

## **Integrating a gender perspective in local, regional and national growth policies**

### **Summary and analysis of study visit reports in Winnet 8**

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#### **Introduction**

Winnet 8 is a transnational project intended to capitalize previous experiences of integrating a gender perspective in local, regional and national growth policies. These experiences were made in a number of projects exporting the Swedish model of Women Resource Centres to other European Union member states. In Winnet 8, these efforts are to be consolidated by the involvement of local, regional and national actors in eight member states: Bulgaria, Finland, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Sweden and UK. The actors in each country are to be engaged in policy development to address the problems with low employment rates among women in combination with horizontally segregated labour markets and the lack of women in entrepreneurship, innovation and technology. These problems are perceived as obstacles for regional competitiveness.

In order to achieve the intended policy development, Multi Actor Groups (MAGs) have been established in the participating regions. In these groups, representatives from managing authorities, local and regional authorities, research institutes, social partners and NGOs are participating. The MAGs will use a gender perspective to analyse growth policies in their own regions and to elaborate action plans to improve these policies. In this work, the MAGs are to be inspired by the other W8 partners' practices of integrating a gender perspective in local, regional and national growth policies. Each MAG carries out a study visit to another region involved in Winnet 8. During these visits, data is gathered concerning labour market segregation and the measures employed for improving gender equality within employment, entrepreneurship and innovation. This data collection has resulted in study visit reports from each MAG.

This report summarizes and analyses the study visit reports in order to give an encompassing picture of how the different regions in Winnet 8 have tried to influence growth policies to become more gender equal.

#### **Collection of data**

The data informing this encompassing report is constituted by study visit reports from the MAGs in Scotland, Portugal, Greece, Poland, Finland, Sweden and Italy. The statistical part is thereto informed by the presentation made by the sociologist PhD Michela Cozza during the thematic workshop organized by Winnet 8 in Italy, 29-20 Nov 2010.

During their study visits to other regions, the MAGs were encouraged to use a template to collect data about the visited region's characteristics and measures to integrate a gender perspective in growth policies. This template was developed by one of the Head Gender Expert Researchers contracted in Winnet 8. The regional characteristics concerned the main problem areas focused by the Winnet 8 project, i.e. low employment rates among women, horizontally segregated labour market, as well as lack of women in entrepreneurship, innovation and technology. These three areas were measured by the following indicators:

- Population rate
- Education levels among women and men
- Share of women being active on the labour market
- Unemployment rates among women and men
- Share of women and men being entrepreneurs
- Distribution of women and men in different occupations
- Distribution of women and men entrepreneurs in different sectors

The data collection about measures to integrate a gender perspective in growth policies was divided into four areas:

1. Visions, actors and measures
2. Empowerment
3. Management
4. Networking

These areas represented different aspects of gender integration, e.g. which actors who were involved in the efforts, which features that characterized the measures, which

needs that had been identified among women in the region, what the primary components of the gender perspective were, and what kind of success and resistance had been experienced when trying to influence policy agendas.

The MAGs were encouraged to perform the data collection with an open mind, paying attention to aspects appearing as relevant in the specific context even if these were not covered by the provided template. The template was in practice applied quite creatively by the MAGs and the focus varied according to cultural and personal interests. Since the study visit reports turned out quite differently in each country, this encompassing summary and analysis are not structured according to countries but rather according to the different issues raised in the study visit reports. These issues are:

- Labour market segregation
- Shared visions and goals
- Multiplicity of actors
- Variety of problems and needs
- Abundance of measures
- Matching problems and measures

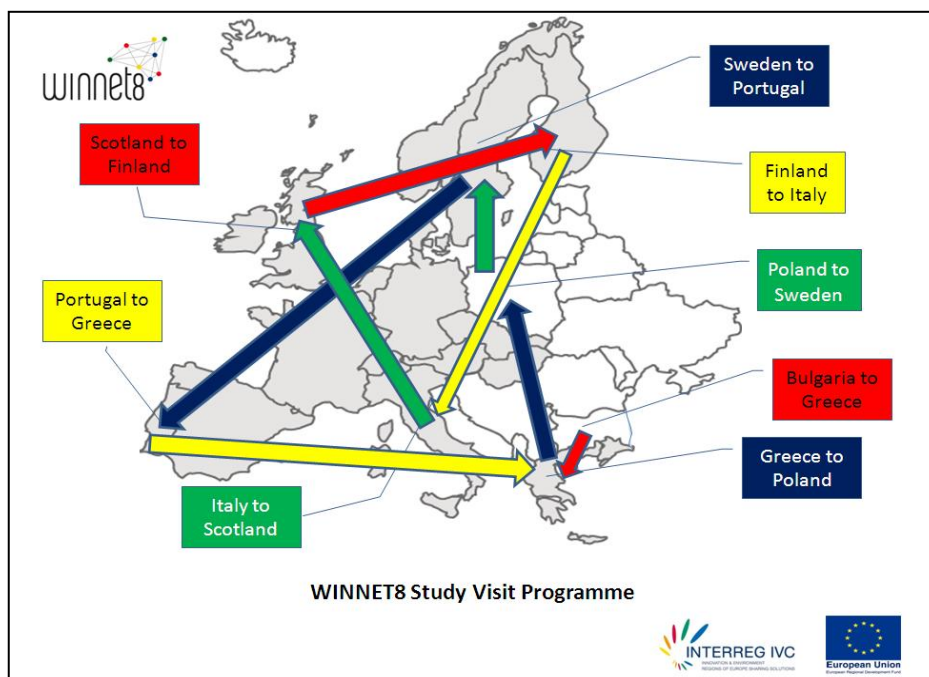
These issues will be dealt with one by one in the upcoming sections. At the end of the report, some learning points are highlighted in order to analyze how the different issues raised in the report might enhance or defer the further efforts by the MAGs.

### **Performed study visits**

During the fall of 2010, each MAG carried out a study visit to another region involved in Winnet 8. Portugal and Bulgaria visited Greece. Italy visited Scotland. Sweden visited

Portugal. Greece visited Poland. Scotland visited Finland. Finland visited Italy. Poland visited Sweden.

The map below illustrated that the study visits performed in Winnet 8 project have covered Europe from North to South and from West to East.<sup>1</sup>

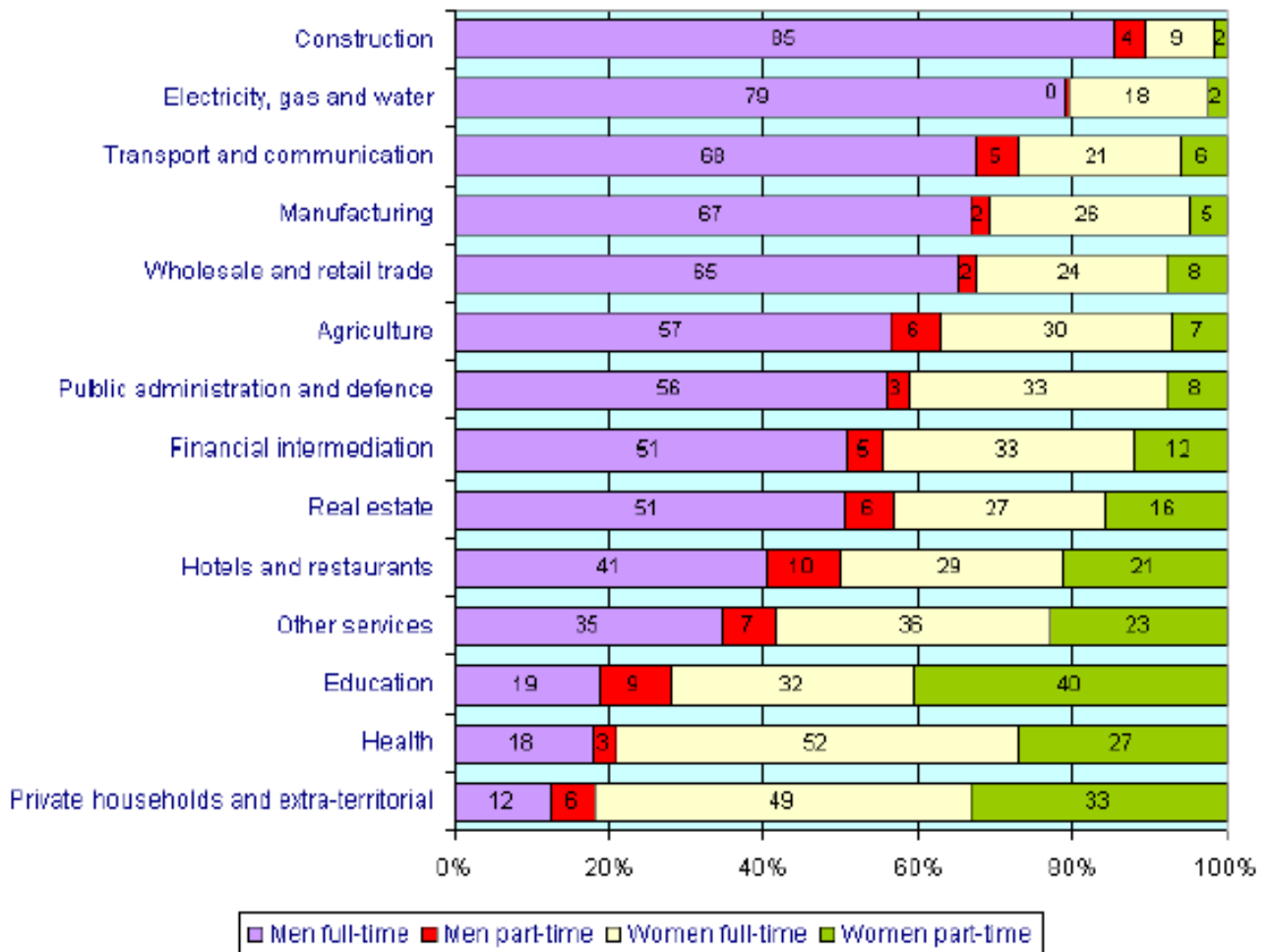


<sup>1</sup> The map is drawn by Project Coordinator Kaisa Männikkö, Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia in Finland

### Labour market segregation

The Winnet 8 project addresses the problems with low employment rates among women in combination with horizontally segregated labour markets and the lack of women in entrepreneurship, innovation and technology. A horizontally segregated labour market implies that women and men mainly work in different occupations and in different economic sectors. Generally, women are

working within the services sector, including e.g. health care, elderly care, child care, education, tourism and culture. Men are mainly working within manufacturing industries or industries based on natural resources or new technology (e.g. ICT and biotech). *Figure 1* below illustrates the segregated labour market in the EU member states.



Source: EWCS 2005, cited in European Foundation, 2008.

Figure 1. Gender segregation by sector, EU27

Michela Cozza states that the employment rate among women in the EU is now close to attain the objective of 60 % by 2010, mentioned in the Lisbon strategy, having increased from 51 % to 58 % in ten years. As Cozza observes, there are major differences between different member states, though, varying from 37 % in Malta to 73 % in Denmark. The labour market segregation varies among the countries participating in Winnet 8, too. The Nordic countries have among the most horizontally segregated labour markets in EU-27, whilst the South and East Europe is less segregated. On the other hand, the employment rates among women are lower, especially in Southern Europe. This reflects the fact that in the Southern countries, the public sector is not as extensive as in the Nordic countries where health care, elderly care and child care are performed as paid work by – mainly women – employees. In the Southern countries, the same tasks are more often performed as unpaid work outside the labour market by women as a part of their family life. In the Eastern countries, the less segregated labour market could be due to their history of

socialist governments, discerning women as an important group of labour force.

Cozza states that parenthood has a strong influence on employment participation among women and suggests that this is due to traditional gender roles and the lack of childcare facilities in many EU member states. The differing extension of the public sector is thereby not only to be seen in the division of paid work between women and men, but also in the very preconditions for performing such work: the provision of child care. This is so far better organised in the Nordic countries than in the Southern ones. Traditional gender roles are another aspect affecting employment participation, according to Cozza. Contemporary gender research has revealed that different regions have different gender contracts, providing limits for what people are allowed or expected to do, depending on if they are women or men (Forsberg 1998). The regions in Winnet 8 can thus be expected to have differing gender contracts forming a specific regional pattern of labour market segregation.





### Shared visions and goals

One of the issues that the MAGs were encouraged to focus during their study visits was the visions guiding the visited region's efforts to integrate a gender perspective in local, regional or national growth policies or development initiatives. Several reports did not mention any vision at all. Other used the same vision as that of the government or the Lisbon strategy of the EU. In some reports the vision was articulated in quite an abstract manner, such as "women contributing to GDP and welfare" or "desegregation of labour markets". Collectively constructed visions are important, because they are usually built on the basis of shared values and they guide the aim, which again directs the choice of objectives. An appropriate vision directed towards an appropriate level of policy making helps define the mission and the objectives of the endeavour.

### Multiplicity of actors

There is plenty of evidence in the study visit reports that the project has mobilized a great variety of actors from different fields, disciplines and sectors of society. They range from grass root activists to top level politicians, such as the President of the Province of Veneto, in Italy. In some cases the actors have formed Quadruple Helix (or Quattro Helix) networks in order to attain their goals, meaning that they have involved stakeholders from four different societal sectors: the public, the private, the academic and the non-profit sector (Lindberg 2007, Danilda et al 2009, Carayannis & Campbell 2010). Some of the MAGs are organized like this. This organizational strategy is similar to the EU model of Public, Private, People Partnerships – called "The Four Ps".



### A variety of problems and needs

The problems among the stakeholders are different, but some of them are common in all countries. The labour market segregation is statistically most severe in the Northern countries, whereas the Southern countries have less segregated labour market (concerning *paid work, nota bene*). The need for financial resources is shared by all stakeholders irrespective of the country or culture. Most countries provide training courses and business support to entrepreneur women, as lack of know-how is a perceived need. Gender-sensitive business coaching also recognizes the need to increase the self-esteem of the trainee. The importance of the support given by the family and the community is recognized in some countries. A major problem, especially in the Southern countries, is a traditional

“macho mentality”, preventing women from improving their work-life balance.

### An abundance of measures

The reports disclose that the stakeholders in Winnet 8 have applied a great variety of measures, such as equality work & gender mainstreaming, lobbying and networking. Even systematic and systemic labour market interventions both to the supply and demand side, are not unknown in Scotland.

Women’s Resource Centres (WRCs) constitute a specific way of integrating a gender perspective in growth policies. The centres have been developed all over Sweden since the early 1990’s, expanding internationally thereafter. These centres are supposed to increase women’s influence



over regional development policies. In practice, they manage development projects and support women wanting to realize their ideas (of new businesses, innovations, projects, organizations etc). The interventions provided by the WRCs mentioned in the W8 study reports often comprise a variety of packaged and targeted measures, such as special courses, counseling, project work, business planning, founding of coops, etc.). They also include different mainstreaming tools, such as the Three Rs (mapping of the Representation, Resources and Realia), different gender games and gender pedagogy, especially in

Sweden. The town of Portogruaro, in the neighbourhood of Venice, has applied the Italian social innovation approach, called “Time Planning” with a local women’s group.

The study reports comprise some extensive examples of outcomes, such as the expanded network of WRCs in Sweden, the tested methodology to insert women into science, engineering and technology (SET), the inspiring Girl Geeks and Close the Gap-projects in Scotland, the newly founded coops and start ups in several countries, better work-life balance and reduced pay gaps in other places.





## Learning points

In this section, some learning points are highlighted in order to analyze how the different issues raised in the report might enhance (or defer) the further efforts by the MAGs in Winnet 8.

Well-resourced equal opportunity structures at the local, regional and national level seem to be necessary in order to support the entering of women in the labour market and their contribution to growth. Only Sweden has succeeded in building such structures all over the country, e.g. via Women Resource Centres and Gender Experts at the County Administrations. Italy has also a decentralized support system of equal opportunities, but with lacking financial resources.

The approach to gender equality as an economic resource, and not as a constraint, is an interesting view promoted by Scotland and Sweden. The labour market segregation can in fact be claimed to be a market failure, where women and men's abilities and competences are not fully used. However, the W8 partners have not yet discussed the definition of the "sustainable growth" promoted by the project. Does the project imply that women should obey the liberalist market ideology or that they should formulate alternative – more holistic – economic solutions to their work-life balance?

The organization and role of WRCs is another learning point in Winnet 8. None of the study visit reports describes the WRCs in a way that truly benchmarks this model of integrating a gender perspective in growth policies. It might be a good idea to try to model the

WRCs collectively, as a separate activity in the project. Then the analysis and management of different types of WRCs in varying national and cultural contexts might be enhanced.

Recent European charters could also help the Winnet 8 participants. The European Commission recently launched their "Strategy for equality between women and men" for the period 2010-2015. Equal economic independence is one of the goals stated there. The Commission also recently launched a new strategy – EU 2020 – for the long term development of the union, replacing the former Lisbon strategy. EU 2020 is labelled "a European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth", thus opening up for a wider spectrum of actors and areas to be concerned by growth policies on national, regional and local level. The extended range of actors and areas is in line with the intentions of Winnet 8 to increase the gender equality in growth policies and could be exploited as an opportunity to implement effective action plans. The European Charter for Equality in Local life, launched by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions 2009, have thereto been signed by several of the W8 member countries, opening up yet other opportunities for Winnet 8 to affect local, regional and national growth policies.

Multi-level governance is yet another learning point that might enhance (or defer) the further efforts by the MAGs in Winnet 8. Irrespective of the application of a variety of measures and tools in the project, there is a risk of activities taking place without being guided by a clear, common vision and

measurable goals. Combined with a lack of a could end up in action plans that are inefficient and irrelevant in regard to contemporary growth policies. A consciously applied multi-level strategy could be helpful in order to sharpen the action plans, as it manages to coordinate the actions of grass root activists as well as of top level politicians. Such a multi-level strategy implies the simultaneous employment of a top down

coordinated, multi-level strategy, this and a bottom-up approach, acknowledging the importance of prevalent policies as well as measures enforced by local level activism.

An additional observation is that the settings of the study visits and the thematic workshops turned out to be important, as they provided impetus and spirit to the collaborative work within Winnet 8.



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