



Raising the awareness of companies about combating gender stereotypes (VC/2007/0350)

BREAK GENDER STEREOTYPES, GIVE TALENT A CHANCE

IRELAND

NATIONAL INSTITUTION IN CHARGE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INITIATIVE AT NATIONAL LEVEL:

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No. of SMEs associated: Almost 12,000

Sectors: Commerce, industry, services, agriculture, crafts

Organisational network: Chambers Ireland is the country's largest business organisation, with 60 member chambers

Institutional partnerships: Member of EUROCHAMBRES and ICC (International Chambers of Commerce)

National Focal Point:	Expert on Gender Issues and SMEs in the country:
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DATE AND VENUE OF THE WORKSHOP “Break Gender Stereotypes, Give Talent a Chance”:

17 October 2008: The D-Hotel, Scotch Hall, Drogheda, Co. Louth

28 October 2008: The Tullamore Court Hotel, Tullamore, Co. Offaly

5 November 2008: Radisson Hotel, Golden Lane, Dublin,

NATIONAL AND LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS INVITED/INVOLVED IN THE INITIATIVE:

- Sales Institute of Ireland
- Equal institutions
- SME associations
- Trade Unions
- Employers associations
- Workers associations
- Training agencies

SMEs IN THE COUNTRY:

Over 97% of businesses in Ireland today are small¹, that is, employ fewer than 50 people. Small workplaces accounted for over 60% of the workforce (1,262,900 people) in the second quarter of 2006. They form an essential part of the supply chain for larger firms, and in particular are part of the support infrastructure needed to attract and retain foreign investment.

Employment in wholesale and retail trade, construction, and financial and other business services accounted for over 44% of the total number of persons employed in small workplaces in the second quarter of 2006.

While indigenous companies have traditionally focused on local markets, and are crucial in the supply chain for larger companies, some small companies are beginning to recognize the potential in international markets and growing to capitalise on opportunities.

Regarding entrepreneurship, it is much more common among Irish men than Irish women. One in ten Irish men (10.5%), compared to one in twenty-four Irish women (4.2%), are early stage entrepreneurs. Men are 2.3 times more likely than women to be a nascent entrepreneur and nearly three times more likely than women to be new firm entrepreneurs. In terms of established entrepreneurs, men are more than three and half times more likely than women to be established entrepreneurs.

¹ *Small Business is Big Business – Report of the Small Business Forum*, The Small Business Forum, May 2006



GENDER SEGREGATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET (*):

- Gender segregation in economics sectors 22.7%
- Gender segregation in occupation 26.8%

These indexes measure gender segregation in the Irish labour market, in 2005; the higher the value of both indexes, the higher the segregation biased against women.

Women in Ireland predominate in caring roles, which are often less well paid. In Ireland, six sectors of activity employed just over 64.5% of all working women in 2005, all of them involving the supply of market or public services. These sectors are health care and social services, retailing, education, hotels and restaurants, business activities and public administration. These same six sectors, however, accounted for only 31% of men in employment. Men concentrate in the construction sector, agriculture and retail trade, although the degree of concentration for men is much lower than for women (except for construction).

The concentration of Irish men and women in the top 6 occupations is higher than the EU average. As in the rest of the EU, in Ireland women tend to concentrate into fewer occupations than men. Most Irish women work as shop salespersons and demonstrators, housekeeping and restaurant services workers, personal care and related workers and administrative workers. Many of these professions are traditionally considered to be feminine (nurses, child care) and are often undervalued in society and thus less well paid. Men concentrate in very different occupations to women, mainly as managers of small enterprises, motor vehicle drivers, and high skilled manual workers. These occupations are generally better paid and have more social recognition than the occupations in which women are concentrated.

GENDER ISSUES AND STEREOTYPES (*):

Given the gender-related occupational and sectoral patterns visible in Ireland, it is safe to assume that gender stereotyping exists in Ireland.

Women in employment have been shown to have higher educational qualifications than their male counterparts. However, there are other factors that clearly impact on the ability of women to translate educational qualifications into greater participation in higher paid employment. Recent research² suggests that subject choice at third-level (and before) determines the areas in which women work. The study also found that women were more likely than men to opt for careers in the public sector and caring professions.

The Forum on the Workplace for the Future 2005 found from a survey done with 8000 employees in both public and private sectors that “women receive less training than men, have less discretion over their work, receive less information in the workplace and have high levels of work stress”³. Female workers in the private sector also receive less training than their male counterparts, which creates a real

² National Women’s Council of Ireland, *National Women’s Strategy 2007-2016*, April 2007

³ Kavanagh M., *Women, Learning, and the Labour Market in Ireland - Irish country report for inclusion in the EAEA study on Gender Aspects in Lifelong Learning*, AONTAS – The National Adult Learning Organisation, June 2007



discrimination against women, as work-related training can have a strong influence on earnings, job security or career prospects. Education and training are central to the advancement of women as they enter or advance through the labour market and it is a key element for women who wish to re-enter the labour market after a maternity leave. The position is no better in the public life. In 2007 13% of public representatives (TDs) in Dail Eireann (National Parliament) were women, well below the average EU rate of 23%⁴.

() From the review of the national situation for the purpose of the workshop in Ireland produced in the framework of the Contract "Raising the awareness of companies about combating gender stereotypes", commissioned by the European Commission to the International Training Centre of the ILO in partnership with EUROCHAMBRES.*

⁴ European Commission, Report on Equality between Women and Men 2008, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2008



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The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

PROGRESS mission is to strengthen the EU contribution in support of Member States' commitments and efforts to create more and better jobs and to build a more cohesive society. To that effect, PROGRESS will be instrumental in:

- (1) providing analysis and policy advice on PROGRESS policy areas;*
- (2) monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies in PROGRESS policy areas;*
- (3) promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities; and*
- (4) relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large.*

For further information, see:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html.

The information contained in this document does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.