and the full versions in their original languages. The scope of the subjects is broad and includes, for instance:



- an analysis, from a gender perspective, of the local development strategies of Latvian municipalities;
- quantitative and qualitative research on stereotypes and causes of professional segregation in Latvia;
- a résumé of good practices of women's entrepreneurship in technology sectors from countries both inside and outside the EU.

According to all the DPs, international comparison of gender equality policies and practices will continue to be a valuable aid in gaining new perspectives and avoiding mistakes.

## Gender Mainstreaming

Led by JIVE, this strand involved an intensive exchange and transfer of good practices. An introductory seminar was organised in the UK to examine different examples of gender mainstreaming (GM). This was followed by two study visits hosted by JIVE partners. The first offered Latvian experts and key players an overview of how GM is implemented in English municipalities. The second visit involved policy makers from both Latvia and Spain for consultation with UK counterparts. Together, they looked at successful GM strategies within the three partner countries. The meeting helped to disseminate viable approaches, such as the British model of equality plans. Creating gender equality alliances between public authorities and private companies, which are particularly aimed at enabling a better balance of work and family life for women and men, is a key element of these plans. The Spanish colleagues found that this approach so innovative and useful that they imported it right away. Given that 26 of the 31 municipalities on the island of Tenerife are active partners in the Spanish DP, the potential for mainstreaming such alliances is extremely promising. Another seminar held in Riga served to exchange information on how Latvia,



Spain and the UK are addressing gender equality issues within local government with particular reference to women and SECT. This event involved representatives of the five municipalities that were partners in the Latvian project and triggered an outreach strategy targeting more city councils. For the Latvian team, adapting UK's good practice of GM was "a real success with huge results, as before we had nothing like this," they said. "At first we contacted municipalities and local authorities. Then, we brought on board the regional ministries which were a great help in implementing gender mainstreaming. Now, we are trying to convince more and more governments to follow suit."

The Spanish method of analysing the gender equality performance of trade unions and employers was another avenue explored by the TP. This tool had been applied to 38 companies operating on the Canary Islands in typical male and female domains such as the metal, transport, construction and energy industries, plus fishing, food and beverage production and the healthcare sector. Interviews were carried out with 88 senior managers from these enterprises and they focused on crucial issues including recruitment and selection of personnel, career

development, access to middle and senior management positions, training, gender fair language, sexual harassment and the promotion of health and safety in the workplace. The results were then presented at a conference, in Spain, together with proposed strategies to remedy the discriminatory practices that had been detected. As a result, a manual with a set of guidelines was published that can help companies to identify discrimination and gender disparities and to use the examples of good practice to bring about positive change. A special chapter of the manual is dedicated to integrating the gender dimension into collective bargaining processes and procedures. Partners from Latvia and the UK were keen to use these guidelines and have started adapting the various sections of the manual to their national and organisational contexts.

## FROM INSPIRATION TO ACTION AND IMPACT

All members of the gender@work TP appreciated the stimulation and inspiration, which they gained through working together. *"We were able to develop a new and better vision of our aims and activities at home following our exposure to other practices,"* they said. For the UK DP, it was vitally important to generate such an effect for individuals, companies and all its national partners. JIVE staff underlined that face-to-face meetings had been extremely fruitful and that this was mainly due to the careful briefing and preparation of those individuals who would represent the DP at such events. Prior to the meetings, participants had to consider questions such as *"Why are we here?"* or *"What is our project about?"* or *"What will we talk about?"* or *"How can we make sure to stick to the core purpose?"* They also explored how each representative could contribute to the dissemination of the meeting's outcomes within the DP and to the eventual channelling of good practices to relevant organisations and mainstream systems. Involving all the national partners of the three DPs in the transnational activities generated local spin offs and gave people the chance to learn more about the different partners in each DP – either their own DP or those from the other two countries. Claire Pickerden from the UK Resource Centre for Women in SECT sees transnational cooperation *"as mutually beneficial, even to a more experienced partnership or individual and it is also useful for more junior staff."* She believes that, *"it raised our profile as with the study visit, recipient organisations in the UK were pleased to have the opportunity to present their work to a European audience."*

It is very evident that these events and study visits increased the visibility and the impact of all TP members in their countries of origin. *"It helped to establish contact with key players and organisations and made them open up to what we have to offer. In our country transnational projects are seen as being more prestigious than national projects"*, confirmed Liga Veca from the Integration Foundation. From the beginning, the Latvian partners saw themselves as learners in terms of content and intercultural competences but the table below shows that the exchange of good practices and tools was by no means all one way traffic.

Methods, tools and good practices transferred	From	To
Support models for women's business creation and entrepreneurship	Spain, UK	Latvia
Establishing and managing networks of women scientists	Spain	Latvia
Widening vocational choices of young women and men through new approaches in career guidance, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• manuals for children and youth;</li> <li>• interactive CD for girls and young women;</li> <li>• poster campaign;</li> <li>• manuals for teachers and guidance staff;</li> <li>• diary for young people helping them to make the most of summer camps and work experience placements in companies.</li> </ul>	Spain, UK	Latvia
Transnational comparisons of gender equality performance (legislation, policies and practices, research)	Latvia, Spain, UK	all

Gender mainstreaming in companies, including CAT	UK	Latvia
New models of equality plans involving several players at local, regional and national level	UK, Spain	Latvia, Spain
Assessment and evaluation of the CAT	Latvia	UK

Sally Driscoll from JIVE could not have been more emphatic about how the export of the CAT is improving its use in the UK. She explained, *"it helped us learn about the practical application of CAT through the eyes of a new promoter. Specifically, they could see better how the tool could be improved. This will be fed into the upcoming CAT review and inform the production of revised and new written materials."* In a more general vein, Claire Pickerden sums up the benefits as, *"transnational cooperation is the way to share what we have learned and to improve our learning, skills and good practices. Its added value is best measured in terms of how partners in different Member States have learned from each other and this includes learning from and about our differences."* In this TP, everyone is committed to continuing this process of learning between the north and the south and between the east and the west of the EU. People hope that in the future there will be even more opportunities for transnational cooperation in the 2007 to 2013 ESF Programming Period.

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