



WWW-ICT  
Widening Women's Work in Information  
and Communication Technology

## Women's trajectories in ICT professions

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## Objectives

- A European project 2002-2004 funded under the IST programme within FP5, aiming at **bridging the gender gap and improving equal opportunities in ICT professions**.
- Some key features of WWW-ICT:  
**integrated, enlarged and dynamic**
  - Integrating the explicative factors linked to education and training, working and employment conditions, and professional and technical culture.
  - Encompassing both computer professions and new professions linked to new communication technology. Covering both initial training and vocational training.
  - Considering professional models and professional trajectories as factors of integration or exclusion.

## Research methodology

- Integrated theoretical framework
- Strong **empirical investigation** in 7 countries  
Austria, Belgium, France, Italy, Ireland, Portugal, UK
  - 140 **biographies** of women (and men) in ICT professions
  - 28 **case studies** of enterprises and sectoral overviews in two areas: IT services and e-publishing
  - Looking for "**good practices**" aiming at reducing gender disparities in ICT professions
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Dissemination: emphasis on **agents of change**

## Conclusions & recommendations

1. Falsification of some stereotypes, expected and unexpected results
2. Creating a better understanding of ICT professions
3. Career reorientation practices
4. Lifelong learning and training
5. Reconciling work and family/personal life
6. New HRM tools in recruitment, retention and mentoring
7. New issues for collective bargaining and welfare policies
8. Gender-oriented socio-economic research

## Falsification of some stereotypes, expected and unexpected results

### **Falsification of some usual hypotheses on women and ICT**

There is not a lack of family role models  
There are not such problems of relation to technology  
Working conditions, although hard, are not perceived as the main problem

### **Evidence of traditional obstacles to women's careers**

Occupational segregation  
Glass ceiling

### **Evidence of characteristics of an open labour market**

Lack of institutionalisation  
Competitive culture among individuals  
High inter-company mobility

### **Evidence of typical forms of work organisation in the knowledge economy**

Project work  
Flexibility, unpredictability and long working hours

## Creating a better understanding of ICT professions

### Awareness campaigns

Cross-disciplined curricula;  
training addressing teachers and career advisors

Managerial recruiting practices;  
collective agreements on entry rules

Systems of recognition of the skills acquired by  
employees and free-lance workers during their  
career paths

### **Agents of change**

Parents, teachers and students, vocational advisors, head hunters  
and human resources managers, European and national  
educational institutions, trade unionists

## Career re-orientation practices

Awareness of the connections and disconnections between degrees and jobs

Re-training opportunity for “generalist” degrees and graduations unsuitable to the new economy

Retraining courses or tutorship for women after unemployment periods or maternity leaves

### **Agents of change**

Vocational advisors, counsellors, social partners, training institutions

## Lifelong learning and training

Low-cost public vocational training and/or subsidising private courses with bonus for self-education

Inventing the right mix of formal training and self training

Women ICT professionals as ICT trainers

Training for women at the end of maternity leaves

Supporting and self-helping networks among women ICT professionals

### **Agents of change**

Training institutions, teachers, women’s associations, social partners

## Reconciling work and family life

Training courses on project management competencies (time management)

Family friendly practices in companies (in order to break the vicious circle: few women → few family friendly practices → few women)

New forms of organisation and regulation of working time, beyond the "long hours culture"

### Agents of change

Companies, HR managers, trade unions

## New HRM tools in recruitment, retention and mentoring

Recruitment practices explicitly addressing both women and men (gender mainstreaming)

Retention policies in companies: improving family friendly practices

Role models of successful women careers in ICT

Mentoring for and by women

### Agents of change

HR managers, women in top management, women teaching in universities and high schools

## New issues for collective bargaining and welfare policies

Framework agreements on working hours flexibility (filling the gap between professionals the ICT sector and in the users sectors)

Framework for "long-term sustainable flexibility" for both employees and free-lance professionals

### **Agents of change**

Public welfare institutions and social partners

## Gender-oriented socio-economic research

More focused investigation on:

- gender aspects and issues of new forms of work organisation in ICT environments
- gender aspects in the the future of industrial relations (mix of collective and individual bargaining)
- the multiple ways adopted by ICT professionals to develop their knowledge

### **Agents of change**

Local, national and European research authorities and institutions

# WWW-ICT publications



Final report



Leaflets for agents of change

Downloadable from [www.ftu-namur.org/www-ict](http://www.ftu-namur.org/www-ict)