



EQUALITY IN UNION CULTURE

Booklet on good practices in gender equality in union organizations



Acknowledgements

This booklet shows the results of a survey conducted by the UNI Equal Opportunities Department among different UNI Global Union affiliate unions. We want to acknowledge the good will of those responsible for responding sending in information from each organization in preparation of this report.

Unions that participated in the survey include:

AEBU-UY Asociación de Bancarios del Uruguay (Association of Bank Employees of Uruguay) – Uruguay
COMFIA CC.OO-ES Federación de Servicios Financieros y Administrativos de CC.OO. (CC.OO-ES Federation of Financial and Administrative Services) – Spain
CONTRAF-CUT-BR Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores do Ramo Financeiro (National Confederation of Workers in the Financial Area) – Brazil
CWA – US Communications Workers of America – United States
DBSSU-SG DBS Staff Union – Singapore
DFKF-DK Danish Hairdressers & Beauticians Union – Denmark
DFL-DK Danske Forsikringsfunktionærers Landsforening (National Association of Danish Clerical Workers in the Insurance Industry) – Denmark
FNV BONDGENOTEN-NL FNV (Allies of FNV) – Netherlands
ICTJ-JP The Federation of Information and Communication Technology Service Workers of Japan – Japan
PSEU-IE Public Service Executive Union – Ireland
PSZ-HU Hungarian Postal Trade Union – Hungary
SACCAWU-ZA South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union – South Africa
SASBO - The Finance Union – South Africa
SDA-AU Shop, Distributive & Allied Employees' Association – Australia
SIBANPO-CR Sindicato de Trabajadores del Banco Popular (Popular Bank Workers' Union)– Costa Rica
SUTEP-AR Sindicato Único de Trabajadores del Espectáculo Público y Afines de la República Argentina – (Single Public Entertainment and Related Fields Workers' Union of the Argentinean Republic) – Argentina
SYNAPOSTEL-CI Syndicat National des Postes et Télécommunications (Post and Telecommunications Union) – Ivory Coast
UFCW-US United Food & Commercial Workers International Union, AFL-CIO, CLC – United States
UNICOME-NP Union of Commercial Employees – Nepal
VNUPTW-VN Vietnam National Union of Post and Telecom Workers – Vietnam



Contents

Introduction	1
1. The paramount objective: Increasing female participation in the unions	3
1.1 Organizing more women. Increasing membership	4
1.2 Increase female participation in the union structure	6
1.2.a The establishment of an equality policy	6
1.2.b The establishment of quotas or positions reserved for women	8
1.2.c Amendments to the Statutes of the union	9
1.2.d Data breakdown by gender	10
1.2.e Activities on gender equality for both genders	12
1.2.f Communication, information and promotion of an equality culture	13
1.2.g Capacity-building and training for women	16
1.2.h Actions aimed at solving female members specific problems	17
1.3 Specific internal structures	20
2. Towards Equality Culture: Achievements and obstacles	23
2. 1 Achievements	23
2.2 Obstacles	24
Charts	25



Introduction

This work is a continuation of the *Practical Guide to Establish Gender Equality Policies in Union Organizations* written in 2011 by the UNI Equal Opportunities Department. It is part of a series of activities that stem from the resolution on *Breaking Through in Women's Representation in UNI Global Union*, which proposed the goal of achieving 40% representation of one or another gender in all UNI structures and its affiliates during the period 2011-2014.

In this case, it is a report that presents data and examples of the different practices that unions around the world implement to promote gender equality in their structure. The main objective of this work is to continue offering UNI affiliates a series of resources, guidelines and tools to disseminate better practices in their organizations in order to increase female participation at all levels of responsibility and thus, reach the 40% representation envisaged in the said motion.

The information has been organized and classified in line with the objectives that each activity or group of activities aims to fulfil and has been divided into three broad areas:

- **Organizing more women in unions.**
- **Increasing female participation in organizations, especially in decision-making positions.**
- **Creating or fostering the creation of specific structures to promote equality.**

In order to facilitate rapid reading and easy information search, each group of activities has been introduced by a brief description, a comprehensive overview of the steps taken by the group of unions surveyed, and some examples with detailed information regarding the way in which those activities are conducted in some of the organizations, or the specific contents of such activities.

Furthermore, this work includes the achievements observed by those unions that have implemented some of the activities, as well as the barriers or obstacles that still inhibit the success of equality promotion in their organizations.

As usual, this work does not seek to offer fixed solutions, which can be transferred to another organization, as that would be a mistake. Each union organization has its own culture and develops its activities in a particular social, economic and political context. This context cannot be transferred to other similar organizations. Though similar, each has its unique characteristics.

Therefore, the challenge that we are involved in as a global union is to look for ways in which to collaborate in each union's efforts, by offering tools, ideas and capabilities that can be used to the best interest of male and female workers worldwide, in differing contexts.

Finally, we must remember that achieving gender equality within unions and the labour world as a whole is a slow and incremental process. The examples of good practices given in this publication reflect different stages towards the achievement of this objective; from first steps to the development of long-term and more comprehensive policies and programmes.





1. The paramount objective: Increasing female participation in the unions

If unions pursue gender equality at work, defending it as a fundamental human right, they should be the first to show that equality is an integral part of their structure and organizational policies and should promote adequate representation of men and women in all areas.

As we identified in the previous guide, every organizational policy seeking specific changes must base its actions on a series of objectives. These objectives can be broken down according to their level of generalization.

In the case we are concerned with, the general objective that all unions surveyed seek to develop through the implementation of the different activities is to increase female participation, both at the grassroots and within decision-making bodies. While recent years have evidenced a significant increase in the number of women in the global labour market, and in the field of trade unionism, there remains a gap, especially in positions of power and in decision-making and negotiation roles.

This fundamental objective can be further broken down into objectives that are more specific and require different actions to fulfil each. Such specific objectives can include:

- **Organizing more women or increasing female membership in unions**
- **Increasing female participation in the union structure**
- **Creating specific structures for women**

In the following section we can see the kind of actions that have been taken to fulfil these objectives in those organisations that were surveyed.

1.1 Organizing more women. Increasing membership

For women to be represented equally in the unions, the first step the organizations should take is attracting them to their ranks. In order to do so, unions should take into account that women have their own priorities and needs because they belong to that group. It follows that the organization's activities should contain, or be rooted in, the concept of gender equality.

Among the consulted unions, 78% stated that they promote activities to organize more women.

Among these activities, we can highlight the following:

- **Campaigns providing incentives and highlighting the importance of female participation in the union (71%)**
- **Women empowering campaigns (28%)**
- **Structure organization, networks and women's collectives (21%)**





- One of the objectives of the policy implemented by **AEBU (Uruguay)** is the organization and training of more women in order to engage in all of the union's structures. In this respect, the union fosters female workers' participation through training courses and information campaigns that highlights the importance of their participation for a smooth functioning of the organization.

- The leaders of **DBSSU (Singapore)** schedule a special day, called Member's Day, when all members of the union, including their families, are invited to participate. The objective of this type of activity is to strengthen the workers' feeling of belonging to the union and fostering their participation within it.

- Among the equality objectives set by **FNV (Netherlands)** we can find the "promotion of active inclusion as a means

to attract more female members” to their ranks. For this purpose they conduct activities that disseminate information about the work done by the union on issues that affect them, such as their right to equal remuneration (by means of e-cards about Equal Pay Day, childcare, layoffs, etc. This leads to more women identifying with the union as they understand the benefits that participation provides.

- In the case of **PSEU (Ireland)** they have sought equal participation between men and women in the union by fostering female workers’ participation in the organization through an introductory training course devoted exclusively to this group.

- **SACCAWU (South Africa)** has run a project targeted at union leadership construction in the workplace. Their strategy has consisted of focusing their efforts on their work with women in their place of employment, training them to take on leadership roles, and raising awareness of union activism. One of the women was chosen by her peers as a delegate. The elected women have become leaders who are more familiar with the organization process, workers’ rights and gender issues. Even more, they have become a role model for the rest, who can see new empowerment in their workplace and higher motivation to be part of union activism.

- The members of **SASBO (South Africa)** disseminated information about the creation of a new union for domestic workers by distributing brochures at train stations and taxi ranks. Each new affiliate was encouraged to bring ten friends. This type of workers – mostly women, perform their duties in private homes and their approach to union movement is much more complex.

1.2 Increase female participation in the union structure

In most cases, unions have been organizations that have been highly dominated by males. In spite of the increase in female participation in the labour market, their representation did not increase by a similar proportion within union structures. (The reasons for this are varied: to learn more about this we recommend that you check the guides previously published by the Department). In recognition of this fact, many unions have taken specific measures to address this under representation to create more equitable and better representation within organizations. These measures cover a wide range of actions and activities – from short time, stand-alone initiatives through the formulation of long-term, strategic policy frameworks that comprise a sequence of actions.

In order to make the reading of the practices among the surveyed unions more accessible we have classified the measures in the following categories:

- The establishment of an equality policy
- The establishment of quotas or positions reserved for women
- Amendments to the Statutes of the union
- Data breakdown by gender
- Activities on gender equality for both genders
- Communication, information and promotion of an equality culture
- Capacity-building and training for women
- Actions aimed at solving female members specific problems

1.2.a The establishment of an equality policy

A policy is a work plan that starts with a current situation sought to be modified by building a future to reach through a certain number of actions that will be developed within a certain period of time.

A gender equality policy is that which, on the basis of the recognition of diversity, seeks to solve existing inequalities between men and women in a given group.

78% of organizations have established an equality policy or plan with specific objectives.



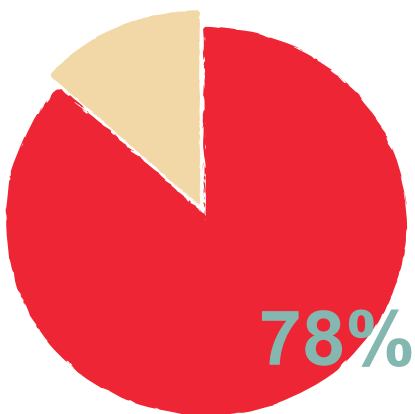
— - **CONTRAF-CUT (Brazil)** has developed a policy whose main objectives are to increase female participation in the union, raise awareness among management about the importance of democratizing power and decision-making structures by organizing women's collectives in each of the country's states, and achieving 40% women's representation at their next Congress.



- **FNV (Netherlands)** has implemented an action programme called 'Time for diversity 2011-2015'. The objectives of this programme in terms of gender equality – as it is not a plan exclusively devoted to women but also seeks to improve the situation of youth, migrants and other minorities - are to promote the inclusion of more women in the union, equalise women's representation according to the composition of the workforce in each sector, and implement actions which have previously generated good results.

- **UCFW (USA)** has a diversity programme whose objectives and action plan stems from the results of surveys conducted among workers around the nation. The strategies adopted by the organization in this programme are: conducting 'equality audits', devoting time and resources to educate union staff and activists with a view to inclusion and diversity; rethinking responsibilities and commitments according to working time in the union to make it realistic for people with family responsibilities; including equality in delegates' training, and courses on political action, collective bargaining and leadership; as well as making the union's position regarding diversity clearly understood in all publications, meetings and on the website among others.

- In the case of **VNUPTW (Vietnam)** they created an Action Plan on Gender Equality 2011-2015 to strengthen female participation in managerial positions and reduce the gender gap; improve the educational capacities in information technology and foreign languages in women collectives; ensure gender equality in all union activities; ensure equality in family life, eliminate gender-based violence and empower female workers.



Stated that they promote activities to organize more women.

Of organizations have established an equality policy or plan with specific objectives.

1.2.b The establishment of quotas or positions reserved for women



There are a number of positive action measures which are designed to address a specific issue of women's under-representation within a specific time frame. Examples include the recruitment of women for preparation to take elected office at decision-making levels which are mandatory and oblige the incorporation of women to lists of nominations or electoral lists. Their validity is subject to overcoming obstacles that hinder adequate female representation in positions of power.

In 44% of cases, unions established women's representation quotas or an allocation of work posts in their organizations.



- Among the federal statutes of **COMFIA CC.OO (Spain)** it has been established that "*candidatures in the organizations in which female affiliation is equal or higher than 30% of the total number, will keep the 60/40% rate for each gender. In those organizations where affiliation is lower than 30%, candidatures will have to include at least a number of women proportional to their share of the union's female membership, and increase 10% of the total of female affiliates.*"

- Article 51 of the Procedure for the Elections of the Executive Committee of **SIBANPO (Costa Rica)** states that “*Ballot papers for positions in the Executive Committee should include at least 40% female and/or male participation*”.

1.2.c Amendments to the Statutes of the union



In this case, unions modify or include specific clauses on gender equality in their constitutions, statutes or basic documents.

Provisions of this type may include statements signalling the commitment of the organization to eradicate discrimination and gender gaps, positive action measures such as the ones mentioned earlier, or adopting references to inclusive policy within its objectives and guidelines.

**Among the unions that responded to UNI’s survey,
33% have included sections
to promote equality in their statutes.**



- The statutes of **PSZ union (Hungary)** reflect the right for “everyone, without distinction of sex, nationality, race, political or religious ideas”, to be members of the union, and after 18 years of age to be elected for a position in the decision-making bodies of the organization.”

- In the cases of **CONTRAF-CUT (Brazil)**, **UNICOME (Nepal)**, **SYNAPOSTEL (Ivory Coast)** and **SASBO (South Africa)**, the unions stated that they plan amendments for their statutes in upcoming Congresses to include clauses regarding 40% female representation in their decision-making structures, in line with UNI Global Union’s official guidelines.

1.2.d Data breakdown by gender



Statistical data collection about gender among union members and affiliates is a useful tool to diagnose gaps in gender representation, and then to develop programmes of activities that seek to bridge them. It is also useful to monitor policies which have been adopted and the results that arise from them.

Among the consulted unions 72% have statistical in relation to gender.





- **COMFIA CC.OO (Spain)** designed a so-called 'Gender Map' which showed union participation and representation of men and women in workers' commissions. This map collects statistical information about affiliation, participation and representation of men and women in the Union. Data is divided into three categories – Organizational Map, Affiliation, and Union Elections – and is available in the Sistema Informático Confederal (Confederal Computerized System) which is maintained by its member organizations. This document is a useful tool for the follow-up and evaluation of equality policies within the organization.

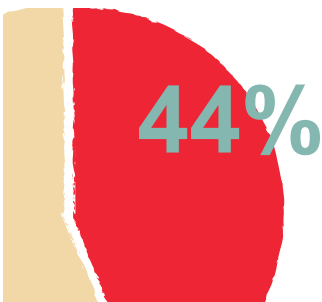
- **DFKF (Denmark)** collects data that can be measured on the basis of gender. The data can show salary levels of female workers and members of the union. This data is compared to those organizations that are dominated by men in order to find potential discrepancies as the organization represents workers in a sector dominated by women (Hairdressers & Beauticians)

- In order to better serve women's needs, **FNV (Netherlands)** conducted a survey among female members and potential members in 2011. The results were used to design gender activities from 2012 that met those needs identified in the study. A general conclusion was that women identified different needs than men. For instance, in the survey, women

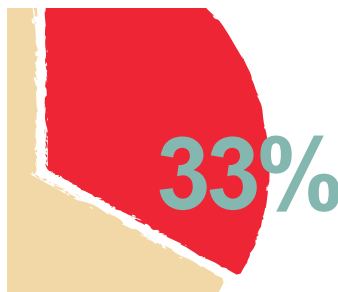
were more likely to remark on working conditions, the balance between family and working life, work load, control over working hours and more flexible hours to improve the situation of employees. Of the women surveyed, 30% stated the need to have specific offers from the union for women. Another issue arising from the survey was the sources that women consult when seeking information related to their work. The Internet and Google were the most highly mentioned. This is why the organization decided to work more on disseminating guidance and assistance among this group.

- In 2001, **UCFW (United States)** undertook demographic data collection and analysis of its affiliates, administrators, staff and governing bodies. The resulting information provided the basis for designing an action programme to build a union that truly reflects members' diversity and fosters participation at all levels. The organization has planned to undertake a similar survey in 2013 in order to embed the learning from the previous survey.

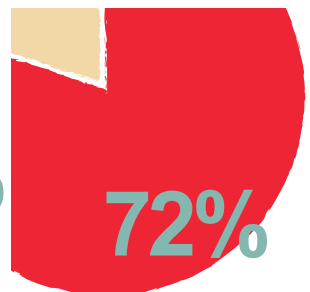
- **UNICOME (Nepal)** has kept track of its register of names, types of service, age, kind of work and experience at work for both men and women who join the union. With this information, it performs actions and improves organization strategies on the basis of female membership rates.



Of unions established women's representation quotas or an allocation of work posts in their organizations.



Have included sections to promote equality in their statutes.



Have statistical data in relation to gender.

1.2.e Activities on gender equality for both genders

These are union actions aimed to raise awareness of gender-specific issues among members, and performing activities that integrate the gender perspective, even when dealing with other issues. Awareness-building of gender equality among both men and women is crucial when one of the key barriers to achieve it is the existence of stereotypes and prejudice, which strain female capacities and potential.

72% of unions undertake activities that include gender equality as one of their topics.

These activities are designed for both men and women.



- **CONTRAF-CUT (Brazil)** leads a campaign called *Campanha Nacional dos Bancários* (National Campaign of Bank Employees), in which collective bargaining agreements are renewed. In order to organize this campaign, the union holds different regional conferences where delegates are chosen to participate in the 'Conferência Nacional com transversalidade de gênero, raça, orientação sexual e pessoa com deficiência' (National Conference with gender, race, sexual orientation and disabled peoples' perspective). This is where the gender-agenda is discussed in order to mainstream activities.

- **DFKF (Denmark)**, as noted earlier, is an organization dominated by females. Its members realized that the activities that benefit women also benefited men so now, they are aimed at both groups and, if there is a gap in participation, they seek to bridge it.

- **CWA (United States)** keeps demographic records of their members and leaders, which they share with their National Committees. If additional gender statistics are needed or further research is requested, this becomes a project for the specific committee or an ad hoc committee, which reviews and supervises the human rights objectives for the National Executive Board.

- **SUTEP (Argentina)** is developing gender-training actions aimed at both male and female delegates from the grassroots up to national leaders with the aim of “deconstructing the roles and mandates that society has been historically imposing on men and women. Thus, the empowering mechanisms in each of them are made visible”. The aim of this activity is that all leaders and delegates can do their jobs and create links between one another with a wider perspective and gender mainstreaming.

- **VNUPTW (Vietnam)** has an action plan for equality from 2011-2015 which gives training in gender-related issues to at least 70% of the workers and 100% of the leaders so that they include gender equality in regulations, policies, actions taken by the organization and the union.

- In the case of **ITCJ (Japan)**, the equality policy states that all union delegates and staff members (both men and women) must attend at least one annual meeting on gender equality organized by the national trade union confederation.

1.2.f Communication, information and promotion of an equality culture



Among the actions taken to raise awareness on gender issues are those that disseminate information among the union members through media such as magazines, brochures, posters and other similar communication campaigns.

55% have included the design of communication items or campaigns as part of the activities aimed at achieving gender equality.

Among the range of activities described by the organizations surveyed included:

- **Publication of rights, laws and clauses of collective bargaining agreements that address the gender issue.**
- **The use of the organizations' website as well as social networks to disseminate information about gender equality, activities to be done and awareness-raising campaigns.**
- **Design of leaflets, brochures and bulletins about gender issues.**

- **Publication of magazines that provide information about the activities done at the union and with contents related to equality issues.**
- **Publications with training tools on gender and equality.**

These types of campaigns and publications are aimed at both union affiliates and its members and leaders.





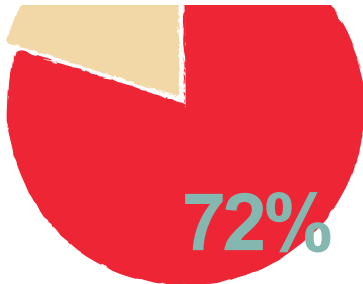
- **AEBU (Uruguay)** regularly publishes the laws and rights that protect female workers in the country, and designs leaflets which are distributed among female members, with the specific clauses on gender dealt within the collective bargaining agreements in their sector.

- **COMFIACC.OO (Spain)** published a 'Guidance Document' as support material for male and female delegates about the most frequent questions regarding new permits and rights described in the law, as well as their equality plans. The document has been uploaded onto the union's website for the information of all workers.

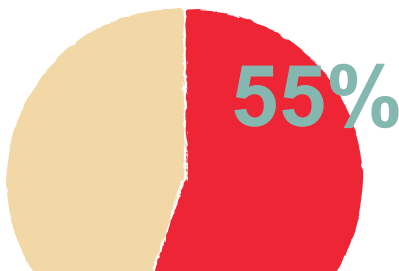
Furthermore, in all the brochures published by the organization: on professional career and salaries, the issue of equal opportunities is addressed in a cross-cutting way. Besides, the union designed a specific brochure on balance between working and family life, aimed at both men and women.

- **CWA (United States)** publishes brochures, also available on their website, with information about the purpose and activities of the Women National Committee, Civil Rights and Equality, as well as, information about sexual harassment for the training of the members, and as general information linked to gender (violence in the workplace; family and medical leave for example).

- **DFL (Denmark)** published a tool-kit on gender equality with material that has been distributed among union affiliates and members.
- **SASBO (South Africa)** has a member magazine, also available on their website, called 'Sasbo News'. It provides information about activities conducted for gender equality, in particular, those carried out in the framework of UNI's Women's Committee.
- **SDA (Australia)** issues publications of special interest for women, and advocates for women's issues, in the organization's magazine and on their website.
- **SUTEP (Argentina)** has a magazine called 'Tras el Foro del Espectáculo' ('At the Show Backstage'), which provides useful information about topics such as the section devoted to disseminating information about gender problem issues. Furthermore, these problem situations are disseminated through delegations and regional organs. Likewise, they publish information on the



Of unions undertake activities that include gender equality as one of their topics.



Have included the design of communication items or campaigns as part of the activities aimed at achieving gender equality.

1.2.g Capacity-building and training for women



All the organizations surveyed offer courses, seminars and training modules aimed at improving women's participation and representation within the union structure. This is due to the fact that education is a fundamental tool when empowering women by developing in them the necessary capabilities that result in having more active participation. They learn more about their rights, legislation and negotiation tools, and gives a source of leadership that allows them to access positions of higher responsibility.

All the organizations surveyed conduct training activities aimed at their female members.

This kind of training can be focused only on women or be open to both men and women, in which case the union must take steps to ensure proportional female representation.

Among the topics discussed in these courses and seminars, we can highlight the following:

- **Gender clauses in collective bargaining**
- **Labour rights, national laws and ILO conventions**
- **Union training and organization**
- **Leadership**
- **Professional training**
- **Tutorials**
- **Health and maternity**
- **Gender roles**
- **Workplace and sexual harassment**
- **Balance between working life and family life**





- **COMFIA CC.OO (Spain)** offers training in gender issues, equality concepts and non-discrimination for all female and male delegates. Special attention is paid to managerial staff in collective bargaining. Their action plan includes courses on union training, a basic course on equality, and training in collective bargaining and equality plans. It also includes special sessions to strengthen and/or develop

occupational and socio-professional capabilities, and women's personal abilities for an efficient performance in management and leadership.

- **DBSSU (Singapore)** offers regular leadership courses, symposia, and dialogue sessions with other unionists and leaders. They also focus on youth training for both genders, through tutorials and by encouraging them to assume leading roles.

- **SYNAPOSTEL (Ivory Coast)** regularly conducts union training seminars and training activities aimed at developing capacities, communication training and collective bargaining among others. They are all aimed at both men and women.

- **UCFW (United States)** carried out different training programmes which included the 'Pilot Program of Expert Organizers' which is designed to train staff, improve their organizational abilities, their capacities to think strategically, and to lead staff. The 16-month-long program includes lessons, workshops, weekly tutorials and fieldwork. Ten out of the 13 participants were women and ethnic minority groups.

There is also a new Organizers' workshop which is a 10-day programme led by experienced organizers, including those who graduated from the pilot program of expert organizers.

- **VNUPTW (Vietnam)** regularly organizes training sessions, seminars and conferences for women. This training seeks to improve their abilities and update their knowledge. Among the activities conducted there is a training course on leaders empowerment aimed at female staff and leaders. They also offer workshops on gender, reproductive health, cultural behaviour, work culture, etc.

1.2.h Actions aimed at solving female members specific problems



One of the reasons why women participate less in union activities is the limitations that their family responsibilities impose on them. This is why, in order to improve equality in their structures, many organizations take steps to tackle these limitations and include activities that deal with health, maternity, sexual harassment, etc.

44% of the organizations surveyed stated that they had undertaken activities to address issues which specifically relate to their female members.



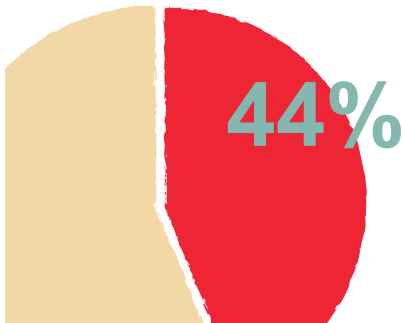
- **SACCAWU (South Africa)** has in their equality policy a series of strategies that address specific problems of its female members. Among them are: reviews of the calendar of meetings so that women can attend, taking into account home responsibilities, changes in working patterns; including children's nursery arrangement during all union activities at local and national level in order to encourage women to participate; as well as promoting topics relevant to women that satisfy their needs and change their material conditions.

- **SDA (Australia)** began to work to increase women's participation in the union but had feedback from women themselves who said that they could not attend meetings because they did not know how to drive, had to be home to prepare the meal for their family, or had to be home to do the housework. The SDA took measures to overcome these obstacles and offered driving lessons at a discount, and launched campaigns on: 'Teach your husband how to cook' and 'Teach your children how to do the housework'. They also organized evening meetings in which they offered a paid meal before the meeting and provided a bus service that picked up workers at their workplace. Besides, the union has a sexual harassment policy and complaint procedures for employees and members of the union.

Moreover, they have run training for officers and delegates on legislation and the organization's policies regarding equal opportunities and sexual harassment. Officers have also been trained to help members to find a solution to their complaints in this respect.

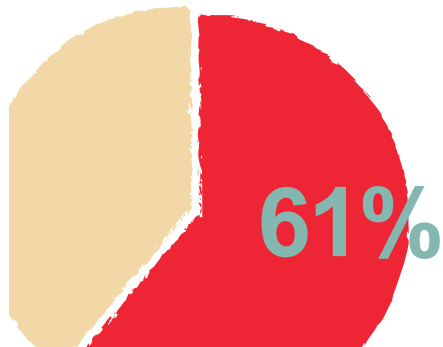
- **UCFW (United States)** has, among their strategies improved the participation in their union, rethought responsibilities and time commitment in the working positions of local unions so that they are realistic for people with family responsibilities, people who take care of children, parents, or disabled people. Notable highlights among their solutions include: sharing work, flexible hours, organizing union meetings and events in buildings with easy access and offering childcare provision. They also ask members about ways in which they can make meetings more accessible. Besides all this, members of the union are trained in harassment and discrimination policies, and give confidence to affiliates to approach them if they suffer this kind of abuse.

- **UNICOME (Nepal)** is a newly formed union which has not yet established a gender equality policy. However, it carries out organizational action for more women to be involved in the union and a programme to improve their capabilities. In 2012 they launched a campaign against workplace harassment and a minimum wage which have both been effective in raising awareness about the experience of women, as well as getting them involved in the union.



Had undertaken activities to address issues which specifically relate to their female members.

Have specific organizational structures for women or for equal opportunities.



1.3 Specific internal structures



Internal structures specifically aimed at women and the specific issues related to gender equality are a common thread among the organizations surveyed. In some cases, these structures have been modified and now address the issue of 'equal opportunities' as a whole, to account for the concept that equal opportunities is not just a 'women's problem', but a particular way of inequality among others. These problems should be settled by the work of both men and women alike, if the ultimate goal is to attain just, and truly democratic societies.

Depending on the territorial extent, the operation, and the range of concerns covered, we can find different kinds of structures. Namely:

Secretariats
Regional/National Offices
Departments
Committees
Officers
Congresses

61% of unions surveyed have specific organizational structures for women or for equal opportunities.





- Among the objectives set in the gender policy of **COMFIA CC.OO (Spain)**, designed by the Secretariat of Women's Affairs at confederal level, all the territorial federations and sectoral groupings must have one person who is responsible for equality. Moreover, trade union branches with more than 250 affiliate members should also have a Secretariat of Women's Affairs which means that there is a specific structure for gender equality at all levels of the organization.

- **CWA (United States)** has a Human Rights Department which constantly supervises the activities in the organization in order to keep a good gender balance and diversity. Moreover, both the National Commission

for Women and the National Commission for Human Rights and Equality are fully operational and keep standing commissions that submit annual reports on the existing problems; and organizes lectures once a year. The reports of both commissions are submitted to the biennial National CWA Convention. These reports include action plans to be implemented at the local unions. Often, resolutions are used in policy-making too. The policies are debated and voted upon by delegates from all segments of the organization. It is also CWA policy that each local union should keep and active Women's Committee.

- **PSEU (Ireland)** has a Department of Justice and Equality which not only addresses gender issues but also those related to the LGBT community. In the case of SASBO (South Africa), there is a Gender and HIV/AIDS Coordinator because this region has a strong presence of HIV, and it is closely connected to the group of women who tend to be the most affected by the condition.

- In **PSZ (Hungary)** there is a Women's Section that coordinates female members and is responsible for their representation. The experiences and proposals raised in that structure are submitted to the guiding organizations of the union. Issues that cannot be solved within the framework of the postal sector are submitted to the National Confederation of Hungarian Trade Unions (MSZOSZ), where there is a Women's Executive Committee. PSZ is actively involved in this and it allows the union to exert positive influence on the general legislation.

- **UFCW (United States)** has a Women's Network that links female activist members with each other across the USA and Canada. They work together to guide, motivate and educate women at local level in order to increase participation of this group in UFCW programmes and activities. The aim is to build a group of female activists committed to the organization's growth. The network is also useful to amplify the voices of women from their workplaces on issues that are most important for this collective; particularly on equal remuneration, decision changes at Walmart, and when it comes to raising salaries and including more benefits in the retail trade.

- At **SIBANPO (Costa Rica)** there is a Secretariat of Women's Affairs which is mentioned in the Union's statutes. These statutes describe in detail the Women's Secretariat's functions that it can carry out, such as seminars, courses, panel discussions, and promotion campaigns aimed at the female collective of the organization.



Towards Equality Culture: Achievements and obstacles

As mentioned at the beginning of this booklet, reaching gender equality takes time and the actions aimed at this must be contextualized. In order to do so, we must take into account the particular characteristics of the groups, the societies and cultures where they are enforced.

However, in order to achieve equality, it is necessary to change ideas, visions, eradicate prejudices and change attitudes that have been deeply rooted in our societies for many years. Therefore, during the process we will not only have successful moments but also setbacks and obstacles that we will have to overcome.

Below, we outline the progress achieved after implementing their actions and the obstacles that organizations have to face even today, and for which they still have to look for new alternatives and action plans.

2. 1 Achievements

- **Female participation globally increased in the organization: 67%**
- **Female participation increased in the decision-making position of the union: 66%**
- **There has been an evident growing recognition and respect for women in the union structure: 33%**
- **New internal structures to address the issue of equality have been created: 25%**
- **The constitutions and statutes that rule the organization have been or will be modified in the near future in order to include gender equality clauses: 25%**
- **New networks and women collectives have been articulated at national and local level: 17%**
- **There was an increase in the understanding of gender issues among the members of the organization: 17%**

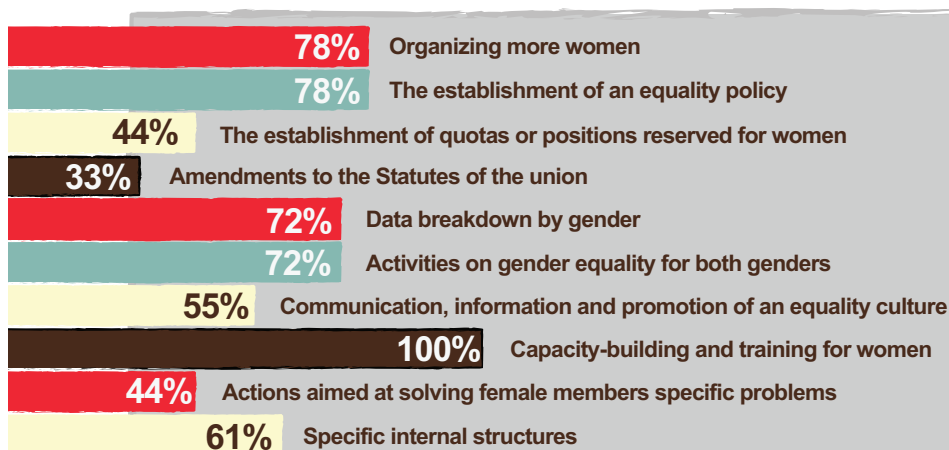
2.2 Obstacles

- There is evidence of resistance in the organization's structures regarding the activities and possible changes these represent: 62%
- Tradition and prejudice hinder the creation and development of the activities: 62%
- Female participation is jeopardized by family responsibilities. (And there is no answer to this issue): 50%
- Gender issues are taken as secondary issues or as "women's problems". Thus, they are not taken as a priority in the organization: 37%
- Enough economic resources to perform the activities are not allocated: 25%
- Lack of specific policies hampers the implementation of the activities: 12%

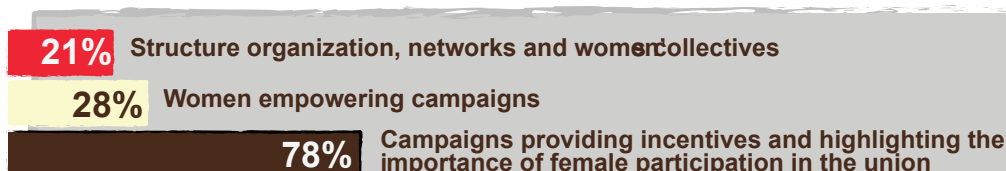


Charts

Practices that unions around the world implement to promote gender equality in their structure



Activities to organize more women



Achievements observed by those unions that have implemented some of the activities



Obstacles that still inhibit the success of equality promotion

