

- Carry out further research on vocational education, namely in schools, to assess how measures and strategies to promote gender equality are being implemented in vocational schools in Portugal;
- Provide specific training on gender equality for vocational education teachers so that they have more tools at their disposal to implement this issue with the people they train;
- Coordinate a strategy with broad territorial coverage, establishing partnerships with external entities to promote sessions in vocational schools on gender equality in training and in the work context;
- Use inclusive language, transversally, in all vocational education curricula;
- Rethink the concepts used to define different types of education, so as not to contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes associated, depreciatively, with vocational education;
- Create mechanisms for reporting and investigating cases of sexual harassment both in training and work contexts;
- Develop research on equal opportunities in terms of professional training, access to the labour market and career progress, namely by promoting reflection on the effect of precarious work contracts and conditions on equal opportunities between men and women;
- Investigate the existing job offers for different genders as well as the difficulties of access to certain professions based on sex, e.g. of the male childcare worker and the female mechanic;
- Analyse the differences in relation to the preconceptions transmitted, the perceptions of trainers and the existing vocational training opportunities in the various geographical contexts of the country;
- Promote accessibility for all people in the workplace, on practical issues such as the possibility of changing rooms and toilets for women in predominantly male workplaces.
- Include in future research not only other gender identities but also issues of sexual orientation, etc.

Another case: Vocational Training in Norway

Over the past 50 years, Norway has invested in the education sector through reforms profound, through measures such as the increase in compulsory schooling and the reconfiguration of the education system at the level of secondary and professional education, currently in force, allowed Norway to become a country with high levels of schooling (Statistics Norway, 2005).

Norway seems to follow the Portuguese trend in terms of concerns the differences in the choice of professional training courses between men and women. If, on the one hand, women tend to opt for courses that involve care and creativity, men tend to choose courses in the areas of technology and engineering, as well as those involving physical strength. Women represent 52% of all students and there are gender differences in the choice of courses.

Presentation of Good Practices on the Elimination of Gender Stereotypes

The good practices presented come from projects by the project's partner entities, which aim to promote gender equality and eliminate gender stereotypes in education systems and professional training.

Policy Brief Study on Gender Stereotypes in Professional Choices

Executive Summary

Study on Gender Stereotypes in Professional Choices

The *Study on Gender Stereotypes in Professional Choices* is the result of a partnership between CES – Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra and APF - Association for Family Planning and Entity promote and coordinated by CITE - Commission for Equality in Labour and in Employment. The study was conducted between 31 May 2021 and December 2022 and its main objective was to identify stereotypes associated with the professional choices of trainees attending Professional Courses at the Training Centres partners in the project, including seven Training Services of the IIEFP - Institute for Employment and Professional Training (Viseu, Évora, Amadora, Bragança, Faro, Porto and Aveiro) and five Training Centres (CECOA, INETE, MODATEX, CENFIM and CINEL)..

Igual Pro Project – Professions have no gender

The Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (CITE) is the promoter of the "Igual Pro Project - Professions have no gender", funded by the Financial Mechanism of the EEA GRANTS 2014-2021 | Open Call#2 | Projects to combat sex segregation in educational and professional and discrimination in the labour market, under the Work-life Balance and Gender Equality Program, in which the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality is the operator of the program.

Is Funded by EEA Grants - European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2014-2021, the project **Igual PRO - Professions have no Gender** is a research-action project whose main objective is to combat gender segregation in educational and vocational choices of girls and boys in Portugal and its effects on future career choices. The project aims to achieve this purpose through the identification and deconstruction of gender stereotypes associated with different study areas and professions, with special emphasis on training areas where there is an obvious segregation between girls and boys.

The project provides for the implementation of five main activities:

1. Carrying out a scientific diagnosis study that will allow promoting the deconstruction of stereotypes associated to the professional choices of young people attending IIEFP,IP Professional Courses and Professional Training Centres with a protocol established with IIEFP,IP with the aim of promoting gender equality in the choice and access to professions where greater segregation by sex is confirmed;
2. Publication of a study and a Policy Brief, summarising and disseminating the results on gender stereotypes in the choice of professions, which contributes to improving the action of public authorities and serves as a basis for the content of youth training and of training and employment entities, in promoting equality and preventing the perpetuation of gender stereotypes.
3. Creation and dissemination of the training Toolkit based on tested methodologies of gender equality with the target groups of the project;
4. A national awareness-raising campaign aimed at young people to combat gender stereotypes in the choice of professions and the general public. This campaign will be carried out based on the results of the aforementioned study and according to the recommendations identified, against segregation and persistence of gender stereotypes associated to some professions. For this campaign, pedagogical materials and interactive videos promoting equality between girls and boys regarding educational and professional choices will be created.
5. Organisation of a final Conference to present the results of the project.

Study

Training Centres in Portugal

The characterisation of the Vocational Training Centres in Portugal focused on two aspects:

- their characterisation, covering dimensions such as the number of people trained, the distribution by training programmes, the execution and employability rates, data disaggregated by males and females regarding

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<https://projetos.cite.gov.pt/igualpro>



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- the attendance of vocational training courses, among others;
- the perception by vocational training Centres and Services regarding the existence of gender stereotypes, or others, associated to vocational choices, the strategies used, or considered feasible, to avoid those stereotypes and also the usefulness of a project like this, in the fight against sexual and moral segregation in the educational and vocational choices of girls and boys and its consequences in professional choices.

From the analysis of these two aspects, we make the following recommendations:

1. The creation of a national vocational training data system, or at least a guarantee of uniformity of the data processed in both private vocational training centres and vocational training services;
2. Availability by the IEFP, IP of regular statistics on the physical and financial implementation, since the most recent data, released in report format, dates from March 2020. Given that, even among the IEFP, IP the systematisation of the information and presentation strategies adopted vary, we believe that each service should have the autonomy to work on its own data, considering the specificities of the regional contexts, being expected, however, a higher level of parameterisation regarding the collection of data from trainees, with special focus on sex and age.

Although the training centres are aware of the gender inequalities in the access, choice and professional output of the courses, the strategies they have used to overcome this challenge do not seem to have an impact on promoting a paradigm shift of the local reality and practice. Analysing the distribution tables of women and men and the access procedure, we can see, from the perspective of the training centres and according to the figures from the survey applied to trainees, that gender role expectations underlie the choices and availability of training for each of the population groups.

Vocational Training Centres and Services recognise the problem and try to solve it, even if only occasionally. It is necessary, therefore, to adopt structural solutions for a problem of a systemic nature such as this.

Trainees in Portugal

The trainees in the Vocational Training Centres and Services partnered in this project were characterised not only in socio-demographic terms, but also in terms of their opinions and ideas about gender equality. A more focused analysis of the trainee's perceptions and considerations about their vocational training was carried out, their choice, their professional career, the gender bias in the professions and in work/employment and remunerations, among other aspects.

The first part of the study was based on a survey questionnaire with the objective of understanding the deconstruction of stereotypes associated with professional choices among young people attending IEFP, IP Professional Courses and Professional Training Centres that are partners in the Igual Pro Project - Professions have no gender.

The second part was developed based on the data gathered in the trainees focus groups, investigating about their professional training, their choice, their professional career, the gender bias in professions and work/employment, the perception of the existence of professions for which men or women are more suited to work, and the wage gap between men and women and its relationship with professional training.

From this bipartite analysis, the conclusion was, with the exception that the sample only considered the partner Training Centres with a wide national territorial coverage and the national IEFP, IP, that the people trained in Portugal:

- Are young (48% are up to 24 years old) and mostly female (64%). However, it should be noted that this data does not necessarily mean that they are more present in vocational training courses, but that they were more likely to participate in the research instruments of this study;
- Women showed more equitable gender perceptions on almost all parameters, including the mean tests in the sample group, for the groups of statements analysed;
- Younger people, presented, in general, a less equitable perception than older people. However, we were not able to assess the correlation between the other variables in the construction of the socio-demographic profile;
- Despite the perception that all professional and knowledge areas are acceptable for both women and men, we find in practice that trainees end up getting their professional certification in "stereotyped" training courses/modalities, i.e. geared towards what corresponds to gender expectations;
- Still, according to the data obtained, the achievement of vocational training did not guarantee employment for about 50% of the trainees, the main cause of this being identified as the lack of professional experience and the lack of correspondence between the qualifications of the position and the course.

It should also be noted that the pandemic has considerably affected vocational training in Portugal in these entities, namely by forcing changes in the structure of courses and confronting both training centres and trainees with a set of challenges and opportunities. In this manner, if, on one hand, it was highlighted that the online training courses enabled access to a wider and more diverse public, the changes, perhaps because they were compulsory, ended up having an impact on the perception about the quality and personal interest of the trainees. Another relevant dimension has to do with the organisation of the household: when taking an *online* training course, the trainee usually had to take it at the same time as her/his caring role, which obviously limited the performance in the course.

It was also perceived that trainees consider: a) society and the way people are socialised throughout life as having a key influence on the perpetuation of gender stereotypes; b) that the choice of professional training courses is more driven by personal interests, such as an unemployment situation, vocation or the satisfaction they feel in a certain area; c) that women are still perceived as more fragile than men and there-

fore have to work much harder to be recognised or to achieve success in certain professions, adding to this the fact that pregnancy and motherhood act as barriers before and during the professional experience.

Trainers in Portugal

In order to obtain a more comprehensive characterisation and diagnostic analysis and critical reflection on the presence of gender stereotypes in the choice of professions and vocational training, the aim was to analyse the perceptions, considerations and reflections of the training people from the Vocational Training Centres and Services that are partners in this project. Thus, focus groups with these specific participants were examined, seeking to find out and qualitatively analyse not only information on demographic and professional identification, but also on vocational training, offer, courses, trajectories and areas, as well as qualitative data on inequalities, choices of vocational training and profession, pay/wages, conditioned by sex.

The main socio-demographic results identified are presented below:

- The focus groups were attended by 47 trainees from IEFP, IP Professional Courses and Professional Training Centres who are partners in the Igual Pro Project - Professions have no gender.
- As can be seen in the following graph, 28 (59.6%) are woman and 19 (40.4%) are man;
- The average age of the trainees is 46.4 years and 43.5% have 1 son or daughter; 23.9% have 2; 2.2% have 3 and 30.4% have no daughter or son;
- As for marital status, 47.8% are married; 26.1% are single; 17.4% said they are divorced; 6.5% are in a consensual union; and 2.2% (one person), said they are separated;
- With regard to the **level of education and employment status** of the people participating, the following graphs show that:
 - 65.2% of trainers have a degree; 19.6% have a Master's; 6.5% have a PhD and 8.7% have completed the 12th grade;
 - 87% of graduates have an employment contract (in various forms) and 13% are service providers.

In conclusion, the trainers of the Vocational Training Centres and Services who are partners in the project consider that family, school, professional and vocational training structures should play a differentiating role in people's training and development, in order to reduce inequality and gender segregation in the training, vocational and professional choices of girls and boys. They also consider that although socio-economic, employability and stability issues are key elements in the choice of training or profession, the existence of gender differentiation between men and women in vocational training and employment should not be forgotten. This aspect is particularly highlighted with regard to the physical strength of men and the stereotypical caring responsibilities potential

of women, which gives rise to unequal opportunities in the labour market (more so than in the area of vocational training) and also generates differences in treatment and working conditions for women to be better represented in certain professions in the industrial area and information and communication technologies, for example.

Conclusions

1. As far as the trainees' motivations for choosing Vocational Training are concerned, if, on the one hand, the trainers consider that they are more linked to socioeconomic issues, presenting a more macro vision, on the other hand, the trainees refer that it is based on each person's vocation, that is, a more micro vision.
2. However, regarding the impact of education on gender stereotypes, trainees recognise the social and cultural context on a global level (macro context) contributes to the existence and maintenance of gender stereotypes, whereas trainers attach great importance to the education they have received on a more individual level (micro context, e.g. through family, peer groups, etc.).
3. The trainees recognise biological differences between men and women, however they do not consider them determinant for the choice of vocational training, emphasising, to their detriment, dimensions such as the willingness to learn. In contrast, the male and female trainers adopt a more deterministic perspective, referring to physical robustness as a differentiating element.
4. Both trainees and trainers refer to the existence of gender stereotypes that influence both the choice of the vocational training areas and the experiences in the workplace. However, while the trainees refer to it from a perspective of reality, the trainees focus their speech on the efforts that can be made to promote social change, referring to the availability and willingness to show, through their professional practice, that they are equally capable, regardless of their sex.
5. With regard to the reconciliation of family and professional life, the perspectives of trainees and trainers converge. Trainees refer to the dichotomy between equal opportunities in vocational training and gender equality that does not exist in the labour market, while trainees do not reflect on this, at least not explicitly.

Recommendations

- Invest in awareness-raising, training and day-to-day practical application of gender equality issues from childhood onwards, in order to facilitate the integration of these key citizenship principles that accompany the entire process of individual development and construction;
- Carry out training that promotes a comprehensive view of gender equality and changes in attitudes and behaviours in order to stop the intra and inter-generational transmission of stereotypes;