

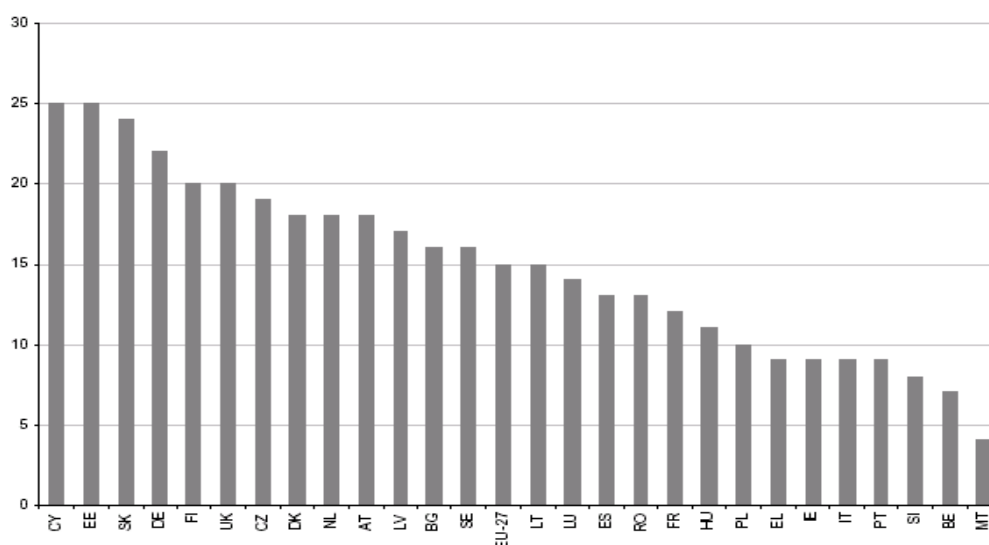
LISBON: CONNECTING POLICY WITH PRACTICE.
New Approaches to Non Gender Segregation
WINGS Final Report

1. Background

The overall aim of the trans-national partnership WINGS, Working Integration for Non Gender Segregation, is to develop an integrated approach to the multidimensional problems of gender segregation in the European labour market. The partnership aims to explore specific issues around gender inequality in the labour market, methods of engagement and participation of women in non traditional employment sectors, support centres for women and to challenge negative stereotypes.

Overall, women in the EU currently earn a significantly less amount than men – 15% less, to be precise (see Figure 1). This figure has remained firm over the past decade, despite there being an increase in the number of females in the workplace.

Figure 1 – Gender Pay Gap in the EU, 2005 (%) Statistics on the Pay Gap and the Situation of Women on the Labour Market



Source: Eurostat.

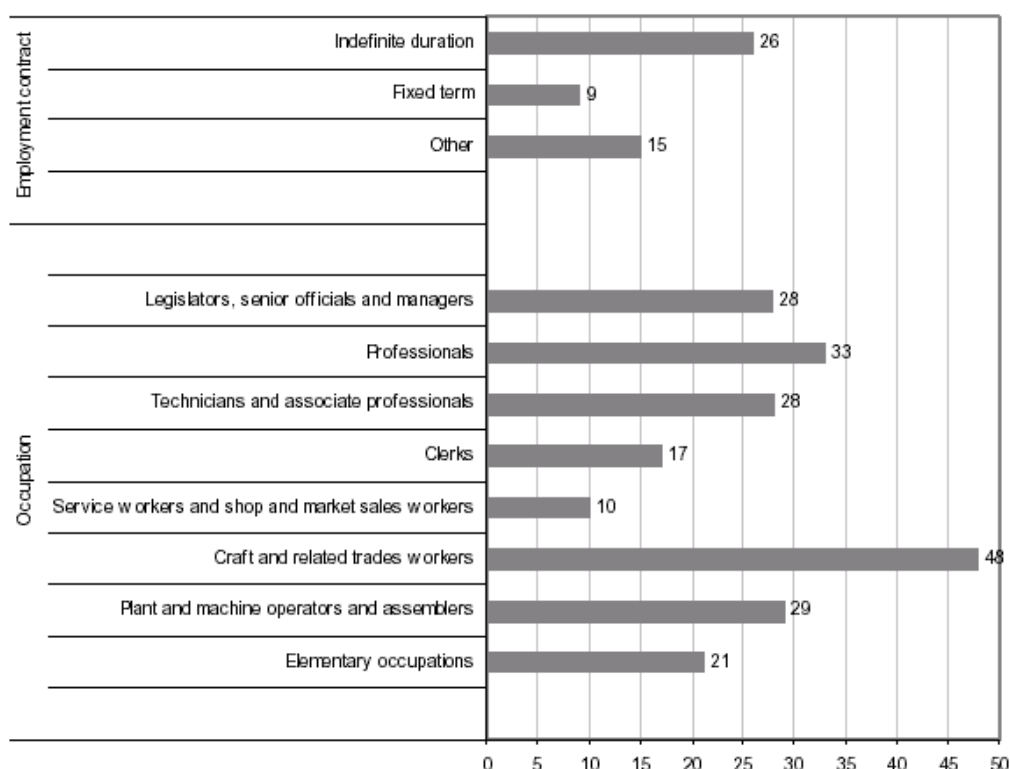
Administrative data are used for LU, Labour Force Survey for FR and MT. Provisional results of EU-SILC (Statistics on Income and Living Conditions) are used for BE, EL, ES, IE, IT, AT, PT, and UK. All other sources are national surveys. EU27 estimates are population weighted-averages of the latest available values.

(1) The gender pay gap in unadjusted form is a structural indicator adopted for the follow-up of the European Strategy for Growth and Jobs. It is defined as the difference between average gross hourly earnings of male paid employees and of female paid employees as a percentage of average gross hourly earnings of male paid employees. The population consists of all paid employees aged 16-64 that are at work 15+ hours per week.

Of the eight million jobs created in the EU since 2000, women have taken six million. In addition, 59% of university graduates are now female, yet serious disparities and inequalities between men and women remain in the workplace.

Rectifying the situation is not clear-cut - the causes are manifold, complex and often hidden (Spidla, 2007). Women are more likely to do unpaid or part-time work and those in occupations with a mostly female workforce are often on lower pay scales. Skills typically associated with women are frequently less valued than those associated with men. Jobs requiring similar qualifications tend to pay less when dominated by women rather than men. Nannies earn less than car mechanics; shop cashiers less than warehouse workers, and nurses less than the police Figure 2. illustrates these features of the labour market.

Figure 2 – Gender Pay Gap, Breakdown By Job Characteristics (%)



Source: Eurostat: Structure of Earnings Survey 2002.

(1) The unadjusted gender pay gap (GPG) is defined as the difference between men's and women's average gross hourly earnings as a percentage of men's average gross hourly earnings. The data presented above (EU-27) covers enterprises, with 10 or more employees, in the sectors of industry and services excluding public administration (NACE Rev.1.1 C to K).

2.Policy

The EU strongly believes that equality between women and men is a fundamental feature of our democratic society. It is an important element of the EU Strategy for Growth and Jobs, and essential for the European Union to sustain its prosperity. Equal pay is an important component of this and so the EU has identified four main courses of action for closing the pay gap:

1. *Applying* current laws more effectively

2. *Integrating* measures into national employment policies and making full use of the European Social Fund (ESF)
3. *Promoting* equal pay as part of employers' social responsibility
4. *Supporting* the exchange of good practice across the EU

For the response to be effective, the EU also believes all parties must get involved and all factors be enthusiastically addressed.

Although all four points stated above are made specifically in relation to the European gender pay gap, they are also considered to be central to the collective issue of gender mainstreaming – the core topic of this report. Point 4 is seen as a specific driver behind this paper, as we aim to discuss the progress and impact of an ESF funded **transnational** project –EQUAL WINGS.

As well as being a matter of social justice, the elimination of gender discrimination is also a matter of economic necessity. Despite a comprehensive legal framework and advances, gender gaps in terms of education, training, pay, employment, unemployment and career development still exist and progress differs amongst the Member states. In addition, a growing number of women, mainly single mothers, elderly and immigrant women, suffer from poverty and social exclusion. **The elimination of gender gaps in every platform is imperative for social justice and economic necessity.** Gender equality is a key element in generating strong growth and creating jobs. It is vital to meet the current demographic challenges of an ageing population, shrinking workforce, and falling fertility rates, and it can help to ensure the financial sustainability of social welfare systems.

The role of the European Social Fund (ESF)

The importance attached to ensuring gender equality in employment is reflected in the **ESF programming for 2007-2013**. It comprises two approaches:

- **Gender mainstreaming**, which incorporates the gender dimension into all ESF priorities;
- **Specific actions** aimed at getting women into work and sustaining them there.¹

The gender-mainstreaming approach means that particular attention must be paid to equal opportunities in the programming and implementation of all ESF activities. Where possible, they support the promotion of women in employment and the elimination of pay gaps. Specific actions target women's employment directly – for example, by concentrating on a particular group such as immigrant women or women entrepreneurs. As well as promoting equal opportunities, the aim of this ESF priority is to support the Lisbon target

¹ (European Commission, Employment, Social Affairs on Equal Opportunities DG,2006)

of raising the average level of women's participation in the workforce to 60% by 2010.²

In addition to the support towards meeting the Lisbon target of 2010, there are several other ESF measures aiming to reduce inequalities for women including the Daphne II Programme (2004-2008), the new Integrated Action Programme Lifelong Learning in education and culture (2007-2013), and The Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men – 2006-2010. The roadmap aims, inter alia, to tackle a number of labour market related imbalances such as the pay gap between men and women, equal participation of women and men and the persisting dilemma of reconciling work and private life.³

.Legislation

Equality of men and women is a fundamental principle of European Community Law and as such is enshrined in EU Treaties. According to Article 2 of the EC Treaty it is one of the tasks to be promoted by the Community. Article 3 lays down the principle of gender mainstreaming by stating that: *"in all its activities referred to in this Article, the Community shall aim to eliminate inequalities and to promote equality, between men and women"*.

Likewise, Article 13 provides for pro-active measures *"to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion and belief, disability, age or sexual orientation"*. Lastly, Articles 137 and 141 specify that each Member State shall ensure that the following are applied: *"equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work"* such as *"to ensure that the principle of equal pay for male and female workers for equal work or work of equal value"*

According to the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997), the gender equality approach is founded on two pillars: specific actions in legislation and programme financing and gender mainstreaming as adopted tools to better achieve the objectives of the European Employment Strategy (EES). It is envisaged that this will be done by integration of the gender issue into every stage of the policy processes, the design, implementation and evaluation of EU Structural Fund programmes. Within the framework of the reformed EES and integration into the new Community Lisbon Programme, the Integrated Guidelines for growth and jobs for 2005-2008 highlight that equal opportunities, combating discrimination and promoting gender mainstreaming are essential for making progress towards achieving full employment, and reducing unemployment and inactivity.

² A full table on the possible contributions of ESF to gender equality can be found within the 2006 document released by DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, European Commission.
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf/docs/genderequality_en.pdf

³ (Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, 2006)

3.The Equal Initiative

The EQUAL Initiative seeks to explore and test effective ways to fight all forms of discrimination present in the labour market. Its trans-national component is designed to help promote the conditions that will create a more inclusive labour market across Europe. Trans-national cooperation partnerships are seen as a tool for the kind of lateral thinking required to achieve innovation.

The inclusion of the gender mainstreaming theme is an expected and much needed development. It indicates recognition within the Commission of the importance of this issue – no doubt driven by the comprehensive policy and legislation backing this area. Whilst there is much work going on locally and nationally across many Member States in terms of addressing inequalities in gender – for example Appendix A shows some national initiatives set up to fight the gender pay gap – is enough being done to share trans-nationally the good practice? This report aims to highlight just that within the context of the EQUAL WINGS project.

Within cities and regions, project activity has been undertaken in large co-operative alliances called Development Partnerships. They have opened the potential for experiments and pilots focussed on countering discrimination in the labour market. In terms of best practice the DP involves all the project organisers, participants and partners working at the political/strategic level to achieve a common objective, with an integrated approach to find solutions to labour market problems.

The DP was structured around four themes: research projects, women into non-traditional employment, working with employers and direct services/provision for women. Within this project there were five organisational strands: study visits, thematic workshops, mainstreaming and dissemination, joint development and a transnational management group.

4.Thematic Framework for Policy Analysis

Lisbon Guidelines

At the EU Council of Ministers meeting in Lisbon in March 2000 the European Union set itself the ambition of developing as the world's most successful and dynamic economic region within the decade. The period until 2005 proved extremely disappointing in meeting these aspirations. The Council of Ministers meeting in 2005 acknowledged the limited progress that had been made and tried to provide a tighter focus onto growth and jobs by outlining a set of Guidelines with 24 key tasks, the first sixteen relating to broad economic policy and the last eight relating to employment policies.

The document as a whole has a strong supply-side emphasis seeking to draw more European citizens into the world of work. Thus the employment guidelines begin by setting as its Lisbon target an overall employment rate of

70% by 2010, with a specific target of a 60% rate for female employment to be achieved by that date. (Guideline 17) The following seven guidelines then outline a range of activities that Member States are expected to pursue in order to achieve these targets. While the Member States and the European Commission have not been explicit, the reality is that contemporary European working patterns are vastly different from those of three decades ago. In sociological terms, what we have seen since the 1970s is the demise of the traditional, male, manual working class and the appearance of a much more heterogeneous, diverse labour force. The Lisbon Guidelines are designed to help Member States to respond effectively to this new paradigm and to promote labour market participation from all sectors of the population.

Bridges over Borders, Conventus, Equilibrium and Wings have each been tackling a range of issues highlighted by these Guidelines. Birmingham University's policy work has examined the practices and experiences which the DP has been developing in relation to these Guidelines. From this we have selected eight common topics which emerge from it. These relate to different aspects of European labour markets but are all concerned with reaching into all corners of the population and finding ways to maximise their potential for engagement in economic activity. The eight themes overlap on occasion and their relative significance differs between the wider four Development Partnerships. But overall, there are potential lessons for policy-makers across the EU, within national government and among regional and local actors in all eight themes.

Our eight themes are:

1. Outreach: Connecting with the most Excluded
2. Maximising Capabilities and Capacities
3. Utilising Information and Communication Technologies to Address Labour Market Disadvantage
4. Encouraging Women into Business
5. Challenging the Barriers to Women.
6. Working with Employers and developing corporate social responsibility
7. Managing Labour Flows within the European Single Market
8. The Role of Support Frameworks and Networks

This third series of Reports of which this report forms a part and our final overarching Report will follow this common framework. They look at the experiences of each DP in these areas; highlight examples of good practice within the individual cities and regions and through their trans-national work; assess the strengths and weaknesses of their joint working; and draw appropriate policy lessons.

The WINGS DP has brought together partners from Spain (Catalonia - Barcelona province), Germany (Emscher-Lippe Region -Ruhr Area), Italy (Sardinia – Cagliari) and the UK (Birmingham and Solihull – West Midlands). Their individual activities within their ESF funded programmes and their joint trans-national activities have focussed on many of these eight themes.

5. Thematic Activity

5.1. Outreach: Connecting with the most Excluded

Given the multi-dimensional character of the EU, attention to equal opportunity issues is vital. Within the field of gender mainstreaming, recognition has to take place of the barriers faced by particular groups (both men and women) - including older people, ethnic minorities, refugees and asylum seekers, those with disabilities and learning difficulties and other groups vulnerable to exclusion.

Outreach work encourages practitioners (ideally local people) to identify barriers to participation and take appropriate action to address them – maybe by encouraging the community to make demands on existing providers to ensure individual and group needs are met. This type of work can encourage the community to explore their own learning needs and to identify opportunities for self-help in meeting learning needs, such as confidence boosting sessions and counselling.

Within the WINGS partnership there have been initiatives that recognise the importance of trying to connect in logical and innovative ways to women in order to progress them towards employment and a better quality of life. In order for outreach activity to succeed careful attention has been paid to the specific needs of women.

Thus, a recurrent request emphasised by trainees and providers has been to have crèche availability guaranteed – especially for single parents. In consequence within **Agender, Birmingham** the partners used Children's Centres as a core base for providing much of their training and events. The importance of providing childcare to enable women to access training is evident in the **Chanze, Ruhr**.

Training into non-traditional sectors Chanze, Ruhr

The Chanze Project, Ruhr, addressed primary barriers to learning for people who have been away from it for an extended period. It offered opportunities for both males and females in fields such as energy, chemistry and the IT sector via training that leads to placements and then paid employment through the attainment of new qualifications. Access is made more attractive by providing childcare and classes on confidence, self-esteem and belief issues. The counselling is offered at employment centres. Chanze has set up a new qualification called "New Energy" which started in May 2006 with two trainees. A problem so far has been that there are only few women that meet the requirements to get onto the course. A second course especially for women working in the offices of private businesses (with electricians, plumbers, etc.) has also been developed. The project's aim is to give the women qualifications in modern energy systems.

When **Agender** developed training programmes for women for non-traditional areas of work it organised these on a 'women-only' basis. For women from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds and for some communities – this type of 'women's only' set-up is a pre-requisite to them accessing training.

Women-only Training Agender, Birmingham

The Agender Project undertook training with women in non-traditional areas such as forklift trucks, horticulture, sports coaching and film-making. Many of the trainees have commented on how the fact that the classes were female only encouraged them to access the courses as they felt more comfortable. Within the sports coaching programme, Rossina Dyer states that:

“ Having women providers has helped other women to believe they can achieve and feel comfortable. Having all women is quite important to bring people out of themselves.”

5.2. Maximising Capabilities and Capacities

This theme evidently overlaps with the previous one in terms of trying to provide clearly targeted programmes. This is particularly important when projects try to break into new ground and help women find jobs in sectors of the economy which have been a traditional male preserve. **Igualem, Catalonia** undertook an extensive project across many sectors which indicated that progress can be made.

Training courses for women in non traditional jobs, Igualem

The Igualem project, Catalonia has developed courses in order to engage women in jobs where they are underrepresented like construction, plumbing, logistics and metallurgy. The project has also included a section within each course on 'transversal competencies' where they work with the women on themes like: 'how can I organise my personal and professional life?', 'positives attitudes for working in a male sector', 'increasing self-esteem', 'making the most of their own background and daily knowledge' and 'knowing the local labour market and its rules.' The work on competencies is considered an effective approach to understanding the lives of the women and aids providers in devising courses to best suit the user's needs. All the courses have two phases - a theoretical one, where women are taught a profession and the practical work-placement - where women develop their apprenticeships in companies. In 2006, 179 women went on Igualem training courses and after training, 38 women gained employment in traditionally male sectors:

Male sectors: 9	Women working
Construction	13
Metal	9
Logistics	5
Transports	3
Plastics and rubber	2
Wine and 'cava'	2
Business services	2
Production of electric material	1
Others	1

Wings also looked at areas of male under-representation. For example, **Agender, Birmingham** identified a shortage of males in Early Years professions. Therefore to increase capacity and maximise capabilities of unemployed men they have been working on getting men into childcare in conjunction with national children's centres.

5.3. Utilising Information and Communication Technologies to Address Labour Market Disadvantage

The Lisbon Guidelines recognise the crucial importance of ICT to the future European economy by giving it a Guideline all to itself. Guideline 9 is headed "To facilitate the spread and effective use of ICT and build a fully inclusive information society." Guideline 19 calls for active measures to ensure inclusive labour markets including "job search assistance, guidance and training as part of personalised action plans."

There are signs from this study that ICT is being utilised widely to help women break down barriers in the labour market. Thus, **Chanze, Ruhr** have used ICT to develop women's skills.

On-line chemical Academy, Chanze Ruhr

The project has created the Emscher Lippe on-line chemical academy for women on maternity leave who want to develop a new career in the chemical industry. The women undertake distance learning at home in chemistry and related sciences, complemented by attending college once a week. The project is supported by the chemical industry employers who are anxious to bring potential new entrants into their industry

Chanze has also been involved in supporting women directly into the IT sector for employment – for example, they have worked with women returners training them in graphic design with specific modules aimed at getting women to stay in the labour market. A related example comes from within the **Agender project, Birmingham**. Women have been encouraged to undertake training in film-making. Within the course provided, which links with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), stereotypes are challenged and women are trained in editing film, directing and producing. The course comes with a placement in industry and some beneficiaries have talked about how their new learning has led them to enquire about media degrees at university.

There have also been initiatives where ICT has been used to help women to assess their potential to break into new areas of the job market.

A self diagnosis IT tool to analyse capacity for new jobs, Igualem

Igualem, Catalonia have developed a self-diagnosis tool for both women and men to facilitate self- analysis of their own capabilities for certain jobs, for example, that of a plumber. It is an IT tool and gives the beneficiaries an orientation related with the labour market and their personal situation, especially family commitments, motivation and others. The subjects covered in the self diagnosis tool with different everyday questions are: work-life balance, believing in the successful possibilities, challenge management and the labour market in a gender vision. In 2006, 40 people tested the self diagnosis tool: 20 men and 20 women in order to check all the questions and the usability of it. The pilot found that the self diagnosis tool was an easy to use tool for giving the minimum individual information about new possibilities of employability.

Transnationally, the **Wings partnership** has used ICT to spread its message on women's capacity in the labour market. It has developed both a '**living library**' website and **DVDs** on working with employers in gender mainstreaming and women in non-traditional employment. The 'living library' is a repository for all the unpublished research / papers produced under this

ESF EQUAL funded project. It is envisaged that this e-library will enable the information to be available beyond the life of the project and continue to grow as associated literature, from future related projects, is deposited here. All four WINGS partners support the product. DVDs produced by the transnational partnership include first hand visual case-studies for potential users and providers to see the benefits there are to gain by opening their minds and doors to gender mainstreaming.

5.4. Encouraging Women into Business

Guideline 17 sets the overall average employment rate for women across Europe for 2010 at 60%. Currently, it stands at 56.3%. Guideline 18 wants *“to promote a life-cycle approach to work ...with resolute action to increase female participation”* while ensuring *“a better reconciliation of work and private life.”*

Two of the partners have undertaken interesting activity in this field. The **Agender project, Birmingham**, UK has successfully managed to encourage women to access and undertake training in typically non-traditional sectors such horticulture, sports coaching, media, construction, ICT and transport. Much of these training courses come with hands-on placements. Many of these women are returners to work after a long maternity break or long term-unemployment due to a variety of reasons including self-confidence or absence of effective career advice. This activity leads on occasion to women wanting to set up their own business. One woman who has undertaken sports-coaching training now plans to

“ get a community regeneration NGO running that gets you hooked in by using sports...but alongside some other things like confidence and self-reflection...but essentially sports as a medium...I'd focus on my community...the young and women”

Supporting small female businesses is another strand of activity.

Female-run chauffeur company, Agender, Birmingham

'Lady Penelope's Cars' is a company based in Birmingham **Agender** who are highlighted as a partner of good practice as they are female run and actively employ females; working on a flexitime basis with work-life-balance at their core.

Within Italy, **Tramas**, undertook an entrepreneurship feasibility plan through the use of GOPP (Goal Oriented Project Planning). Alongside this they carried out an analysis of women's entrepreneurial competences as part of a personal-professional project. An operational tool addressed to teachers within vocational guidance and entrepreneurial training addressed to women is due to be produced. The Regional Agency within **Tramas** incorporates the female entrepreneurship observatory which offers a range of employment

services to women, while the Ifold project gives direct assistance to female entrepreneurs.

Assisting female entrepreneurs, Tramas, Italy

Ifold, Tramas DP is a training centre for women which specialises in assisting female entrepreneurs. Women are given grants to start up/finance their new or existing businesses. They also offer training and undertake research. Examples of businesses include an organic farm run by two sisters, who have been given a grant by Ifold and are now in a position to export to the UK. Another is of a female photographer who has also been given funds by Ifold.

5.5. Challenging the Barriers to Women.

Boosting female economic activity is a crucial component of meeting the overarching Lisbon goals. Herein lies one of the largest reserves of potential labour available to the EU. The success of the Nordic countries in meeting these goals is reflected in their high female participation rates. Guideline 18 states the task clearly. It calls for “resolute action to increase female participation and reduce gender gaps in employment...”

The WINGS transnational DP focussed on non-traditional employment as a central target. The issue of the diversification of female employment, so that women are able to access jobs across the whole employment spectrum is crucial to hitting the 2010 target. It is a question of both breadth and depth, women being able to reach outwards into non-traditional areas of employment and to reach upwards into senior positions and thereby break the glass ceiling. These are two vital issues if the Lisbon employment goals of a 60% female participation rate are to be achieved and sustained. If women remain corralled within a limited range of jobs and if their promotion opportunities are restricted, then the EU will not maximise female employment potential.

The Wings partnership has addressed this issue. Its **trans-national DVD project** on different employers taking on women in the non-traditional sector presents a film with one example from each partner. The film centres on three careers that until recently have been exclusively the province of men. Today farsighted employers are reaping the benefits of being less gender specific when selecting their employees from female as well as male applicants. Women working across industrial, commercial and service fields are all bringing additional benefits with them to the work environment. The DVD includes a **fire fighter (Agender)** whose assets are her strength and dexterity, the **chimney sweep (Chanze)** whose customers are relaxed with her presence in their homes and the **tiler (Igualem)** whose dedication and commitment to her company will repay their confidence in her throughout her working life. The following quotes from employers exemplify the kind of learning and benefits employers are gaining from ignoring stereotypes and embracing women in non-traditional employment:

Mr Beck is the owner of a chimney sweep company in the Ruhr, Germany. He states that: *“Time and again, I’ve observed that my customers respond well to a woman wanting to learn this job. So far I’ve only ever heard positive comments, and I have never heard negative ones about me having a female apprentice and a female journeyman...I started with one female apprentice who I accepted because, during the job interview, she left a very resolute, self-assured and positive impression. And during that talk I had the feeling that she is a young lady who can do it, she wants to become a chimney sweep and Franziska will make it, she is now in her third year. When I suddenly was without an employee, I needed a new journeyman and the chance offered itself to take on a female one. So now I have a female apprentice and a journeywoman...”*

Blautech, a swimming pool tiling company based in **Catalonia**, Spain state that,
“It is not a question of a woman being able to carry a sack of cement or not, whether she can lay tiles or not, or carry out a task that does not require strength. It is simply because women have not participated in these tasks because men have always done them... We are now more responsible, more aware of the gender perspective and I believe that the company’s image has also improved. We do not feel that this fund (specifically to train women) is an expense, but rather an investment. Over the long term, we will see whether we are proven right. We’re sure that we will be.”

Mr Swift, a recruitment manager of the Fire Service in Birmingham, UK finds that,
“If you have a greater diverse workforce it brings in a lot more experience, different aspects and different edges to the organisation... We, as an organisation, want to represent the community that we actually serve, and being able to do that we need to have more women within the service.”

Within **Chanze**, Ruhr there are many examples of women qualifying and working as engineers within the fields of ‘New Energy’, ‘New Chemistry’ and ‘ICT’ – but again more needs to be done in helping women break the glass ceiling when going into existing companies – as is the case across many of the WINGS non-traditional projects. Also more could be done in addressing the attitudes of male employees towards having a female working alongside them to better understand equal opportunities and the need to boost the economic activity of females.

Igualtem Catalonia worked with job centres and educational institutions to encourage females who are unemployed to access work-based training which they would never have thought they could do. These tend to fall into two key sectors: electrical and metallurgical industry. Women talk about how their fears of working in a male-dominated field have been allayed due to confidence boosting, adequate training, empathetic employers and colleagues. Across the WINGS transnational project however the need for guaranteed childcare facilities is often a barrier to women continuing in training.

The benefits women bring to non-traditional jobs are multifaceted and they are not without a commercial imperative. The reasons for seeking to encourage women into the traditionally male workforce are not ones of political correctness. Adding women into previously masculine industrial situations brings added value, additional markets and benefits to that environment. Employing and training women makes financial sense. Employing and training women encourages growth in productivity and encourages healthy competition. And employing and training women offers payback by way of enhanced public perception and improved relationships with customers and the public. Women working in traditionally male sectors is a positive development for women as well as employers. For women, it provides new opportunities in jobs that are better paid with better future opportunities.

Yet obstacles still remain to gender mainstreaming. Wings partners looked at this issue. **Chanze Ruhr** collected gender monitoring data to produce a regional gender-sensitive planning instrument, a tool for regional planning that can be used by local policy makers and labour market experts. Transnationally, the partners worked on the WINGS booklet. This has been driven forward by **Tramas**, Italy. The product includes two case studies of women breaking stereotypes from each country (a total of eight). It identifies gender stereotypes, showcases good practice across Europe and aims to influence service providers and funding bodies.

5.6. Working with Employers and developing corporate social responsibility

Investing in training and embracing the opportunities women offer the world of work today will pay dividends tomorrow. Being at the forefront is always the better place to be. Initiatives across Europe have been put into place to ease the financial outlay of additional training and other associated costs of increasing the female workforce. Award schemes offer recognition and further encouragement to bolster the word-of-mouth. In the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs 2005-2008 the European Council recommended that Member States should “*encourage enterprises in developing their corporate social responsibility.*” Guideline 21 makes the case for “innovative and adaptable forms of work organisation with a view to improving quality and productivity at work.” This is the hard-edged business case for corporate social responsibility.

Within the WINGS project, a transnational product in the shape of a **new awards category in local business awards** has meant that the area of gender mainstreaming has been celebrated. Each partner country (except Italy) has devised a strand related to gender mainstreaming for their local award scheme for 2007 and beyond. In **Birmingham, Agender**, this has been the **Birmingham Best Business Awards**.

Birmingham Best Business Awards

In February 2007 a new category was introduced to the annual Birmingham Best Business Awards: "What has your company done to promote non-traditional gender roles in your workplace?" 'Teamworks Go-Karting' won the award. Now, Agender are working with the same awards to get the same strand included in the 2007/2008 awards. At the award ceremony, 300-400 businesses were present and Agender had a slot on stage to highlight the EQUAL WINGS project and what gender mainstreaming could do for employers.

Within **Catalonia (Spain), Igualem** have their own award scheme which they are developing around equality. They are going to include non-traditional employment within this. In **Chanze, Ruhr**, there are no local awards schemes for employers, so the partners are working with a national business awards scheme to get a similar strand to that of Agender's included.

Examples of close working with employers are evident from examples in previous sections. One example comes from **Igualem** where Blautech devised an equality plan where the firm identified gaps in their labour supply and started to train up women and offer them employment.

5.7. Managing Labour Flows within the European Single Market

At this stage this has not been an area taken up to any extent by the four partners within the WINGS development partnership.

5.8. The Role of Support Frameworks and Networks

Bringing together people and intermediary organisations has helped strengthen their joint capacity to promote their particular client or interest area. Yet there is no organisational component within the Lisbon Guidelines on this.

The existence of the WINGS project has brought together groupings with common interests that did not previously exist. It has frequently linked up partners beyond their immediate local administrative boundaries. For example, **Igualem, Catalonia** brought together fifteen partners across four local authorities. **The ChanZe DP, Ruhr** linked up twelve separate cities and municipalities in the Emscher Lippe region of the Ruhr along with seven other

partners. **Tramas, Italy** brought together municipalities, employment services, committees on equal opportunities and women's organisations.

Another dimension of this networking has been the trans-national dimension. Participants have learned by seeing, meeting and discussing. As Lisa Meyer, **ChanZe DP, Ruhr (Wings)** put it

“we've learned how others do it... in the UK and in Spain, how they work more closely with employers and SMEs than we do in Germany.”

And by working together, partners have developed new products and innovative ideas. For a Single Market to function well it is important that citizens and employees feel comfortable.

6. Conclusions: The Key Messages for Policy Makers

The purpose of trans-national programmes such as Equal is gain greater understanding of the realities of the contemporary European labour market; to allow experimentation to occur; and test out potential new developments that if applied more widely will help the EU to meet the goals set in its Lisbon guidelines. Learning from the project should influence understanding of different communities and processes of working and make ESF programming for 2007-2013 even more effective. This policy paper is designed to contribute to that process.

Over the past four decades significant progress has been made concerning the status of women and their relations to men in main areas such as education, social and employment policies and balanced participation in the decision-making process (Spidla, February 2005). The European Union (EU) has contributed significantly by its policy-making, project initiatives and legislation to these developments. However, many challenges still have to be met despite this substantial progress. The areas of gender pay gaps, reconciliation between work and private life and the position of migrant women are just three examples of major issues that remain to be tackled.

The following evidence-based policy conclusions are drawn from the experiences of partners within the WINGS programme.

6.1 Breaking down barriers to women in training and employment

Wings has demonstrated the huge potential that exists for increasing female participation in employment and extending the areas where women can work. To maximise this potential policy-makers should:

- **Focus on women's needs when it comes to training and employment.**
- **Recognise on occasion the need for women only initiatives**
- **Acknowledge that easy access to childcare remains a priority**
- **Design special programmes to help women to break into traditional male preserves**

- **Support men working in sectors traditionally dominated by women.**
- **Recognise that further barriers to women's engagement in work can occur after successful training.** Addressing barriers to training in non-traditional areas does not mean that barriers to employment have been addressed. Self-esteem, cultural, language and religious issues need to be considered and addressed in relation to this. Part of the reason for this phenomenon may be that up till now many women have accessed training provided predominantly *by women for women*, but the world of work is different. These women need adequate support in working with men – especially in workplaces where men predominate. A suggestion could be to also undertake some explorative work on attitudes and beliefs with the male relatives of trainees who may be possibly influencing these women's' decisions to not work.

6.2 Working with Employers

Most of the successful initiatives have arisen from close collaboration with employers.

- Companies need to be continuously encouraged and celebrated for employing females within their staff, especially in the non-traditional sector. This support could be in the form of **reward/award incentives**.
- Work has to be undertaken to address the **glass ceilings** women hit within organisations– in terms of pay, employment contract and seniority.

6.3 Entrepreneurship

- Policy makers should recognise the **potential for self-employment**. With women this means taking careful account of the need to tailor initiatives to fit in with potential domestic and caring responsibilities.
- **Start-up funds** should also be made more readily available to women in order to encourage the trend of creative self-employment. The pre-requisite is that a robust business plan is firstly developed and presented.

6.4 Utilising ICT to Combat Labour Market Disadvantage

The Wings initiative has made extensive use of ICT in both its individual projects and joint activity. Policy-makers should recognise:

- The potential of **inter-active tools** for the purposes of self-diagnosis, updating skills and encouraging new learning.
- The role of new technology in promoting the cultural changes that are required if women's full potential in the labour market is to be achieved. Thus, it is important to **update and sustain IT based products** emerging from the DP like the Living Library website and DVDs.

6.5 Funding

- **Make full use of the new European Social Fund (ESF) programmes.** For the 2007-2013 period the EU has decided that the pilot programmes that it ran during the 2000-2006 period designed to tackle specific issues of disadvantage such as EQUAL should be mainstreamed within the core Structural Fund programmes financed by the EU. This primarily means ESF. All parts of the Union are eligible for ESF and during 2007-2013 there will be national ESF programmes in each Member State. Gender equality has to play a large part in this as the ESF guidelines specify incorporating gender mainstreaming into ESF priorities and supporting specific actions aimed at getting women into employment and sustaining them there.

6.6 Support Frameworks and Networks

- **Network groups need to be promoted more within the field of gender equality.** This currently needs strengthening both in practice and in policy. Women should be enabled to self-organise so they can cater to their own priorities in their own way. This way both practice and policy will be influenced from the ground.

6.7. Sustainability in employment

Female engagement in the labour market has to be actively promoted and sustained. Policy-makers should consider:

- **Incentives to women returning to work after a long term reliance on benefits** to motivate and sustain them in employment. These need to be well-planned and tailor made to suit the needs of the community. For example, a guaranteed crèche facility, flexible working or even part recompense for childcare costs.
- Initiatives which address **male attitudes** within the world of work to women as equal colleagues. Discrimination and harassment act as real disincentives to the female workforce.

Sophia Bokhari and Jon Bloomfield, 07/03/08

Appendix A

National Initiatives set up to Fight the Gender Pay Gap

BE	<p>Guidebook on job classification available for employers and trade unions to avoid and eliminate gender bias in pay systems (2006)</p> <p>Equal Pay Day established, with the aim of raising awareness of the public about the persistence of gender wage inequality.</p> <p>2006 decision by the federal government to establish an annual report monitoring progress in reducing the gender pay gap. First report published in March 2007.</p>
EL	<p>Guide for the integration of gender equality in firms, including equal pay for work of equal value, with recommendations to public administration and social partners.</p>
ES	<p>Spain adopted in March 2007 a new gender equality law that notably includes provisions on fighting discrimination, allowing positive action measures in collective agreements, encouraging reconciliation of work and family life, promoting equality plans and fostering good practices (1)</p>
FR	<p>Law on equality of remuneration between men and women (March 2006) strengthening women's rights in respect of maternity leave; obligation for enterprises to take steps to close the gender pay gap by 31 December 2010 and to provide for catch up salary payments to be made following maternity or adoption leave. Obligation of gender pay bargaining in companies and sectors.</p>
HU	<p>Law aimed at promoting voluntary regulation on equal opportunities; Equal Opportunity Plan (EOP) to be adopted by public employers and private employers with State-owned share over 50% for each year.</p>
IT	<p>Obligation for public and private firms employing more than 100 employees to provide statistical information on the employment conditions of their employees broken down by gender every two years (1991 Law on Positive Actions; Article 9, Act 125/1991). Companies to give the report to local equality advisors and trade unions.</p>
LU	<p>Obligation for social partners to bargain on equal pay (law of June 2004). Collective bargaining has to include a provision concerning the implementation of the principle of equal pay between men and women.</p>
NL	<p>Equal pay working group (2005) established, bringing together organisations relevant to equal pay – employees and employers organisations, the Equal Treatment Commission, the Dutch Human Resources Policy Association and the Dutch Association for Employee Participation.</p>
PT	<p>Obligation for all employers to display in November in a visible place for a period of at least 30 days, the list of their staff indicating each employee's earnings (Law N° 35/2004, of 29 July, Articles 452 to 457 and 490), with the exception of central, regional and local administrations, public institutes and other collective public entities, as well as employers of domestic service workers</p> <p>Training on gender equality for judges and other agents involved in the process of</p>

	justice administration, promoted by the Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment
SE	Equal Opportunities Act provides that all employers with a minimum of ten employees are required to prepare an annual equal opportunities plan as well as a plan of action for equal pay.
UK	Equality Act (2006) places a statutory duty on all public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

Source: "Gender Pay Gap – Origins and policy responses", Group of Experts on Gender, Social Inclusion and Employment, 2006

(1) Added after the completion of the report.