

Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment

**CORPORATE SOCIAL  
RESPONSIBILITY, GENDER EQUALITY  
AND THE RECONCILIATION OF WORK  
AND FAMILY LIFE**

**A Report on the Experience  
of the Equality is Quality Award**

**Maria das Dores Guerreiro  
Inês Pereira**

**Studies no. 5**

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**Title:** “Corporate Social Responsibility, Gender Equality and the Reconciliation of Work and Family Life: A Report on the Experience of the Equality is Quality Award”

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, measures aimed at reconciling work and family life and promoting equality between men and women have intensified in Portugal. However, despite a qualitative improvement at this level, gender inequality and discrimination persist in both the public and the private sphere. This fact justifies promotion of more effective policies and practices leading to a new social gender contract.

The purpose of this publication is to provide an account of the process leading to the allocation of the "Equality is Quality" Award, sponsored by the Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (CITE) over the last five years, with the aim of encouraging corporate social responsibility in this area. This document benefits from the experience of a team, which has for several years analysed and assessed gender equality policies and practices in various organisations (companies, co-operatives and associations) and whose work has allowed it to gather information on the various typical situations described here. This document will also reflect upon the way in which employers have supported this initiative and proved to be aware of the problems of guaranteeing gender equality and reconciling work and family life.

By publicising the good practices being achieved in various workplaces, which can be replicated in similar contexts, it is hoped that awareness of these measures will help to disseminate measures that incorporate social responsibility policies that can be implemented by companies. This document also aims to demonstrate the role played by the "Equality is Quality" Award in encouraging employers to promote equality and resolve persisting problems in this area.

A general account of the topic in the first pages of this document is followed by, a summary of the applications for the prize in the years in which CITE has awarded it. This summary focuses on an analysis of the profile of the applicant organisations, which are described, *inter alia*, in terms of their location, legal nature, age, the business sector in which they operate and their human resources. The main trends that have affected the applications for the award will also be presented and discussed from a developmental perspective.

This is followed by a detailed consideration of some of the fundamental aspects influencing equality policies and practices in an organisational context. This analysis is based on both quantitative and qualitative data collected during visits to applicants by a technical assessment team, which provides greater detail on the investigations carried out. Some of the main aspects of organisations that have competed for the award are identified and broken down into measures of excellence. Some of the weaknesses encountered are also identified, in the hope that this contributes to the emergence of ideas and solutions with regard to employers' social responsibility.

## **2. A new social gender contract in a changing society**

We are living at the beginning of the 21st century, in a world of accelerated social change where the main social institutions – and the values and practices underlying them – are facing considerable transformations. Our society is increasingly one of information and knowledge, marked by new forms of work and employment, changing organisational contexts, new patterns of family relationships and a new social gender contract.

Of the recent changes in employment in various societies, including Portugal, the most important are (1) the increasingly significant impact of new technologies, particularly information and communication technologies, in the business world (2) the increasing flexibility in forms of work and places of work, (3) the increasing precariousness of employment, which is no longer for life, (4) the increasing importance of the service sector, and (5) the massive incorporation of women into the labour market, which has led to the predominance of families in which both parents work (Rapoport, 1971, Gilbert, 1993, Guerreiro, 1998).

There has also been a significant reduction in marriage and birth rates, together with an increase in divorce rates and the emergence of new forms of conjugality and the family, i.e. stepfamilies and one-parent families. While these changes in conjugal patterns and family structures have occurred, the social gender contract within each family unit has also changed considerably. In Portugal, it is possible to identify the turning point: the April 1974 revolution, followed two years later by the approval of the 1976 Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, which officially recognised equality between men and women within marriage. This replaced the prevailing model, which was marked by a significant division of the roles in the family between the husband, the head of the family, who was responsible for supporting the members of the nuclear family, and the wife, who was responsible for the household and who, like the children, was subject to the husband's authority.

For, although women have always contributed to material production in industrial society, at that time there was a “social gender contract” that presupposed a single family wage (i.e. that of the husband as provider) and the existence not only of differences between male and female roles but of social and political inequalities between men and women. However



the second half of the 20th century was marked by a growing presence of women in the world of work. The model of the male breadwinner thus started to decline, especially as household budgets could no longer do without the contribution of the female wage to meet the needs of the consumer society.

In Portugal, where the phenomenon of the formal entry of women into the labour market occurred somewhat later than in other industrialised countries, this process became established at the end of the 1960s. As a consequence of the colonial war and major migratory movements involving a large part of the male population, the emerging urbanisation and industrialisation processes led to the increased recruitment of female labour, resulting in the feminisation of the labour market. Of the various social and economic changes that have occurred in the last thirty to forty years, the integration of women into the working population is therefore particularly significant. In Portugal the current rate of female employment as a percentage of the total working population is 67%, which exceeds the European Union average of 62% (*European Commission, 2005*). It should be noted that Portuguese women tend to interrupt their careers less frequently and that only 17% work part-time (the European average is much higher, at 35%).

In European terms, Portugal is therefore a country with an exceptionally high rate of female employment, where women with small children tend to work full-time in numbers (65%) that far exceed the levels in any other country in the 15-member Europe and are equalled only by some of the newcomers to the EU.

Portuguese society is still characterised by short paid parental leave, with the consequence that parents are forced to resort to formal or informal day-care, which gives rise to increased needs and difficulties in reconciling work and family life.

The involvement of women outside the home is not limited to the world of work. Female enrolment in the school system, where greater success by girls has been noted in recent years, is also very significant. Under the current trend, more and more girls are continuing their studies, and girls are now in the majority among university students. Approximately 32% of women between 25 and 29 have completed higher education, while for

men, the percentage is only 22%. These figures demonstrate the wide difference between the young women of today and the women of previous generations. In the 50-64 age group, only 9% of women obtained a higher education qualification, as against 13% of men of the same age (Guerreiro, 2003).

However, the involvement of women in other areas of public life such as politics or voluntary associations is clearly at a lower level than in employment and education. This aspect has been the subject of study and debate, e.g. regarding the proposed introduction of quotas to promote greater involvement of women in senior political positions.

The equal involvement of men in family life is still greatly undeveloped. If it is evident that the role of the father has changed in recent decades, it is also true that men are generally granted fewer family assistance rights than women. Paternity leave is short and has only recently been defined and enshrined in legislation (Decree-Law No. 230/2000). Employers generally have difficulty in recognising the importance of the father's role in childcare, and exercise of the leave to which fathers are entitled can be obstructed. Male participation in housework is still at a low level as a consequence of traditional forms of socialisation, which are still dominated by gender differentiation.

It is possible to list a series of areas where gender equality is formally guaranteed by various mechanisms, i.e. work, education, civic and political participation and family life and childcare. It should be noted, however, that though these are separate areas reflecting different stages of development, discrimination in some of these areas tends to reinforce exclusion in others, as the various processes involved are closely inter-linked. In fact, it is not possible to establish strict boundaries between the various social roles played by individuals in the many arenas in which they are active in their daily life.

Regarding integration in the labour market, which is the particular concern of this report, it is worth noting that, despite the high proportion of women in employment, there are still significant gender inequalities in this area. Employment is deeply gender-segregated horizontally, vertically and transversely.

In the first place, women tend to be victims of horizontal segregation, i.e. women and men are concentrated in different occupations, so that many occupations are strongly male or female-dominated. Although work done by women has a very significant role in society, its social status generally continues to be unequal to that of work done by men. Female-dominated occupations are concentrated into a narrow range of activities, considered an extension of the work that women do in the home, and are generally care-providing activities. The knowledge connected with these activities has been assimilated and transmitted informally from generation to generation without recourse to formal education. As a result, in many cases these occupations are poorly paid, if not socially undervalued, and the skills involved and used in such occupations are ignored.

Women are, therefore, also victims of transverse segregation (Ferreira, 2003), i.e. they are concentrated in certain economic sectors, mainly the public administration and small companies, the latter of which are generally associated with greater economic fragility and less social recognition.

Furthermore, even in female-dominated sectors, they are rarely in leading positions, which are mostly occupied by men. This indicates vertical segregation, in which women are found at the lower levels of organisations and experience greater difficulty in reaching senior positions. The truth is that the female working population has lower rates of promotion and fewer vocational training opportunities and tends to earn less than men.

But men are also subject to gender discrimination in the employment market: paternity leave is very short and they are frequently subject to subliminal or overt pressure not to take it. This is because organisational cultures do not, as yet, take a favourable view of men who assume family responsibilities in the same way as women are generally expected to or hope to, i.e. as the primary priority among their personal obligations.

Concerning the home environment, time occupation research (Guerreiro and Perista, INE, 1999) and similar studies (Guerreiro and Wall, 2005) reveal that women still bear the main responsibility for performing domestic tasks (e.g. preparing meals, looking after clothing and doing the regular cleaning). For, while male involvement has significantly increased in recent years, particularly in relation to childcare, it is still

lower than women's involvement and tends to be secondary and more specialised.

This situation results, on the one hand, in what is frequently referred to as a "double working day" for women and, on the other, in a frequent dissociation from family tasks for men, since, as we have seen above, they may be stigmatised in their workplaces if they wish to put their family responsibilities before their work.

Both men and women face problems in reconciling work and family obligations: women risk being stigmatised as bad mothers if they put their work first, and men risk being judged as unprofessional, or even having their masculinity put in question, if they seek to give priority to their family lives.

In many cases, working mothers and fathers are forced to choose between family and career and not infrequently have to abandon legally established rights in order to avoid discrimination at work and in other social situations. The interference of workplace matters in home life and vice-versa is generally hard to manage and becomes even more so insofar as dedication to one of these areas tends to be viewed as incompatible with dedication to the other.

The need to reconcile work and family life therefore tends to be reflected in greater difficulties for women in terms of professional advancement, as in most organisational cultures the ideal/typical model of a competent employee continues to be that of a man with no family responsibilities to threaten his almost total availability for his occupation. Men, however, have difficulty in gaining recognition of their rights in private life, i.e. their family responsibilities, both in the eyes of the legislation and their occupational cultures – or even within the family, where the importance of their contribution, or the absence of it, is still minimised.



### **3. Policies for equality at work and in employment**

The policies for promoting gender equality belong to the context outlined in the previous pages. These policies are frequently created by the European Commission and member countries with the aim of altering values and attitudes and creating policies that promote equality and the reconciliation of work and family life, while also insisting on the application in practice of existing policies. The following are the basic principles of citizenship that are indispensable for establishing a more egalitarian society: (1) identical representation of men and women in the various occupational categories, from the most to the least skilled, (2) non-discriminatory processes for the recruitment of men and women, (3) progressive lessening of the association of certain occupational categories with men or women, (4) equal pay for men and women, (5) equal access to vocational training and lifelong education, (6) equivalent contractual conditions for men and women, and (7) full enjoyment of maternity leave, paternity leave and parental leave by both parents.

#### **3.1. Who is responsible in Portugal for promoting gender equality?**

Responsibility for promoting gender equality is shared by both the government and private organisations. The former may be interpreted as including supranational organisations, which play a fundamental role in establishing policies to promote equality (particularly the European Union, via the European Employment Strategy and associated programmes, of which, since the end of the 90s, the most important have been the National Employment Plan, the National Equality Plan and the National Inclusion Plan, in addition to the ESF/EQUAL and OETSDP programmes). In Portugal, the Portuguese state plays a fundamental role in transposing and adapting European directives and principles agreed at a European level and supervising the effective implementation in practice of current measures. It does so not only via the government but also via local authorities and state equality commissions (such as CITE – Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment or CIDM – Commission for Equality and Women’s Rights).

Finally, civil society has an important role in promoting cultures, representations and practices that favour gender equality, whether via business,

which must apply the legislation and promote non-discriminatory organisational cultures, or NGOs, schools, the mass media, the family and individuals, who must promote a socialisation aimed at effective gender equality among themselves and the younger generation.

**Figure 1 – Organisations and individuals responsible for promoting gender equality**

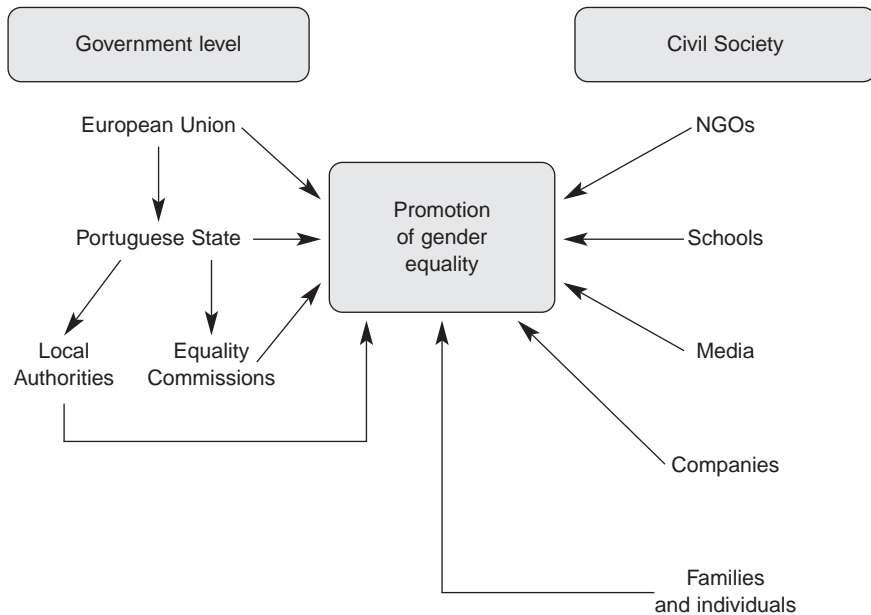


Figure 1 illustrates the various governmental and civil society agencies involved.

The role of employers will be particularly emphasised in this report. Firstly, however, the role of the state and families is discussed and examined, as two institutions that can promote gender equality in close collaboration with business.

### **3.1.1. Upstream and downstream of the employment market: from state to family**

The state acts at various levels and plays a fundamental role in promoting equal opportunities between men and women. Some of its roles can

be summarised and grouped into three major areas: (1) the legal framework governing the family and work are defined by the government; (2) the state is responsible for monitoring and preventing discrimination; (3) the state is also responsible for providing social welfare and encouraging the creation of work-family life reconciliation services, such as day nurseries and other local community services. The state is therefore simultaneously the legislator, supervisory authority and provider.

One more function can be added at this level: the promotion of training on the issue of equality and the dissemination of good practices, e.g. via the introduction of training modules in domestic science and personal care, for both sexes, into educational curricula.

The Portuguese state is traditionally considered to be a welfare state based on the model currently used in southern Europe, where the social system is not highly developed, i.e. in relation to the provision of support for families and workers. However, Portugal stands out from the other countries in southern Europe by virtue of the high percentage of women who work full-time, as mentioned above. It should also be noted that the 80s in Portugal were marked by policies to strengthen the welfare state, which were encouraged with the transfer of European Union funds. These policies intensified in the second half of the 90s (Mozzicafreddo, 2002; Silva, 2002). In addition to an extension of the public services network in areas such as health and education<sup>1</sup>, various projects, programmes and support and protection schemes were undertaken, targeting groups at risk and marginalised groups. The promotion of a better balance between work and family life also became part of the political agenda, and some efforts were made to co-ordinate policies on employment and family life. However implementing statements of principle and legislation introduced in the meantime proved to be difficult. In particular, organisations are faced, still today, with structural and cultural problems that hinder implementation of the equality rules and measures aimed at reconciling work and family life.

Concerning equal rights between the sexes, the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic provides for non-discrimination in all areas, including

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<sup>1</sup> There has been a significant increase in the state pre-school network, which grew considerably in the 90s and has continued to grow during the last decade.



employment. The promotion of gender equality is one of the fundamental tasks of the state (Article 9, paragraph h). The issue is also dealt with in Article 13, which provides for equality between all citizens irrespective of “ancestry, sex, race, language, place of origin, religion, political or ideological beliefs, education or financial situation or social position”. Article 58, which establishes the right to work, expressly sets out that the state is required to promote access to work for all and “equal opportunities in the choice of occupation or type of work and conditions so that access to any positions, work or occupational categories shall not be prevented or obstructed by reason of sex”.

The Labour Code, which regulates labour and employment programmes, reinforces the provisions on gender equality. It also establishes measures with regard to wages and salaries, various types of contracts, the organisation of working time (holidays and working hours) and hiring and dismissal procedures. Labour law also stipulates the way in which maternity and paternity rights and family assistance rights are protected.

There is also a series of specific employment instruments (collective bargaining agreements and company agreements), which can add further specific measures and benefits, but which cannot restrict the exercise of any rights or the performance of any duties established by the general law.

Labour law therefore establishes a series of family assistance measures, i.e.<sup>2</sup>:

- 120 days’ maternity leave;
- 5 days’ paternity leave;
- 2 weeks’ parental leave for the father;
- The provision that maternity leave can be partially transferred to the father (except for the first six weeks). This option was introduced in 1995. Prior to this, the father could only take leave in the event of the illness or death of the mother;

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<sup>2</sup> Viz. Decree-Law No. 154/88 of 29 April, which is available, together with other related government legislation, at <http://www.cite.gov.pt/cite/legisnac.htm>

- 2 hours a day to feed a baby during the first year of its life;
- 3 months (or 6 months on a part-time basis) of unpaid parental leave after maternity leave.

This legal framework applies to all economic sectors and aims to prevent sex discrimination, while also providing specific support for the reconciliation of work and family life.

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Even though it is true that the state provides an overall framework defining the rights and duties of all workers, of both sexes, the fact remains that the role of the family in promoting gender equality is absolutely fundamental. Female social roles are particularly associated with the family context. As noted above, even when women work outside the home, they continue to be primarily responsible for the housework, and the allocation of domestic tasks to women, frequently to the detriment of their career, is still a significant social trend. This is why legislation, which provides for the right to reconcile work and family life, is a necessary precondition for creating real equality between women and men in the labour market (den Dulk, 2001).

One of the primary roles of the family involves the transmission of values and standards, which may or may not promote gender equality. It is in the family context, a fundamental agent in primary socialisation, that a set of values and practices is transmitted that will subsequently be reflected in the occupational and family trajectories of young working fathers and mothers. Families therefore play a fundamental role in the socialisation of boys and girls and in developing educational practices that promote shared parenting and transmit the knowledge needed for personal autonomy in the domestic context.

The family unit can also be organised in line with the various models of dividing domestic tasks. Equal sharing of domestic tasks and childcare is an important condition for gender equality, not only within the family but also at work. Aspects such as absence from work for family reasons, for example, are fundamental indicators used to evaluate the conditions governing the occupational advancement of both halves of a couple,

although there are still few couples who share this responsibility equally. It is therefore once again evident that promoting gender equality, even in the family context, is closely linked with employment contexts.

Even though work and family life are frequently viewed in contemporary societies as two radically different areas of social life, albeit necessarily present in the lives of most people, studies carried out by various authors show that family life and work have a mutually interactive effect (Friedman and Greenhaus, 2000). Reconciling family life and work therefore involves the need to co-ordinate two worlds that often seem completely unrelated, firstly because of the differing rules and standards of behaviour involved and secondly because of the time pressure, which makes it difficult to dedicate oneself equally to both of these areas of life.

In various publications on this topic, the authors have analysed the relationship between work and the family. On the basis of the assumption that it is not possible to disassociate family life from work completely, some of these authors identify various types of relationship between these two areas of every worker's life. Karen I. Fredriksen-Goldsen and Andrew E. Scharlach (2001) refer to four interaction models between work and the family. The first model envisages a symbiotic relationship in which these two areas are mutually complementary. In the second case, family and occupation are viewed as being able to have a positive or negative effect on each other. An example of this is workers who speak of increased tension within the family during periods of employment problems but who, on other occasions, state that the satisfaction gained in one of these worlds also improves the rest of their lives. A third theoretical model indicates mutual compensation, in which deficits in one of these areas are compensated by benefits from the other area. Finally, a fourth possibility indicates conflict as the two areas are irreconcilable because they involve responsibilities, rules and expectations that are different, if not opposed.

#### **4. The labour market and gender equality**

In a society undergoing rapid and profound changes, the labour market is currently affected by causes and processes of intense change springing from a variety of players, strategies and projects. Understanding organisational contexts nowadays, therefore, also involves an understanding of the transformational processes that affect them.

At the beginning of this report, reference is made to some of the main sources of organisational change. Organisational contexts tend to involve increasing flexibility, deregulation and individualisation of working conditions as a consequence of the global economy (Castells, 1996; Rebelo, 1999; Beck, 2000).

It should be noted that these global processes affecting the labour market have very different configurations in the various locations in which they occur. Portugal is marked by its semi-peripheral position, by a process of “modernisation at different speeds” and by a series of specificities at this level. Its business structure continues to be dominated by micro and small companies, which in most cases generate low-skilled, poorly paid and frequently non-unionised employment with insufficient training opportunities (Guerreiro et al., 2000). It also involves the coexistence of highly modernised and competitive sectors with other “informal” or “pre-modern” ones (Freire, 1998).

This disparity between different employment contexts is reflected in very different approaches to gender equality at work and in employment. While in some cases gender equality is part of the organisational agenda and leads to new strategies and mechanisms and, more generally, to organisations that are “support providers” or “family friendly” (Guerreiro, Pereira and Abranches, 2002; den Dulk et al. 1999), in other cases, divisive and discriminatory trends still prevail. This disparity of circumstances is also evident in the analysis given below of applicants for the award, which identifies considerable differences between what is provided, corresponding to specific business profiles.

It should also be noted that the organisational context can have an influence on promoting gender equality in several ways. The following

examples are only some of the ways in which organisational culture and employment policy can affect equality. They can do so by:

- (1) Applying and complying with the legal provisions on gender equality, i.e. non-discriminatory recruitment processes, career advancement and exercise of legal leave rights, along with equal pay for men and women.
- (2) Developing organisational and occupational cultures that promote worker autonomy and responsibility, corporate citizenship policies, policies that encourage male participation in family life and, in particular, non-discriminatory organisational and occupational cultures as far as recruitment, duties, careers, pay, training and work-family life reconciliation are concerned.
- (3) Creating innovative services that support workers' family lives and are adapted to the new needs of people and families, and promoting flexible use of time and space and other improvements in working conditions.
- (4) Promoting equal access by men and women to positions that are not traditionally considered appropriate for their sex (an attitude leading to the traditional segmentation of the employment market).

It should not be overlooked that if employers play an important role in preventing the spread of discriminatory practices and contribute to disseminating and developing good practices to promote gender equality, the effective promotion of equality will also have a positive effect on the organisations in question. Equality studies usually mention the following impacts of good practices promoting gender equality in organisations.

Promoting gender equality in the workplace:

- Encourages employee creativity and motivation, improves communication between workers and management and promotes a more complete awareness of the organisation's culture and objectives;
- Facilitates the introduction of new working methods and new technologies, thus allowing better use of technological capital;
- Reduces recruitment and training costs insofar as it contributes to retaining qualified human resources;

- Increases productivity, insofar as the planning of working hours is more adapted to workers' needs, and thus reduces unexpected absences;
- Widens and diversifies the range of potential employees interested in working for a company offering good working conditions that do not clash with their family and personal responsibilities;
- Reduces employment disputes;
- Improves the company's image in the community and internationally, which contributes to promoting its products and increasing its turnover.



## 5. The “Equality is Quality” Award

According to its regulations, the “Equality is Quality” Award is a prestigious honour promoted by the Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (CITE), which seeks to contribute to equality between men and women at work, in employment and in vocational training and to reconciliation between work and family life.

The priority laid down for the award is to recognize and reward enterprises and other employers for implementing good practices in promoting gender equality. The award is also an instrument for promoting corporate social responsibility, promoting gender equality, creating awareness of this equality, and combating segregation in the employment market. The award’s objectives therefore involve reducing the gap between male and female unemployment rates, reducing pay inequalities, improving working conditions and changing the culture of organisations so that equality and reconciliation become two of their basic elements.

On the one hand, the award focuses on recognition of work already carried out and, on the other, dissemination of exemplary measures to promote replication of this work in other organisational contexts. It also focuses on creating public preference for “total quality” goods and services, which means that companies are in total compliance with the applicable legislation.

The “Equality is Quality” Award thus seeks to highlight the contributions of companies and organisations that take or promote positive measures aimed at gender equality and quality at work, in employment and in vocational training. This is achieved by publicising exemplary cases and measures and raising awareness among other companies and consumers of the importance of implementing specific measures to promote gender equality and reconciliation between work and family life.

Small, medium-size or large companies and other organisations (associations and co-operatives) who are involved in good practices in gender equality, are interested in publicising these measures and are committed to improving corporate social responsibility in this area, may apply for the award.



As stated above, the award has been conferred on five occasions, involving 11 awards and 16 honourable mentions.

The winning companies were recognised by the technical assessment team and the judges of the “Equality is Quality” Award as best practice organisations. The regulations drawn up by the CITE establish some of the practices given preference in the assessment of the applications for the award and provide the following list of some of the measures of excellence:

- Quantitative and qualitative analyses of the circumstances of the company’s or organisation’s male and female workers and monitoring of developments;
- Adoption of a human resources management policy that promotes gender equality;
- Adoption of an equality plan to redress any inequality progressively;
- Balanced participation by male and female workers in consultation and/or decision-making processes;
- Guaranteed equal opportunities for men and women in recruitment;
- Guaranteed equal access by women and men to promotion and career advancement;
- Guaranteed equal opportunities in access to vocational training by women and men;
- Guaranteed compliance with the provisions covering maternity and paternity rights and those for reconciling work and family life, equality between women and men and non-discrimination;
- Guaranteed equal opportunities, for male and female workers, to reconcile work and family life, in particular via:
  - Flexible forms of work organisation;
  - Extended leave periods;
  - Career breaks;
  - Flexibility to attend to personal and family needs;
  - Facilitated access to childcare and family support facilities and services;

- Specific measures to ensure that men are available to exercise their family rights and responsibilities;
- Specific measures that promote the return to the labour market of male and female workers who have interrupted their careers for family reasons;
- Job creation or vocational training in occupational areas in which men or women are underrepresented;
- The adoption of measures that discourage conduct in breach of the obligation to respect the human dignity of men and women in the workplace;
- The adoption of measures that discourage discriminatory conduct;
- Guaranteed actual equal pay for equal work and for work of equal value;
- The use of correct and non-discriminatory language in all the company's or organisation's documents;
- Other measures that are not mentioned but tend to eliminate or attenuate factors that penalise women in the labour market or men in family life.

### **5.1. Instruments and stages of the application process**

The conditions for conferring the “Equality is Quality” Award are defined in regulations created for this purpose, available on-line and in leaflets. Publicity for the award is of fundamental importance to its success, both in order to attract candidates and in order for the subsequent reporting of results to encourage organisations that have not yet applied for the award to adopt equality measures.

Once a new round has been announced, the first stage of the award process is the submission of applications. All applicants must submit their application to the CITE by completing a special application form. The form contains a small questionnaire aimed at establishing the applicant's basic details, not only as to its legal nature, location and human resources structure but also as to certain indicators on the status of men

and women in the organisation and any specific measures taken to promote equality and combat discrimination. Applications must also be accompanied by a set of documents that complement the form, including a compulsory set of statistical indicators.

With regard to CITE, the first phase involves checking that all the required documentation has been submitted, as failure to submit any of these documents provides the grounds for exclusion. Following this phase, the documentation is evaluated. The answers given on the application form are evaluated and ranked according to a series of weighting coefficients developed as part of the award procedure. A score is given, based on the final evaluation of the application form, and operates as the applicant's equality score. This final score is used to make an initial selection of applicants, as only applicants with a score of 500 or more can proceed to the next phase.

The subsequent evaluation of the applications is conducted simultaneously, at two interlinked levels. Firstly, a documentary analysis of the applications is carried out, based on the documents submitted with the application, plus any documentary and statistical information requested in the meantime from applicants included in the first stage of the process. This evaluation is based on a detailed study of the organisation's personnel structure (complemented by information regarding pay and working hours) and the organisation's financial situation.

At the same time, the applicants' premises are visited by a team of specialists, who make a qualitative evaluation of the application. During this visit, the member of the organisation's management in charge of the application and workers' representatives are interviewed. This is a key stage, involving direct contact with the reality of the organisation and the opportunity to listen to some employees' opinions. It is also an appropriate moment for clarifying any questions that emerge from the evaluation of the documentation submitted and for comparing statements made in the application form with the organisation's day-to-day life. The importance of this visit to the preparation of the final evaluation should be noted.

After this visit, a technical assessment report is prepared in which the main aspects are considered on a systematic basis. This report is subsequently submitted to the judges, who may request further information,

and they discuss the suitability of each applicant for the award. At this meeting of the judges to select applications, the technical assessment report is considered, together with a series of assessments made by entities represented on the panel of judges, i.e:

- An assessment, by the representative of IAPMEI (SME Support Institute), of compliance with the legislation relating to business and the viability and profitability of the enterprises;
- An assessment of compliance with the legislation governing cooperative activities, by the representative of the Instituto António Sérgio do Sector Cooperativo (António Sérgio Institute for the Cooperative Sector);
- An assessment of compliance with employment legislation by the representatives of IDICT (Institute for the Development and Inspection of Working Conditions) and IGT (General Labour Inspectorate);
- An assessment of compliance with the legislation governing the activities of non-profit entities, by the representative of the DGSS (Directorate-General for Solidarity and Social Security);
- An assessment of compliance with the legislation on advertising and consumers' rights, by the representative of the Instituto do Consumidor (Consumer Institute);
- An assessment of compliance with environmental legislation, by the representative of the Ministry of Cities, Town and Country Planning and the Environment.

The panel of judges for the “Equality is Quality” Award is chaired by the president of CITE and consists of the following members:

- The members of CITE in office on the date on which the applications for the award are considered.
- A representative and an alternative representative of each of the following institutions:
  - Regional Advisory Commission for Women’s Rights – CCRDM, Azores Autonomous Region;
  - Regional Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment in MADEIRA - CRITE, Madeira Autonomous Region;

- Institute for Employment and Vocational Training – IEFP – 1 representative in addition to its representative in CITE;
- Institute for Development and Inspection of Working Conditions – IDICT: 2 representatives, 1 from IGT (General Labour Inspectorate);
- Portuguese Quality Institute – IPQ;
- Institute for Support to Small and Medium-Size Enterprises and Investment – IAPMEI;
- General Management of ICEP (Institute of Enterprises for External Markets) Portugal;
- António Sérgio Institute for the Cooperative Sector;
- Directorate-General for Solidarity and Social Security;
- Institute for Innovation in Training – INOFOR;
- Consumer Institute – IC;
- Ministry of the Environment, Town and Country Planning and Regional Development;
- Nature Conservation Institute – ICN;
- High Authority for the Media;
- Directorate-General of Public Administration – DGAP;
- Portuguese Association of Human Resources Managers and Officers – APG;
- Portuguese Management Association – APM;
- Portuguese Association of Advertising and Communications Enterprises – APAC.

The decisions on awards are taken during the judges' meeting (or meetings, if more than one is needed). The applicants are subsequently informed. A short report is distributed stating some of the reasons for their decision, prepared on the basis of the issues discussed at the meeting and the technical assessment report. This short report is also important because it can give rise to subsequent changes within the organisation receiving it.

## **6. Evaluation of applications for the award – the applicant organisations**

The following pages present information on applicant organisations for the “Equality is Quality” Award in its first five editions. This data provides an interesting panorama of the Portuguese business structure and of the organisations with the greatest awareness of equality issues. Following an introductory chapter providing quantitative aspects of the applicant organisations, the practices and policies of the organisations visited by the technical assessment team (i.e. the organisations awarded more than 500 points in the initial selection on the basis of the replies in the application forms) are analysed in greater detail. Our aim with this is to provide a twofold analysis: one covering the quantitative data of all applicants and another the more qualitative data of the organisations visited by the technical assessment team.

In the first part, we shall therefore consider all applicants in terms of a variety of indicators, including location, type of organisation, the internal composition of their human resources and the person who initiated the application procedure. In the second part, we shall provide a more qualitative analysis of the organisations accepted following the initial selection procedure based on the application forms submitted and analysis of the data collected during the visits to the organisations – on the basis of interviews with management, workers and workers’ representatives – and during the visits to the premises.

Finally, in the third part, we shall seek to focus more specifically on the organisations honoured in recent years by presenting a set of best practices that can and should be replicated in other contexts.

As has already been stated, the visits to the organisations are highly important as in many cases the data presented in the application forms is either not confirmed or reinforced by the visits. These visits are, accordingly, of fundamental importance to the evaluation of the organisation’s overall performance in the promotion of equality. However, given the sporadic nature of these visits, they must be prepared with great care. The methods used to select the workers who will be interviewed have therefore been progressively refined and, since a particular point, random selection of interviewees (or selection by the interviewers) has

been imposed. At the time of the second edition of the award, it was also decided to give a significant role to works council or trade union representatives, as institutional spokespersons whose contribution should be heard.

## 6.1. The applicants

There were more than one hundred and fifty applicants for the “Equality is Quality” Award between the date of commencement in 2000 and 2004. In the year 2000, that of the inaugural edition of the award, there were 24 applicants. In the following years, applications were repeated with some regularity, generally from twenty organisations, with the exception of 2001, when there were 67 applicants. It should be noted that, as some organisations have made repeat applications, there is a slight mismatch between the number of applicant organisations and the number of applications, which is greater. There was a slight decline in applications in 2004, when the number of applicants was under twenty for the first time.

**Table 1 – Organisations and applicants per application year**

Year	Application	
	No.	%
2000	24	15.6
2001	67	43.5
2002	26	16.9
2003	20	13.0
2004	17	11.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Concerning the applicants’ location in Portugal, they are spread throughout various districts and regions, though there is a concentration in the Lisbon region (36.5% of applicants for the EQA are located in this district). The Lisbon district is followed by applicant organisations based in Oporto (17.6%), followed by Aveiro (6.1%), and Coimbra and Viseu (5.4%). These figures can be explained in terms of the distribution of the

Portuguese business structure throughout the country and the sectoral specificity of the organisations that have applied for the EQA (as discussed below).

**Table 2 – Applicants according to district**

District	Year										Total	
	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Aveiro	1	4.3	3	4.8	2	7.7	2	10.0	1	5.9	9	6.1
Beja	–	–	2	3.2	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	1.4
Braga	–	–	4	6.5	1	3.8	1	5.0	–	–	6	4.1
Bragança	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Castelo Branco	2	8.7	1	1.6	1	3.8	1	5.0	–	–	5	3.4
Coimbra	2	8.7	5	8.1	1	3.8	–	–	–	–	8	5.4
Évora	–	–	3	4.8	1	3.8	–	–	1	5.9	5	3.4
Faro	–	–	1	1.6	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	0.7
Guarda	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Leiria	–	–	3	4.8	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	2.0
Lisbon	8	34.8	16	25.8	14	53.8	6	30.0	10	58.8	54	36.5
Portalegre	2	8.7	1	1.6	1	3.8	–	–	1	5.9	5	3.4
Oporto	4	17.4	13	21.0	1	3.8	4	20.0	4	23.5	26	17.6
Santarém	1	4.3	–	–	–	–	1	5.0	–	–	2	1.4
Setúbal	–	–	1	1.6	1	3.8	1	5.0	–	–	3	2.0
Viana do Castelo	1	4.3	1	1.6	2	7.7	1	5.0	–	–	5	3.4
Vila Real	–	–	1	1.6	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	0.7
Viseu	1	4.3	4	6.5	1	3.8	2	10.0	–	–	8	5.4
A. R. Azores	–	–	2	3.2	–	–	1	5.0	–	–	3	2.0
A. R. Madeira	1	4.3	1	1.6	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Note:** The location of some of the applicants in 2000 and 2001 is unknown.



**Table 3 – Applicants in the Lisbon and Oporto districts according to municipality**

District	Municipality	Year					Total
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	
		No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Lisbon	Alenquer	–	–	1	–	–	1
	Arruda dos Vinhos	–	–	1	–	–	1
	Azambuja	–	1	–	–	–	1
	Cascais	1	1	–	–	1	3
	Lisbon	6	10	6	2	4	28
	Loures	–	2	–	–	1	3
	Mafra	–	–	1	–	–	1
	Oeiras	–	2	1	1	2	6
	Sintra	1	–	4	–	–	5
	Vila Franca de Xira	–	–	–	3	2	5
Oporto	Amarante	–	1	–	–	–	1
	Gondomar	–	–	–	1	1	2
	Marco de Canaveses	–	1	–	–	–	1
	Matosinhos	–	–	–	1	1	2
	Penafiel	–	–	–	1	–	1
	Oporto	1	4	1	1	2	9
	Póvoa do Varzim	1	1	–	–	–	2
	Valongo	–	2	–	–	–	2
	Vila Nova de Gaia	2	4	–	–	–	6

As can be seen in Table 3, the municipalities most represented in the Lisbon and Oporto districts are Lisbon and Oporto, followed, in the case of Lisbon, by the municipalities of Oeiras, Sintra and Vila Franca de Xira and, in the case of Oporto, by the municipality of Vila Nova de Gaia. The more urban and industrially developed regions are therefore better represented.

**Table 4 – Applicants according to legal nature**

Legal Nature	Year										Total	
	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Non-profit association	1	4.5	6	9.4	2	7.7	1	5.0	–	–	10	6.8
Limited liability co-operative	1	4.5	2	3.1	5	19.2	2	10.0	1	7.1	11	7.5
Single-member company	–	–	1	1.6	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	0.7
Municipal enterprise	–	–	1	1.6	–	–	–	–	1	7.1	2	1.4
Private charitable organisation	3	13.6	2	3.1	2	7.7	1	5.0	2	14.3	10	6.8
Public Limited Company	11	50.0	16	25.0	12	46.2	2	10.0	3	21.4	44	30.1
Private Limited Company	6	27.3	36	56.3	5	19.2	14	70.0	7	50.0	68	46.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Analysis of the legal nature of EQA applicant organisations is very important as, contrary to what is normally the case for other awards, there is a wide range of circumstances and types of employer. The vast majority of applicants are commercial enterprises, approximately 30% of which are public limited companies and over 46% of which are private limited companies.

Co-operatives account for 7.5% of applications, while non-profit associations and private charitable organisations account for almost 7%. It should be noted, however, that participation by co-operatives, which was relatively insignificant during the first years of the award, grew in 2002 and has since tended to decline. Participation by associations has also declined and was nil in 2004.

**Table 5 – Applicants according to business sector (CAE)**

CAE (i.e. business sector)	Year										Total	
	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Manufacturing industries	10	41.7	10	14.9	13	50.0	4	20.0	1	5.9	38	24.7
Production and distribution of electricity, gas and water	–	–	2	3.0	1	3.8	1	5.0	1	5.9	5	3.2
Construction	1	4.2	6	9.0	2	7.7	1	5.0	–	–	10	6.5
Wholesale and retail trade	–	–	23	34.3	3	11.5	4	20.0	3	17.6	33	21.4
Hotels and restaurants	–	–	4	6.0	–	–	1	5.0	1	5.9	6	3.9
Transport, storage and communications	2	8.3	2	3.0	–	–	2	10.0	2	11.8	8	5.2
Financial intermediation	1	4.2	1	1.5	1	3.8	–	–	1	5.9	4	2.6
Real estate, renting and business activities	1	4.2	7	10.4	2	7.7	5	25.0	5	29.4	20	13.0
Public administration, defence and social security	–	–	1	1.5	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	0.6
Education	2	8.3	1	1.5	–	–	–	–	1	5.9	4	2.6
Health and social work	2	8.3	2	3.0	–	–	–	–	1	5.9	5	3.2
Other community, social and personal service activities	5	20.8	8	11.9	4	15.4	2	10.0	1	5.9	20	13.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100.0</b>

With regard to participation according to business sector, as classified according to the Economic Activity Code (CAE), there is also a wide range of circumstances, with a major trend towards manufacturing industry and trade. There is considerable variation from year to year: for example, in the first edition of the award manufacturing industry accounted for almost half of applications, while in 2004 its presence was minimal.

However, participation by enterprises in the service sector and particularly those providing services to enterprises (such as consultants) has increased considerably.

**Table 6 – Applicants according to date of establishment**

Year	Year										Total	
	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Prior to 1950*	5	31.3	5	7.5	3	11.5	–	–	3	17.6	16	11.0
1950-1959	1	6.3	10	14.9	2	7.7	1	5.0	1	5.9	15	10.3
1960-1969	–	–	2	3.0	1	3.8	–	–	–	–	3	2.1
1970-1979	4	25.0	8	11.9	4	15.4	3	15.0	1	5.9	20	13.7
1980-1989	2	12.5	21	31.3	8	30.8	7	35.0	4	23.5	42	28.8
1990-1999	4	25.0	21	31.3	8	30.8	8	40.0	7	41.2	48	32.9
2000	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	5.0	1	5.9	2	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Note:** There is no data for 8 of the applicants in 2000.

\* Of these, the majority were established in the first half of the 20th century. It should be noted, however, that three organisations created in the 19th century and two in the 16th century were also applicants.

With respect to years of existence, over half of applicant organisations were established recently (i.e. within the last 20 years). Over 30% of applicants were created during the last 15 years.

An interesting indicator, given the nature of the award, is related to the percentage of women in the workforce of applicant organisations. This is relevant insofar as it is possible to associate the decision to apply for the “Equality is Quality” Award – and, more generally, the awareness of gender equality issues – with female-dominated enterprises or associations with a high proportion of women workers. It has been suggested on several occasions, not only on the basis of common sense but also of certain studies carried out in the area, that promoting gender equality is an almost exclusively female concern, and that the majority of those involved with this issue are women.

The table below shows that 27% of applicant organisations are at a level considered to be egalitarian (40% to 60% of employees from each sex). In approximately 24%, over 60% of employees are men, and slightly less than 30% have a majority of women. This is curious since no significant differences between the number of organisations with a roughly equal number of men and women on their staff and organisations that are more male- or female-dominated are recorded. It is, therefore, not possible to establish a direct relationship between applications for the award and organisations with a significantly more female workforce.

It should be noted that these figures provide no information on an organisation's internal structure or the proportion of men and women in leading positions. This is dealt with below.

**Table 7 – Applicants according to percentage of female employees**

% of women	Year										Total	
	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0.0 – 20.0	3	15.0	16	24.6	2	7.7	4	20.0	1	5.9	26	17.6
21.0 – 40.0	6	30.0	16	24.6	10	38.5	4	20.0	5	29.4	41	27.7
41.0 – 60.0	3	15.0	20	30.8	6	23.1	5	25.0	6	35.3	40	27.0
61.0 – 80.0	7	35.0	9	13.8	7	26.9	5	25.0	4	23.5	32	21.6
81.0 – 100.0	1	5.0	4	6.2	1	3.8	2	10.0	1	5.9	9	6.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 8 – Application promoters according to sex and position**

Position	Year										Total	
	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Senior Manager (M)	7	29.2	28	41.8	12	46.2	10	50.0	8	47.1	65	42.2
Senior Manager (F)	3	12.5	9	13.4	2	7.7	4	20.0	1	5.9	19	12.3
Other position (M)	7	29.2	22	32.8	9	34.6	3	15.0	4	23.5	45	29.2
Other position (F)	7	29.2	8	11.9	3	11.5	3	15.0	4	23.5	25	16.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>100.0</b>

When completing the application form, applicant organisations are required to appoint an application promoter. In most cases, this person is the driving force behind the application, though in other cases he/she may be appointed to the position after the application has been made. Application promoters tend to be senior management members (in 54.5% of all cases) and 42.2% are men. This indicates a trend towards vertical segregation of the labour market, but also indicates that organisations concerned with gender equality issues are not necessarily led by women.

It should be noted that the “other positions” category includes human resources managers. It is in this department that the application for the “Equality is Quality” Award and other measures to promote gender equality most frequently originate. This category, rarely described in greater detail in the application form, also includes various intermediate levels of management and co-ordination, with particular reference to the areas of human resources, training and quality.



## **7. Equality policies, practices and representations**

In the following pages we shall seek to consider in greater detail how gender equality is promoted in applicant organisations. The data was collected from applicants visited by the technical evaluation team because they had been accepted for the second phase of evaluation. A great deal of material was obtained during these visits. This made it possible to conduct interesting analyses of Portuguese organisational structure, in particular with regard to this specific segment, which is particularly aware of gender equality issues. From a methodological point of view, these visits are organised as follows: each member of the technical assessment team is responsible for visiting a limited number of applicant organisations. Each visit is prepared in advance: this may result in adapting the general interview script whenever questions requiring clarification arise from an analysis of the documentation submitted by the organisation. The visits last an average of half a day, though they may, in the case of larger enterprises, last all day. It should be noted that, in some cases, the visit will continue for several days, in the event that it becomes necessary to clarify any questions after a preliminary analysis.

A considerable part of the visit is taken up with a directed or semi-directed interview with the application promoter. This is followed by other interviews with workers (two to six workers are interviewed, depending on the total number of employees in the organisation), with trade union representatives or works council leaders also being contacted at this stage. Finally the person in charge of the visit takes a guided tour of the enterprise to gather further information on the organisational atmosphere and make informal contact with workers. Of particular interest during this tour is a visit to the facilities provided by the organisation, such as canteens, rest rooms or spaces that can be used by employees' children.

The following text is the result of the qualitative analysis made over five years and is organised according to the major variables taken into consideration in the analysis, i.e: (1) the gender equality policy in force and the meaning given to the concept of equality; (2) recruitment and selection policies; (3) career plans and performance evaluation procedures; (4) the training offered; (5) the remuneration system and pay equality for men and women; (6) work-family life reconciliation measures and, finally, (7) communication and the organisational atmosphere.



## **7.1. Meanings of equality and how it is reflected in organisational policies**

Above all, the analysis of gender equality in an organisational context involves an understanding of organisational cultures and the meanings given to equality. It also involves an understanding of the way in which the organisations in question conceive their role, in a continuum ranging from the most active and proactive perspective to one that views the role of organisations as an unavoidable reflection of the overall characteristics of society and the market and, accordingly, allots them neither a transformational capacity nor any autonomy.

The first question put to all application promoters is related to the reasons why the organisation decided to apply for the award. The reasons for applying can be divided into three major groups: (1) a desire to see public recognition of characteristics considered inherent in the organisation, (2) a desire to compare recent changes in this area with the situation in other organisations and with the accumulated knowledge of CITE as an organisation involved in this issue and (3) a desire to obtain more information and training on any of the organisation's weaknesses and strengths.

Evaluation of the applicant organisation reveals a series of strengths and weaknesses that affect policies to promote gender equality, which need to be made known. The prevalence of a certain lack of co-ordination in policies, practices and representations should be noted. In most cases studied, there was a failure to formalise what the organisation considered to be its equality policy. Most of the organisations contacted had no formal drafting whatsoever of their policies for promoting gender equality. Likewise, there were no specific plans to promote gender equality, funds allotted to this objective or documents stating the procedures and basics of such policies.

In fact, most of those responsible for award applications consider that it is unnecessary to formalise their policies, allegedly because of the informal and even "natural" character of gender equality as promoted within the organisation. Statements suggesting that "equality between men and women is an intrinsic value of this enterprise" or that "formalisation is excessive and unnecessary as this enterprise has always promoted

equality”, are repeated by a considerable number of interviewees, who explain their application by referring to current practices in the organisation’s routine existence and not to the existence of formal strategic plans for promoting gender equality.

However, despite the recurrent nature of this type of discourse, as proved in the collection of more detailed information, the reality is very varied and while, in some cases, equality is an integral part of the organisational culture, there are also many cases where discriminatory practices that are not prohibited by the enterprise’s regulations persist. Or, even more commonly, the organisation has no proactive strategies to counteract what many managers consider to be imponderables arising from the market, the laws of supply and demand and the characteristics of Portuguese organisations.

Nevertheless, a significant number of the organisations contacted have individual measures for promoting gender equality that are more or less formalised. In some cases there are documents that refer to the principle of equal opportunities as an organisational principle. This tends to be more common in multinational companies that have imported principles from the countries where they have their head offices and have applied them for a longer time, enterprises in the service sector where the degree of formalisation is generally greater, and organisations in the sector covering co-operatives and associations where concern for equality issues is part and parcel of the organisation’s original design.

The documents identifying policies and practices to promote equality include the annual reports, which contain data on the contractual status of men and women, internal regulations defining anti-discrimination procedures, information sheets distributed to employees, welcome manuals for new employees and codes of practice.

These policies can in many cases be found in instruments such as collective bargaining agreements, which are very important regulatory mechanisms for the effective application of male and female employees’ rights.

The significance given to equality and the promotion of equality varies greatly and in some cases is seen from a minimalist perspective, in

which the promotion of equality merely amounts to guaranteeing compliance with the legislation in force, equal pay and non-discriminatory recruitment of men and women. However, for a significant number of the organisations visited, promoting equality also has a more proactive aspect, involving the implementation of specific measures adapted to the work context in question that go beyond what the law requires.

There is still only a small number of organisations that associate promotion of gender equality with more proactive intervention or that tend to concentrate on the promotion of parity in the number of men and women employees, the employment of women in traditionally male jobs and the promotion of measures to reconcile work and family life, on the principle that these considerations are fundamental objectives.

Among managers with a more proactive approach, equality between men and women tends to be associated with the corporate social responsibility issue and the integration of minorities, which tend to be subject to discrimination. It is sometimes associated with other concerns of the organisation, such as the inclusion of disabled people or ex-prisoners in the enterprise or the aid given by the organisation to the poor.

Despite the generally diffuse nature of the measures proposed and the failure to consolidate many of the principles expressed, there is in fact increasing concern with the problem of gender equality, at least in theory.

In the vast majority of cases this concern has only recently become relevant due to the introduction of a new human resources policy, the import of new international trends or new approaches adopted by individuals recently appointed to management positions. An application for the "Equality is Quality" Award is frequently the personal project of a new human resources manager who is particularly concerned with this issue. While this situation suggests the emergence of agents of change who are particularly aware of the gender equality issue, it also suggests the crucial importance that certain key aspects can have for promoting gender equality in a certain organisational framework. These men and women are of fundamental importance but are frequently confronted with obstructions or even prevented from extending what is a personal concern to an entire complex organisational structure.

## **7.2. The human resources structure of the organisations evaluated**

The contrast between what is expressed (albeit insufficiently) with regard to the principle of gender equality and its implementation in practice is evident from an analysis of the workforce of applicant organisations. Organisations with a balanced number of men and women in their workforce represent less than one third of all applicants. For the other two thirds, the majority employ more men than women, although there are a significant number with more women than men. This division depends very much on the sector in which the organisation is active, which confirms the existence of transverse discrimination against male and female workers.

When the participation of men and women is considered vertically, there is an even greater contrast, insofar as the percentage of organisations where men and women are represented in equal proportions in decision-making bodies is lower than the number of organisations where there is overall parity. The vast majority of other organisations have a clear predominance of men in leadership positions. There are no more than five companies with a strong female presence at management level.

Concerning the distribution of men and women according to business sectors, the traditional division is maintained, even if it is not intentionally promoted. We have also mentioned the tendency to associate women with tasks involving care provision, i.e. extending the woman's traditional role in the home, while men are generally given duties involving greater physical strength or greater public exposure.

There are however a few cases where the progressive inclusion of women in jobs that tend to be considered a male preserve is presented as good practice. They involve about ten industrial manufacturing companies where women have been placed in skilled worker positions that were not frequently occupied by women. In some cases this placement was broken down into several phases, including negotiations to deal with resistance from other workers. Sometimes it was necessary to create special facilities within organisational infrastructures, e.g. women's washrooms, where previously there had only been male facilities. However, such practices are somewhat asymmetrical, as there is no similar concern for including men in positions traditionally occupied by women.

The discussion on the meaning of equality leads quite naturally to a discussion of human resources structures in enterprises, a subject we will deal with in greater detail in the following section: "Recruitment and selection".

### **7.3. Recruitment and selection**

The analysis begun in the preceding section suggests that an organisation's human resources structure and, particularly, the distribution of women among the various areas of activity and their position in the hierarchy are key indicators of the existence in the organisation, or non-existence, of gender equality in employment and at work. This is because the concentration of women at lower levels of the hierarchical pyramid, where they have less social prestige and earn lower wages, is one of the major obstacles to effective gender equality. Furthermore, the fact that the distribution of men and women in the organisational structure, even in contexts in which discrimination is not explicit, continues to be marked by horizontal and vertical asymmetries, is evidence of the key role of those who manage and work in the human resources department of each organisation. This is because the various aspects of their activity appear to be of strategic importance to defining the horizontal or vertical gender make-up of an organisation's workforce.

Three different attitudes can be identified among the organisations evaluated, i.e. (1) continuation of discriminatory situations via preferential employment of men and women in positions "naturally" considered to be more appropriate to their sex; (2) supposedly neutral recruitment via mere formal legal compliance in terms of advertising the position to be filled, a stance that tends to reproduce the current patterns in the employment market; and (3) pro-active employment of men and women in occupations that are not normally considered "typical" for their gender.

One of the conclusions to be drawn from the evaluation is the persistence of a relative informality in terms of the recruitment methods and selection process used. This is relevant as a lack of formalisation could give rise to a failure to provide safeguards against potential discrimination.

It should be noted that recruitment methods tend to be informal (e.g. recruitment of acquaintances of managers or other employees in the organisation). These are frequently the only form of recruitment, or at least the form of recruitment generally used, above all with regard to less qualified personnel.

The most frequently used formal recruitment methods include, in particular, advertisements in the press. Approximately half of the organisations evaluated used this method. The role of employment centres, which should also be noted, is particularly relevant in the recruitment of workers for less skilled positions.

Among the less frequently used recruitment methods are the internet (mainly via the company site, when the site includes a space for submitting CVs), which is nevertheless of some significance; agreements and partnerships with universities; spontaneous applications, and the use of recruitment companies. While the first two methods are used in particular to engage more qualified employees, spontaneous applications and recruitment companies are more associated with hiring for less qualified positions.

Concerning the selection processes used, there is a reasonable range of models. Personnel or human resources departments, where they exist, tend to be primarily responsible for selecting applicants. When there is no such department, as in the case in many enterprises with a small number of employees, the most common solution is a selection process conducted by the general management and by those in charge of the position for which an employee is to be appointed. In some cases these three entities are involved (i.e. the general management, the human resources department and the person in charge of the department in which an employee is to be recruited). In other cases, the main people responsible for the selection process tend to be either the general management or those responsible for the area in question, acting alone.

Organisations with a formal job description system that establishes selection criteria account for less than a third of all applicant organisations. This system exists mostly in large organisations, which have human resources departments, and mainly in the service sector. The

formal description of duties, like other methods that are formalised and subject to regulations, can be important in preventing discrimination. It represents a positive feature.

In approximately 10% of cases, recruitment procedures do not expressly provide for gender equality. Another 10% of the organisations evaluated even have procedures that are potentially discriminatory (e.g. procedures that consider certain positions to be appropriate for men or women). Although the organisations in question are few in number, they still require a lot of persuading and information to ensure equal access to the labour market by men and women.

As already stated, this does not mean that there are no cases where there has been a concerted effort to place women in positions considered typically male, although the opposite rarely occurs, which suggests greater difficulty in placing men in positions considered typically female. This reflects a tendency to “masculinise” working women, which rarely involves an equal effort to place men in traditionally female positions, particularly as these positions tend to be less prestigious and poorly remunerated.

The following are illustrations of the processes to promote gender equality. They were taken from the technical assessment reports on applicants that were considered to illustrate good practices:

**Example 1: *Friedrich Grohe***

At GROHE, there are women working in the sanding/polishing sector. This is one of the areas involving great physical strength, where most members of the workforce are men. In one case, a female employee was initially recruited as a temporary worker to replace an employee on maternity leave. The temporary worker’s employment contract terminated at the end of the maternity leave of the employee she was replacing. At that time a vacancy arose in the sanding/polishing sector, where the enterprise had never employed women. She was offered this position and accepted it. She is now fully integrated in this position. There are other similar cases of placements of women in positions usually occupied by men in this enterprise.

## Example 2: *IBM*

IBM has a special working group called the *Women's Leadership Team*, which promotes a series of measures to attract women to the information technologies area, habitually a male area.

The team's on-going work includes: organising meetings in schools with female pupils to inform them of opportunities for careers in technology and the existence of a summer traineeship programme in the company targeted at girls; seeking to create networks with enterprises that promote similar policies and practices; raising awareness among women in clerical positions (meeting and sharing experiences) and proposing that they move to technical positions (the necessary training is offered); and developing lines of action with the agencies responsible for family policies in order to promote reconciliation between work and family life. IBM also collects the experiences of its male and female workers in their work-family life reconciliation strategies and disseminates them on the Intranet.

Both of the above examples illustrate how it is possible to find mechanisms in different sectors and at different hierarchical levels for placing women in occupational positions that they would not initially consider, and thus counteract trends towards segmentation in the market.

### 7.4. Career planning and performance evaluation

The existence of internal career advancement plans is also very important for promoting equal opportunities between men and women, as it is via internal promotion that workers are placed in more important positions and earn more. These plans are therefore an important tool in the fight against vertical segregation.

Furthermore, as already stated for recruitment processes, formalising these career plans is essential insofar as they are a regulatory tool for eradicating access inequalities between male and female workers. Discretionary hierarchical powers are thus avoided.



It should be noted that almost half the organisations assessed had a formal plan governing promotion. A significant part of the promotion plans in force are a direct consequence of collective bargaining agreements (CBA) or company agreements (CA) that define a promotion plan for each career (as well as promotion criteria – e.g. seniority – and the corresponding pay rises). This increases the importance of these two regulatory instruments.

A significant number of the organisations assessed have more complex plans that go beyond the provisions of the CBAs, establishing career mobility within the enterprise. These plans and their dissemination to all new employees are a good practice as they enable the employee to plan his/her career in line with criteria that cut across the various departments in the organisation.

Some of the organisations contacted consider that they only have informal promotion and career plans, i.e. upward occupational mobility is possible but is subject, to a great extent, to the informal policies of certain departments. In these situations there may be a risk of discretionary assessments by the management of each sector, which may be based on differing criteria, and, consequently, of disparities between employees in different departments.

Almost a quarter of the organisations do not have promotion or career plans. This is particularly true of small businesses (1) where most employees work in relatively unqualified occupations and job mobility opportunities are few as there are no other positions (e.g. some service providers, such as restaurants and some manufacturing industries) or (2) where employees are already highly skilled and the existing hierarchy is horizontal (e.g. some small service-providing companies, e.g. consultants).

It should be noted that only in a small minority of the organisations visited was there evidence of discrimination between men and women. However, the number of organisations where non-discrimination is reflected in promotion criteria is relatively small, which means that future discrimination is possible.

Employee performance evaluation processes are closely related to the establishment of internal careers. These processes are a fundamental tool for occupational advancement but also have other uses, e.g. the calculation of pay rises and creation of continuing training and further training plans.

Once again, almost half the organisations contacted carry out formal performance evaluation according to set criteria (although there are gaps between the levels of complexity of these criteria and their dissemination to employees). This evaluation is normally carried out annually by middle management, on the basis of a set of criteria (frequently the result of objectives defined at the beginning of the year or during the previous performance evaluation). Performance evaluation therefore tends to create a closer link between the worker and his/her immediate superior and to give a key role to middle management.

The evaluation process normally involves a meeting with the worker and is frequently a basis for drawing up training and continuous improvement plans, which in some cases are used to establish pay increases for the following year. It is also an ideal time to analyse future scenarios and possible promotion. As far as the criteria in force are concerned, these are generally productivity-related but can also include behavioural factors.

In the case of organisations that do not have a formal period for carrying out performance evaluations for each employee, approximately one quarter stated that they carry out an informal performance evaluation (with the consequent risks already mentioned regarding insufficiently formalised promotion criteria and career planning). The remainder have no performance evaluation mechanism. Once again the importance of formalising performance evaluation criteria is to be noted, as this guarantees that all employees are subject to the same type of evaluation. Evaluations that are solely dependent on the opinions of management or on vague and poorly defined criteria should be viewed with caution.

Example 3 illustrates the case of an enterprise where careers are planned and both vertical mobility and career changes are provided for:

**Example 3: *Texto Editora***

Texto Editora seeks to emphasise career development via internal promotion. The company has an internal career plan that defines the various thresholds envisaged for each position. Careers are not however limited to this predefined plan, and in many cases employees change jobs and are transferred from one department to another. In addition to continuous informal performance evaluation, there are two formal performance evaluations at Texto Editora, i.e. half way through and at the end of each year. This evaluation and the interview at which the results are given are used as a basis for promotion and vocational retraining. This is also the time training needs are diagnosed and salary increases decided.

The evaluation factors in force are communicated to employees when they are engaged. There are a total of 25 parameters for a wide range of areas, from technical, relational and behavioural skills to involvement in the company's business.

**7.5. Training**

Another aspect analysed during the application processes for the "Equality is Quality" Award is training. All organisations were asked about the various forms of training made available, e.g. vocational retraining, further training of certain skills or the worker's personal enrichment. It was also intended to ascertain the impact of these training plans, if any, on the careers of the workers interviewed. The existence of a training plan is not only good practice but related in various ways to the gender equality issue. Furthermore, as training is essential for the occupational advancement of male and female workers, it is a necessary condition for developing their careers. Equal access to training is an important criterion for confirming the effective existence of equal opportunities between men and women. It should be noted that holding training measures outside working hours, at weekends or a long way from the workplace may

involve increased difficulties in the reconciliation of work and family life and therefore be particularly onerous for workers with family duties.

One very positive aspect is that all applicants for this award hold training activities from time to time. Only in a minority of cases (approximately 5% of all applicants) may this commitment to training not exist.

Approximately one third of the organisations contacted have a training plan (generally annual). It should be noted that most of these organisations (and some of those that do not regularly draw up training plans) offer what can be said to be a high volume of training.

The areas in which training is given vary greatly, although the more specifically technical areas and more general skills (such as English and IT) are represented in similar proportions. Training in the behavioural area is also fairly widespread. Although in some organisations there is a greater incidence in one area than in others, there is a similar concentration in each area overall. It should also be noted that in a significant number of organisations, equal opportunities training modules are included in the training offered. This is to be welcomed as these types of training modules can play an important role in promoting an organisational climate that favours gender equality.

Training is offered as follows: in a significant number of the organisations approached, the workers were taken into consideration when preparing training plans and were directly consulted (e.g. via the performance evaluation interview) or could even apply for the training they considered necessary for their area of work. In a small number of organisations, the training plan is a direct consequence of the performance evaluation interview, involving a systematisation of employees' training needs.

In fewer cases, employees were not consulted during the preparation of training plans and considered that there was a mismatch between their needs and the training included in the annual training plan.

As stated above, one form of discrimination between men and women that could be a consequence of training, is training held outside working hours (evenings or at weekends). Holding training initiatives outside normal working hours may involve increased difficulties for workers

with greater responsibilities outside the workplace. It is well known that women tend to have greater difficulty in reconciling work and family life, so it is no surprise that participating in training outside working hours or a long way from the workplace may be particularly difficult for them and may have a negative impact on their careers.

There are however very few organisations in which training mainly takes place outside working hours. Evidence of discrimination between men and women in access to training exceeds this figure (10% of the organisations contacted), as a consequence, *inter alia*, of a major emphasis on training in areas where there is a lower proportion of women.

Another noteworthy good practice is the facilitation of access to training and the grants provided in some companies to male and female workers who wish to improve their qualifications, e.g. through post-graduate education.

It should also be noted that in some organisations (mainly larger ones) training is certified and certificates are awarded. This involves added value for the employees who are awarded these diplomas: it goes beyond the bounds of a position in a specific organisation. Accordingly, companies offering certified training can be considered to be “learning organisations” that have an added positive impact on the career advancement of their employees.

The following examples of good vocational training practices have been taken from the reports on two of the organisations visited:

**Example 4: IBM**

When identifying the objectives to be attained during the next year at the beginning of each year, IBM employees are required to draw up their own training plan, in the form of an initial proposal that is subsequently reviewed by their immediate superior, who may add other courses considered necessary. The training plan prepared by the Human Resources Department is the outcome of the combination of the employee’s proposal, the immediate superior’s proposal and the company’s objectives.

The annual training plan combines internal and external training and classroom training with e-learning training.

It should be noted that as a consequence of the nature of its business, IBM has considerably developed training via e-learning. This can either be an integral part of the training sketched out annually or occur spontaneously at the instance of the employee, as he/she has on-line access to the various training modules provided by the company. In this case management is informed of the decision, and the virtual training in question is added to the employee's individual CV. The IBM training portal has approximately 3500 freely available courses, all free of charge.

When workers join IBM they undergo initial training, including equal opportunities training that is freely accessible via the e-learning system.

In 2003, IBM conducted 504 training initiatives, which totalled 14,355 hours. The company also provides grants for higher education, including master's degrees, MBAs and post-graduate courses, and language courses.

**Example 5: *ADE – Associação para o Desenvolvimento e Emprego*  
[*Association for Development and Employment*]**

Employees' training needs are identified at sectoral meetings. The two management members interviewed emphasised that the association is currently able to meet all the training needs identified via projects developed as part of the EQUAL community initiative.

ADE's male and female workers have already had the opportunity to attend various workshops (one of which was on equal opportunities and covered employees in the ADE's central unit), among other training initiatives (covering topics such as new technologies, document management, etc.). Some training activities also take place outside working hours, in the areas of social marketing, planning, etc. (with a duration of 50 hours each). All of these topics were identified during the meetings.

According to the person in charge, it is an important ADE objective to implement an on-going training system so that, *inter alia*, good practices in the area of equal opportunities can be internalised by everyone working for the association. The same person also stressed the practice of visits to organisations with activities similar to those of ADE. These visits are also considered training. During the process, visitors are required to fill in a form containing, among other things, an item regarding equal opportunities, in which they are asked to state how the organisation visited deals with the equal opportunities issue. This tool is considered crucial for allowing ADE employees to reflect on this question.

Among the most interesting characteristics of the training given at IBM and ADE is the opportunity employees have to participate in drawing up their own training plans, which makes it possible to satisfy both the employer and the employee. The inclusion of equal opportunities in the training offered should also be noted, since it can have a positive effect on developing a non-discriminatory organisational environment.

## **7.6. The remuneration system**

One of the most common forms of discrimination between men and women in the labour market is unequal pay. This is partly a consequence of vertical segregation that concentrates women in less qualified jobs. In the preceding pages, we have demonstrated the importance of recruitment and selection processes, career planning and performance evaluation for minimising this type of inequality.

Pay inequalities are usually detected in people who work in similar positions. Therefore an important part of applicant assessment involves a comparison of the wages and salaries earned by men and women (and the detection of any imbalances), and the procedures by which wages and salaries are set (as, if these criteria are rigorous, they will prevent discrimination).

In most of the organisations applying for the “Equality is Quality” Award, there is no discrimination between men and women in the wages and

salaries policy. It is noteworthy that pay discrimination between men and women was detected in only one fifth of applicants, i.e. inequalities that cannot be explained or are insufficiently supported by other factors, such as the concentration of women at lower hierarchical levels or the seniority and qualifications of the employees in question. Consequently, only in one fifth of the organisations assessed were there pay gaps among workers of the same category that are in a substantial number of cases inequalities between men and women. Although this number is of relatively limited significance, it is evidence of entrenched discrimination between men and women, even within organisations that appear to be aware of the issue.

In almost half the organisations visited, the wages and salaries paid were in line with the provisions of the CBA or CA, although in a substantial number of cases, the amount earned was slightly in excess of the amount stipulated. The importance of these contractual models for avoiding illegal discrimination is therefore once again confirmed.

Only in a minority of cases are the criteria determining monthly earnings insufficient or not explicit . In approximately half the organisations considered, remuneration is comprised of a fixed basic pay (which is calculated according to the position involved and may be the amount stipulated in the CBA) and a variable element. There are various ways in which this variable component can be defined. It may take the form of (1) a minimum and maximum figure for each position, so that the salary of each employee is defined individually according to the evaluation of his/her performance, (2) a fixed amount to which monthly or annual bonuses are added on the basis of timekeeping, productivity or performance or (3) a fixed amount that is increased annually in line with inflation or on the basis of performance.

Some companies have profit-sharing schemes, according to which profits can be shared equally among all employees or paid variably according to each employee's performance.



The following examples illustrate various ways in which salaries are established:

**Example 6: *Nestlé Portugal***

At Nestlé, salaries are determined individually. The company is governed by two or three collective bargaining agreements but it pays substantially more than the amounts stipulated in them.

The various positions are ranked according to the responsibility involved, on the basis of a points system. This system for evaluating positions means that employees can be placed in various classes. In every class, every position is given between x and y points, each of which corresponds to a certain salary.

The positioning of each employee between the upper and lower salary limits is made in line with the performance evaluation system and is adjusted annually, so the annual salary increase is defined according to the evaluation effected.

**Example 7: *Montepio Geral***

At Montepio Geral, employees' pay is determined annually by the board of directors, in line with the Collective Agreement (CA). Salaries are comprised of fixed and variable components. Monthly remuneration, seniority bonuses and other monthly payments are fixed on a permanent basis. The variable remuneration comprises overtime pay, expense allowances and other benefits, merit and productivity bonuses, awards related to the individual contribution to corporate objectives, and other variable remuneration components stipulated in the CA, the Statutes or Board decisions.

There is also a length of service bonus, which involves payment of a month's salary in the month in which the employee completes 15 years' service, two months' salary in the month in which the employee completes 20 years' service and three months' salary in the month in which the employee completes 25 years' service. Absences due to maternity/paternity leave and periods of hospitalisation do not count

as absences for the purpose of calculating length of service. In no circumstances is there a loss of either fixed or variable pay for absence from work for family reasons (e.g. maternity/paternity leave). It was stated, for example, that female workers continue to receive their meal allowance and exemption from the stipulations of the working hours bonus (if any) while on maternity leave.

### **7.7. Measures to promote reconciliation between work and family life: working hours, leave of absence and special facilities**

In this section, we shall discuss another way to promote equal opportunities between men and women, related to measures aimed at reconciling work and family life. As the pressure of family responsibilities tends to affect women more significantly, particularly those with small children, it is important to understand that the lack of effective policies to promote reconciliation between work and family life tends to increase the imbalances between men and women in the labour market. For this reason, it is essential to analyse the policies and practices of the organisations in question, while noting that the lack of reconciliation measures may be reflected in lesser career opportunities for female workers.

A set of measures and basic principles on the question of social organisation are generally considered to facilitate reconciliation between work and family life and to promote gender equality. These include measures relating to workers' use of time (Parcel & Cornfield, 2000) and space and other working conditions, which can be more restrictive or more adaptable to the needs of personal and family life. In fact, many incompatibilities between work and family life are a consequence of conflict between the times and spaces inherent in these two social areas.

Other important measures that support reconciliation between work and family life seek to introduce changes to *organisational cultures* and combat certain *occupational cultures* that are unwilling to recognise that workers, and above all male workers, are entitled to assume family responsibilities (Lewis, n/d). They also resist the idea that the compulsory and controlled physical presence of workers at traditional workplaces is not always what promotes the greatest productivity.

A third form of promoting reconciliation involves the kind of *infrastructure* needed by workers and families on a day-to-day basis. First of all this includes nursery and kindergarten services plus other forms of child-care, care for young people and, increasingly, services supporting the elderly (Huikes, Dulk and Schippers, n/d). In addition to these, two major requirements are public transport systems with frequent services and road infrastructures providing easy and rapid access between home and workplace. An increasingly wide range of proximity services for broader periods of time and outside standard times are also indicated as of fundamental importance to the reconciliation of work and private life (Concede, 2001).

Finally, emphasis must be placed on the importance of family support measures enshrined in the law, e.g. paternity, maternity and parental leave or absence to attend to family responsibilities, and their effective implementation by employers.

Hence, in the context of the employers' role, there are various types of measure to promote reconciliation between work and family life, of which we shall consider three major groups: (1) the management of working time, which includes working hours, effective compliance with them and options for more or less formalised flexibility that facilitates fulfilment of family responsibilities; (2) compliance with the leave policies enshrined in the law and a possible extension to them (in which compliance with the law amounts to level 0 and level 1 amounts to development of family friendly policies); and (3) facilities, services and other benefits that amount to effective support for male and female workers and their families (Guerreiro, 2000).

### **(1) *Time management, working hours and flexibility***

Time management is particularly relevant in modern societies and is of critical importance for tackling the issue of reconciliation between work and family life. Therefore, an organisation that enables its employees to manage time in a manner that does not prevent them from fulfilling their family responsibilities and in which the employee is not disadvantaged in terms of his/her occupation, can be considered a good example.

There is currently a new set of forms of organising working time, involving adaptability and flexibility aimed at optimising efficiency and productivity. These innovations relate to part-time work, job-sharing, flexible hours, a compressed working week and telework. Ideally, this flexibility should satisfy both employers and employees. It is important to ensure that it is used to support employees and is accepted as an important tool in reconciling work and family life, since, in many cases, this flexibility ultimately favours the company and the attainment of company objectives and gives employees no autonomy in managing their time (a fact repeatedly mentioned by trade unions and works councils).

Concerning the organisations visited for the “Equality is Quality” Award, approximately one quarter offer the option of flexible working hours, but it should be noted that, in some cases, this flexibility appears to be used more to the benefit of the employer than the employees. This formal flexibility is combined with an informal flexibility available in approximately half the organisations contacted, though once again the benefits may be distributed asymmetrically and fail to favour employers and employees equally.

In a significant number of organisations it is also possible to accumulate hours worked. This is an interesting measure, which can contribute to improved reconciliation between work and family life.

The possibility of homeworking is almost non-existent. It was used in only two companies, although others use it as an occasional solution.

The following examples illustrate good practices for promoting flexible forms of work:

**Example 8: GRAFE** (informal flexibility)

Working hours at GRAFE are from 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., and have recently begun to be recorded automatically. However one of the innovative aspects of this company is flexibility of working hours. Since the company’s management considers that rigid working hours are not conducive to creative work, most of the company’s male and female workers work flexible hours. Priority is given to complying with

objectives and the number of hours worked rather than complying with working hours.

Furthermore, the male and female workers interviewed stated that the company informally facilitates matters so that workers can resolve personal and family problems. They gave examples of several situations in which they had been absent from the company during normal working hours to deal with personal or family matters (care for children) with no consequences in terms of remuneration or other benefits.

The company states that it promotes employee responsibility by giving its employees freedom. It is not routine practice to take work home.

### **Example 9: ADE**

In its “Internal Equality and Quality Policy Regulations”, this association envisages various forms of flexible working hours, e.g. (1) jobs without pre-established working hours, oriented towards meeting objectives; (2) telework/homeworking; (3) rotating shift work agreed between the workers and the employer; (4) informal facilitation to deal with personal and family responsibilities; (5) a time bank: the option for employees to compress their working time into fewer weekdays, to accumulate overtime hours worked to gain rest days, or to make exchanges with other employees in compatible positions; and (6) flexible starting and finishing times.

### **(2) Family assistance leave**

With respect to leave, most applicant organisations comply with the law. No explicit breaches of the law were detected. However a significant percentage of organisations claim to provide more leave than is required by law. This is true of the ADE, mentioned in the example above, where 10 additional days’ maternity and paternity leave are granted. The conditions for granting this social benefit are defined in the association’s “Internal Equality and Quality Policy Regulations”.

It should, however, be noted that, although most of the organisations visited comply with the law, there may in some cases be unofficial pressure not to take the entire leave entitlement. On the one hand, the taking of leave tends to penalise female employees, who in some companies are viewed as giving more importance to their families than their work and are therefore not valued employees. On the other hand, pressure not to take leave entitlements tends to be particularly common where male workers are involved: taking leave to attend to family responsibilities is still more the exception than the rule.

### **(3) *Reconciliation support services and facilities***

When evaluating the applications, we also sought to list a set of facilities and services offered by the organisations that can provide important assistance in promoting a balance between work and family life. As already stated, services of this type can be a fundamental way to ensure reconciliation between work and family life and deal with one of the potentially most discriminatory factors between men and women.

One of the services most frequently provided by the various organisations is a canteen serving meals at low prices. Sometimes the canteen can also be used by family members. This is viewed by employees as an important advantage and this facility is especially made use of by employees' children during holidays.

A few companies have a kindergarten or agreements with kindergartens and/or play centres. This is a best practice for promoting reconciliation between work and family life. A smaller but significant number of enterprises provide transport, e.g. a company bus, thus reducing travelling costs and simplifying the potentially time-consuming daily journey to and from work for all employees.

Some organisations, particularly those of a significant size, organise leisure activities for workers' children, e.g. holiday camps, thus simplifying childcare problems in school holidays. In many cases, activities are organised on a more occasional basis, such as visits to the company, parties and the distribution of presents at certain times of the year. There

are also situations where the company considers granting an allowance for the purchase of school equipment for workers' children, or even donates school materials.

Finally, another service provided by some organisations is related to healthcare. It should be noted that, in a significant number of cases, the organisation has a doctor and offers health insurance that frequently extends to family members.

## **7.8. Communication and the organisational atmosphere**

Investigating an organisation also involves gaining an understanding of the type of communication existing within the organisation and the nature of the organisational culture and day-to-day atmosphere. These factors are all the more important to the equality issue, insofar as a large number of situations of discrimination and self-exclusion are caused by common internal factors. The final part of the evaluation of applicants for the "Equality is Quality" Award concerns communication within the enterprise and its organisational climate. The purpose of this evaluation is to observe the various internal channels of communication, assess the employees' involvement in the organisation, the atmosphere created between the workers and the relations between the various hierarchies within the organisation.

Concerning formal communication within the company, almost one third of the organisations contacted have more or less regular meetings between workers and senior or middle management, and in approximately one fifth of all cases, the employees consider they are consulted on matters relating to the company. Only in a minority of cases was there any specific reference to a lack of consultation of employees on matters that they considered concerned them. Furthermore, in almost one fifth of organisations, procedures were established for obtaining suggestions from employees on the organisation's operation, either via suggestion boxes or the company intranet. This information is important insofar as the existence of open communication channels within an organisation greatly contributes to the wellbeing of its employees, to their involvement in building their careers and to effective access to the benefits available.

There were established forms of communication in approximately half the organisations, issued by the employer and distributed to all employees. Company bulletins, posters in strategic locations and intranet networks were the forms most frequently used. Despite the fact that such communication is not interactive, it assists in disseminating the organisation's policies and practices and in creating an organisational identity.

With reference to relations between male and female workers, on the one hand, and the organisation, on the other hand, these tend to be direct and on an individual basis, since the number of organisations in which works councils or trade unions play an important role is less than 10%.

With reference to the working environment, there are complaints of a poor working environment in only a minority of organisations. In most, employees describe the atmosphere as pleasant, quite informal, and favourable to cordial relations between employees and their superiors. They feel comfortable when making suggestions, complaints or various types of requests.

With reference to the promotion of a good organisational climate, it is also worth noting that in a substantial number of organisations, mainly large ones, the human resources department regularly organises recreational activities to increase the sense of belonging to the organisation and promote a good working environment. These activities can include events and parties on symbolic occasions or outdoor activities. Employees' children also participate in some of these activities.

A final and very positive aspect is the fact that a small percentage of the organisations conduct surveys to obtain a diagnosis of the organisational climate and of the level of employee satisfaction with the enterprise. Conclusions are then drawn for application to future activities and measures.



In the following examples, we analyse some good practices in the communications strategies of two of the organisations contacted:

**Example 10: *IBM***

As might be expected of a promoter of computer services, IBM has developed an instant messaging system for use by its employees, enabling them to communicate with each other remotely and free of charge. It is a software application, installed in all the company's computers, in which each employee can add the contacts of fellow IBM workers (in Portugal or internationally). These contacts are highlighted when the person in question is on-line and it is possible to send written messages, which are received automatically and simultaneously.

**Example 11: *GROHE***

As parts of its continuous improvement policy, this company has implemented an IMG (Improvement Measures Groups) system created by GROHE. With this system, any person in the company can detect a problem or an opportunity to improve a specific area and can then create a working group specifically to solve the problem or implement the improvement opportunity in question. The working group is dissolved when the purpose for which it was created has been fulfilled.

In this context, the human resources manager wished to emphasise the creation of an IMG group for communication. This group emerged when it was noted that some employees do not read the memos issued by the company, or at least do not read them in their entirety and are therefore not fully informed. The working group proposed to identify the causes of the problem and suggest alternative ways of presenting information.

## 8. Conclusions

Throughout this document, we have been able to list a series of good practices for promoting gender equality. Non-discriminatory recruitment procedures, equal pay, access to leave and other benefits defined by law, and investment in programmes to promote equality were identified. If, on the one hand, there is still a long way to go, on the other hand there are many organisations, and notably winners of the “Equality is Quality” Award, that implement best practices that can and should be replicated.

In the remainder of this report, we shall seek to draw some conclusions from our evaluation of the applicants, as listed below:

1. The regional, sectoral and organisational context has a significant influence on gender equality policies and practices. Moreover, there is a major gap between organisations in which there is already widespread awareness of these issues (though it may sometimes not be well implemented in practice) and organisations where inequality of opportunities between men and women is deeply entrenched in organisational values and cultures;
2. While there are already many organisations with formalised human resources management systems, the absence of such management practices is quite widespread. Furthermore, when recruitment, selection and internal advancement procedures are not formalised, there is a risk that decisions are made on a discretionary basis, giving particular importance to the role of management and managers;
3. The very understanding of what promoting gender equality means varies greatly, depending on the organisational context. In some contexts, it is closely linked to the idea of corporate social responsibility and the projection of a pro-active image of the organisation's action. In other contexts, it is only associated with explicit non-discrimination and minimal compliance with the legal requirements;
4. The promotion of gender equality in the workplace is closely linked to events in other social areas. The relationship between career advancement, availability and reconciliation between work and family life is particularly clear;
5. The idea that certain positions are more appropriate for men than for women continues to be deeply rooted in organisational cultures. The

efforts made to combat this idea involve an as yet timid inclusion of women in traditionally male roles, while there have been no efforts to place men in traditionally female roles;

6. Reconciling work and family life still tends to be viewed as a private matter or an issue in which the state should have a say, but has not yet been assumed as part and parcel of corporate social responsibility;
7. There is a sectoral and generational variety of engagement models with a significant impact on the possibility of promoting equality and reconciling work and family life;
8. Even within the same organisation, there is a multiplicity of agencies seeking to promote gender equality, frequently involving only a small core of people. Trade unions and work councils play a relatively insignificant role, particularly in some sectors;
9. There are various gaps in information and internal communication, e.g. organisations are insufficiently aware of employment legislation and employees have difficulty in obtaining access to information on the employer's regulations;
10. The most common best practices are regulations on human resources management procedures, formulated to avoid internal imbalances, efforts to include women in traditionally male sectors against market trends, and the promotion of simultaneously formal and informal communication relationships.

# **APPENDIX 1**

## **NOTEWORTHY BEST PRACTICES IN ORGANISATIONS THAT HAVE RECEIVED THE AWARD**



## **Montepio Geral Associação Mutualista**

### **Caixa Económica Montepio Geral**

In Montepio Geral, **equality** is referred to in the Employee Rules, in a paragraph that identifies equality as a strategic objective of the organisation. The rules state that the promotion of equality must also be seen as a marketing strategy and as a competitive advantage.

Employees' training needs are identified during the performance evaluation and a training plan is subsequently developed. When training takes place outside working hours or away from the workplace, all travel costs are met and the allowances established in the **Collective Bargaining Agreement** are granted.

The organisation provides formal and informal **flexible** working hours to enable staff to accommodate personal and family responsibilities. Some employees of Montepio Geral are entitled to **transport** in a bus provided by the bank.

Montepio Geral organises trips, school holidays and summer holiday camps for **employees' children**.

**Tavares de Oliveira – Assesores e Consultores de Empresas, Lda.**

The equality issue is discussed at weekly meetings at Tavares e Oliveira. This company's concern with equality is also reflected in the care it takes when drafting the company's documentation, which is written in a gender-free style.

It is possible in this company to compress normal working hours into fewer days, which greatly assists compliance with family care responsibilities. There are also other formal and informal flexible working time arrangements in line with workers' needs and the projects they are involved in.

Tavares e Oliveira has a canteen and a bar with very low prices, to which employees' children have access.

This company is also committed to promoting good communication channels between the various hierarchical levels. Employees are consulted at weekly meetings on matters such as new working methods or future operations that the company intends to engage in.

### **RTP – Confatra Project**

In 1986, RTP was invited to join the Steering Committee for Equal Opportunities in Broadcasting, which existed until 1996. This body developed various initiatives that culminated in the two-year (1998-99) Confrata Programme – Reconciliation of Work/Family Life, financed by the ESF.

From 1994 to 1998, all courses at RTP included a training module on gender equality.

At RTP, up to 2 absences per month for family reasons are considered justified. RTP gives one more day of paternity leave than the legal minimum.

Various services are provided to support employees and their families, e.g. a low cost canteen, where family members can also have meals, and a medical unit for employees and relatives (of older and younger generations). Employees with children under 12 are entitled to a grant towards the expense of nannies/child-minders and baby-sitters.

### **Heska**

An Equality Committee involving employees from various sectors was recently created. The committee's first initiative was to distribute a manual of good practices on reconciling work and family life.

Employees are authorised to be absent from work for personal and family reasons provided that they make up the time lost. Shift work is rotating and agreed on with the employees in question.

The company hires buses to transport employees free of charge. The travel costs of employees who travel by public transport are reimbursed. A canteen with very low prices is also available.



### **Salvador Caetano, SA**

This company is committed to social responsibility and has taken measures on several fronts, e.g. the employment of disabled workers. The question of gender equality is mentioned annually in the financial statement and annual report.

Since 1986, the company has employed women on its production lines. Initially this was met with some resistance from some management members but this dissipated rapidly. The number of women employed at Salvador Caetano has grown.

The company places great emphasis on the training of employees as a factor of strategic importance. Salvador Caetano has constructed various training centres and prepares annual training plans based on a needs survey. The gender equality issue is explicitly disseminated during training. Working students are supported by the Fundação Salvador Caetano, which awards education grants.

Employees can accumulate hours worked, which can subsequently be traded for rest days.

Children of Salvador Caetano employees are entitled to free vocational guidance tests and summer courses during school holidays.

### **A. Silva Matos Metalo-mecânica, SA**

Any employee may be absent from work for family reasons and these absences are considered justified. All that an employee needs to do to obtain authorisation is to inform his/her immediate superior.

Employees may reduce their normal working week. This reduction may, or may not, result in a loss of pay, depending on the employee's performance.

There is an agreement with a social centre, in which the head of human resources is involved, which provides nursery and kindergarten facilities and a play centre. The company supports this institution and, in exchange, receives free places for its employees' children.

The company seeks to consult its employees regularly. A survey carried out recently resulted in many suggestions for improvements. A satisfaction index of approximately 95% was created on the basis of this survey.

## **TAP – Transportes Aéreos Portugueses**

Employees may accumulate up to 8 hours worked per month and subsequently exchange them for rest days. They may also reduce their working hours, with a corresponding loss of pay, provided this does not affect the company.

TAP employees are given flexibility to attend to family or personal matters, without loss of pay, either by justifying the absence or by giving informal prior notice.

The TAP Club provides a wide range of facilities and services, including various leisure activities (e.g. chess, a folk dance and music group, a library...). It is also responsible for organising the annual Christmas party and sporting competitions (football, tennis, etc.).

TAP has a kindergarten that opens 24 hours a day; it gives priority to female employees. The cost of the kindergarten can be subsidised and there is also a possible grant for school equipment.

Workers are consulted in various ways. There is a telephone number for suggestions and suggestion boxes at the head office and other offices. Communication between management and employees is largely carried out via the Works Council and Trade Union representatives.

### **Sociedade de Aparelhos de Precisão Bruno Janz, SA**

The number of women employed at Bruno Janz has increased significantly, which is noteworthy in a male-dominated company.

It is possible to accumulate hours worked and subsequently exchange them for rest days. Informal leave of absence is also available to attend to family and personal matters.

The company is associated with the Ester Janz Association, which provides a crèche, kindergarten and primary school.

The company promotes a good working environment. There is a staff leisure group and a staff sports group. Employees are also encouraged to look outside the company, e.g. with the formation of a blood donors' group and another group concerned with human rights.

Employees are consulted about work and reconciling work and family life issues and about the award of bonuses and grants.

### **Cooperativa Agrícola de Reguengos de Monsaraz**

The co-operative is committed to social responsibility in its region, and one of its stated objectives is to eliminate certain prejudices that still persist within the organisation.

Employees are permitted to be absent from work to attend to personal matters, provided their absences do not affect the production line. Informal exchange agreements between workmates are preferred.

A bar and a canteen were recently set up; they are managed by the employees, who rejected a management proposal to hire staff for this purpose. This bar/canteen is also used by members of workers' families.

Parties are held for the festival of St. Martin and at Christmas, at which presents are distributed to employees' children.

## **RES – Prestação de Serviços Comerciais**

The company promotes flexible working hours but does not encourage presence in the workplace after 6.00 p.m. Time off work to attend to family responsibilities, which is granted without loss of pay, is considered justified. It is also possible to accumulate hours worked to be traded for rest hours/days or to reduce the length of the normal working week, without loss of pay.

There is a canteen at RES that cooks and serves meals. It is also a centre where all employees, including management, can meet socially. Cooking is organised by the employees and the cost is shared by everyone.

Health insurance is provided for all employees, their spouses and children.

A biannual meeting of all personnel is held at a hotel, at which time the company's strategic planning is presented.

There are various cases in which the company has directly assisted employees with problems and, where relevant, reinstated them to their position. For example, the company paid for psychological treatment for the son of one of its employees. Another worker with alcohol problems was given 3 months leave of absence for treatment, which was paid by the company. The worker was subsequently reinstated to his position.

### **Opel Portugal, Comércio e Indústria de Veículos, SA**

The gender equality promotion policy is presented in a specific document. The policy is part of General Motors' International Equality Policy.

An investment has been made in the placement of women in traditionally male sectors, requiring the building of women's washrooms in the painting and assembly section. These measures are the responsibility of a team from the Human Resources Department.

A "**Woman Engineer of the Year**" award has been created to promote gender equality.

Trade union representatives distribute leaflets on gender equality.

The company grants 12 additional days of paid family leave. Paternity leave entitlement is 7 days, 2 of which are extra days given by the company.

### **Serviços Municipalizados de Água e Saneamento da C. M. Loures**

Some employees work a continuous working day (6 continuous hours with a half hour lunch break), by agreement with the employees.

It is also possible to accumulate overtime hours and exchange them for rest days. There is a fortnightly adjustment.

A study was made of the viability of a crèche facility but the result was negative. The Social Work Department facilitates contacts with child-care institutions to provide places for its employees' children.

### **EBAHL – Equipas dos Bairros Históricos de Lisboa**

8 non-consecutive days of family leave are granted per year.

Holidays are longer than the legal minimum.

Employees in contact with the public are entitled to an extra four continuous rest days per month.

### **Grafe**

The organisation of working time at Grafe is fundamentally based on compliance with objectives. The employees informally define their working hours in line with the company's needs. Overtime worked is offset against time off work when the workload is less.

Employees may take time off to attend to family responsibilities on an informal basis.

The company makes up the Social Security benefit paid during normal sick leave absences.

During school holidays, employees' children frequently remain on the company's premises all day.

The company has an acupuncture clinic, which can be used regularly by its employees.



### **Farmácia Barreiros**

Employees are allowed to take time off on an informal basis to attend to personal matters. Working hours are not the same for all employees and are negotiated annually according to their individual requirements.

Communication within the pharmacy is fairly fluid and informal, as the employees are a small team of skilled workers, almost all of whom are at the same level. The certification procedure required the preparation of internal communication models, and various systems to facilitate communication were developed.

The entire team is involved in decision-making processes.

### **Caixa de Crédito Agrícola Mútuo de Mafra**

The Caixa de Crédito Agrícola de Mafra has an official written promotion system that complies with the criteria stipulated in the CA. Career planning is also formalised.

The working atmosphere at the Caixa is fairly informal and people work closely with each other, in particular in terms of the employee-client relationship.

The co-operative holds birthday parties for its employees. Staff weddings are also celebrated and presents are given. All these activities promote a good organisational atmosphere. There is also a Christmas party to which all employees' families are invited. Everyone receives a present.

The Caixa provides a canteen with a kitchen, and a bar where coffee and some sweets are free of charge.

Employees are offered housing credits and benefit from a 24-hour personal accident insurance.

### **Nestlé Portugal, SA**

The “Nestlé Corporate Business Principles” and the “Nestlé Basic Management and Leadership Principles” both deal with the equality issue.

Studies on the company’s internal image are carried out periodically at Nestlé via questionnaires answered by employees.

Nestlé workers and their families are entitled to health insurance.

There is a shop in the workplace selling Nestlé products at low prices. The company offers free food to employees’ children.

Employees’ children receive educational allowances from the company, and grants are awarded to those in higher education.

**Texto Editora, Lda.**

The gender equality policy is clearly stated in the Welcome Manual given to all new employees. The document is explicit on the promotion of equality. The body responsible for equality policy is the Quality Committee, which meets regularly and has its own funds and activity plans, one of which is to promote the personal dignity of men and women in the workplace.

Employees are entitled to discounts when purchasing books.

Texto Editora provides health insurance for employees and their families and a wedding bonus. Weekly medical consultations are available at the company's medical unit. Medical appointments are made at the Human Resources Department.

Every year, the employees' children all receive a Christmas present. The presents are distributed at a company Christmas party. There is also a formal reception on the anniversary of the company's founding. Other leisure time activities include an annual car race and specific activities for each department, which are also annual.

Employees are entitled to a free transport pass and free transport to and from Cacém station.

## **Espaço T**

Employees of Espaço T can take time off to attend to family or personal responsibilities on the understanding that they make it up on other days.

In peak workload periods, it is sometimes necessary to work at weekends or on public holidays. In these cases the overtime worked is compensated by rest time equal to twice the overtime worked. This rest time may be taken at the employees' discretion.

Career planning and promotions are defined in the IPSS CBA and disseminated to all workers. The "Com(tacto)" magazine is the main vehicle for disseminating the association's principles and objectives.

## **Luízes Representações**

This company offers its employees the flexibility to attend to personal matters on an informal basis. It is possible to accumulate overtime hours worked and exchange them for rest days or family leave.

The company has informal communication processes and the organisational climate is good. There is also periodic formal communication between the management and workers, e.g. at annual meetings with all employees. The employees are consulted and take an active part in decision-making.

### **ADE – Associação para o Desenvolvimento e Emprego**

ADE is currently formalising its gender equality promotion policy via preparation of a document entitled “Internal EO Policy Regulations”.

The regulations in force at ADE establish various forms of flexible working, including positions based above all on compliance with objectives; teleworking/homeworking; informal flexibility for personal reasons and a time bank (e.g. for compressing the working week into fewer days). Workers with children under three have priority access to various forms of flexible working.

An additional 10 days of maternity leave are granted at ADE.

ADE’s male and female employees have special access to the services provided by the placement companies with which ADE has partnerships.

### **Friedrich GROHE**

GROHE recently initiated a programme to welcome new employees, which includes references to the company’s equality promotion policy.

GROHE is committed to training and has set the objective of providing 95% of its employees with at least 30 hours’ training annually.

The company includes gender equality in the concept of social responsibility, has provided some significant support to its employees and has been active in charity work.

GROHE is also committed to creating a good working environment and recently created GROHE – Culture and Sport.

## **Oracle**

Oracle has a dossier including a skills model that involves a skills development system and stipulates a career planning structure.

Flexible working hours are normal practice. There is no clocking in or out.

Employees are allowed to take time off to attend to personal responsibilities, with no need for a formal explanation.

Oracle conducts an annual opinion poll to promote employee participation in the enterprise's management policies.

## **IBM**

IBM's Business Conduct Guidelines state the company's rules of conduct, which expressly refer to gender equality.

This document also expressly mentions the issue of lack of respect in the workplace, while the company intranet includes informative texts on sexual harassment. There are established procedures for dealing with cases of sexual harassment.

There is detailed career planning, available on the intranet, and transfers between careers are encouraged.

IBM has run some experiments with teleworking, based on free net access from the home and portable computers. It must be agreed in advance with the management.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **BEST PRACTICES IN FOREIGN COMPANIES**





### **Nationwide Building Society**

This company is one of the founders of *Employers for Work-Life Balance* and has developed various practices, e.g. promotion of telework, job-sharing (where two part-time employees share the same position), and the option to complete the working week by working the same number of hours in fewer days.

### **Lloyds TSB Scotland Scottish**

This company has implemented a project that promotes reconciliation between work and family life. The project had two phases: the first involved 19 teams comprising 154 employees who controlled their own working patterns. A focus group was created and educational workshops were developed. The second phase was based on extending these practices to the rest of the workforce, using experience and knowledge-sharing as the main strategy. This project is fundamentally based on a flexible working culture.

## **HSBC**

The policy for the reconciliation of work and family life in this bank is based on two central principles: childcare projects and the promotion of flexible working hours. The company offers:

- Partnerships with crèches nationwide;
- Payment of allowances to cover child care expenses;
- The organisation of forums for employees who are parents, where they can discuss ideas and strategies and share experiences;
- The promotion of diversity and dissemination of opportunities within the enterprise;
- The organisation of an annual family recreational event;
- Publication of an event, organised by parents, promoting careers via the Internet. It supplies policy information and the staff team manuals.

## **Lauder College**

The measures offered by this institution include:

- The creation of a programme for health and well-being in all aspects of work and personal life;
- Measures promoting sports and vocational training;
- Flexible working;
- The option for employees to take up to 20 weeks' parental leave until a child is 18 years old;
- Regular news bulletins that aim to provide employees with a variety of information, e.g. on measures for reconciling work and family life.

### **The Penguin Group – Publisher**

This company encourages initiatives for young mothers and offers the option of flexible working hours, the opportunity for both parents to interrupt their careers for up to 6 months, the provision of child care and financial support for pre-school children and the distribution of a book for children. A forum for male employees is also organised with a view to promoting gender equality.

### **GSK – Glaxo SmithKline**

This company provides flexible working hours (not only for full-time but also part-time workers), which apply to all employees. This type of option is particularly attractive to parents. In the 2004 evaluation of the company, 78% of employees stated they have sufficient flexibility to manage their work and personal responsibilities. Among British workers, 60% choose flexible working hours, 12% choose regular or occasional rest days and only 20% have never considered flexible working schemes.



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