

# Pay Equity: Training and Awareness Raising

This paper is the fifth of eight features for EI's campaign "Pay Equity Now".

Please feel free to contribute to EI's campaign "Pay Equity Now" by sending your opinions, research, links and campaign material to [equality@ei-ie.org](mailto:equality@ei-ie.org)!

## **Abstract**

*This feature provides a model for a short and compact introduction to the issue of pay equity and the gender wage gap for trade unions to use in their seminars and meetings. The manual is targeted at newcomers with little or no knowledge about the topic.*

## **1. Introduction**

The gender pay gap measures the earning differences between women and men in paid employment in the labour market. It is one of the many indicators of gender inequality used when examining labour market participation in a country in terms of gender. The gender pay gap occurs as a result of direct and indirect discrimination, which are often deeply embedded in our everyday life and thus difficult to address by appropriate actions.

Direct discrimination occurs when jobs which are the same or broadly similar in terms of skills, responsibility or value to the employer, are paid differently depending on the worker's gender. One example would be when a male headteacher receives a higher placement on the salary scale than his female counterpart because his previous management experiences are overrated in contrast to the female teacher's know-how. If there is no factual difference between the qualifications and experiences of the two headteachers except their gender, then it is a case of direct discrimination.

Indirect discrimination occurs when it is the result of a set of circumstances not directly planned to discriminate but which have the effect of disadvantaging some groups. Gender-specific employment segregation plays an important role in women's labour market participation. This means that women are inclined to work in occupations associated with stereotypically feminine skills which are less prestigious and less well paid than sectors which are related to masculine skills. The specific sectors in which women employees are the vast majority – secretaries, teachers and nurses – are typically undervalued, with low salaries in relation to skill levels, poor career prospects and low social status.

## **2. Trade Unions' Role in Combating the Gender Pay Gap**

As teaching is a profession dominated by women, women outnumber men in teacher unions' membership in most regions. Data gathered from Education International's member organisations

shows a stable global average of about 60% female members over the past 15 years. However the proportion of women in the national executive boards of these unions is only 40% on average, while only 25% of union presidents are women (EI 2010).

One precondition for establishing an effective pay equity campaign is awareness-raising and training on gender equality among the union officials themselves. Historically trade union culture has been predominantly “male”, as reflected for instance in the scheduling of meetings, style of meetings, trade union jargon, male networks etc... Building the intellectual capacity to fight for pay equity is a crucial step towards more gender equality in the trade unions as well as the working environment. The following guidelines are a useful tool for delivering the core ideas of pay equity:

### **3. Course – basic conditions:**

This course is designed to provide a brief overview of the key aspects of pay equity. It takes about two hours and can easily be held within the framework of a general meeting or a union panel. For a more extended version (a workshop of about six hours) please take a look at the EI Pay Equity Manual. For further information about the various topics addressed in this model, please consult our features (available on [www.ei-ie.org/payequitynow](http://www.ei-ie.org/payequitynow)). Please contact EI to order EI Pay Equity Now Leaflets.

#### 3.1. Course aim

To build trade union capacity to achieve pay equity and end gender wage discrimination by raising awareness among the members, as well as preparing the ground for further expertise.

After the course participants will:

- have a clear concept of the definition of pay equity
- know more about the different aspects that pay inequity encompasses
- have a broad perspective of the reasons for the gender wage gap
- be able to consider the unions' role in the struggle for pay equity
- be able to advocate for pay equity

#### 3.2. Target group

This training material is targeted at participants with little or no knowledge about the complex issue of pay equity, so it is mainly intended for beginners. It is designed to stimulate debate, discussion and awareness among union members and officials by providing basic information about the gender pay gap.

### 3.3. Design

Activity & Notes	Method	Time
<p><b>Introduction</b>            Most people are familiar with equal pay and what that means. The term pay equity is not as well understood. Originally, pay equity referred to equal pay for equal work. However, when institutions and social partners started to implement pay equity policies they were confronted with the problem that many jobs were not identical and required different sets of tasks. So the definition was broadened to equal pay for work of comparable worth for jobs that are not exactly identical. (ILO 2003) Many players (institutions, governments, trade unions, employers federations, women’s organisations, etc.) have shaped the definition of pay equity to fit their specific interests.</p> <p><b>Pay equity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognises and acts to end discrimination in the pay and employment conditions of women</li> <li>• recognises that the jobs done by a majority of women are often paid less than jobs done by a majority of men</li> <li>• goes beyond equal pay and requires that pay should be given equally to jobs of equal value.</li> </ul> <p><b>Gender Pay Gap</b>            Women generally earn between 50% and 80% of men’s pay. Women are less likely than men to be paid overtime, receive bonuses or additional payments. Many women are in part time and casual work, which often implies lower total pay. This is also true in education and public services. The cumulative impact of low pay during a woman’s working life impacts on her ability to support her family and disadvantages her in old age.</p>	Input	15 min
<p><b>Identify causes for the pay gap</b></p> <p><b>Question:</b> Which reasons can be identified for the persistence of the gender pay gap?</p> <p><i>After the small groups have finished, collect the reasons in plenary and cluster them into two main categories:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>direct gender discrimination</i></li> <li>- <i>occupational sex segregation</i></li> </ul>	Small groups	20 min
<p><b>Two main reasons for the pay gap:</b></p> <p>Generally two main reasons for the pay gap can be identified (UNDP 2006): <i>Direct gender discrimination</i> in labour markets and occupational segregation. Direct discrimination occurs when people who have the same level of educational attainment and work experience are treated</p>	Input	5 min

<p>differently because of their gender: different pay levels for the same work or different job requirements for the same pay level.</p> <p><i>Occupational gender segregation:</i> the varied discriminations are more subtle as well as more delicate to address with specific actions The specific sectors in which female employees are the vast majority – secretaries, teachers and nurses – also are poorly paid occupations, and even within these jobs women are paid less than their male colleagues.</p>		
<p><b>The Importance of pay equity</b></p> <p><b>Question:</b> Why is pay equity important?</p> <p><i>Collect, visualise and discuss the importance of pay equity in plenary.</i></p> <p><u>1. Pay equity improves workplace climate and productivity</u> People faced with discrimination suffer from stress, low self-esteem and lack of motivation. This not only affects the climate of the workplace in a demoralising way but also has negative consequences for productivity as a whole. A fairly treated, thus motivated workforce leads to improved performance.</p> <p><u>2. Pay equity enhances the value of the work of men and women</u> Not only women benefit from efforts to end pay inequity. By the constant levelling down of wages a downward spiral is set in motion that imposes pressure on the workforce as a whole. Furthermore, men working in female dominated occupations also experience pay discrimination.</p> <p><u>3. Pay equity is a basic human right</u> The UN Declaration of Human Rights states: “Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.” (UN 1948 article 23.2.) Pay equity is a matter of fairness. When women are paid less than men for comparable work, women have fewer resources to support themselves and their families and consequently their freedom of work choice is limited. Pay equity enforces freedom, dignity and the well-being of individuals and leads to the empowerment of women.</p> <p><u>4. Pay equity is closely linked to poverty reduction</u> Lack of pay equity can generate poverty and social fragmentation which seriously compromises economic growth and development. Discrimination in employment causes poverty while poverty furthers discrimination at work in a vicious circle. (ILO 2003:27) In particular, the low pay in female dominated jobs strongly affects consumption habits.</p> <p><u>5. Pay equity benefits families and communities</u> Lack of pay equity has a heavy impact not only on women, but also on the social context they are embedded in, impoverishing children, families and communities. Furthermore, the unequal contribution to the family income reinforces traditional gender roles: Many men who might want to spend more time with their children and families are prevented from doing so, being forced to bridge the financial gap.</p>	<p>Brain- storming in plenary</p>	<p>20 min</p>

<p><b>Trade Union and pay equity</b></p> <p><b>Question:</b> How can our trade union contribute to the struggle for pay equity?</p> <p><i>Form small groups and ask them to collect ideas for campaigning against the gender pay gap.</i></p> <p>Here are some additional ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use the internet: Collect information and data as well as useful advice for workers affected by pay inequity and put them on your webpage</li> <li>- Improve the quality and quantity of data on salaries and make it publicly accessible</li> <li>- Include pay equity in collective bargaining</li> <li>- Update the information on pay equity and distribute it among relevant target groups.</li> <li>- Go public: Raise awareness for pay equity by street action, collecting signatures for protest letters, the distribution of newsletters, reports in the union's magazines etc.</li> <li>- Implement training to sensitise trade union workers, teachers and government representatives to the issue of pay equity and proactive measures against discrimination.</li> <li>- Improve the position of women in decision-making in trade unions.</li> <li>- Support minimum wages that provide a decent quality of life.</li> <li>- Prepare legislation or develop more effective procedures for already existing regulations.</li> <li>- Push the ratification and implementation of international instruments on anti-discrimination and pay equity.</li> <li>- Advocate for qualified professional teachers, both male and female, and fair salaries as a core principle of modern public services.</li> </ul>	<p>Small groups &amp; presentation</p>	<p>45 min</p>
<p><b>Summing up</b></p> <p><b>Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What was new for me?</li> <li>- What did I get out of this course for my daily political action?</li> <li>- What would further interest me? Where would I like to deepen my knowledge?</li> </ul> <p><i>Ask every participant</i></p>	<p>individual answers</p>	<p>10 min</p>