

Equal pay works! Achieving pay equity for women in Europe's public services
PSI / EPSU / EI
Geneva, 7-8 October 2004

Workshop Briefing
Friday 8 October, 14.00 – 15.30

Group 1: Job evaluation

Background

An increasing number of public service organisations are using job evaluation to identify the value of jobs. Experience has shown that many of these schemes continue to undervalue women's jobs and skills. Developing job evaluation schemes free from gender bias has been important to the achievement of gender equality.

Job evaluation is a system for comparing different jobs within an organisation based on the demands of the job or roles performed, rather than on how an individual performs. Job evaluation is used to evaluate a wide range of jobs by using a common set of rules that are applied to all jobs regarding *skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions*. Job evaluation schemes can help to uncover different components of wages and how they are valued, including the various components that make up wages, bonuses and other fringe benefits in cash or in kind, working time, education and training and so on.

The value of the work done by women is often overlooked in the setting of wages. Examples of skills typically held by women in public service jobs which are often overlooked include: manual dexterity skills, hazards associated with working with sick or frail people, working with difficult people, stresses involved in providing front-line services and in dealing with the public. Male jobs are not undervalued in this way. Good job evaluation schemes are those that avoid gender bias and that question prevailing stereotypes about the worth of women's work.

Aims of the workshop

- To discuss the role of job evaluation in valuing women's work
- To highlight the role that unions can play in job evaluation
- To identify strategies for using job evaluation

Tasks / discussion points

- a) What role can job evaluation play in achieving equal pay for work of an equal value?
- b) What positive or negative experiences do participants have of job evaluation schemes?
- c) How can unions use and press for job evaluation free from gender bias in order to progress equal pay?
- d) What can unions be doing in the future to make use of job evaluation to enhance the value placed on women's work?

Equal pay works! Achieving pay equity for women in Europe's public services
PSI / EPSU / EI
Geneva, 7-8 October 2004

Workshop Briefing
Friday 8 October, 14.00 – 15.30

Group 2: Low pay and living minimum wages

Background

The 2004 EPSU/PSI survey found that measures to address low pay and minimum wages are central to achieving pay equity. This includes measures that focus on basic incomes or living minimum wages. Low pay is a particular problem faced by many women in the public services. It is particularly associated with part-time and casual work, and work that has a low value placed on it, the majority of which is performed by women.

Living minimum wages are a potentially powerful way of reducing pay inequalities between women and men. Centrally agreed collective agreements have been important in some countries in setting minimum wage levels that can be further improved at local levels. However, local wage setting often disadvantages women who tend to receive fewer locally negotiated bonuses and special awards. Public service unions are increasingly focussing their attention on tackling low pay through living minimum wages. Examples of how this has been achieved are:

- Identifying the grades or jobs that are dominated by women and target pay increases for those particular grades or jobs;
- Eliminating low paid grades completely so that female dominated grades are lifted into a higher paid grade;
- Negotiating a separate budget to fund pay equity increases so that other workers are not made to pay for these gains out of the general wage budget.

Providing for living minimum wages does not necessarily solve the problem of the low value given to women's jobs and skills. Pay equity is about a recognition of the value of women's work. For this reason think about the twin track approach to pay equity and living minimum wages. Whilst they are part of the same equation they deal with different aspects of pay and income.

Workshop aims

- To discuss the role of living minimum wages as a strategy for achieving gender pay equality.
- Highlight the roles that unions can be playing to campaign for living minimum wages.

Tasks / discussion points

- a) Discuss the role of living minimum wages as a strategy to achieve gender pay equity. What experiences are there of the implementation of minimum wages and their impact, if any, on gender pay equity?
- b) How can unions campaign for living minimum wages and what should be the role and focus on these campaigns?
- c) What benefits are anticipated for public services?

Equal pay works! Achieving pay equity for women in Europe's public services
PSI / EPSU / EI
Geneva, 7-8 October 2004

Workshop Briefing
Friday 8 October, 14.00 – 15.30

Group 3: Collective bargaining

Background

Many unions view collective bargaining as the most important route to achieving gender pay equity. There are many good examples of how gender pay equality has been mainstreamed into collective bargaining, for example, by requiring women's and men's job content to be evaluated for gender bias, or by negotiating separate equality payments for low paid women workers. However, the 2004 EPSU/PSI survey showed that there was a long way to go before gender pay equality is fully integrated into pay bargaining and that there are variations in the extent to which all workers are covered by collective agreements.

The reality is that women are not always at the bargaining table and women's pay issues are routinely ignored in collective bargaining. A further problem is that in some countries inadequate or ineffective bargaining systems exist to tackle pay equity. For this reason strengthening the role and breadth of collective bargaining in the public services is a major objective of many public service trade unions. This means dealing with discriminatory clauses that disadvantage women, addressing negative assumptions about the value of the skills held by women and addressing the lower wage rates given to women's jobs.

Workshop aims

- To examine the ways by which equal pay can become more effectively integrated into collective bargaining
- To explore how to mainstream pay equity into collective bargaining.

Tasks / discussion points

- a) What key issues should negotiating teams consider in order to address gender pay issues. Share experiences of i) getting the issue on to union bargaining agendas and ii) improving the representation of women on collective bargaining teams.
- b) What can collective bargaining do in practice to achieve gender pay equity? Issues to consider are:
 - How elements of pay may discriminate against women e.g. bonuses, non-monetary payments, pay increments, criteria for performance related pay etc.
 - Whether particular groups of workers are discriminated against in their pay, for example, part-time or temporary/contract workers.
 - How unions can negotiate to include pay equity clauses that address minimum or basic income and a separate fund to pay for pay equity adjustments so that they are not funded from main salaries bills.