

A Toolkit for Gender Equality in Practice - Initiative

European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE)

Various initiatives on gender equality

Summary of the initiative

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) represents teachers' interests at European level. It was established in 1977. ETUCE represents 132 teachers' unions in 45 countries (27 from the EU countries and 18 from EFTA, candidate and non-EU countries). In total numbers, ETUCE represents 11 million members all over Europe. ETUCE membership is highly feminine: 68% of members are in fact women.

This EU union federation has a Standing Equality Committee, which adopted various documents and recommendations on gender equality. Four areas of action are considered to be priorities:

1. Overcoming gender stereotypes in and through education;
2. Reconciliation of work and family life;
3. Economic empowerment of women teachers: combating pay inequities and budget cuts;
4. Improving women in leadership positions in teachers' unions.

Indeed, these were the issues chosen by the Committee and all the participating trade unions committed themselves to their implementation in their everyday activity.

ETUCE has realised various EU projects promoting gender equality in teacher unions and in the teaching profession. They mainly aim at challenging gender stereotypes in education and gender segregation in the labour market.

Following the results of a project carried out between 2011 and 2012, ETUCE published an activity report and adopted guidelines and recommendations to fight gender stereotypes in education sector. The following priorities are addressed:

1. Raising awareness amongst teachers, education employees and social partners in education on the issue of gender stereotypes with the aim to tackle them in the education sector;
2. Developing tools to contribute to gender sensitive education;
3. Mitigating gender stereotypes in students' choice of career paths
4. Taking concrete measures to engage in a national social dialogue about how to include gender sensitive education to aim for equal economic independence for men and women
5. At European level, exchanging best practices of successful institutional and / or legislative changes in national education systems

Some of ETUCE members have been very active in producing materials to fight gender stereotypes at school. Spanish affiliates, for instance, have prepared for publication two example of lessons to be held on equality issues in primary and secondary school classes. They focus on prejudices, women who have chosen to follow their own inclinations and the evolution of female status in the last century.



One of the main concerns of trade unions in the last years have been the negative effects of the crisis on salaries, purchase power, pensions and workload. All this has a particular impact on women and people with care responsibilities.

School staff has been heavily affected by cuts and trade unions have had hard times in defending workers' rights against demands which turn out to be too exacting.

Several ETUCE members have organised strikes, printed leaflets, took part in confrontations with the government in order to advocate for a fairer treatment for education workers, who are mostly women. ETUCE has produced various material on the issue, such as the brochure "Teacher trade unions in solidarity for healthy and safe workplaces in the economic crisis".

Priorities

Addressing gender roles, Promoting women in decision-making, Supporting work-life balance, Tackling the gender pay gap

Sector(s)

Education

Type

Social Partners

Country

EU Level

Model of social partnership

Unilateral (Trade Unions)

Launch date

2010 - 2013

References

http://etuce.homestead.com/ETUCE_Equality.html

This initiative was submitted by:

ETUCE (ETUC)

Website

<http://etuce.homestead.com>