

## **MENTORING PROGRAM** **CONSOLIDATED ACTIVITY REPORT No. 1** **April 2014**

The following document is a compilation of the experiences, achievements and challenges faced by the different tandems that participated in the Opening Workshop for the Mentoring Program in Warsaw, Poland, in September 2013 (with the exception of the tandem made by Austria-Germany which due to maternity leave was not able to contribute information for this first report).

### **Frequency of meetings:**



Most of the participants met face to face between 2-3 times in the last months, with only a couple tandems meeting on a more regular basis.

The preferred form of communication amongst the Mentor/Mentee has been by telephone and the e-mail exchange, followed by person to person meetings.

### **Activities in which both Mentor and Mentee participated:**

All the Mentors have made an effort in including the Mentees in participating in different types of activities, including planning activities within the trade union, internal trade union conferences and workshops, organizing drives and international meetings.

On this last activity it is important to recognize the effort the tandems have made in allowing the Mentees to participate in international meetings as observers like the World Women's Committee Meeting in Madrid and regional women network meetings. This allows for the Mentees to gain a better knowledge and understanding of how international trade union work takes place, the issues discussed, and how they are addressed.

Examples of activities carried out by the tandems:

- Participation in the Youth Plenary, the Meeting on Sexual Diversity and Gender and the Meeting on Environment (Spain)

- Planning activities (Croatia)
- Participation in organizing drives and union promotion activities (Portugal)
- Participation in conferences on discrimination (Poland)
- Discussion of training activities (Ireland)
- Participation in an international conference organized by CNE in Strasbourg, participation in the meetings of Area IV (France-Belgium)
- Participation in meetings with representatives from other sectors and federations (Hungary)

### **Achievements:**

The Mentoring Program has proved to be a great success amongst the European tandems. It has allowed young women to be more active in union work. In some cases, it has allowed the Mentees to gain first hand knowledge of trade union work and to train themselves for future work in the unions.

Amongst the achievements are:

- The Mentoring Program has helped in organizing and recruitment activities for unions (Hungary and Portugal).
- Unions have adopted the Mentoring Program as part of their training activities in both the Youth and Women sectors (Hungary, Spain).
- The Mentoring Program has allowed the Mentees to participate in international union work (France and Belgium), creating stronger bonds with Mentors (Portugal), a better understanding of the issues that concern workers and unions (Spain), and of being part of the internal work of the union (Croatia).
- Both Mentors and Mentees have gained a better understanding of each others perspectives on union trade work (Ireland)
- Mentees have acquired more decision making roles within the union with the support of the Mentor (Croatia)
- Workers within the unions are more aware of the benefits of this type of partnership (Poland)
- Work becomes better organized and focused, objectives are more clearly defined and achieved, there is better cooperation between co-workers, better support in conflict resolution and for those problems that might arise in the different sectors, and it provides for an increase in union membership (Portugal)

### **Difficulties/obstacles/challenges:**

The demands of work often leave no room for more meetings and planning, which often has to happen in the evening hours, making it harder for women who have family commitments to be able to participate. Additionally, physical distance can prove to be a challenge for person to person meetings on a more regular basis.

Furthermore, some tandems have experienced difficulties from male counterparts, who make jests and remarks on the fact that women want more responsibilities, or who are not ready to accept and support the participation of women in unions.

For one tandem, the difference in age and experience between Mentor and Mentee proved to be an obstacle, especially in terms of use of vocabulary and expressions used to address fellow colleagues and workers.

For another tandem, the difficulty resided in the creation of new tandems, because in their line of work there is no contact amongst workers.

Finally, one tandem expressed that for the Mentee the biggest concern was the difficult environment Europe is currently undergoing. The constant fear of unemployment and the poor perception of unions in some sectors of society prevent women and young people to seek a place in unions.

### **Mentoring as a multiplying agent:**

In Ireland, a small pilot initiative was established in conjunction with another trade union to be completed in 2014. So far there has been a one day training session for mentors and one day training sessions for mentees. They have also developed a mentor/mentee diary which will assist them in noting down their progress. So far six new tandems have been created, with one mentor, mentoring two people.

The tandem created in France and Belgium is considering implementing the program at the école syndicale belge.

Hungary is currently implementing the program within its union using UNI EOD materials. They expect to have between 9 and 10 tandems (one per region). Furthermore, their work as a tandem and the implementation of the program within their union has allowed them to increase their union numbers by several hundred new members.

In Portugal, the Mentoring Program sets an example as it shows other workers the benefits of cooperation between union workers and it sets the basis for future implementation of the program at different levels and sectors.

When young people see that unions also deal with issues that have a particular impact on their lives (gender discrimination, environment, sexual diversity and violence), they are more inclined to actively participate and join unions (Spain).

Both Mentor and Mentee are working on the creation of women's network within the banking sector in Greece.

### **Ideas for the future:**

- To include men as possible Mentors as well. The reason behind this is that it gives young women a different perspective on union work and it also gives the Mentors a gender perspective of union work.

- Adapt the program to the needs and requirements of each union. Allow the participants to have flexibility in tailoring the program to better suit their needs.

-Include the Mentees into organizing activities so they can help and learn in the process.

## ACTIVITIES BY COUNTRY



	ORGANIZING ACTIVITIES	PLANNING ACTIVITIES	UNION MEETINGS	INTERNATIONAL UNION MEETINGS	TRAINING ACTIVITIES
BELGIUM					
CROATIA					
FRANCE					
GREECE					
HUNGARY					
IRELAND					
POLAND					
PORTUGAL					
SPAIN					



## ACHIEVEMENTS BY COUNTRY

	MENTORING FOR ORGANIZING	MENTORING AS TRAINING	PARTICIPATION IN UNION WORK	PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING PROCESS	PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS	BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF UNION WORK AND NEEDS
BELGIUM						
CROATIA						
FRANCE						
GREECE						
HUNGARY						
IRELAND						
POLAND						
PORTUGAL						
SPAIN						