Gender, OSH and gender mainstreaming – Towards better practice

EU-OSHA Risk Observatory seminar
Brussels, 9 December 2010

Sarah Copsey
Project Manager
Mainstreaming, gender-sensitivity: This means ensuring both women and men are included in all h&s activities and doing a ‘gender-check’
Gender issues in safety and health at work
EU-OSHA report 2003

Some Conclusions:

- Different jobs, different work circumstances = different exposures and health outcomes
- Gender segregation is strong:
  - Horizontal: not same jobs
  - Vertical: less women in senior positions
- Women’s greater home responsibilities
- Higher proportion of women in low paid, low skilled, part-time and precarious jobs
- Discrimination of women has OSH impact


Available in: [Deutsch] [English] [Español] [Français] [Italiano] [Polski]
Gender issues in safety and health at work
EU-OSHA report 2003
Some Recommendations

- Include gender in data collection
- Ensure gender balance in research programmes
- Fill gaps in research, e.g. standing work, menstrual disorders
- Assess gender impact of policies, changes in the world of work etc.
- Consider double-work load and promote work-life balance policies
- Implement gender-neutral OSH regulations in a gender-sensitive way
- For risk assessment, avoid assumptions, look at jobs women really do, involve women workers
- Investigate and share good practices

Available in: [Deutsch] [English] [Español] [Français] [Italiano] [Polski]
The XX factor

Men - Women Different - Equal

Principle applies wherever gender is an issue – including OSH
“The difference between Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire was that she did it backwards and she did it in high heels…”

Who had the hardest task?
Key experts and decision-makers from both safety and health & equal opportunities from Member States, European Commission and European social partners incl. Head of Equality for women and men unit, European Commission

Conclusions - Key steps & challenges

- Getting the message across that gender impact on working conditions more dramatic than realised
- Avoid stereotypes, deficit model, backlash
- Make gender an OSH issue for men and women
- New issue for many in OSH – misunderstandings - support needed
- OSH has to be taken out of its niche as equality has been
- To take gender and put it into the middle of OSH – and to include everyone, from policy to workplace
- Understand the issues, ask the right questions, adapt tools
Proposals for taking forward gender issues
Agency seminar June 2004, Brussels

- OSH and equalities organisations at EU and national level to explore cooperation
- Encourage equalities organisations to examine how to include OSH in their activities
- Women’s health organisations to be encouraged to cover OSH
- Use work-life balance as a common meeting point
- Establish a routine for gender impact assessments
- Examples of good practice – concrete tools and measures needed
- Social partner role and agreements, development of guidelines
- Include in work of standards committees, EU research programmes Labour inspectors role, training, instruction
- Increase women’s participation in decision-making
- Developing and maintaining a network
EU-OSHA approach to mainstreaming gender into its own work

- **Gender-specific studies**
  - 2003 report on situation in EU
  - Web feature of links, factsheet on risk assessment
  - Follow-up seminar 2004
  - New project to review situation 2009-2010

- **Projects on sectors with a high proportion of women workers**
  - Cleaners – Risk Observatory and good practice cases
  - Health care sector

- **Projects and campaigns risks affecting a high proportion of women**
  - Stress, MSDs...
  - Risk assessment campaign 2008-2009 – will include a report of examples of including diversity in risk assessment

- **Specifically specifying coverage of gender in general projects**
  - ‘Risk Observatory’ reports look at exposures and health outcomes – contractors have to specifically cover gender – noise, young workers, MSDs, transport sector...
Mainstreaming gender into the youth campaign 2006

- Examples of injuries and ill health to young women used in all general factsheets (advice to employers, parents, supervisors, young people) and publicity

- Additional factsheets to include sectors/jobs where young women work – catering, hairdressing

- Deliberate inclusion of both ill health and accident data – although ill health data not so easy to find!

- Images showing both young men and young women at work, and not only in stereotypical jobs, e.g. to include young women in construction
The Agency factsheet 43 provides a basic method for mainstreaming gender into risk assessment and recommendations such as ...

- Avoid assumptions of who is at risk
- Include women’s jobs and consult them
- Look at real work situations
- Match jobs, equipment to real people
- Include work-life balance
- Incorporate into a holistic approach
Look at the real jobs women do!
Summary

- **Appearances can be deceptive, so can stereotypes** – *keep an open mind*

- **Re-examining realities, and involving women, are keys to more effective targeting of prevention for both women and men** – *address the gender deficit*

- **Change requires awareness and strategic action at all levels - government, unions and employers have a vital role to play. Both women and men will benefit, and so will employers.*
Common goal

- Improving health and safety conditions for all workers – women and men

- Improving health and safety for women generally improves conditions for men too

- Improving health and safety for women does NOT mean ignoring risks for men
Thank you for your attention