



Enhancing Gender Equality in and through Education

Baku, 7-8 May 2018 - Conference Report



EUROPEAN TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION
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Introduction

The ETUCE Conference on “Enhancing gender equality in and through education” was organised with the support of the ETUCE member organisation in Azerbaijan, the Independent Trade Union of Education Workers of the Azerbaijan Republic and aimed to address gender equality issues in education and society, in particular in Central and Eastern European countries. The Conference focused on how to overcome gender stereotypes, enhance the representation and participation of women in decision-making in all education sectors, and make the teaching profession more attractive to both men and women. In plenary discussions and presentations, ETUCE member organisations had the opportunity to discuss challenges for gender equality in education and the teaching profession in their national context and to share good practices of tackling gender inequality in the education sector. Smaller working group sessions provided space and time for participants to exchange experience and ideas on concrete education trade union activities to promote a gender sensitive approach in education, challenge gender stereotypes in education and society as a whole, and to overcome gender segregation among different education sectors and subjects.

Opening session

The ETUCE President Christine Blower welcomed all conference participants and highlighted the benefits of gender equality for both women and men, as well as for the national socio-economic situation.

Subsequently, Susan Flocken, ETUCE European Director, welcomed all participants thanked colleagues in Azerbaijan and the ETUCE Secretariat for the organisation of the event.

Minister of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Jeyhun Bayramov, outlined the actions of the Ministry aimed at attracting more men to the teaching profession and



in education by raising teachers' salaries, working with parents, and implementing inclusive education programmes.

Satar Mohbaliyev, President of the Azerbaijani Trade Union Confederation (ATUC) highlighted the key role of trade unions in promoting gender equality in Azerbaijan. He noted that 50.1% of the population of Azerbaijan are women and the number of women in sport, medicine, and science is constantly growing in the Republic. ATUC President also mentioned that the national legislation on gender equality support women in leadership and provide opportunities for more and more women to become members of the national and municipal governments.

Hijran Huseynova, President of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, informed the participants that 117 years ago, the Republic of Azerbaijan opened the first secular school for girls in the Muslim world. She noted that at present, every school in Azerbaijan has gender equality in its statutes and there are 6 incubator centres for young women leaders around the country.

ETUCE promoting gender equality in education and teaching profession

Susan Flocken, European Director, presented the ETUCE work on promoting gender equality in the European and international contexts. In the framework of the 2030 UN [Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, ETUCE focuses in particular on ensuring

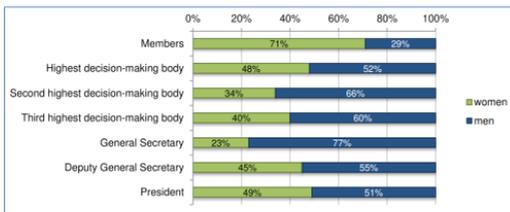


quality education, gender equality and decent work for all, using Education International's (EI) Gender Equality [Action Plan](#) and the ETUCE [Action Plan](#) on Gender equality within education trade union structures and in the teaching profession as the basis for its work.

The European Director highlighted that even though, there exists a strong legislative basis for gender equality in Europe ([European Pillar of Social Rights](#), [Council Of Europe Gender Equality Strategy](#), [European Commission Strategic engagement for gender equality](#), etc.), the [Gender Equality Index](#) of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) shows that Europe is moving towards gender equality at 'a snail's pace' and gender gaps prevail in almost all areas of life. In the teaching profession where the majority of the workforce are women, gender segregation persists among different education sectors (e.g. early childhood education vs higher education), and women are still under-represented in leadership positions both in the education sector and in education trade union structures.

Susan Flocken explained the structure of the ETUCE equality bodies and outlined several ETUCE initiatives aiming at promoting gender equality within education trade unions and in the teaching profession, address gender inequalities and gender stereotypes in education, and to empower education trade unions to address gender equality through social dialogue. ETUCE also regularly contributes to gender equality surveys, reports, and policy documents at European level (e.g. EIGE, European Trade Union Confederation).

Gender ratio in education trade union structures, ETUCE Survey, 2014



Few women are in leadership positions in schools and in unions



Presentations from Invited Speakers

Dr Anne Nègre, Vice-President in charge of Equality of the Conference of INGOs in the Council of Europe, presented gender mainstreaming actions and gender equality standards of the Council of Europe. She explained that gender mainstreaming is one of the key objectives of the Council of Europe as a tool to reach real equality between men and women. Gender Equality Rapporteurs have been nominated in both Council of Europe intergovernmental committees and monitoring bodies since 2012, an example to be followed by schools, universities, trade unions, and other organisations. Anne Nègre also outlined the Council of Europe standards on gender equality issues contained in the European

Convention on Human Rights and case-law compilation on gender equality, Istanbul Convention against violence against women and domestic violence, Anti-human trafficking Convention, and Recommendations for the States on many topics: education, media, sexist language, sex discrimination, public participation, etc.

Addressing the education sector, Dr Anne Nègre noted that Council of Europe recommends removing gender biases and discrimination in teaching, learning, and to support pathways to women's economic empowerment by systematically approaching the aspect of equality, in all subjects, books, movies, etc. She also highlighted the importance of preparing teachers to promote gender equality in teaching and learning and to prepare the girls and boys to challenge higher



6 objectives for the Gender Equality Strategy: Paving the Way, launched May, 3, 2018, Copenhagen The Framework of actions recommended by the CoE necessary for equality in education

- 1. Prevent and combat gender stereotypes and sexism
- 2. Prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence
- 3. Ensure the equal access of women to justice
- 4. Achieve balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making
- 5. Protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls
- 6. Achieve gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures.

positions in all fields. Dr Anne Nègre concluded that it is in the interest of the whole country to give the opportunity for a gender evolution as individual successes lead to the success of the whole community.

Jamilya Sattarova, President of the Republican Committee of the Trade Union of Cultural Workers of Azerbaijan, reported on the gender equality challenges and their solutions in the education system and in the society of the Republic of Azerbaijan. She pointed out that education is one of the key tools for achieving gender equality and providing access for women to more opportunities in life. Jamilya Sattarova informed participants that in 1998, the State Committee on women's affairs was established in Azerbaijan complemented by the law (in 2000) on ensuring the balanced representation of women and men in government, business and economic structures, and the gender equality law adopted in 2012.

The President of the Republican Committee of the Trade Union of Cultural Workers of Azerbaijan noted that even though in the recent year, gender mainstreaming is present in all education fields, gender stereotypes about the 'caring' and 'family' role of women persists in the Azeri society and the teaching profession remains strongly female-dominated with most of men only on the managerial positions. Therefore, the Trade Union Confederation of Azerbaijan considers gender equality as one of the important directions of its work: founded in 2006 by Trade Union Confederation, Centre for gender equality and women's affairs coordinates and manages the work of a women network of 2316 gender equality commissions and 8980 activists around the country. Moreover, since 2001, the Trade Union Confederation requires from its members to report on the balance between female and male membership in the trade union structures.





Working Group Sessions and Plenary Discussion

During smaller working group sessions, the conference participants discussed concrete education trade union activities aimed to promote a gender sensitive approach in education, challenge gender stereotypes in education and society as a whole and overcome gender segregation among different education sectors and subjects.

Participants named the lack of funds and sufficient investment in education as the main challenge for promoting gender equality in education, as well as teachers not having been trained to address gender equality issues in the classroom. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to educate teachers and teachers new to the profession on how to teach about gender topics and human rights and provide them with necessary tools (including on how to approach parents in this process). Participants concluded that education trade unions addressing all aspects of gender equality in education and the teaching profession, including elimination of gender stereotypes, gender segregation and the gender pay gap, enhancement of representation of women in leadership positions, and promotion of gender-sensitive language. Moreover, they underlined the significant role of trade unions in including gender equality in the legislative framework (e.g. maternity leave) and collective bargaining.

Among other recommendations for education trade unions' work on gender equality, participants mentioned the need to address specific challenges for gender equality for migrants and refugees, raise awareness on and promoting gender equality in education in times of digitalisation, and promote and implement concrete and practical measures against gender-based violence.

During the panel discussion on women in leadership, representatives from Romania

(Alexandra Cornea, FSLI), Georgia (Marina Alugishvili, ESFTUG), and Kazakhstan (Maira Amantayeva, KTUESW) shared with participants how their trade unions enhance the representation and participation of women in decision-making in all education sectors. The panellists agreed that combining family life with the career is the biggest challenge for women in leadership as the society considers that women's responsibility is to take care of children and household. As a consequence, women in leadership are often more criticised by the public so they prefer to stay on the medium level of decision-making to be less exposed.

To address these issues, the Romanian Free Trade Union Federation in Education (FSLI) proposed a new national law that would require from every organisation that has more than 50 employees to have an expert on gender equality as a legal counsellor. Moreover, in 2017, a department on Equality, Women and Youth was set up in FSLI which works in two main dimensions: directly promoting women to be leaders (explaining how to manage work-life balance, influence the national level of federation, etc.) and participating and implementing various projects (e.g. new project proposes to create 34 information points on gender equality around the country, write the first guide for leadership in education, and launch various social activities in order to discover potential leaders for national level).

Gender progress in decision-making structures of FSLI, Romania (2012 vs 2017)

In Kazakhstan, as explained by Maira Amantayeva, the challenge is that union activists at national level have a status of 'released workers' while union activists at local level do not have that status and depend on their 'good will' of their school heads and local administration. This situation creates additional obstacles to the advancement of women to the decision-making positions in trade unions. To address this difference between national and local/municipal level, the Kazakhstan Trade Union of Education and Science Workers (KTUESW) supports its young local



LEADING STRUCTURE	TOTAL	2012		2017	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
President		1	0	1	0
Prime - vice president		1	0	1	0
General Secretary		1	0	0	1
Executive Board	14 vice presidents	12	2	8	6
National Board	62 county leaders	51	11	42	20
Presidents of county organizations	62	56	8	42	20

1990 – 2012	18 departments	Equality/ Women/ Youth	NONE	
2012 – 2017	15 departments	Equality/ Women/ Youth	1	Man
2017 – 2021	10 departments	Equality and Women	1	Woman
		Youth, Culture and Sports	1	Man

members with grants and provide loans for those who move to teach in rural areas. Free Trade Union of Educators and Scientists of Georgia (ESFTUG) acts as a role model for women in leadership and ensures equal opportunities for men and women in the decision-making process in the education sector. Marina Alugishvili informed participants that in 2014, ESFTUG created a Gender Equality Committee which works towards empowering teachers with the capacity to promote gender equality. ESFTUG also organises national conferences for teachers according to their subjects where topics of gender equality and empowerment of women to take part in decision-making are discussed among other topics.

Country Cases

Poland

Dorota Obidniak from Polish education trade union ZNP presented union's activities aimed to overcome gender stereotypes in education and in the society. ZNP takes an active part in ETUCE projects related to the topic: Teacher Trade Union Actions Challenging Gender Stereotypes In Education And Gender Segregation In The Labour Market (2011-2012); Promoting gender equality within teacher trade unions and in the teaching profession II – Implementing and reinforcing teacher trade union actions on gender equality in times of austerity (2013-2014); and current project EU Convince – EU Common Values Inclusive Education. Moreover, ZNP cooperates with Polish NGOs that promote equality and address discrimination and



stereotypes in the society, within the framework of national platforms the Coalition for Non-discriminatory Education and the Equal Chance Coalition.

Key topics that ZNP addresses in its work toward the elimination of gender stereotypes are sexual education and access to early childhood education and care. Regarding the access to early childhood education, the ZNP presented a project of a citizens' initiative in the Polish Parliament to improve the access to pre-school education. In its regular publications, the ZNP also presents surveys on teachers' attitude to female students and gender issues and popularises the gender problematic. Preparing to celebrate 100 years of women's rights in Poland in September 2018, the ZNP is planning to promote stories of famous women-teachers who change Polish pedagogy and to broadly celebrate this event in schools and union's branches.






ZNP Publications

- ▶ Teachers' attitude to girls students
- ▶ Exam content of curricula: history, mathematic, ICT, sexual education
- ▶ Present current survey on teachers' attitude to girls students and gender issues
- ▶ Popularise the gender problematic

ZNP Publications

Tajikistan

Nigyna Jurayeva from the Trade Union of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan (TUESRT) presented the measures on promoting gender equality in education in the Republic of Tajikistan and union's views on them. She noted that with a view to create the necessary conditions for providing equal opportunities for women in all spheres of the society, the National Strategy for Activating the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011-2020 was adopted in 2011, and more than 80 presidential grants were allocated from the public budget (around 216 230 Euro) for the development of women's entrepreneurial initiatives. Moreover, the Presidential quota for enrolment in higher education was introduced for girls from remote regions of the Republic.

TUESRT closely cooperates with the State Committee on Women and Family Affairs in order to influence gender legislation in the Republic of Tajikistan. The Standing Committee for Gender Equality has been established under the Republican Committee of the trade union and has its working programme revised every year. TUESRT advocates for:

- further improvement of the access of girls, especially from rural areas to all types of general and vocational education;
- better involvement of local administration, education authorities, and civil society in the explanatory work among parents and local communities on the right of girls to obtain general and vocational education;
- development of mechanisms for gender expertise of textbooks for schools and universities with a view to include a gender component (including the criteria for the examination);
- introduce various forms of gender education at all levels of education for youth and adults;
- strengthen the role of media in promoting gender equality and overcoming gender stereotypes in the society.

Belarus

Natallia Davydenka from the Belarusian trade union of education and science personnel (BTUWES) explained that gender equality in Belarus is promoted on the national level in the framework of National Action Plan for gender equality which is updated every three years. However, even though, the national policy focuses in particular on providing public early childhood education services and financial support for mothers and fathers, caring responsibilities taken up by women still occupy more time during the day than caring responsibilities taken up by men (24% for women versus 9% for men). Therefore, BTUWES advocates for better measures for improving the work-life balance and promoting the social model of egalitarian family.

With a view to making the teaching profession more attractive to both men and women, BTUWES promotes better working conditions for education personnel with higher salaries and social benefits. The trade union uses a framework of the trilateral collective agreement to participate in the design of legislative measures and recommendations and to address the issues of collective protection of education personnel. It also promotes various measures for recruitment and retention of teachers, such as pedagogy-specialised classes in the high school for students interested in the teaching profession (students also have advantages when they apply for university afterwards), professional and psychological support for young teachers in their work, quality continuous professional development, and activities aimed at raising the status of teaching profession (e.g. professional contests 'The teacher of the year', literary contests, sharing of professional expertise by teachers).

Bulgaria

Yanka Takeva from Bulgarian education trade union SEB shared practices on how to make teaching profession more attractive to both men and women. She noted





that in Bulgaria, 85% of all teachers are women with 99% female teachers in early childhood education, while men dominate in higher-paid jobs related to economics or ICT. Yanka Takeva underlined that such unbalance results in the poverty rates much higher for single women than for single men (20% difference in 2017). To address these issues and with a view to make teaching profession more attractive for both men and women, SEB demanded from the government to design and implement a National strategy for the development of teaching staff. Trade union also developed and initiated the introduction of career development categories for teachers (e.g. teacher, senior teacher, main teacher), mentoring as a good practice of attracting and retention of young teachers in the profession, establishment of a Permanent Academy of Sciences and Innovations in Education (PANO) and a Balkan Institute of Teacher Qualifications.

Other SEB social policies and actions aim at raising social and economic status of the teaching profession and teachers' salaries in all education sectors in Bulgaria, expanding the framework of social partnership, including with parents and non-governmental organizations, and ensuring a better work-life balance for education personnel. Trade union also advocates for improvement of teachers' working conditions with a view to attract more young people in the teaching profession, as well as for stronger autonomy of education personnel.

Azerbaijan

Zumrud Rzayeva from the Independent Trade Union of Education Workers of the Azerbaijan Republic (AITUCEW) presented the situation of gender equality in the teaching profession in Azerbaijan and AITUCEW's recommendations on improving gender equality in the education sector. She noted that the teaching profession in Azerbaijan not only remains a highly feminised, studies also show that female teachers tend to take more additional tasks and responsibilities at school. Moreover, the teaching profession in the Republic of Azerbaijan is not among the highly respected or well-paid professions in the labour market.

In order to enhance gender equality in the education sector and raise the socio-

economic status of teaching profession, AITUCEW recommends to provide teachers with additional benefits (e.g. accommodation if teachers move to work in rural areas) and opportunities to realise their full potential (e.g. sport teachers can organise sport teams for students or teach elective courses of their interest). The union also advocates for stronger anti-discrimination legislation and better monitoring for its implementation by education employers.

CONCLUSION

All participants expressed their commitment to continue working on enhancing gender equality in and through education by addressing gender stereotypes and structural barriers for gender equality, empowering women and enhancing the representation and participation of women in decision-making in all education sectors, and contributing to raising the socio-economic status of the teaching profession to make it more attractive for both men and women.

Participants also noted even though most European countries already have the legislation on gender equality in place, it is not properly implemented which leave the space for many inequalities, including the education and teaching profession. Therefore the focus should be on the implementation of existing international, European, and national conventions and legislation on gender equality. Education trade unions play a key role in monitoring this implementation, making sure that unions' members know their rights, and providing safe space for unions' members to discuss challenges to gender equality that they face in their work. Participants also underlined that promoting and enhancing gender equality is a common responsibility of both men and women and that solidarity between education trade unions is of utmost importance.

Conference conclusions were collected and presented in a Conference note which was approved by participants and submitted for adoption by ETUCE Committee.







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