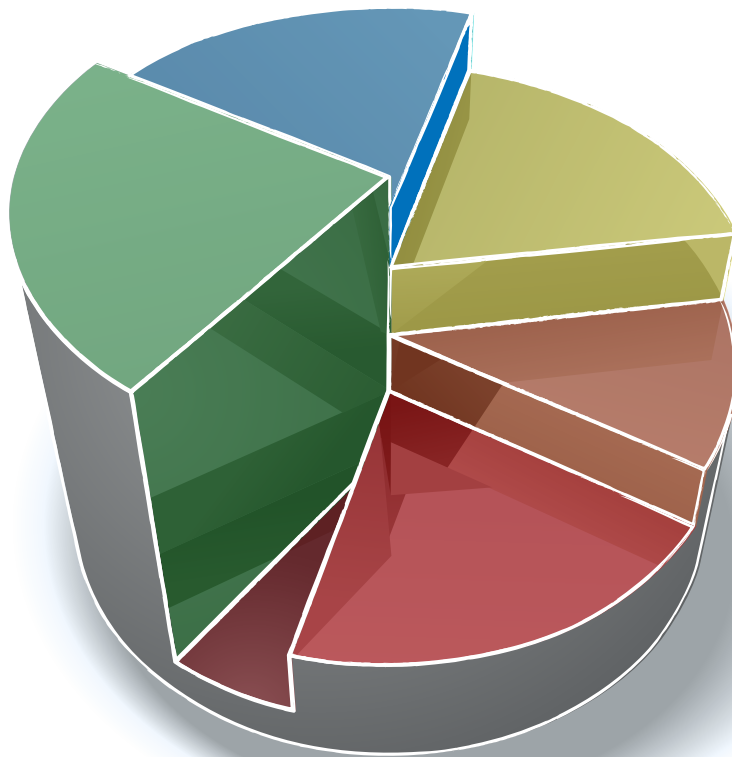


**On the move for Equality**  
First World Women's Conference  
**Objectif Egalité**  
Première conférence mondiale des femmes  
**En camino hacia la igualdad**  
Primera Conferencia Mundial de la Mujer

# *Quadrennial Report on the Status of Women in Unions, Education and Society*

*Draft version*



Education International  
Internationale de l'Éducation  
Internacional de la Educación



## Contents

A. Introduction .....	2
1. Aim and Context of this Report .....	2
2. Method .....	3
3. Response Rate.....	4
B. Gender Equality in the Unions .....	5
1. Benefits from and Obstacles to Equality in Trade Unions .....	5
2. Representation of Women in the Union Membership and Leadership .....	5
3. Mechanisms for Gender Equality in Unions .....	7
4. Gender Equality Policies, Structures and Activities in Unions .....	9
C. Education of Girls and Women .....	12
1. The Role of Education for Gender Relations and Development.....	12
2. Access to Education .....	13
3. Gender Stereotypes in the Classroom .....	16
D. Gender Equality at Work, in Education Employment and in Society.....	19
1. Women’s Rights and Gender Equality .....	19
2. Gender: The “hidden dimension” of the MDGs.....	21
3. Pay Inequity and Glass Ceiling for Women Teachers.....	28
E. Conclusions and Priorities for EI’s Work .....	32
1. Conclusions from the Data.....	32
2. Priority Issues and Activities .....	33
References .....	34

## A. Introduction

### 1. Aim and Context of this Report

#### **EI Policy Declaration on Women in Education and Teachers' Organizations, 1995:**

37.c. "EI should draw up a report for each ordinary congress on the progress made in each country and each member organisation, particularly with respect to participation by women in responsibilities and decision-making."

This report presents the results of a survey conducted by Education International in 2009/2010 among its member organisations. It constitutes a key part of the Report on the Status of Women in Unions, Education and Society to the Sixth EI World Congress in 2011.

The report begins with an analysis of gender equality within EI's member organisations (part B): What is the status of women's representation in teacher union membership and leadership and which tools do unions use to increase women's representation? Which issues are high on their priority lists? The aim is to provide a current picture on the status of women's participation in their unions.

The report continues with unions' perceptions of gender inequalities in education systems and societies (parts C, D): What are the main obstacles for gender equality for teachers, students and in society? Which achievements have been made, and where is more effort needed? The aim of these chapters is to give an impression of gender equality in education and society, seen through the eyes of teacher unions across the world. The report further outlines unions' suggestions on which priority issues and activities EI should focus on in its work on gender equality in the coming years (part E).

All through the report, the intention is not only to provide answers, but also to raise questions for discussion and suggest areas for further research. Both EI's First World Women's Conference "On the Move for Equality", as well as the Women's Caucus preceding the 6<sup>th</sup> EI World Congress will serve as global discussion forums for this purpose. This report is therefore not the end of a process, but a catalyst for a focused and ongoing discussion on gender equality in the work of EI and its members.

## 2. Method

This report is based on the responses of EI's member organisations to a questionnaire between July 2009 and January 2010. The coordination and communication with member organisations from Europe and North America was administered by the EI Headquarters, while in Asia-Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, EI Regional Offices were in charge of coordinating the survey responses. The EI Status of Women Committee had decided to administer the survey regionally, thus providing more time for unions to complete the survey, and embedding it in the regional equality agendas. This aimed at raising the response rate of the survey, and proved successful.

Compared with questionnaires from previous years (1995, 1998, 2001, 2004 and 2007), while the main questions and the general direction are still the same, this questionnaire was by far the longest and most detailed, containing around 350 questions. Additionally, the EI Regional Offices had the chance to add region-specific questions. Three regions made use of this opportunity: Asia-Pacific, Europe and Latin America. The results of these questions will feature in the regional and sub-regional reports.

The data was analysed with SPSS, mostly using cross tabulation and simple correlations. The analysis aims at presenting a global picture and regional profiles. In some places, tests of significance were used in order to provide additional evidence for correlations. While they do help in identifying the relevance of patterns in the data, the results of the tests of significance have to be treated with caution: The response rate is high in comparison with surveys from previous years and other EI surveys; however, the data is still affected by a number of sampling biases, such as the unions' capacity or the priority they give to gender issues.

Where possible, the results of this survey are compared with the results of previous surveys. As some of the previous surveys had a very low response rate (and thus a much stronger effect of sampling biases), they sometimes cannot be regarded as representative, but only as rough indicators of a development.

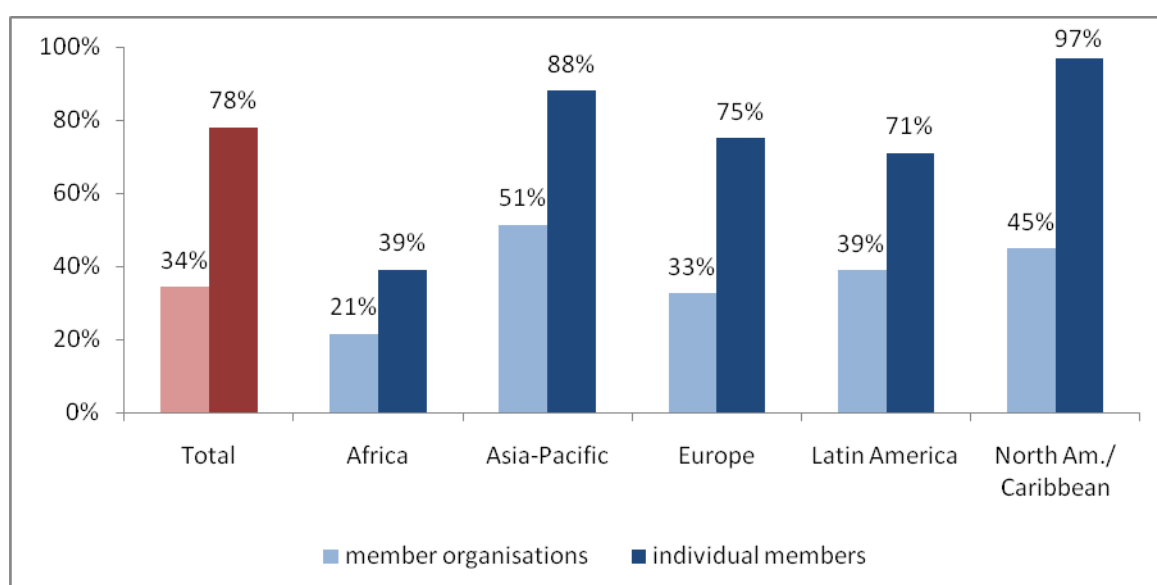
In 26 countries, more than one union responded from the same country. For some parts of the analysis it was necessary to select one union per country (parts C and D). The selection was based on how thoroughly the survey was completed, and on the representativeness of the unions. In many cases, unions from the same country gave different responses to the same question.

The results concerning gender equality in the unions (part B) can be regarded as highly valid, since they represent first hand information about EI's member organisations. The results from the other parts (C and D) have a different character: They are not factual description of the countries' realities. Instead, they represent teacher unions' analysis of their countries' education-, political- and social systems. As such, they give valuable insight into the unions' perception of the world. As in previous reports, a further comparison with data from other sources is necessary.

### 3. Response Rate

The finding in this report are highly representative for EI’s membership: 138 organisations from 95 different countries responded to the survey, representing 34% of EI’s member organisations (26 unions from Africa, 40 unions from Asia-Pacific, 45 unions from Europe, 14 unions from Latin America, 13 unions from North America/ Caribbean). While most corners of the globe are covered, responses are missing mainly from North Africa, Southern Africa and the Middle East.

Taking the size of member organisations into account, the responding organisations represent 78% of the total individual membership of EI. The following graph shows the response rate by region, with the light bars representing the percentage of responding organisations and the dark bars representing the percentage of individual membership. The percentage of individual members represented in this report is higher than the percentage of member organisations that responded to the survey, which leads to the conclusion that larger organisations rather responded to the survey than smaller ones.



Graph A-1: Response rate by region

With 138 organisations, this is the highest response rate in absolute numbers of all EI surveys on the status of women since their beginning in 1995. In relative numbers, the response rate of 34% was only topped in 1998, when 39% of EI member organisations responded to the survey:

	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007	2010
Absolute number of MOs	64	110	78	44	77	138
Percentage of MOs	24%	39%	25%	14%	18%	34%

Table 1-1: Response rate 1995-2010

In terms of education levels, primary and secondary education personnel is represented by most unions (over 80%); two thirds of the unions represent early childhood-, and half of the unions represent higher education personnel.

## B. Gender Equality in the Unions

### 1. Benefits from and Obstacles to Equality in Trade Unions

Data on women's representation in education unions, including data from previous EI surveys, consistently shows that women constitute the majority of the teaching force and the union membership, but they are underrepresented in the union leadership.

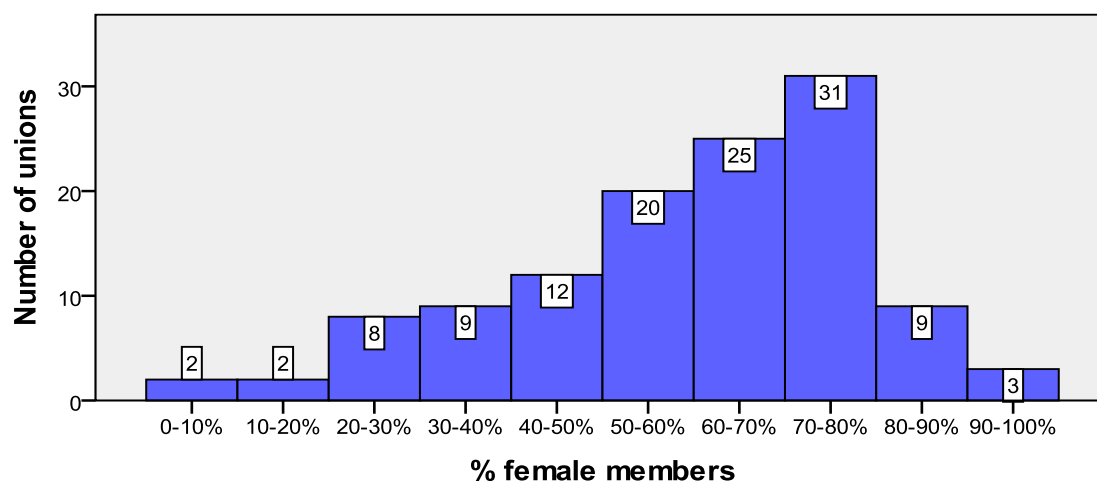
**Underrepresentation of women in unions is a global phenomenon.** A study by the International Labour Organisation (ILO 2008) analyses women's participation in social dialogue institutions at the national level in government delegations, employers' and workers' groups. Data from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean shows that women account for only 15% of total members in social dialogue institutions. The percentage of women in workers' groups is with 13% even lower than that of government delegations (19%); the lowest representation of women can be found in employers' groups (10%).

Trade unions, founded on the principles of equality, justice and solidarity, should be the most progressive in terms of gender equality.

### 2. Representation of Women in the Union Membership and Leadership

In the first part of the survey, unions were asked to describe their organisation in terms of gender-related aspects. Questions included the number of women in the union membership and leadership positions, as well as the existence of union structures for gender equality, policies and activities. Unions could provide additional information about gender equality mechanisms within their union and on union activities related to women's rights and gender equality.

**Women make up a majority of teacher union membership:** Almost two thirds of the unions that responded to this question have between 50 and 80% female members. The global average is 60% female members.



Graph B-1: Percentage of women in union membership (frequency distribution)

There are strong regional differences in the gender composition of union membership, reflecting the regional differences in the gender composition of the teaching profession (see part C.2):

- African teacher unions have the lowest percentage of female members (average 40%). Three quarters of African unions have fewer than 50% female members.
- Caribbean teacher unions have the highest percentage of female members (average 76%). Almost all Caribbean unions have over 70% female members.

In the other regions, the average of female members lies between 55 and 70%, but there is a great variety within the regions (minimum: 3%; maximum: 93%).

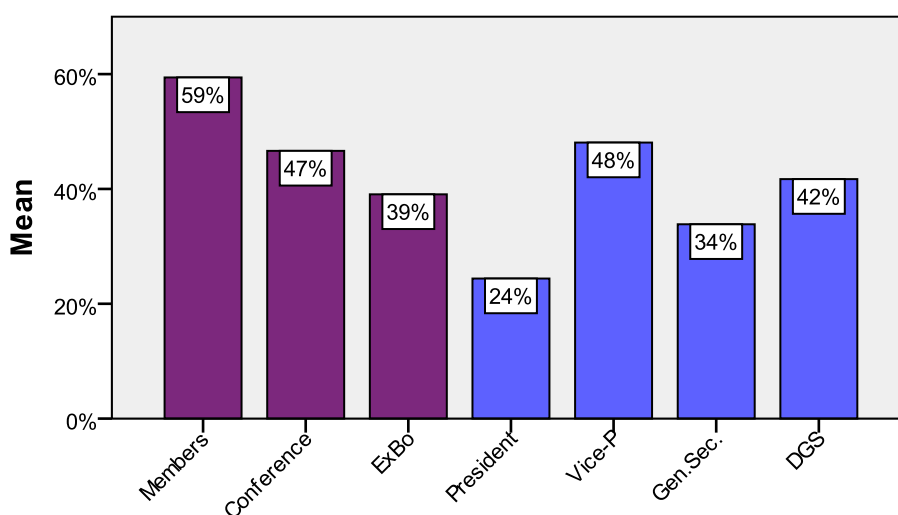
**While women represent the majority of union members in most regions, they are underrepresented in the union leadership. The higher the decision-making body, the lower is the percentage of women:** Globally, the percentage of women decreases from 60% in the membership to 50% in conference delegates and further to 40% in unions’ executive boards.

Except for 2004, this pattern has been shown by all surveys on the status of women that EI has conducted: The percentage of women in the union membership has always been above 50%, decreasing to around 50% of women at the conference, and further decreasing to under 40% women in the executive boards. The comparison shows that **the percentage of women in executive boards and in leadership positions is rising slowly and unsteadily.**

	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007	2010
% female members	66%	> 50%	63%	53%	> 50%	59%
% women at conference	43%	-	50%	54%	51%	47%
% women in executive board	35%	< 30%	25%	33%	46%	39%
% women in leadership	-	-	< 20%	21%	37%	36%

Table 2-1: Average percentage of women in unions’ decision-making bodies 1995-2010

**This pattern of “more power – fewer women” is visible in all regions** (exception: in North American unions the percentage of women in the executive board is higher than at the conference), and strongest in Africa and Latin America, where the percentage of women in the membership is twice as high as the percentage of women in executive boards.



Graph B-2: Average percentage of women in unions’ decision-making bodies

When it comes to leadership positions in EI’s member organisations, the data shows that **women are strongly underrepresented in the front line** (24% presidents, 34% general secretaries) and better



represented in the second row (48% vice-presidents, 42% deputy general secretaries), but even there, the percentage of women is under 50% and far lower than their proportion in the membership. There are regional differences:

- In Africa and North America, the proportion of female members is well reflected in presidents and vice-presidents, but women are underrepresented in general secretaries and deputy general secretaries.
- In the Caribbean, women are strongly underrepresented in general secretaries. The other positions more or less reflect the proportion of women in the union membership.
- In Europe, Latin America and Asia-Pacific, women are underrepresented in all high positions. In Europe that especially concerns general secretaries; in Latin America and Asia-Pacific especially presidents.

### **Do unions with a higher proportion of female members have more women in leadership**

**positions?** For presidents, general secretaries and deputy general secretaries, there is a weak, but significant correlation: The higher the proportion of female members, the more likely unions are to have a female president, general secretary and deputy general secretary. For vice-presidents, the data doesn't show a significant correlation<sup>1</sup>.

The pattern of “more power – fewer women” can also be observed when it comes to union staff: On average, half the staff are women, but there are fewer women in management (43%), and more women in administrative/ secretarial staff positions (62%). While in Europe, North America and the Caribbean there are more women in the total staff (around 65% as opposed to 40-55% in the other regions), the percentage of female employees is much higher in administrative staff (70-87%) than in management staff (45-55%).

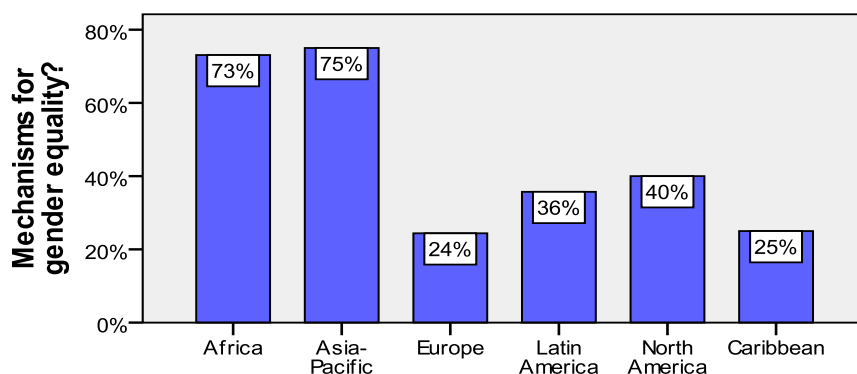
#### **Conclusions:**

- **Positions of more power – fewer women:** Women represent the majority of union members in most regions, but they are underrepresented in the union leadership. The higher the decision-making body, the lower is the percentage of women.
- **Slow, but uneven improvement:** Compared to previous years, the representation of women in union leadership positions is rising slowly and unsteadily.

## **3. Mechanisms for Gender Equality in Unions**

Are there mechanisms in place in the unions to ensure that women are represented in high decision-making positions/ bodies? Half of the unions confirm that such mechanisms exist in their union, but there are strong differences between the regions: In Africa and Asia-Pacific, three quarters of the unions have such mechanisms; in North America and Latin America around 40%, and in Europe and the Caribbean such mechanisms only exist in a quarter of the unions.

<sup>1</sup> Pres:  $R^2=.05$ ; sig=.021. GS:  $R^2=.08$ ; sig=.003. DGS:  $R^2=.08$ ; sig=.015. Vice-pres:  $R^2=.01$ ; sig=.267.



Graph B-3: Percentage of unions with gender equality mechanisms by region

Those mechanisms are generally quotas or reserved places for women. 41 unions mention these mechanisms, that is a third of all unions that responded to this question. A similar question was asked in previous surveys, and a comparison of the results shows that while in 1998, less than a quarter of unions affirmed that they reserve leadership positions for women in their union, this number seems to stabilise around 30%.

	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007	2010
Quotas, reserved places	-	23%	32%	26%	31%	31%

Table 2-2: Average percentage of unions with gender quotas 1995-2010

Quotas start at 20% women in leadership positions; mostly they secure a minimum of 30%; some unions have 50%-quotas. The quotas are applied for different decision-making bodies: Mostly executive boards (mentioned by 7 unions), representative positions and elected bodies (4 unions) or congresses (4 unions). Some unions have more specific regulations, for example that there has to be at least one, or more than one, woman as vice president (mentioned by 5 unions). In other cases, there are places reserved for the women's officer or gender equality committee in decision-making bodies (7 unions). Ten organisations explained that they don't have statutory mechanisms, but that a special effort is put into increasing the number of female members and their representation in decision-making positions. Those efforts include leadership trainings and mentoring programmes for female members, internal gender audits and gender mainstreaming procedures, as well as action plans and incentives to increase the number of women in the union leadership.

**Are those mechanisms effective?** The data shows that unions with gender equality mechanisms do not appear to have a better representation of women in high decision making positions and bodies. It is therefore not easy to answer the question whether those mechanisms are effective. Firstly, implementing structural change in an organisation can take a long time. It would therefore be necessary to know how long these mechanisms have already existed. Secondly, their effectiveness depends on the organisation's overall commitment to gender equality: If unions have gender equality mechanisms, they may just exist as a lip service in order to silence union members who fight for gender equality. If unions do not have those mechanisms, the reason could either be that gender equality is not on the union's agenda, or that women are already well represented in the leadership.

Conclusions:

- **Unclear effectiveness of gender equality mechanisms:** Half of the unions have mechanisms to ensure gender equality in high decision-making positions. But the data doesn't give a clear indication whether those mechanisms actually improve the gender balance in the union leadership.

## 4. Gender Equality Policies, Structures and Activities in Unions

**76% of the unions that responded to the survey have a committee dealing explicitly with women's rights and/ or gender equality;** in two thirds of these cases it's a women-only committee. In 80% of these unions, the gender committee is guaranteed by the union's constitution. The members are mostly elected (70%) rather than appointed. Whether unions have a gender committee is independent from the percentage of female union members<sup>2</sup>.

13% of the responding unions say that they are considering to establish a gender equality committee. Only 11% do not have a committee and are not planning to introduce one. These unions mainly come from North America and Europe: A fifth of the North American unions and a third of the European unions have no plans to create a gender committee.

There are also other structures for gender equality, such as a women's network (75% of unions) or a women's caucus (50% of unions). These structures often exist jointly: Almost half of the unions have all three structures (committee, network and caucus), and three quarters have at least two of these structures. 20% of the unions that responded to the survey do not have any of these structures in their organisation; that especially concerns European organisations, while many unions in Africa and Asia-Pacific indicate that they do have such structures.

Practically all unions have gender equality policies in their unions: they provide equal opportunities to women in all union related activities (over 90%), they have specific resolutions for gender equality (two thirds), reserve places for women in educational programmes and trainings (half the unions) or have a specific budget allocated for gender equality activities (half the unions). Caribbean unions do not seem to have many specific policies to ensure gender equality, as opposed to unions in Asia-Pacific and North America where those policies are abundant.

Over 90% of the unions carry out activities related to gender equality: networking with other unions or NGOs (over 80%), organising trainings on women's rights (three quarters), running campaigns (two thirds) and preparing research on gender issues (two thirds). Those activities are scarce in Caribbean unions, but they seem to play an important role for unions in Africa and Asia-Pacific.

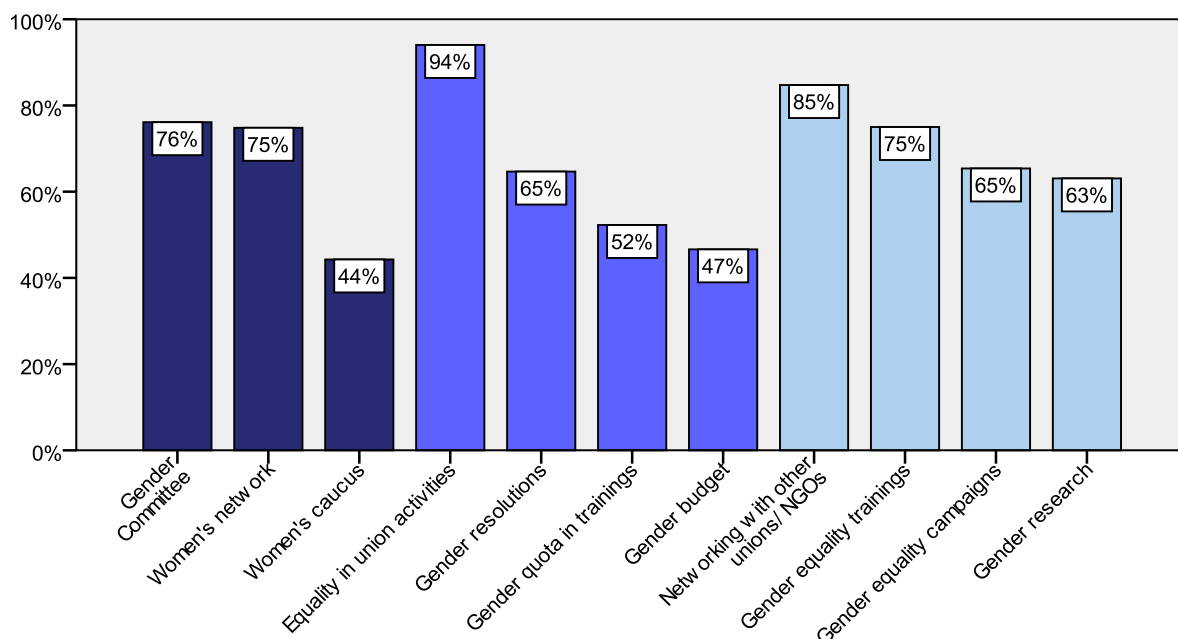
**All in all, policies, activities and structures for gender equality are quite widespread among EI's membership.** Unions in Asia-Pacific and Africa appear to be more active on gender equality than unions in other regions – the lowest intensity is indicated by unions in Europe and in the Caribbean<sup>3</sup>.

The following graph shows how many unions have structures for gender equality (dark blue bars), how many unions have gender equality policies (blue bars), and how many unions organise activities related to gender equality (light blue bars).

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<sup>2</sup> Tau-c=.09; sig=.222.

<sup>3</sup> ANOVA sig=.000



**Graph B-4: Percentage of unions with gender equality structures, policies and activities**

Some unions described their gender equality activities in more detail: They advocate for women's rights by developing policies, organising petitions to the parliament, participating in governmental consultations, lobbying to include gender issues in the teachers' code of conduct and in collective agreements, and advocating for the development of gender sensitive curricula.

Unions across the globe organise campaigns and projects such as activities on the International Women's Day (8 March) and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November); participation in women's marches; exhibitions on women's history, feminist movements and the role of women in union struggles; articles on gender equality in trade union magazines or specific women teachers' magazines; production of publications, web pages and campaign materials for women's rights; as well as guidance documents for school representatives and information on gender sensitive language. Some unions organise health education and –tests for HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmittable diseases, breast and cervical cancer and breastfeeding. Unions further mentioned that they conduct research projects on the status of women; that they organise conferences and trainings for recruitment of women as union members, as well as skills and leadership development or mentoring projects; and that they work on international cooperation projects, mainly in the context of the EI regional and sub-regional women's networks.

Questions on unions' structures, policies and activities on gender equality were also asked in previous surveys. A comparison of the data shows irregular developments, but some conclusions can be drawn:

- An increasing number of unions have gender equality committees.
- The number of unions organising a pre-congress women's caucus appears to be rising.
- Just fewer than half the unions have a specific budget for gender equality activities, with no major changes since 2004.
- The number of unions preparing research on gender issues appears to be rising quickly (more than doubled in the past four years).

	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007	2010
Gender equality committees	-	-	-	26%	44%	76%
Pre-congress women's caucus	21%	36%	40%	56%	28%	44%
Budget for gender activities	-	-	-	46%	42%	47%
Research on gender issues	-	-	-	-	29%	63%

Table 2-3: Gender equality structures, policies and activities 1995-2010

Do unions with a gender equality committee, network or caucus have more women in their leadership? An analysis of the data shows contradictory results: Unions that have a gender equality structure have more female general secretaries, but significantly fewer female presidents and fewer women in the executive board<sup>4</sup>. The data therefore gives no clear indication on the effect of gender equality structures on women's representation in the leadership.

Are unions with a higher representation of women in their leadership structures more active on gender equality issues? The data shows no significant correlation between the percentage of women in leadership positions and the intensity of gender equality policies and activities.

**But there is a very strong connection between the existence of gender equality structures within a union, and the intensity of gender equality policies and activities:** Unions that have gender equality structures in their organisation also have more policies and organise more activities on this issue. Across the globe, women's committees, networks and caucuses are the place where the initiative is born to formulate policies and organise activities on gender equality.

Conclusions:

- **Complex correlations:** Gender equality mechanisms and structures seem to have no clear impact on the representation of women in leadership positions, and the number of women in leadership positions doesn't appear to have a distinctive effect on the frequency of gender equality activities.
- **Further research necessary:** A case-by-case analysis would be desirable to identify the effectiveness of policies aimed at gender equality in the union leadership in very different cultural and union contexts.
- **Importance of gender equality structures:** However, the data makes obvious that across the globe, women's committees, networks and caucuses are the place where the initiative is born to formulate policies and organise activities on gender equality.

<sup>4</sup> GS: T-Test sig=.056. Pres.: T-Test sig=.002. ExBo: T-Test sig=.061.

## C. Education of Girls and Women

### 1. The Role of Education for Gender Relations and Development

Education systems have a twofold impact on gender relations: On the one hand, they create opportunities for women to develop careers in the labour market and achieve financial independence. This is described as the right *to* education – who can access what education – and rights *through* education – which doors are opened by education and training. On the other hand, gender relations are reproduced or transformed in the school systems through interactions between girls and boys, female and male teachers. This concerns gender rights *within* education.

Within the past decade, many policy initiatives have led to great progress in the right of girls to education, guided by international frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs 2 and 3) and the Education For All goals (EFA goals 2 and 5):

MDG 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

Target: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

MDG 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Target: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

EFA goal 2: Ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

EFA goal 5: Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

These policy initiatives have been motivated and backed up by numerous studies showing that educating girls can make more dramatic positive changes than any other single intervention – both for the individual and for society as a whole. As expressed by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan (2004): “Study after study has taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls and the empowerment of women. No other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity, lower infant and maternal mortality, or improve nutrition and promote health, including the prevention of HIV/AIDS.”

Although considerable money has been invested into increasing education of girls, many problems persist. Worldwide nearly 1 billion people have had no schooling or left school after less than four years. Nearly two thirds are women and girls. An estimated 77 million children, 55% of whom are girls, are still denied any form of education (E4 2010: 4). Two thirds of the almost 800 million illiterate people worldwide are women (UNESCO 2010b: 1). There are still major obstacles in realising rights to education, in education and through education for millions. Gender inequalities are deeply entrenched in this denial of rights.

A recent report by UNGEI (United Nations Girls' Education Initiative) describes three significant trends in the education landscape in terms of gender equality within the last 10 years (UNGEI 2010: 9):

- Gender parity in access and attendance has substantially improved, though progress is not uniform across all levels of schooling or all regions and countries.
- Major gaps remain in areas that signify gender equality, such as subject choices, gender bias and stereotypes in textbooks, teaching-learning processes and teachers' attitudes towards girls.
- Women are more likely than boys and men to have their education cut short due to adverse circumstances such as poverty, conflict, natural disasters and economic downturn.

The report identifies a range of challenges for attaining gender equality in education (UNGEI 2010: 19), most importantly the risk of losing the gains in girls' enrolment, attendance and retention due to reductions in education investment and in other areas that affect girls' education directly or indirectly. Similarly, the UNESCO Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2010 (UNESCO 2010a: 6) highlights the effects of the economic crisis as a major threat to the right to education. While the crisis originated in the financial systems of the developed world, the aftershock is now reaching education systems in the world's poorest countries. Rising poverty, growing unemployment and diminishing remittances lead to situations where many poor and vulnerable households have to withdraw children from school because they cannot afford school fees or need the children's labour in the household or as an income source. The UNESCO report warns that "the crisis could create a lost generation of children in the world's poorest countries, whose life chances will have been jeopardized by a failure to protect their right to education" (ibid). In most cases, girls are the first to be taken out of school.

## 2. Access to Education

The UNESCO Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2010 presents the most recent statistics for school attainment. It shows that much progress has been made in the past ten years. But while the MDGs set the goal of full universal primary schooling and elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2015, reality is still very far away from these targets.

Globally, 87% of children in the primary education age group attend school, compared to 82% in 1999<sup>5</sup>. This increase in school attendance concerns both boys and girls. The most dramatic increase in primary education attendance can be found in the regions that had low bases, i.e. South and West Asia (86%) as well as sub-Saharan Africa (73%). In most regions there are more than 95 girls per 100 boys in primary education, but more than half of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, South and West Asia and the Arab States have not reached gender parity at the primary level. Worldwide 28 countries still have fewer than 90 girls per 100 boys in school; 18 of these are in sub-Saharan Africa.

The situation is worse when it comes to secondary education. The global school attendance rate lies at 66%<sup>6</sup>, and there are strong regional differences. The enrolment ratio is lowest in sub-Saharan Africa (37%), which also shows the worst statistics in terms of gender parity: Only 79 girls per 100 boys attend secondary school, and the increase in school attendance in the past ten years was greater for boys than for girls. Low enrolment rates can be found as well in South and West Asia (52%; 85 girls per 100 boys), the Caribbean (58%; 103 girls per 100 boys) and in the Arab States (65%; 92 girls per 100 boys).

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<sup>5</sup> Net enrolment ratio (students enrolled in a level of education who belong in the relevant age group, as a percentage of the population in that age group)

<sup>6</sup> Gross enrolment ratio (students enrolled in a level of education, whether or not they belong in the relevant age group for that level, as a percentage of the population in the relevant age group for that level)

The Gender Parity in Education Index<sup>7</sup>, computed by the UN Statistics Division (UNIFEM 2008: 124) indicates big regional differences for higher education, leading to strong differences in women's chances to access leadership roles in politics, economy and administration.

One section of the EI questionnaire focused on education of girls and women. Unions were asked about their opinion concerning access and barriers to education on the one hand, and gender equality within education on the other hand. Open-ended questions gave unions the opportunity to describe access barriers in more detail and explain how government measures affect girls' education.

Access to education is considered a problem by teacher unions in one third of the countries responding to the survey. There are strong regional differences: Almost all unions in Europe, North America and the Caribbean indicate that full access to education is achieved, both for girls and for boys, on all education levels. By contrast, unions in over 80% of countries in Latin America, as well as in half of the countries in Africa and Asia-Pacific say that access is a problem, and they identify about five times more barriers to education than unions in Europe, North America and the Caribbean<sup>8</sup>.

### Barriers to Education

The reasons for absence and drop-out from school are multidimensional and mutually reinforcing: "Girls, and children from poor households and rural areas all face a much greater risk of being out of school. These three categories interact with each other and with additional factors – such as language, ethnicity and disability – to create multiple barriers to school entry and survival." (UNESCO 2010a: 12) A report from UNGEI points out that girls from socially disadvantaged families and poor households face the greatest education inequalities – for instance, girls from indigenous populations in Latin America, lower-caste populations in South Asia or rural populations in many developing countries. The rural-urban divides constitute one of the main challenges for education for all, and they are sharp especially in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (UNGEI 2010: 14, 18).

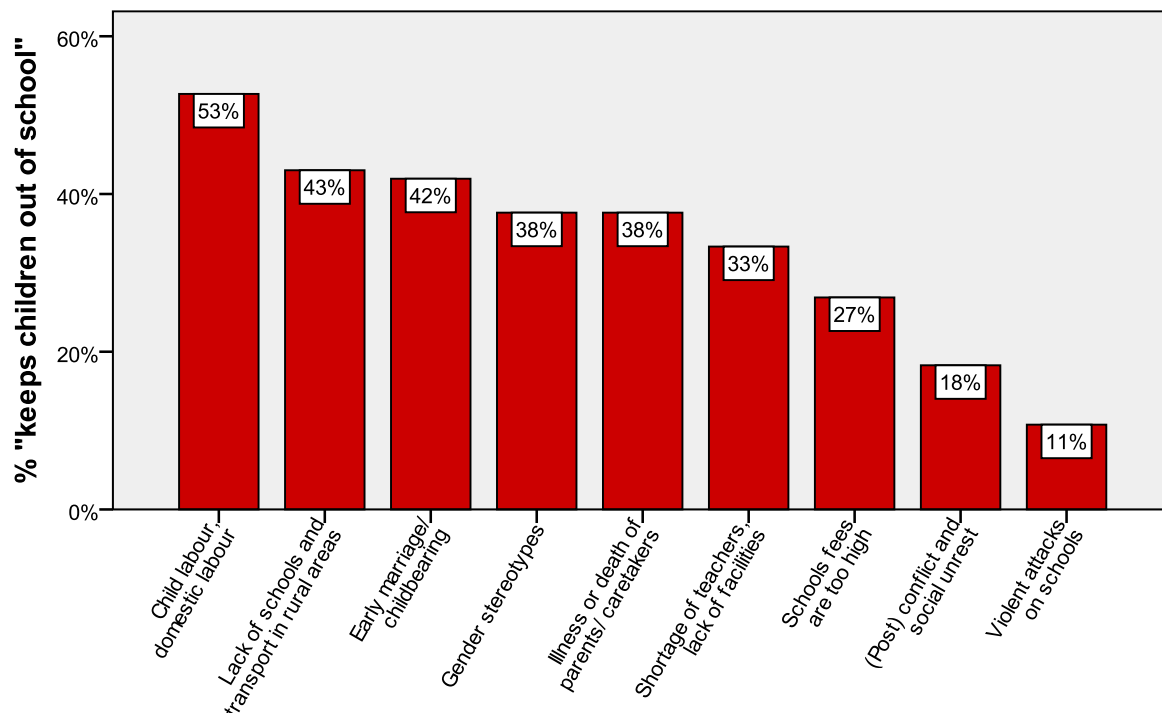
The following graph shows which barriers to education were mentioned by how many unions. The most relevant barriers to education are related to child labour, lack of school infrastructure and gender stereotypes. Furthermore, illness or death of parents and caretakers is an important reason why children do not to go to school.

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<sup>7</sup> Gender Parity Index = quotient of the number of females by the number of males enrolled

<sup>8</sup> ANOVA  $\eta^2=.47$ ; sig=.000





Graph C-1: Barriers to education

**The constellation of barriers to education seems to be different in different regions.** In Africa, barriers to education mainly relate to gender roles, early marriage and childbearing, and illness or death of parents. In contrast, Latin American unions mainly mention barriers related to child labour and domestic labour. Additionally, many unions (20 unions), mostly in Africa and Latin America, say that poverty keeps children out of school. Some added that parents with limited resources rather send their sons to school than their daughters. Further barriers mentioned include: overcrowded schools and lack of qualified teachers (9 unions), ignorance and lack of support from parents (5 unions), bad management of schools and corruption (3 unions), lack of attractiveness of schools and inflexible school timing (3 unions), sexual violence (3 unions), as well as juvenile delinquency and gang violence (3 unions).

**The majority of African unions think that these barriers mainly keep girls out of education;** in Latin America half of the unions say that they mainly affect girls and half of the unions say that they affect both genders equally. In Asia-Pacific, Europe and the Caribbean, the majority of unions think that boys and girls are affected equally by barriers to education. Other social groups particularly affected by barriers to education are: Children from rural areas, indigenous children, Roma children, migrant children, ethnic and religious minorities, children with disabilities and special needs, as well as lesbian or gay students.

Unions were asked to describe government measures in recent years that have affected girls' education – both positive and negative initiatives. Unions from Asia-Pacific, Africa and Latin America frequently described measures that focus on the right to education for all, such as introducing new laws that aim at ensuring or prolonging free and compulsory education, creating more schools especially in rural areas and improving schools' infrastructure, providing midday meals for pupils and financial support for education to poor families.

Some unions described **specific efforts to support girls' education**:

- Unions from Africa and Asia-Pacific: Making basic education free for girls, introducing education schemes or scholarships for girls, building girls' dormitories, creating systems of motivation for girl students, creating incentives for parents to send girls to school.
- Unions from Latin America and the Caribbean: Measures to improve the legal status and re-entry of pregnant students into the education system.
- All regions: Strategies and institutions (with budget allocation) that deal with gender equality for students.

**Many unions complained that their governments are not tackling long-term problems keeping children, especially girls, out of the education system.** Resources and investment in education are being reduced; tuition fees are introduced in higher education; the number of pupils per teacher is rising; governments abolish structures for gender equality; and education institutions are ignoring the government programmes for gender equality.

Conclusions:

- **Barriers to education:** The most relevant barriers are related to child labour, lack of school infrastructure and gender stereotypes.
- **Persistent long-term problems:** Unions describe government efforts to increase access to education – for all children, and for girls specifically. Nevertheless, long-term problems persist and are not tackled appropriately.

### 3. Gender Stereotypes in the Classroom

Much work on gender and schooling focuses on access to education, trying to ensure that girls are enrolled in school. While the importance of gender parity in education is beyond dispute, many reports argue that access is not enough: "When it comes to education, gender equality goes well beyond ensuring that equal numbers of girls and boys attend school. It is about changing attitudes and relationships and about the sharing of power." (Bokova 2010: 5) Equal access to education often does not translate into institutionalised arrangements to secure gender rights *within* education. That includes gender equality in curriculum, gender-sensitive language, gender-responsive textbooks, gender-aware teachers and empowering classrooms, atypical gender subject options and safe school environments.

An underlying problem is what some researchers refer to as "hegemonic masculinity", meaning strict societal roles whereby men dominate other men and subordinate women. This has been observed in many developed countries, as well as in East Asia, Caribbean and Pacific countries. "These roles deem education to be feminine and thus the domain of girls, whereas work is seen as belonging to boys and men. As a result, a number of countries are witnessing a trend whereby boys underperform in many subjects, especially language arts, and drop out of secondary schools at higher rates than girls." (UNGEI 2010: 16) These researches see the reason for boys' underachievement not in the "female orientation of schools" and the "feminised teaching staff", but rather in the persistence of gender stereotypes.

## Gender Stereotypes in the Classroom

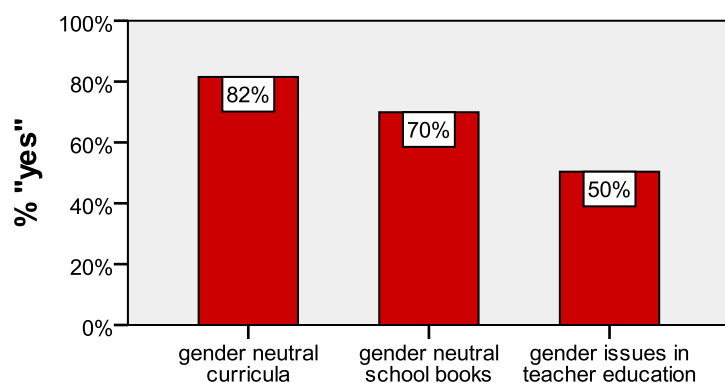
Many studies show how gender stereotypes are reproduced by the education system. These studies focus on the “hidden curriculum”, a collection of messages transmitted to children through informal relations and interactions in classrooms. It is argued that students’ informal interactions within the school are the most influential aspect of their socialisation into what it means to be female and male in society. Since peer interaction and peer pressure play such an important role in forming gender identities, schools are critical spaces in which these notions can be either reinforced or countered.

For many years, studies have been consistent in revealing the dominance of boys regarding the school space they occupy, the teacher-time that they demand, and the influence that they have over the rest of their peers. “Recent research has found that teachers’ attitudes, classroom and other schooling processes, and textbooks continue to reinforce gender stereotyping despite the increase in gender reviews and additional training. Although there have been some changes in textbooks, with somewhat more balanced representations of men and women, stereotypical depictions persist in many countries.” (UNGEI 2010: 15)

School textbooks often exclude girls and women or present them in demeaning ways, favouring gender stereotypes – for example, when men appear more often and in a wider set of roles as workers, while women are shown mainly in domestic and ‘romantic’ roles. Also the language in those books has been proven to be highly influential, especially on younger children. Gender stereotypes are reproduced by this language – for example when talking about a “fireman” instead of a “fire fighter”, or about boys “laughing” and girls “giggling” (Eurydice 2009: 26).

Furthermore, teachers’ perceptions of male- and femaleness are crucial for their relations with pupils and can be an important factor in generating gender equality in schools. Despite this, many teachers are unaware of how they use gender as an important organising and categorising factor in the classroom. Studies on classroom interaction show that both male and female teachers tend to encourage passivity and conformity in their female students while at the same time valuing independence and individuality in their male students (ibid: 29). “When (...) more girls than boys are in school, officials come to think they have ‘done’ gender, although issues remain concerning economic, political and social rights, violence and ideas about masculinity and femininity that undermine equality concerns.” (E4 2010: 11f)

EI’s member unions indicate that a reproduction of gender stereotypes through curricular structure is being avoided in most countries. But they also say that this only partly translates into providing school books that are free of traditional gender roles. Even lower is the number of countries where gender equality is part of teachers’ education: Unions from only half the countries indicated that this is the case.



Graph C-2: Percentage of countries with provisions for gender-sensitive education

Furthermore, although there is no legal barrier for women or men to teach in any subject, unions from 40% of the countries (especially Latin America, North America and Europe) indicate that **in reality, in there is a gender division between subjects**. Women teach mainly languages, home economics, cooking and needle work; while men are concentrated in sciences, technical education, mechanical engineering, wood- and metal work. There are practically no male teachers in early childhood education, and very few in primary education.

In a few countries, unions reported that **governments are trying to make their education systems more gender sensitive**. These efforts aim at removing traditional gender stereotypes from curricula and text books, and instead introducing equality-, human rights- and sex education. Other important tools are to make gender equality part of teachers' education, and to use specific encouragement or quotas in order to create a stronger gender mix in education paths.

Conclusions:

- **Gender stereotypes are still prevalent:** Although there are no legally defined gender differences in the process of education, gender stereotypes still shape subject choice and teaching materials.

## **D. Gender Equality at Work, in Education Employment and in Society**

### **1. Women's Rights and Gender Equality**

On the global level, the most comprehensive framework for realising women's rights and gender equality exists within the United Nations: The UN Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), often described as a "bill of rights for women", was passed in 1979. In 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing endorsed CEDAW and initiated the Beijing Platform for Action, a global agenda for women's empowerment. Another vehicle for women's rights was created in 2000 with the Millennium Development Goals, each of which can only be realised through substantial improvements in the field of gender equality and women's rights: "Women's empowerment is not a stand-alone goal. It is the driver of efforts to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, reduce child and maternal mortality, and fight against major diseases like HIV/AIDS and malaria. Women's empowerment is also a driver of sound environmental management and is, finally, essential for ensuring that development aid reaches the poorest through making women a part of national poverty reduction planning and resource allocation." (UNIFEM 2008: 117)

Although the value of women's rights – both as human rights, and as a means for social and economic development – is widely affirmed, advocates for women's rights still find themselves confronted with counter movements. Culture, religion and tradition are used as arguments to legitimate existing inequalities, and the progress made towards equality is used to argue that gender issues are already taken into account, and that organised activity is unnecessary and even counterproductive. Women all around the world still face wide ranging inequalities and discrimination. "In too many countries, even where the constitution or laws prohibit it, women may be denied equal pay; they may be sexually harassed at work, or dismissed if they become pregnant. Women who assert a claim to land may find that claim disputed by village elders or their own husbands. Women seeking care during childbirth may be pressed to pay bribes for a mid-wife's attention. Women who have been victims of sexual violence might encounter judges more sympathetic to the perpetrators, and receive no redress for their suffering." (ibid: 1)

A glance at global statistics makes it obvious that a more concerted effort is needed. The Gender Equity Index (GEI) computed by Social Watch ([www.socialwatch.org](http://www.socialwatch.org)) consists of internationally comparable data in the fields of education, economic activity and political empowerment. A comparison between 2005 and 2009 shows that the gender gap is not narrowing in most countries, and that the majority of the countries that show progress are those that were already comparatively better, regardless of whether they are rich or poor or in what region they are located. Globally, women perform 66 percent of the world's work, produce 50 percent of the food, but earn 10 percent of the income and own 1 percent of the property ([www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)).

The UNIFEM report "Progress of the World's Women 2008/09" therefore focuses on the issue of accountability and asks "Who Answers to Women?" Accountability systems that work for women contain two essential elements: Including women as participants in those systems, and making the advancement of gender equality and women's rights one of the standards against which the performance of officials is assessed.

The focus on accountability was also central to the 54<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March 2010. Several panel discussions evaluated progress made and challenges to the implementation of internationally agreed commitments such as CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs (UN CSW 2010a, b, c). All of these discussions pointed out the importance of these instruments, and their effective function as catalysts for constitutional, legal and policy reforms. But at the same time, all panels concluded that in order to overcome poor legal enforcement and the resulting gaps between law and practice, strong systems for monitoring and accountability have to be implemented. This includes the provision of an adequate budget and of effective evaluation mechanisms.

In the EI survey, unions were asked to describe the status of women teachers. Questions focused on working conditions and the difference between legal provisions and reality, with the option of describing discriminatory practices or best practice examples in more detail. Further questions asked for information on the gender composition of the teaching body and their salaries. Unions were furthermore asked to describe the rights and liberties of women in society, their economic and political power, as well as gender-based discrimination. Questions focused on the difference between legal provisions and reality, with the option of describing discriminatory practices or best practice examples in more detail and elaborating on the effects of government policies on gender equality in society.

According to EI member organisations, **legal provisions for gender equality among teachers exist in almost all of the countries**; there are no relevant regional differences. Those provisions include laws on gender equality in teacher education, hiring, access to high pay scales, non-discrimination and maternity protection. Many unions commented that gender equality and non-discrimination are enshrined by their countries' constitution and labour laws, and that female teachers are overall protected from discrimination. Unions were asked whether the enforcement of those laws is high, medium or low. Unions from 80% of the countries indicate that most of these laws are highly enforced. A high level of enforcement of gender equality regulations is most widespread when it concerns the conditions to become a teacher, and job protection during pregnancy. **There seems to be a bigger gap between legal provision and actual enforcement for laws on women's access to the highest pay scales and effective non-discrimination laws.** On a regional level, unions from the Caribbean indicate a specifically high enforcement of laws, while unions in Latin America say that those gender equality provisions may have a legal basis, but are poorly implemented.

Similarly to legal provisions for gender equality among teachers, unions from almost all countries indicated that there are laws for gender equality in the labour market, politics and the social system. But these **equality laws appear to be badly implemented: Unions from only 30-45% of the countries judge the enforcement of these laws as "high"**. Caribbean unions are the only exception: They see those laws as highly implemented in over 80% of the countries. In contrast, a particularly low level of enforcement is indicated by unions in North America and Latin America.

Many unions described government initiatives that affected the status of women in society positively. These initiatives concern legislative change, such as the introduction or improvement of non-discrimination and equal treatment laws (13 countries), as well as of other laws, for example laws against sexual harassment and violence against women (13 countries), laws and regulations for reproductive rights of women, birth planning or anti-trafficking laws, as well as property owning regulations for women. Some unions mentioned the ratification of ILO conventions 100, 111, 156 and 183, and the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Unions did not only report good news. One of the main complaints was that, **while policies do exist, they are not adequately implemented and communicated.** That is partly due to a lack of resources,

and partly because gender inequality is not recognised as a problem and there is not enough political will to tackle some problems, specifically when it concerns rape, violence and reproductive rights. Some governments even destroy efforts that were made by their predecessors.

Additionally, **there are also new developments that have negative side effects on the status of women, most recently the economic crisis.** Two thirds of the unions responding to this survey think that the economic crisis will reduce investment in infrastructure, and half of the unions think that it will increase women's poverty more than men's.

Conclusions:

- **Law versus reality:** There is a big gap between the existence and the enforcement of gender equality laws.
- **Reasons for the gap:** The difference between law and reality appears to exist mainly due to the considerable impact of gender stereotypes, male networks and the unequal division of family responsibilities.

## 2. Gender: The “hidden dimension” of the MDGs

Women's rights are central to all MDGs, but most explicitly to goal number 3: “Promote gender equality and empower women” This goal includes a wide range of issues, mainly focusing on access to education, women in politics and gender equality in the labour market.

### Women in decision-making

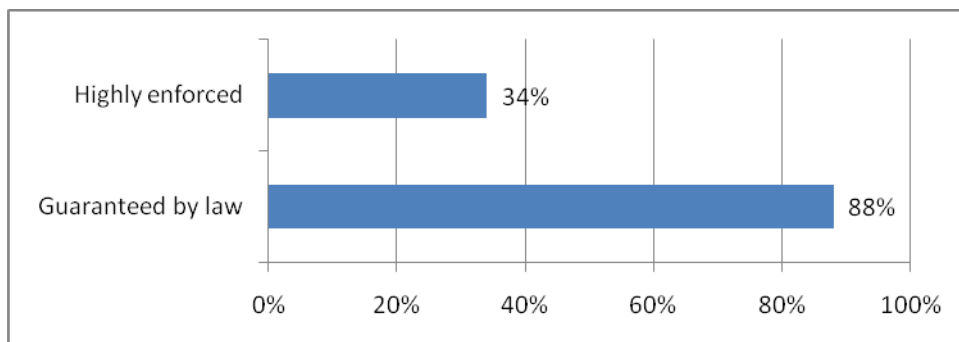
The 2010 MDG evaluation report shows that the number of women in politics is increasing, but very slowly and mostly when boosted by quotas and other special measures (UN 2010b: 25). Globally, the share of women in parliament has reached an all-time high of 19 percent in 2010, compared to 11 percent in 1995, but is still far from the goal of 30 percent and even further from the MDG target of gender parity. The highest share of women in parliament can be found in Rwanda, followed by Sweden, South Africa and Cuba. In nine countries there are no women in the parliament at all (Belize, Micronesia, Nauru, Oman, Palau, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu). When it comes to executive branches of governments, progress is even slower than in the legislative branches: Currently only 6 percent of heads of state or heads of government, and 16 percent of ministers are women. Furthermore, women are underrepresented in the policymaking processes in areas that are critical to advancing gender justice, such as HIV/AIDS (30%), climate change (30%) and peacebuilding (8%) (UNIFEM 2010: 13).

The UNIFEM report asserts that women's lack of voice in the public sphere starts in the home. Many women have no say in vital everyday decisions such as their own health care, household purchases, or visits to relatives. Often women are not able to negotiate using a condom. This lack of power is further exacerbated by lack of education, poverty, and – most of all – early marriage, disempowering girls throughout their lives: “Early marriage curtails girls' opportunities for education and exposes them to the risks of early pregnancy and childbirth, the leading causes of death for girls aged 15 to 19 in developing countries.” (UNIFEM 2010: 12).

Participation of women in local politics and community organising can help strengthen their power in decision making on all levels – from the household to international politics – and encourage them

to become more visible. In order to support the critical role of women’s organisations and networks, the fraction of development aid aimed at women’s organisations needs to be increased substantially from the current 0.3% (ibid: 15).

EI’s member organisations were asked whether women and men have equal access to politics. In theory, women have equal access to participate in politics, but in practice they are kept out of the political system by financial and cultural barriers, male networks, family responsibilities and sometimes violence. Some unions point out that there are women in high political positions in their countries; others stress the low proportion of women in the political leadership and parliaments. **While women are not regularly represented in top political positions, their numbers seem to be rising.** This trend was confirmed by unions from 70% of the responding countries, higher even in Africa and Latin America, but not in Asia-Pacific.



Graph D-1: Women have equal opportunity to take part in politics

### Women at work

In the field of women’s participation in the labour market, the progress report towards the MDGs shows that the share of women in paid employment outside the agricultural sector is slowly increasing in all regions and reached 41 percent in 2008. The regions with the lowest share of female employment are Southern and Western Asia, as well as Northern Africa, where the percentage of women among paid workers lies around 20 percent. “But even when women represent a large share of waged workers, it does not mean that they have secure, decent jobs. In fact, women are typically paid less and have less secure employment than men.” (UN 2010b: 22)

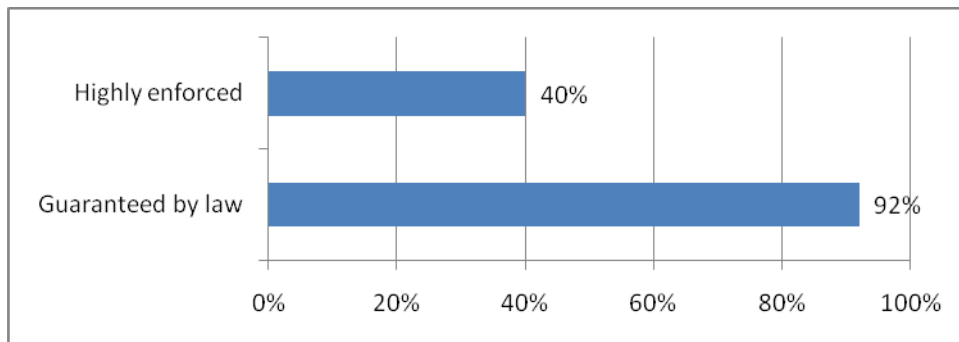
And the increase in female employment is not mirrored by an increase in the share of women in top-level jobs. Globally, only one in four senior officials or managers are women; with the lowest numbers (one in ten) again in Southern and Western Asia and Northern Africa (ibid: 24).

When asked about equality in the labour market, EI’s affiliates explained that, **while in theory and in law there are no barriers to gender equality in the labour market, in practice gender stereotypes and patriarchal mindset lead to a strong segregation.** Women dominate occupations that may be considered as extensions of their reproductive and caring roles. Additionally, there is a glass ceiling for women, caused by career breaks due to maternity leave, and constraints due to family duties. Many unions point out that the number of women on corporate boards and in other leadership positions is still very low. There is a reluctance to recognise women’s professional skills; gender stereotypes lead to discrimination of women in selection procedures; and sometimes women self-select and are reluctant to apply for promotion. Unions especially from Africa and Latin America say that political affiliation and favouritism count more than competency, which may create a further disadvantage for women.

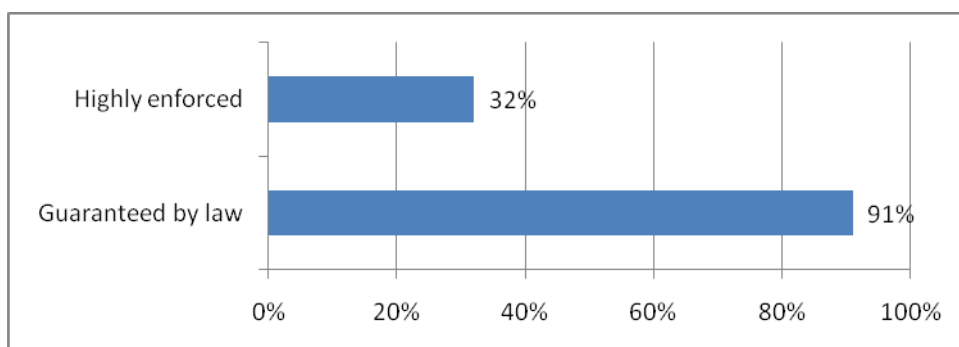


On the other hand, other unions refer to women holding high leadership positions in their country's economy and being encouraged to enter male-dominated fields and high positions; some unions say that with equal competencies, women have to be prioritised in certain fields. **Government efforts for gender equality in the labour market were described, including:**

- Projects to improve employment opportunities for women;
- Initiatives for equal pay for work of equal value;
- Regulations on workload, work-life balance, part time work and flexible working;
- Improved regulations for maternity and paternity leave or childcare facilities.



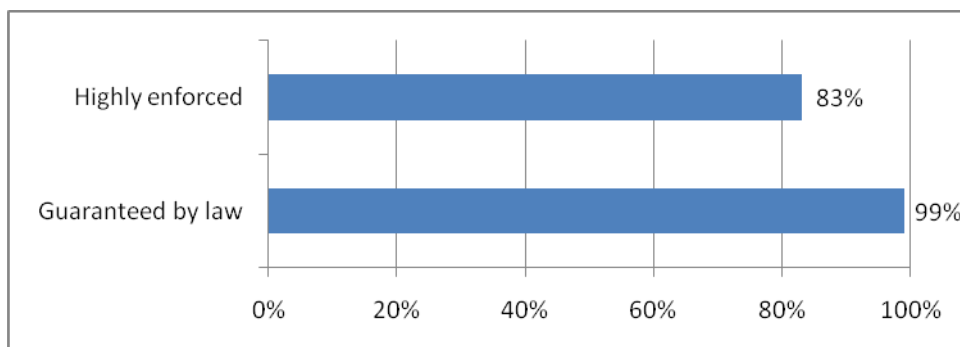
Graph D-2: Women have equal access to any profession



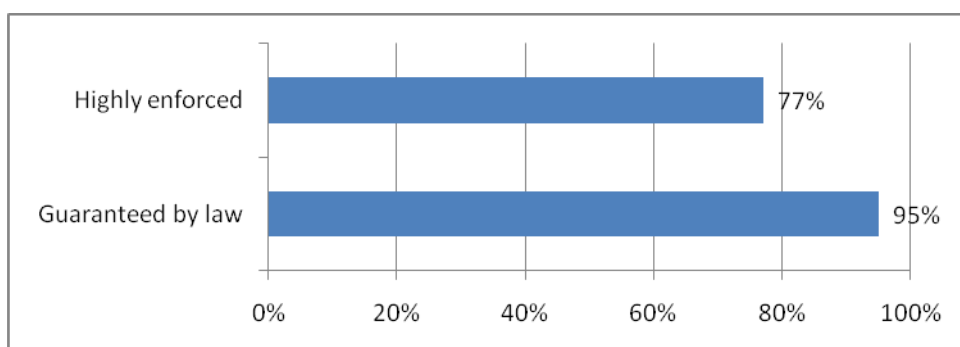
Graph D-3: In general, women have equal access to high positions in any job

When it comes to pregnancy and parental leave regulations, unions indicate that job protection during pregnancy is highly enforced in most countries, but **maternity and parental leave systems are highly enforced in only 73% of the countries**. There is a great variety of maternity leave systems, both in duration and in remuneration, and often the leave is too short and pay is too low. Paternity leave systems are not as widespread as maternity leave system, and if they exist, they are limited to just a few days, and fathers often refrain from making use of them. Problems with legislation and implementation of maternity and parental leave systems include:

- Protection is limited to certain groups or sectors (only public schools; only permanently employed teachers; only full-time teachers).
- Lack of substitute teachers.



Graph D-4: Women teachers are protected from losing their job during pregnancy



Graph D-5: There are adequate maternity and/ or parental leave systems in place for teachers

**Some equality regulations are much more widespread than others** in union policies and in government implementation:

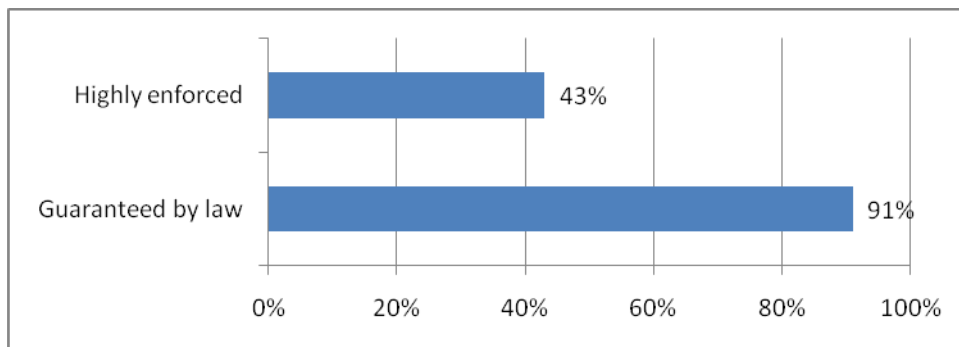
- Widespread regulations (over 80% implementation by government and 50% in union policy) include maternity leave, pay equity and provisions against sexual harassment. These provisions seem to be more accepted and higher on priority lists of achieving gender equality – both by unions and by governments. They deal with obvious discrimination against women and lay the foundation of gender equality in the labour market.
- Less frequent regulations (under 60% implementation by government, under 30% in union policy) are affirmative recruitment policies and complaint mechanisms in case of discrimination. These provisions touch on less obvious gender inequalities. They deal with problems that become visible once the corner stones of legal gender equality are laid, and their purpose is to allow for a real implementation and enforcement of laws. As such they seem to encounter more resistance – both by unions and by governments.

### Women in poverty

The first MDG is to “Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”. Globally, the statistics show a significant reduction in poverty, but they also show that women are still more likely than men to be poor and at risk of hunger because of the systematic discrimination they face in access to education, healthcare and control of assets (UNIFEM 2008: 119). Across all countries, the female population is poorer than the male population, and two thirds of the people living below the poverty line are women (ILO 2009: 23ff).

According to EI’s member organisations, women have the right to inherit property in almost all the countries. The enforcement of women’s equal access to public services according to their needs is indicated as relatively high, but problems exist especially for women with low income, women from

rural areas, as well as Indigenous women and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.



Graph D-6: Women have access to public services according to their needs

MDG number 7 is to “Ensure environmental stability”. This includes improving access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, which is still a problem for over 1 billion people, especially in rural areas and urban slums. In all regions, women shoulder the bulk of responsibility for collecting water, which keeps them from investing their time in paid employment, political activity or leisure. “It is estimated that women and children in Africa alone spend 40 billion hours every year fetching and carrying water – a figure equivalent to a year’s labour for the entire workforce of France.” (UNIFEM 2008: 130). Environmental degradation and lack of access to and control over natural resources have consequently had an especially severe impact on women.

With MDG 8, governments committed themselves to “Develop a global partnership for development”. This Goal hints at incoherencies between strategies required for achieving the MDGs and economic and trade policy-setting frameworks: “For example, if decisions taken at national and global levels in relation to subsidies effectively disadvantage poor women’s agricultural products, promote privatization schemes that price water out of poor women’s reach or shrink the pool of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) available for development cooperation, then even the best efforts at the national level will not be sufficient to achieve the MDGs.” (UNIFEM 2005: 38)

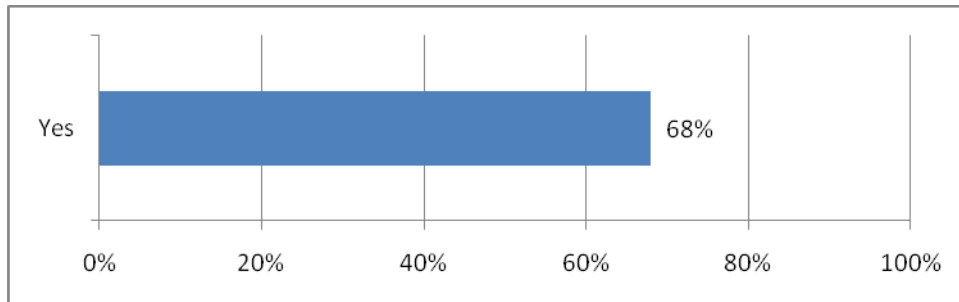
### Women’s health

MDG number 6 aims to “Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases”. While the number of people newly infected with HIV peaked in 1994 and is since declining, the number of people living with HIV worldwide continues to grow, with women representing a growing share. In sub-Saharan Africa, the region most heavily affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, over two thirds of people living with HIV in 2007 were women (UNIFEM 2009: 12). Growing evidence links the spread of HIV with gender inequalities, especially gender-based violence, child marriage and cultural norms of sexual ignorance and purity for women.

One of the Goals with least progress is MDG 5 – “Improve maternal health”. Every year more than 500.000 women die in relation to childbirth, with 99 percent of these deaths occurring in developing countries, and most of them being avoidable. Additionally, over 300 million women worldwide suffer long-term health problems and disability arising from complications during pregnancy or delivery (UNIFEM 2010: 6) When it comes to reproductive health, research shows that progress in expanding the use of contraceptives by women has slowed, and is lowest among poor women and women with no education (UN 2010b: 36f). This is particularly problematic because “it is estimated that one in

three maternal deaths could be avoided if women who wanted contraception had access to it.” (UNIFEM 2010: 6)

In the EI survey, the unions were asked about reproductive rights in their countries: Women have full control over their reproductive rights, free of coercion and social sanctions in almost all countries in North America, the Caribbean and Europe, in 80% of the countries in Asia-Pacific, but in less than a third of African and Latin American countries.



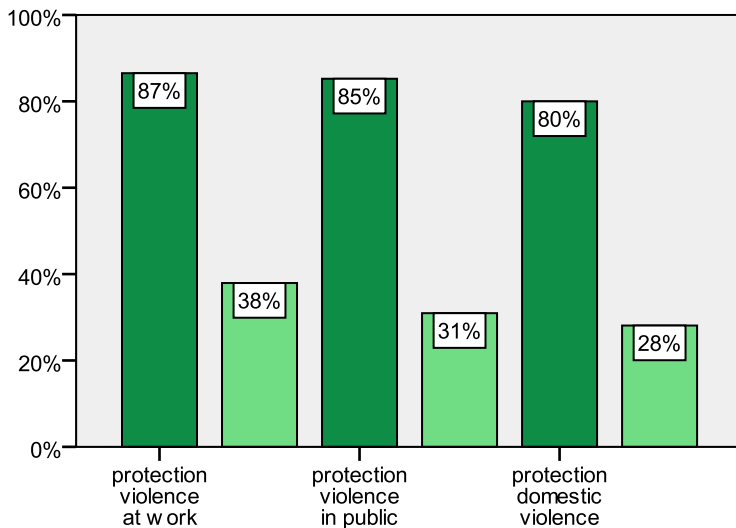
Graph D-7: Women have full control over their reproductive rights, free of coercion and social sanctions

### Violence against women

The issue of violence against women is absent from the MDGs. None of the goals, targets or indicators include protection of women against violence, thus disregarding a “problem of pandemic proportions” ([www.saynotoviolence.org](http://www.saynotoviolence.org)): Among women aged between 15 and 44, acts of violence cause more death and disability than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents and war combined.

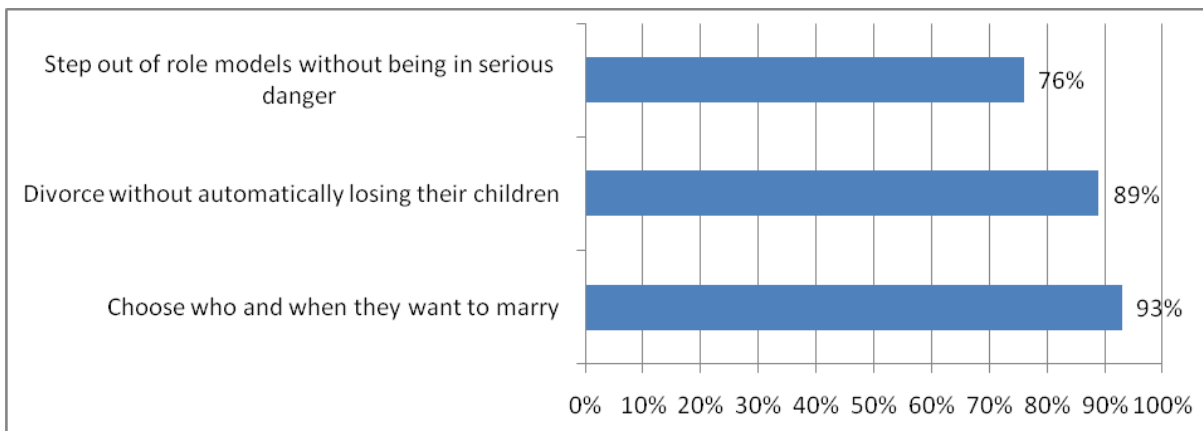
Violence against women takes many forms and occurs in many places – domestic violence in the home, sexual abuse of girls in schools, sexual harassment at work, rape by husbands or strangers, in refugee camps or as a tactic of war, trafficking of women and girls, or harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage. It affects women in every region of the world, of all age groups and social classes. Up to one in five women report being sexually abused as children. Every year, about 5.000 women are murdered by family members in the name of honor. Every year, 640.000 women and girls are trafficked, most of them for sexual exploitation (WHO 2009). One in four women experience physical or sexual violence during pregnancy (UNIFEM 2010: 16).

According to EI’s member organisations, **legal provisions against gender-based violence are more rare than the above-described laws, and their enforcement is lower** – especially in Latin America and Africa, and most of all when it concerns domestic violence. Many women are not educated about their rights, or they are afraid of reporting because of public pressure, scrutiny, emotional and economic dependency, fear of victimisation or a lack of trust in the authorities.



Graph D-8: Percentage of countries with anti-violence laws and high enforcement

EI affiliates confirm that women have the right to choose who and when they want to marry; or to divorce without automatically losing their children – except in Africa, where unions from only 70% of the countries confirmed that women have this right. When women want to step out of traditional practices and role models, they can do so without being in serious danger from family, government or society in all countries in North America, the Caribbean and in Europe. In Asia-Pacific, unions from 80% of the countries confirm this; yet in Africa and Latin America, this seems to be the case in only half the countries where unions responded to this question.



Graph D-9: Women have the right to...

Conclusions:

- **Economic and family rights:** Some women’s rights are widespread, such as inheriting property or decisions on marriage and divorce.
- **Body and identity:** When it comes to reproductive rights and the freedom to step out of gender role models, unions report that these rights are much more limited – especially in Africa and Latin America.
- **Enforcement of laws:** Although there is slow progress in the ratification of international frameworks for gender equality, the political will for proper enforcement of laws is missing.
- **Low enforcement of anti-violence laws:** The low enforcement of laws especially concerns regulations dealing with violence against women.

### 3. Pay Inequity and Glass Ceiling for Women Teachers

In the world of work, pay differences between women and men remain one of the most persistent forms of inequality. According to the ILO (2009: 17), progress in closing the gap remains slow, and the situation has even deteriorated in some countries. In a majority of countries, women's wages per hour of work represent between 70 and 90 percent of men's wages, with even lower ratios in some Asian and Latin American countries. This pay gap of course only includes paid employment. Unpaid care work, which would be equivalent to at least half of a country's GDP (ILO 2010: 51), is not part of the calculation. Since unpaid care work – or household work, defined as “looking after the physical, psychological, emotional and developmental needs of one or more other people” (ibid) – is mainly done by women, a calculation that includes this kind of work would widen the official pay gap immensely.

Analyses of labour statistics (ibid: 51ff) show that generally, the more women participate in the labour market, the smaller is the gender pay gap. Furthermore, occupations that are likely to be dominated by women, such as first-level education teacher, professional nurse and office clerk, have the smallest gender pay gaps. But when comparing the average salaries of female-dominated occupations with the average salaries of male-dominated occupations, there is a strong wage bias towards male-dominated jobs. Most women thus find themselves either in “typically female” jobs, receiving lower salaries than employees of “typically male” jobs; or they work in less traditional fields, where they are confronted with greater gender wage gaps and a glass ceiling. “The unfortunate fact remains that engaging in the labour market brings women less gains than the typical working male (monetarily, socially and politically).” (ibid: 56)

#### Gender pay gap for teachers

Teaching, on the levels of pre-school and primary education, is a female dominated occupation. According to UNESCO statistics ([www.uis.unesco.org](http://www.uis.unesco.org)), globally almost 90 percent of pre-school teachers and over 60 percent of primary school teachers are women. These proportions change with higher education levels: In secondary education about half the teachers are female, and in higher education under 40 percent. In most regions the percentage of female teachers in pre-school education is two to three times higher than the percentage of female teachers in higher education. The regions with the biggest gender difference are sub-Saharan Africa (14 percent female teachers in higher education vs. 75 percent in pre-school) and the Arab States (22 percent female teachers in higher education vs. 91 percent in pre-school).

Across all regions there is a clear trend: The higher the education level, the lower is the percentage female teachers. The opposite is true when it comes to teachers' salaries: The higher the education level, the higher are the salaries of teachers.

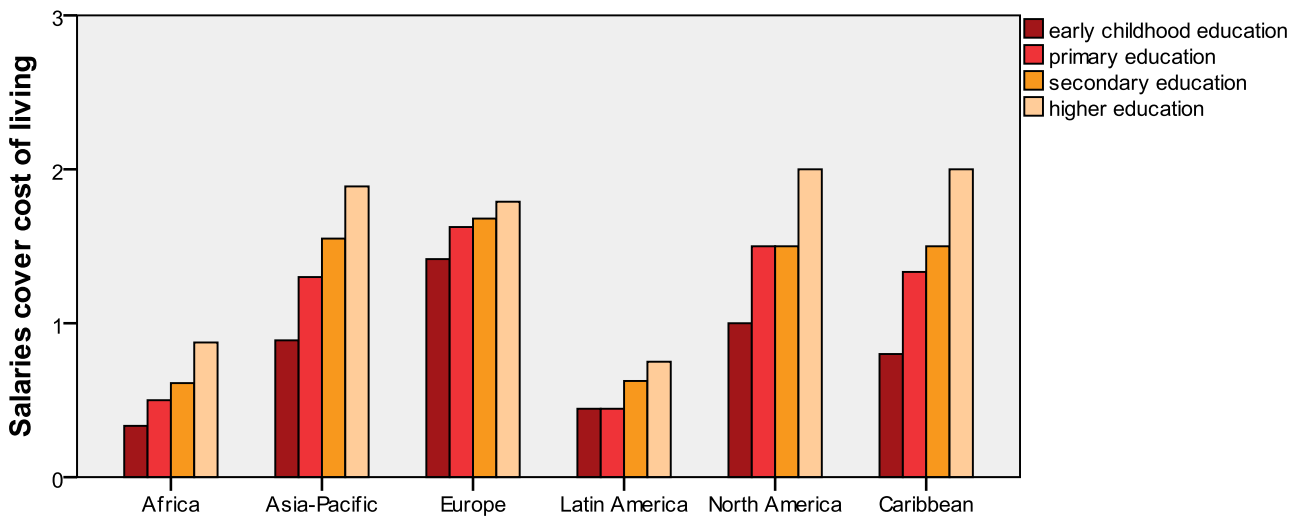
Providing information on the number of education personnel, disaggregated by gender and by education levels, was only possible for about half the unions that responded to the survey, and often incomplete. The following table gives an overview over the data that was submitted. For each education level, it shows the average percentage of women (median).

	Early childhood education teachers	Primary education teachers	Secondary education teachers	Higher education teachers
Africa	78%	50%	35%	40%
Asia-Pacific	98%	68%	54%	43%
Europe	97%	79%	57%	37%
Latin America	95%	80%	63%	54%
North America	97%	83%	63%	43%
Caribbean	99%	86%	69%	43%
Global	95%	77%	57%	42%

Table 4-1: Percentage of female teachers in education levels by region (median)

The data shows a clear trend: The higher the education level, the lower is the percentage of women teachers. This trend is visible across all regions (except in Africa, where unions indicate that the percentage of female teachers is bigger in higher education than in secondary education).

When it comes to teachers' salaries, unions across all regions indicate a reverse trend: The higher the education level, the higher are teachers' salaries. The following graph shows to which extent the salaries cover the cost of living (0 = too little; 1 = barely enough; 2 = adequate; 3 = good).



Graph D-D-10: Teachers' salaries in relation to the cost of living

These two facts combined lead to one conclusion: Women are overrepresented in the lower paid areas of teaching, and underrepresented in the higher paid areas. Expressed differently: The salaries in the feminised sectors of the teaching profession are lower than those in sectors with more male employees.

Unions provided explanations for this situation: Women are burdened with family responsibilities, limiting their flexibility, their ability to take on additional duties and receive bonuses, and their opportunities for further training. Poorly regulated maternity leave systems cause further harmful effects on women teachers' careers. **All these factors, together with cultural barriers and a lack of**

**confidence to apply for top posts, lead to an underrepresentation of women on the highest pay scales and job positions.** Women therefore dominate certain lower classifications of educators, with worse employment conditions and lower pay. Also, women are underrepresented in school leadership positions, where the salaries are higher.

Conclusions:

- **Inequity in education hierarchy and pay:** Women are overrepresented in early childhood education and primary education, where the salaries are lower; and underrepresented in higher education, where the salaries are higher.
- **Discrimination causes further discrimination:** The reasons for this pay inequity are gender stereotypes, discrimination against women in the labour market and the unequal distribution of family responsibilities.

### Direct and indirect discrimination

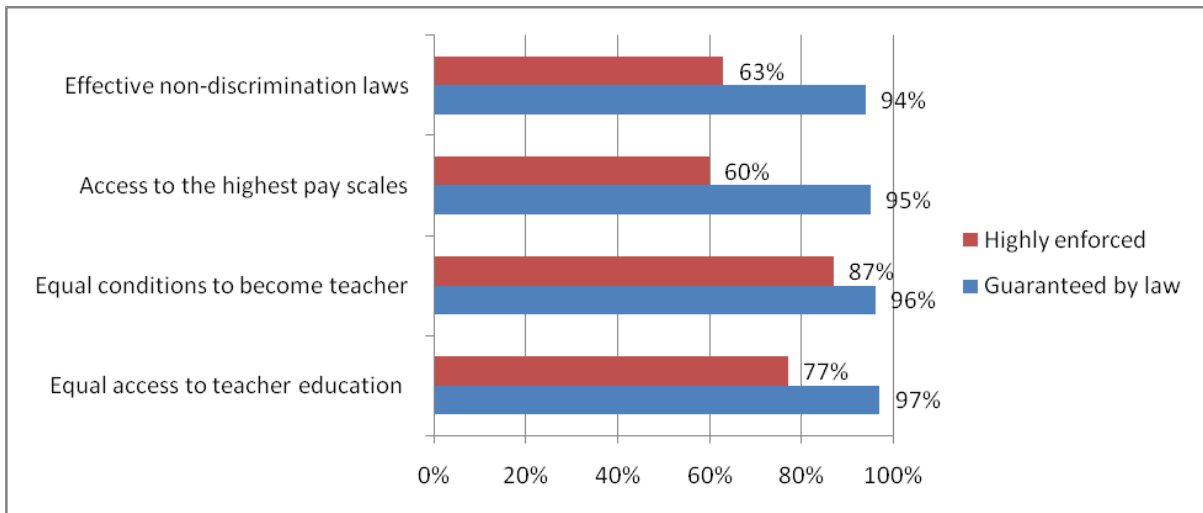
The gender pay gap in the teaching profession has a number of reasons (UNDP 2006), all of which derive from the persistence of traditional gender stereotypes:

- Employment segregation: Teaching in pre-school and primary education is a female-dominated job, while higher education is a mixed- to male-dominated occupation. This trend is closely related to gender stereotypes, with pre-school and primary education being regarded as an extension of motherhood, and therefore as “typically female”. Female-dominated occupations are assigned a lower value, which is expressed in lower salaries.
- Reconciliation of work and family responsibilities: Women still bear the brunt of house- and family care work, even when they are employed. This means that they have less time and flexibility to invest in their career. The difficulties in combining paid and unpaid employment is the main reason why many women either don’t return to employment after their maternity leave, or work part time, which means part salary.
- Glass ceiling: Even when they represent the majority of teachers, women are underrepresented in senior and headship roles. The higher the hierarchical level and the associated power of decision making and prestige, the lower is the percentage of women.

When it comes to access to teacher education and the teaching profession, unions describe it as a problem with varying dimensions:

- Some unions point out that the problem is not women’s access to becoming a teacher, but rather a shortage of male teachers. In a number of countries, governments have introduced special benefits for male teachers in order to provide an incentive for men to enter the teaching profession.
- Other unions indicate a lack of female teachers and describe concrete efforts to facilitate women’s access to becoming a teacher: Gender quotas for teaching jobs, scholarships and flexible timetables to facilitate access to teacher education for women from remote areas, or affirmative action to encourage women to apply for higher job positions.





Graph D-11: Equality for women teachers

Many unions argue that, **while equal rights are set by the law, gender differences do occur because of social disparities and gender discrimination in society.** Women teachers often are not aware of their rights, and even if they are, there are few procedures available that enable women to protest against inequities and prove discrimination. Lack of accountability appears to be a problem across all regions. Unions reported a lack of transparency in selection procedures and personal preferences of members of selection committees, as well as discriminatory practices in promotion and appointment processes in schools. Additionally, laws sometimes exist for the public sector, but not for private schools, and often the implementation of laws depends largely on the school leadership.

Conclusions:

- **Law versus reality:** The gap between legal provisions and their enforcement is biggest when it comes to women’s access to the highest pay scales in the education hierarchy, as well as in the field of non-discrimination laws.
- **Impact of gender discrimination:** While equal rights are set by the law, gender differences do occur because of social disparities and gender discrimination in society. A lack of accountability procedures and complaint mechanisms further contributes to the gap between law and reality.

## E. Conclusions and Priorities for EI's Work

### 1. Conclusions from the Data

All through the report, one message appears again and again: The big gap between the stated commitments or policy goals on the one hand, and their implementation on the other hand. Despite mechanisms for gender equality in education unions, women are underrepresented in the union leadership. Despite gender equality in school curricula, gender stereotypes determine subject choice and teaching materials. Despite laws for gender equality in the labour market, women face discrimination in recruitment, promotion and pay. Despite equal access to politics, women are underrepresented in the political leadership. Despite the existence of laws, women are still not effectively protected against male violence.

These gaps between policy and reality are not isolated cases of gender inequality. Instead, they show how discrimination against women and gender stereotypes are manifested in all aspects of society. One of the root causes seems to be the unequal division of family responsibilities.

Where laws for gender equality exist, they are often badly implemented. Where accountability systems or complaints mechanisms exist, women are frequently disadvantaged in using them, because of their subordinate status in relation to men at home or as decision-makers and power-holders. Lack of security, power and resources keeps women from holding public or private institutions accountable and mutes their voices in determining collective goals.

Education can play a key role in empowering women and enabling them to break through the cycle of gender discrimination. This starts with access to education, but it doesn't stop there. Education has to challenge gender stereotypes through curricula, teaching methods and teaching materials. Through education, women gain access to career development, financial independence and autonomy, as well as full participation in the social and political life of their societies.

When it comes to education unions' contribution to equality between women and men, the report underlines the importance of committees and networks for gender equality: These are the places where the initiative is born to organise activities and campaigns for women's rights. EI Deputy General Secretary Jan Eastman pointed out: "Gender equality in unions lies within the union members' power and control. Progress made indicates that it is a realisable goal; and an essential goal to achieve."

## 2. Priority Issues and Activities

Unions were asked to indicate which issues and which activities should be the priorities of EI's work on the global level. The following tables show which themes were mentioned most frequently by the unions.

# of unions	Issues
45	<b>Education of girls and women</b> Quality public education for all, investment in education, women in higher education Gender stereotypes, gender equality education in curricula Schools as safe sanctuaries
32	<b>Gender equality for teachers</b> Working conditions, pay equity, equal pensions, teacher education, teacher recruitment, maternity rights, reconciliation of work and family responsibilities
23	<b>Women in unions</b> Women in union leadership, young women in unions
23	<b>Beijing &amp; MDGs</b> Women's rights, gender equality in developing countries
19	<b>Violence against women</b>

# of unions	Activities
36	<b>EI women's networks</b> Support to regional women's networks, as well as connecting the different networks and women's committees on a global level – newsletters, information exchange. (e.g. south-south cooperation project)
35	<b>Trainings</b> Half of these unions referred to skills trainings for women, especially leadership trainings. Half referred to trainings on gender issues for men and women, including the development of an education programme for gender equality.
27	<b>Advocacy</b> To UN, ILO, CSW, national governments. Develop EI gender equality strategy together with member organisations.
14	<b>Campaigns</b> On several issues. Disseminating information and raising awareness. Decentralised campaigns adapted to regional context. Including publications (electronic info kits, posters, brochures)
13	<b>Research</b> On several issues. Including case studies.

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