



A Toolkit for Gender Equality in Practice - Initiative

Confederation of German Trade Unions (DGB) The “female breadwinner” project

Summary of the initiative

The Confederation of German Trade Unions (German: Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, DGB) is an umbrella organisation for eight German trade unions, in total representing more than 6 million people (2011). It was founded in Munich, 12 October 1949.

The “female breadwinner” project (in German: Familienernährerinnen) has been initiated by the DGB and is financed by the German Federal Ministry for Family, Older People, Women and Young People.

Women who provide for the family with their income can no longer be dismissed as a category in Germany: whether as single parents or in a partnership, women now earn the main income for the family (at least 60% of household income) in no less than one fifth of multi-person households. The fact is that any woman can become a family breadwinner in her life - e.g. following a divorce, if the partner loses his job or because she is more successful in her professional life. It is important to bear in mind that women still have different career profiles from men. They often interrupt their professional activity for family-related reasons and often return to work for a reduced number of hours. They are also employed more often in professions that pay below average and in smaller enterprises where the remuneration level is typically lower. This weakens earning and promotion chances. In addition, traditional gender role stereotypes and childcare service offers which fail to meet needs make it more difficult for women to assume the role of breadwinner.

To improve the living and working conditions of female main earners, the female workers in the project organise specialised conferences and information events, give lectures on, publish and raise awareness about the growing phenomenon of female breadwinners in cooperation with policy-makers, decision makers, trade unionists, members of works councils and personnel committees, equality officers and other players on the labour market.

In the first year of the project, a series of policy discussion rounds as well as two specialised policy conferences have already been organised in cooperation with DGB's regional organisations. These seek to raise awareness about the employment and living conditions of female breadwinners and to build up an ever-wider network of multipliers. In addition, sector-specific data on female breadwinners have been evaluated in 2013 on the basis of the socio-economic panel (SOEP) in order to improve the quantitative data on female main earners on the labour market. By 2014, the aim is to increase awareness about the issue among company-level actors of both genders in the framework of qualification seminars and via a brochure with best practice examples. Useful information, data, facts and materials can be found on the project's website: <http://www.familienernaehrerin.de>.



Priorities

Addressing gender roles

Type

Social Partners

Country

Germany

Model of social partnership

Trade Union / Unilateral

Launch date

2013

References

<http://www.familienernaehrerin.de>

This initiative was submitted by:

BDA (BUSINESSEUROPE), ZDH (UEAPME), bvöd (CEEP) and DGB (ETUC)

Website

<http://en.dgb.de/>

