

ONE WORKPLACE EQUAL RIGHTS

Research conducted in Scotland found that if confronted by racism in the workplace only 1% of ethnic minority men and 3% of ethnic minority women would turn in the first instance to their trade union. Conversely, a study into approaches of equality in Scottish trade unions shows that equality issues are marginalised within the broader bargaining agenda, dominated by terms and conditions and pay. The Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC) reacted to this situation and launched new action to challenge discrimination in the workplace and promote good practice by mainstreaming equalities into the trade union bargaining agenda.

The **One Workplace Equal Rights** project was set up by the STUC, within the context of the **COOL** (Creating Opportunities for Ongoing Learning) DP, to mainstream equality and tackle discrimination in the workplace. It carries out a range of activities aimed at trade union representatives (reps), in order to improve their understanding and knowledge of equality issues and to build up their capacity to support marginalised groups.

The backbone of the project is the delivery of an Action Learning Programme for trade unions, involving both full-time officials and lay reps across the whole of Scotland, to build capacity through

- Residential training programmes to create 100 *Bargaining for Equality Union Reps*;
- Seminars for trade unionists on equal opportunities best practice and raising awareness of new rights for members; and
- The development and use of campaign packs and web-based resources to promote race equality and equal opportunity in the workplace.

These activities are underpinned by a *Bargaining for Equality* toolkit for trade union reps, a training DVD and best practice guides, online advice through the One Workplace website, and by the establishment of an annual *Equality Rep Award* to encourage and sustain progress

The Project has received a Scottish Empowerment Award in 2004 under the employment category. Its success is also demonstrated by the fact that Wales TUC has developed a similar Equal at Work Project which it modelled on the One Workplace Project.

However, the project team believes that there still remains considerable progress to be made if Scottish trade unions are to integrate and mainstream equalities issues within the bargaining agenda, while also better representing an increasingly diverse workforce within its membership, leadership and structures.

Success in combating discrimination at the workplace also requires a strong commitment on the part of employers, particularly from the privates sector which accounts for 70% of employment in Scotland. The One Workplace project is therefore actively engaged in Trade Union/Employer Partnership activities which are expected to result in improved HR practice and positive action measures to empower marginalized groups.

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Link to [EQUAL database description](#) (COOL)

[Transnational Partnership](#)

[STEPS: Steps Towards Empowerment, Partnership and Success](#)