



Interim Research Report

July 2005

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1. Introduction

The Women Into Non-traditional Sectors (WINS) project was formed in order to provide greater opportunities for women to take part in “non-traditional” jobs. By this we mean jobs where the large majority of workers are typically men - for example in the construction industry, grounds maintenance, street cleaning and public transport. These types of jobs often suffer from a negative image and this project aims to show how employment practices have moved on and that major employers like Belfast City Council are actively reaching out to encourage more women to consider this type of work.

Employment of more women in these sorts of sectors is a “win-win” situation for all involved. At the most basic level, employers get increased access to employees with a more diverse range of skills and experiences, and women get better access to high quality jobs in a wider range of areas. The WINS project aims to be accessible to all women, particularly those who are returning to work after some time away (or those commencing work for the first time) with dependent children and few or no formal qualifications.

Aims

The core objective of the WINS project is to assist more females into non-traditional jobs, thereby creating more choice and opportunities for female employment. Ways in which WINS will impact on women entering into non-traditional forms of employment include:

- To conduct research across partner organisations into why women remain under-represented in particular job types
- To pilot a pre-employment training and empowerment programme for forty women which addresses the needs of women entering non-traditional employment
- To pilot employment tasters for these women which support the integration of women into non-traditional employment
- To work with similar projects in the Republic of Ireland and the wider European Union
- To shape future policy locally, regionally and nationally (and potentially in the wider European Union also) regarding gender mainstreaming in the workplace
- To disseminate the findings of WINS across local partner areas, nationally and throughout Europe
- Impacting on the existing recruitment and employment practices
- Establishing role models for women
- Creating an awareness of the barriers faced by women in the workforce and putting in place mechanisms to counteract these problems
- Establishing an environment which supports women entering a traditional male dominated workplace

Further details on the major components of the project appear below.

Research

The research component has been one of the largest single aspects of the project to date. There was a large amount of “desk” research conducted, involving an extensive review of other projects in similar areas, the methodologies followed and any significant findings and recommendations. Findings from within the literature review were used to inform the progression of the research for the WINS project.

In addition to the desk research, “field” research has been conducted in the form of several surveys and interviews held with various stakeholders to gain information on policies, facts, perceptions and opinions. This study is looking not only at the behaviour of the participants, as many studies have done, but also at employer behaviour (in terms of policies and practices) which has been underrepresented in the literature. Interviews were conducted with three separate groups: senior management, current employees and the “target group” of potential beneficiaries. Details on the research methodologies used and any significant findings can be found in later chapters in this report.

Training Programme and Job Tasters

One of the most significant aspects of the WINS project involves the beneficiaries taking part in an introductory training programme (conducted by one or more local training organisations) as well as “job tasters” (hosted by employers within the development partnership). These will take place over the next two years.

The first intake into the training programme will likely take place in early 2006 and will be conducted by the successful tenderer or tenderers. The programme will, most importantly, feature a number of “job readiness” aspects including confidence building, life-management skills and communication skills, but may also include other basic technical training such as equipment identification and hands-on experience such as basic power tool usage.

In addition to the training programme there will be a series of “job tasters” with each of the four employers within the development partnership. The content of the job tasters will be managed by the employers themselves and the job profiles are dependent on them. At this point, some organisations have identified target areas such as bus driving, grounds maintenance and basic crafts.

Development Partnership

The WINS project is being developed through a partnership approach to take advantage of the expertise and experience of other organisations from Northern Ireland and beyond. The development partnership contains members representing key employer organisations (specifically discussed in Chapter 3) and government agencies, which will support the integration of results emanating from the development partnerships activity into mainstream policy and programme intervention. The Belfast City Council, as lead partner, provides an access to all twenty-six local authorities throughout Northern Ireland. The Department for Employment and Learning and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions provide a means for impacting upon the policy environment. Belfast City Council, the Construction Industry Training Board, the Housing Executive and Translink are all key employers or employer groups within Northern Ireland and the establishment of new recruitment and employment practices will be spearheaded by those organisations.

In addition to these, the Development Partnership contains the expertise and experience of three major support and outreach groups in the form of the Training for Women Network, Belfast GEMS and Women's TEC. These institutions deal with employment and gender issues on a daily basis and regularly provide expertise and resources to the project, as well as assistance in reaching members of society which the project would otherwise not have access to. Finally there is also a higher educational aspect with involvement from Queen's University, Belfast.

Current Economic Situation

The current economic situation with respect to gender representation in Northern Ireland illustrates the need for projects such as WINS. Statistics reported in the November 2004 Labour Market Bulletin include:

- The economic activity rate for women of working age in Northern Ireland has not been improving and has in fact fallen slightly over the last five years
- Women in Northern Ireland are much less likely to be economically active than women in Great Britain (63% of women in Northern Ireland are economically active, compared with 73% of women in Great Britain)
- Economic activity for men in Northern Ireland is much higher than for women (76% compared to 63%)
- The economic activity rate of women of working age decreases as the number of dependent children increases (53% of women with more than two dependent children are economically active)

Increasing the economic activity rates of women in Northern Ireland will have significant positive effects locally and nationally, both socially and economically.

2. The Business Case for Diversity

That fact that the four large employer organisations have joined the WINS project is evidence that they are aware of some value in improving the gender diversity of the workforce. At the most fundamental of levels it seems undeniable that in order for business and industry to compete at the highest level, it can no longer by-pass the talent available in 50% of the population.

Edgar S. Woolard, Jr., a former CEO of the DuPont organisation, cites three explicit reasons why diversity is good for business:

1. *Fierce global competition* – people of various cultures and nationalities are customers, competitors, employees and other stakeholders;
2. *Enriched business decisions and new markets* – teams with a mixture of gender, racial and ethnic backgrounds produce multidimensional and innovative decisions.
3. *Recruiting advantage and talent* – competition for the most qualified employees, including women and minorities, is stiff. Diversity is an effective recruiting tool since the comfortable and supportive environment that can be developed attracts and retains good employees.

From a purely economic point of view, by employing more women, older people, disabled people and encouraging a wider ethnic mix, organisations are able to identify more closely with their customer base. Additional benefits for employers of offering more flexible employment include reduced casual sickness absence, improved retention rates, improved productivity, improved morale and commitment to the organisation.

Finally, shortages in the workforce are going to become a major consideration. In the construction industry for example, skill shortage vacancies as a proportion of total vacancies are almost double the UK average. According to the most recent Employer Skills Survey (ESS), approximately 8% of organisations reported “hard to fill” vacancies and 4% reported “skills shortage” vacancies. This is higher within the construction industry with 14% of organisations and business facing unfilled vacancies due to a lack of suitable or suitably skilled applicants. Another recent study of employers within the construction industry found that most employers believe the low number of applicants to be the reason for hard-to-fill vacancies. Improving the perception of these non-traditional industries as well as the recruitment strategies employed will go a long way towards increasing female representation in the workforce.

Recruiting from only a very small percentage of the female population greatly increases the risk of skills and employee shortages within non-traditional sectors.

3. Benchmarking

This chapter covers the benchmarking of the four employers within the development partnership (the “employer partners”) and the policies they have in place relating to equal opportunities, work/life balance issues and other relevant strategies or guidelines. This benchmarking information would be used to judge the current situation within the organisations, specifically with respect to the gender breakdown of the workforce in non-traditional roles, retention rates for male and female employees in different roles and the uptake of work-life balance policies. In addition the responses would provide information on current policies in place, indicating the organisations’ willingness to commit to a more diverse workforce.

Research Methodology

The benchmarking process was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. It involved a structured interview process with a senior management figure within each organisation, followed by a detailed written survey seeking a variety of information about the organisational staff and policies. It is encouraging to note that all senior management staff interviewed were extremely cooperative and some went well beyond what was requested to provide as much useful information as possible.

The detailed survey consisted of a statistical information section that requested details on the gender breakdown of staff numbers in administrative areas, non-traditional areas and the organisation as a whole, and also on employee retention and turnover rates. In addition to the statistical information, there were forty-one “short answer” style questions seeking information mainly on working environment issues, work-life balance policies in place and recruitment procedures.

The completed surveys provided very detailed benchmarking information for the employer organisations individually and collectively. Any details that were unclear were followed up with the senior management contact by telephone or in person.

The survey questions themselves appear at the end of this document in Appendix A.

Employer Partners

There are four large employer groups in the development partnership who are participating in the beneficiary training throughout this project. Each of the employers have sectors within their organisation that have traditionally experienced difficulty in recruiting and retaining a high proportion of females. A brief description of each of the employer groups follows and this includes the areas that they are targeting through the WINS project.

Belfast City Council

The Belfast City Council is the lead partner within the WINS project and has the management responsibility EQUAL resources within the project. It is the largest of the twenty-six District Councils in Northern Ireland and employs almost 2,500 people. Responsibilities of the Belfast City Council centre around the delivery of key services such as those related to refuse collection and disposal, health and environmental services, community development, parks and recreational facilities and support for the arts, tourism and economic development. The areas that the Council will be targeting include parks and amenities maintenance, cleansing services and leisure centre attendants.

Translink

Translink is the brand name for the public company covering the integrated services of Ulsterbus, Citybus and Northern Ireland Railways, employing over 3,800 staff. It operates scheduled bus and rail services in Northern Ireland, including cross border and cross channel links. Translink are most interested in increasing the ratio of female bus drivers within the company but may also consider other non-traditional areas such as porters.

Housing Executive

The Housing Executive is Northern Ireland's comprehensive regional housing authority and encompasses over 3,500 employees. Its key aims are to assess housing needs, ensure that housing programmes are targeted at those individuals and areas in greatest need, and are delivered as effectively and efficiently as possible. The organisation is responsible for some 125,000 properties and also promotes best practice throughout the social rented sector. The organisation is interested in promoting more women into jobs such as neighbourhood wardens.

Construction Industry Training Board

The Construction Industry Training Board is a non-departmental public body and a key stakeholder within the construction industry in Northern Ireland. It aims to work in partnership with other stakeholder groups to identify and satisfy the industry's requirements for people training to the appropriate standards. The purpose of this is to enable construction firms in Northern Ireland to grow and compete more effectively. As the organisation is not a construction company itself, they are more interested in participants taking part in construction training programs.

Key Findings

Firstly, the key findings with respect to the quantitative data supplied by the senior management are considered. There are four main discussion points coming out of the statistical data, three of them being quite negative:

- Women make up less than 7% of the workforce in non-traditional sectors within the four employer partners. To make matters worse, the actual figure is

lower than this, with the quoted percentage including women working in a “traditional” role (such as administration) within the non-traditional sectors;

- Of these women working in non-traditional sectors, over one quarter are working in a part-time capacity compared to less than 2% of men;
- Where historical information was available, recruitment of women has on average been increasing in non-traditional sectors (albeit very slowly);
- Where information was available, the retention periods for women in non-traditional areas of the employer partners was much worse than for women in more traditional areas (35% worse on average). This would seem to indicate issues within the working environment in the non-traditional areas.

The qualitative aspects of the senior management survey included an examination of the different work-life balance and equal opportunities policies currently in place within each organisation. In addition, “support” policies such as gender awareness training were investigated.

With respect to policy issues, where appropriate all of the employer partners have all of the fundamental work-life balance policies in place. All organisations have support for flexible working hours, job sharing, part-time hours, career breaks and term-time working.

The employer partners also implemented some support policies, but the specific implementations differed between the organisations. All had complete and up to date equal opportunities policies and procedures for dealing with discrimination, which does show a commitment to equal opportunity. The gender awareness training (or general equal opportunities training) within the organisations however varied between annual training for all staff, one-off training for new staff and training only being provided to management. Support for team building activities such as “away days” was generally limited to the organisation approving of teams organising their own activities. Mentoring provision, while particularly important for new or potentially vulnerable staff, was quite poor with “some mentoring is done” and “under development” being the most encouraging responses.

Finally the issue of childcare provisions was examined. This is a major barrier for many women taking up employment and ideally these large organisations would provide on-site childcare. Due to various constraints however (for example, the employer partners are all spread out over a large geographic area) this is perhaps an unrealistic request. All of the senior management staff consulted were well aware of issues relating to childcare and at least some effort was made by all organisations to address this. Each was either a member of the Employers for Childcare group or involved in a voucher scheme to reduce childcare costs (or both).

4. Employee Perspective

This chapter discusses the perspective gained from group interviews with current employees within the employer partners. Female employees within non-traditional sections were specifically targeted with each discussion providing access to employees from very different areas. These consultations would provide a means of gauging employee satisfaction within their organisations and within non-traditional sectors in general, opinions of the recruitment and training process they underwent, opinions of existing work-life balance policies and rating the organisational aspects most important to them.

Research Methodology

Again, the approach used here was both a qualitative and quantitative one.

Separate consultations were held with a group of employees from each of the four employer partners. These consisted of a number of questions aimed at stimulating discussion on topics such as the recruitment process they undertook, work/life balance policies and the general working environment. Participants were assured that any statements used would remain anonymous and each session lasted for approximately one to two hours, depending on the number of participants and the level of discussion. Consultations were recorded (after obtaining permission from participants) and notes were also taken by two members of the WINS staff who were present. By adopting the structured interview format, it was possible to ask several supplementary questions while not deviating from the main issues. These discussions yielded a large amount of useful information and insights.

At the end of each consultation, participants were also asked to fill out a small written survey to provide quantitative information. The written survey obtained general demographic information and sought employee opinions on the importance of various organisational factors (such as salary, job security and work/life balance policies) in both recruitment and retention capacities, working environment assessments and issues relating to childcare. These written surveys were formatted in a “tick box” style, to allow for a maximum amount of feedback to be provided in minimum time (the written survey took approximately ten minutes to complete). Participants were also provided with the opportunity to provide written feedback, although most chose not to (this was not surprising, as most participants made their feelings clear during the open discussion).

One of the major challenges faced in this aspect of the research was in gaining access to enough appropriate participants. The main issue was the severe lack of females working in target sectors within the employer partners. The target sectors sometimes had to be widened to achieve a useful number of participants. In addition, the geographically dispersed nature of the employer partners meant it was often difficult for employees who may have been interested to attend the consultation. Achieving a strong attendance required a lot of effort, particularly within the organisations, including negotiations with line management and several follow-up contacts.

The discussion questions from the consultations appear in Appendix B and the written questions in Appendix C.

Group Demographics

The group demographics differed between the different employers, which was seen as an advantage in that a wider range of employees was reached. All participants were female, with ages ranging from twenty-three to fifty-six. Approximately 50% of the participants had dependent children (with five children the most), and length of service with their organisation ranged from two years to twenty-four (with an average of just under ten). In addition two trainees and two trainers participated in consultations, giving a different point of view.

Additionally, approximately eighty percent of employees were working full-time with jobs ranging from gardeners, neighbourhood wardens, painters, conductors, porters, bus drivers and hostel attendants.

Key Findings

This section discusses the major findings from the employee consultations and is split into quantitative and qualitative subsections.

Quantitative

Starting with the quantitative data obtained from the “tick box” surveys that participants filled out during the consultation sessions, there are a number of points to be highlighted:

- Overall happiness in the workplace is most closely correlated with happiness with work/life balance; second was with happiness with hours worked and third happiness with colleagues;
- Job security was rated as the most important aspect (above salary, working environment, work/life balance etc.) both when looking for work and with respect to happiness in the workplace (“match with previous job experience” was consistently rated as the least important aspect”);
- Participants with dependent children still rated job security as the most important aspect (most rating it as “vitaly important”), with work/life balance rated second highest;
- Detailed induction processes, mentoring and organised networks were rated as more useful than things like communications training and training scholarships;
- The location of suitable childcare facilities influenced where the employees chose to work for 50% of those participants who have dependent children;

- Over 90% of participants agreed that they were happy overall with the work they were doing and their working conditions (67% said they were very happy). A similar percentage agreed that they were happy with their current work/life balance;
- 42% of the participants felt that their employer was making a genuine effort to keep them happy in their jobs;
- Just over 40% are happy with the level of feedback they are receiving from upper management;
- Almost 40% of the participants felt they work extra, unpaid overtime but over 80% are happy with the amount of hours they currently put into work;
- Approximately 30% of the participants find their jobs stressful;
- Over 70% of respondents felt that more diversity training within the organisation would be useful;
- Workers with dependent children are almost 50% less likely to work unpaid/voluntary overtime, and also tended to be happier with their use of work/life balance policies and experienced less stress at work;
- Social interaction and internal company values were thought of as least important in achieving happiness and satisfaction in working life, with job security, work/life balance and opportunity to train/learn regarded as most important (all participants rated these aspects as important or very important).

Qualitative

The qualitative aspects came out of the consultations held with the employees. The major points appear below, with direct quotes from consultations included where applicable.

- The overriding theme from all four of the consultation sessions was that the participants were very happy with their jobs and working in non-traditional industries.
 - “I love my job”
 - “It’s nice to wake up and be happy about going to work today”
 - “I have nothing bad to say about working in a non-traditional sector”
 - “I would recommended working in non-traditional sectors to anybody”
 - “I only have complimentary things to say about the industry”
 - “It’s the best job I’ve ever had”
 - “Had I known about this job I would have applied straight after I finished school”

- Despite the fact that most of the participants were happy in their jobs, most were open about the fact that there is still occasional discrimination to deal with. This would certainly be an issue for most women and a job-ending one for those with less confidence and strength than these participants. It should also be noted that some participants were very positive about their treatment from male managers.

“You get occasional stupid comments from one of the guys, but it’s nothing we can’t handle”

“One guy told me that if we don’t have enough work to do at least I can make the tea”

“You get a chauvinistic environment sometimes but I’ve gotten used to it”

“I have to say I’ve never felt that my sex or my gender has held me back”

- The discussions often provided an opportunity for staff from different organisational areas to compare experiences. A regular feeling was that line management can be very inconsistent and policy needs to be more explicit in some areas.

“It depends on your line manager very much so”

“Your treatment depends completely on who your line manager is”

- Job flexibility is very important, with flexi-hours and especially term-time hours highlighted.

“Flexibility is very important”

“Term-time jobs are very rare and there should be more of them”

- The participants strongly support the idea of on-site childcare facilities in large organisations and would strongly consider jobs there that they would have otherwise dismissed.

“These big companies should all have on-site childcare based around the hours of the staff”

“Not enough is being done to support women in their caring duties”

- Gender awareness (or general equality) training was thought to have very positive effects and should be performed in all organisations.

“We’ve had equal opps training before and it was amazing the difference it made to some of the guys”

- The training being provided by the company (both in the induction stages and ongoing) is thought to be inconsistent.

“There is certainly no consistent handling of training across the board”

“I was basically handed the key and told to read up about it”

“My training was very thorough; I got two weeks training and three week’s induction”

- There can be insufficient security for lone workers who find themselves in vulnerable situations

“The vulnerability is the worst part of the job”

“Sometimes we’re left alone in vulnerable situations and that can be a bit scary”

“The worst part of the job is the realisation of potential harm that could happen to you”

- Some participants felt that more recognition from management would be desirable, particularly if the organisation had received positive feedback from the public due to particular employees’ efforts.

“More acknowledgements of our achievements would be good”

“It doesn’t have to be money, just a small gift, a bottle of wine or even a bus ticket”

5. Beneficiary Perspective

This chapter details the results of consultations with the target group of potential beneficiaries. These consultations were conducted with the purpose of obtaining a clearer picture of the barriers preventing women taking up employment in non-traditional areas as well as what motivates their opinions of various job sectors and specific employers within those sectors.

Research Methodology

The most difficult initial issue faced in obtaining suitable participants for the beneficiary consultations is that many of the target group were not reachable through “normal” channels. For example, it is reasonably easy to contact senior management within the employer partners and consult with them. In the case of the beneficiaries it is much more difficult and we are in a sense trying to “reach the unreachable”, as one of the development partners put it. In order to reach a target group of women, Women’s support groups from within the development partnership were approached, and they were able to put together two groups for consultation. There is still an issue with respect to reaching those women who are not associated with any support group, and attempts to further involve those more distant women will be made in follow up research efforts.

As with the other consultations, the approach here was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The two separate consultations consisted firstly of a series of questions to provoke discussion of topics including perceptions of non-traditional industries, aspects of job advertisements that are most appealing, working environment attitudes and feelings on what should be included in the training programme later in the WINS project. The discussions sessions lasted between ninety minutes and two hours, depending on the amount of discussion, though more time was allocated should it be required. These consultations were also recorded (after obtaining permission from all participants) and notes were taken by two members of the WINS staff on one occasion and a single member of staff on the other. The open, flowing discussion format allowed for participants to give their open opinions on a range of topics, providing more useful information for the project.

In addition to the open discussion, each consultation ended with a small written survey, providing quantitative data for analysis. This written survey obtained general demographic information and sought beneficiaries’ opinions on barriers to non-traditional jobs, recruitment procedures, work/life balance policies and working environment issues. As with the surveys discussed in the previous chapter, these were “tick box” style surveys, allowing for the participants to fill them out in less than ten minutes. Participants were again offered the opportunity to provide further a written commentary if they didn’t have the opportunity, or were uncomfortable expressing a particular opinion in front of the group, within the open discussion.

The discussion questions from the beneficiary consultations appear in Appendix D and the written survey in Appendix E.

Key Findings

This section details the major findings from the beneficiary consultations and is split into quantitative and qualitative sections.

Quantitative

There are less significant quantitative findings here, compared to the previous chapter, due to the fact that there were fewer consultations performed. That said, there are still some important points coming out:

- With respect to issues affecting the likelihood of applying for jobs with a particular employer, “knowledge that the organisation was eager to address any problems with gender discrimination” was identified as the single most important issue (showing that organisations that are openly trying to fix problems are seen in a very positive light);
- The least important aspects according to the survey were, interestingly, training scholarships and opportunities for female line management;
- The average time spent out of work (in total) for the participants was approximately five years;
- Lack of suitable qualifications and the possible effect on benefits were identified as the biggest concerns stopping them returning to full-time or part-time work;
- Most participants had found out about previous jobs or training courses through either word of mouth or through support groups, with only one third finding out through newspaper advertisements;
- The opportunity for flexible working hours was identified as the most important work/life balance policy;
- There still exists a belief that there is a prevalence of gender discrimination in non-traditional sectors, with all participants either agreeing or strongly agreeing that a lot of gender discrimination would occur;
- With respect to aspects of the working environment, participants were most interested in mentoring programmes within the organisation and also in job tasters in non-traditional sectors;
- Participants were least interested in opportunities for all-female teams.

Qualitative

A number of qualitative points came out of the open discussions. The major points appear below, with direct quotes appearing where applicable.

- Most of the participants were completely unaware of the level of flexibility available at large employers such as the City Council (or the other employers in the partnership)

“I wouldn’t even consider working at the Council because they don’t have the flexibility I need”

“There’s only one place in Belfast that has term-time hours and it’s a pub”

The participants were very surprised (but perhaps remained somewhat sceptical) when informed of the level of flexibility typically available in the employer partners.

- Participants felt that welcoming messages such as “applications from women would be particularly welcome” were very effective and it was unanimously agreed that similar messages in job advertisements would lead to them considering a job that they would otherwise dismiss

“At least if you know that they want you there it’s a start”

- In conjunction with welcoming statements, participants also said they’d be encouraged by statements about the flexibility available with certain jobs (for example, flexible working hours or term-time working)

“That would definitely make me look closer at any job advertisement”

“Yeah, sure, if I knew they had the flexibility I’d consider it”

- All participants, even those without dependent children (or children at all), felt that childcare was a big issue for employers; they generally felt employers should be making more of an effort to support workers with dependents

“Childcare is a big one for me”

“Yeah, childcare’s a big issue for a lot of women”

“Big companies should be looking at having a crèche or something on-site”

- The issue of welfare payments versus full-time jobs was brought up on two occasions; the general feeling was that any job must have a salary high enough to make it worthwhile going off benefits, as well as covering any extra childcare and transportation costs

“The salary’s got to be good enough to make it worth going off benefits”

- Participants made some useful suggestions for recruitment for more WINS project beneficiaries, including advertising on public transport (city buses particularly), sending leaflets out to economically inactive mothers through schools, including leaflets in welfare letters and participating in an outdoor fair

at Belfast City Hall; it was also felt that advertising in the community Post newspapers might be more effective than using, for example, the Belfast Telegraph.

- It was felt that there was very little female representation in much of the promotional material for non-traditional sectors (although no specific examples were given) and it was suggested that this puts a lot of women off

“You never see women in any of the ads or anything”

“I’m sure some women are intimidated at the thought of working somewhere surrounded by men”

- Many of the participants found their lack of experience an intimidating factor when applying for jobs

“The big problem for me is experience, it’s going to be difficult for me to compete for jobs with other people that have years more experience than I do”

- Finally, gender awareness (or general equality) training was something that the participants felt would make them more at ease when going into a non-traditional job area

“If I knew they’d had training in how to cope with women doing what they think is a man’s job, I’d be more comfortable for sure”

6. Appendixes

A. Senior management surveys

Statistical Information

In this section we are looking at gathering valuable statistical information about the workforce, separated into genders, within the organisation. Some statistics may not be available within the organisation, in which case place “N/A” within the relevant section, but please endeavour to be as complete as possible.

Statistical category	Men	Women
How many employees are there in your organisation?		
How many people are employed within the administrative divisions?		
How many people are employed within the “non-traditional” divisions?		
How many part-time workers are employed within the organisation?		
How many part-time workers are employed in the non-traditional areas?		
What percentages of each gender apply for jobs in the non-traditional areas?		
What percentages of employees have dependent children?		
What percentages of employees within the non-traditional areas have dependent children?		
What is the average employee income (adjusted for differences in working hours) within the organisation?		
What is the average income of employees within the non-traditional sectors (adjusted for differences in working hours)?		
On average, how long do employees stay with the company?		
On average, how long do employees with dependents stay with the company?		
On average, how long do employees without dependents stay with the company?		
On average, how long do employees within the non-traditional sectors stay with the company?		
What is the turnover rate for employees within the organisation (that is, how many existing jobs have to be re-filled after an employee leaves, over the course of an average year)?		
What is the turnover rate within the non-traditional areas of the organisation?		
What percentage of employees make use of parental leave (either paid or unpaid) in an average year?		
What percentage of employees within the non-traditional areas make use of parental leave (either paid or unpaid) in an average year?		

General

- 1(a) Would you say you are currently (or will be in the near future) facing a shortage of suitable workers in your organisation? If yes, in which areas?
- 1(b) Describe the organisational structure/layers of your organisation.

Part-time Workers

- 2(a) How many part-time workers are in management positions?
- 2(b) How many part-time workers are females with dependent children?
- 2(c) In a recruitment sense, does your organisation view previous part-time experience as being as valuable as previous full-time experience?
- 2(d) Would the organisation prefer a skilled or trained employee to be working full-time, rather than part-time?

- 2(e) What are your organisation's views regarding part-time work for employees within the non-traditional areas?
- 2(f) What are the implications, with respect to benefits, for part-time employees? That is, do they receive the same hourly salary as a similar full-time worker; do they receive the same fringe benefits such as health plans?

Working Environment

- 3(a) Please give details of the basic working environment within the different major divisions of your organisation.
- 3(b) Please give details of your current induction/training schemes for new employees (if any).
- 3(c) Do you have any feedback mechanisms built into your organisation to assist in identifying employee problems and concerns early? If yes, please give details.
- 3(d) Does your organisation implement formal communication channels such as monthly newsletters, weekly team meetings, briefing sheets, notice boards, e-mailing lists etc.? If yes, please give details.
- 3(e) Does your organisation encourage informal communication channels such as supporting the approachability of managers, department heads etc.? If yes, please give details.
- 3(f) Do you have any regular team building activities within your organisation? If yes, please give details.
- 3(g) How does your organisation offer a safe and discrimination-free environment for employees?

Work/Life Balance

- 4(a) What are the organisation's current flexi-time policies (if any)?
- 4(b) Does the organisation currently have any job sharing policies? If yes, please give details.
- 4(c) Does the organisation currently have any childcare provisions? If yes, please give details.
- 4(d) Would the organisation consider a small childcare allowance for workers who have children (and perhaps satisfy some other criteria, such as working more than 25 hours per week)?
- 4(e) Describe any other implemented work/life balance policies not already covered?

Gender Issues

- 5(a) Is any gender awareness or diversity training performed within your organisation? If not, would you be willing to introduce facilitated training?
- 5(b) Are there any mentoring programs either for general employees or targeted specifically at women? If yes, please give details.
- 5(c) Is the senior management aware of any instances of discrimination (particularly based on gender) within the organisation? If yes, please give details.
- 5(d) All other things being equal (previous training, work experience etc.) would recruiters specifically choose to employ a female rather than a male?
- 5(e) Are there any opportunities for all-female teams within the organisation?
- 5(f) Does the organisation have an explicit, written equal opportunities policy? Is it up to date?
- 5(g) Does the organisation have explicit, written disciplinary and grievance procedures for discrimination issues?
- 5(h) Are there any other specific issues or comments you have with respect to gender?

Recruitment

- 6(a) Describe your recruitment process (for example, do you advertise locally? In local print media? Internally?).
- 6(b) How do you advertise a new position in non-traditional areas? Does this differ at all from how positions are advertised in other areas of your organisation?
- 6(c) What success rate does your organisation have with your current recruitment strategies (that is, what percentage of job advertisements are successfully filled, particularly in non-traditional areas)? Do you always get applicants? Do you always get suitable applicants?
- 6(d) Briefly, how do you evaluate a "good" applicant? Does the process differ between different areas of your organisation?

- 6(e) With respect to recruitment procedures, does your organisation attend or present at any functions featuring target employees (for example, school career days or further education centres)? If yes, please give details.
- 6(f) Does the organisation have any current recruitment techniques specifically aimed at improving the employee gender imbalance? If yes, please give details.
- 6(g) Are there any basic skills (such as communication skills, ability to work as part of a team, ICT skills, etc.) that you find missing from your job applicants (particularly female applicants)?
- 6(h) What do you feel are the best strategies for recruiting and retaining female employees?

Other

- 7(a) Would your organisation consider quotas on the number of female employees within the non-traditional sectors (at least as a means of signalling that women are really wanted)?
- 7(b) Would your organisation consider small scholarships in local secondary schools or women's groups to increase the availability of female workers?
- 7(c) Would your organisation consider schemes aimed at training people who don't match all the desired criteria (perhaps aimed at getting people back into work after a career break or similar)?
- 7(d) Would your organisation consider establishing a mentoring program to assist in the transition of women into these non-traditional roles (if there isn't one already)?
- 7(e) Are there other comments that you would like to make?

B. Current employee discussion questions

Recruitment and Early Stages of Employment

- 1(a) How did you hear about your current job (newspaper advertisement, word of mouth, internal advertisement etc.)?
- 1(b) Did you have any perceptions of the job sector before you were employed here? If so, how did your perceptions relate to your experiences once you began work?
- 1(c) What aspects of the recruitment process were useful, or made you feel comfortable or secure?
- 1(d) What aspects of the recruitment process would you like changed if you were to go through it again?
- 1(e) What are the best strategies for recruiting and retaining female employees in non-traditional roles?

Working Environment

- 2(a) Have you experienced or observed any discrimination in the workplace (particularly based on gender), either unwittingly or intentionally? If yes, please give details.
- 2(b) What aspects of your job do you like the most?
- 2(c) What aspects of your job do you dislike the most?
- 2(d) Is there anything else your employer can do differently to keep you happy and working at your present job?

Other

- 3(a) Are there any other comments or ideas you would like to express about the organisation, working environment, work/life balance or any other aspects?

C. Current employee written questions

Section 1. General information

- 1(a) Please provide the following information about yourself (as a reminder, this information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality).

Age?	
Gender?	
Job title?	
Organisational division / department where you work?	
Length of employment with this organisation?	
Do you work full-time or part-time?	
Number of dependent children?	
Approximate current salary?	
Highest educational qualification?	
Approximately how many hours do you spend at work during a typical week?	
Approximately how many hours do you spend travelling to and from work during a typical week?	
Have you ever been away from the labour market for a year or more?	

Section 2. Recruitment and Early Stages of Employment

- 2(a) Please rate each of the following for its importance in organisations *when you are looking for a job* (tick the appropriate box on each row).

	Completely unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Neither important nor unimportant	Somewhat important	Vitally important
Salary offered					
Job security					
Matches previous experience					
Work/life balance					
Perceived working environment					
Geographic location					
Opportunity for advancement					
Opportunity for training					
Other (please specify)					

- 2(b) Please rate each of the following points according to how useful/helpful each aspect was (or would have been) when you were beginning employment.

	N/A	Totally useless	Somewhat useless	Neither useful nor useless	Somewhat useful	Extremely Useful
A detailed induction process						
A mentoring program						
An organised network to be part of						
Communication skills training						
A training scholarship						
Other (please specify: _____)						

Section 3. Work/Life Balance and Dependent Children

Only provide answers in this section if you have dependent children. Please circle the response that best matches your answer.

- 3(a) Did the location of childcare facilities influence where you chose to work? YES / NO
- 3(b) Does your organisation have work/life balance policies (such as flexible working hours)? YES / NO
- 3(c) If you answers 'yes' to the previous question, do you make reasonable use of the work/life balance policies? YES / NO
- 3(d) If you needed it, do you think you could you get reasonable time off for family, health or other reasons? YES / NO
- 3(e) What are your childcare arrangements? PAID CHILDCARE / MANAGED BY PARTNER / MANAGED BY FAMILY MEMBERS / OTHER

Section 4. Working Environment

- 4(a) Please indicate, by ticking the respective box, your level of agreement with each of the following statements about your occupation or organisation.

	N/A	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
Overall I am happy with the work I am doing and the conditions under which I am doing it						
I am happy with the work/life balance I currently have						
My work uses all of my talents, abilities and skills						
I am satisfied with the current training opportunities that I am provided						
I feel like my employer makes a genuine effort at keeping me happy in my job						
I find my colleagues helpful and friendly						
I am happy with the level of feedback I receive about my work						
I have ample opportunity to express problems or concerns I have with the organisation						
I feel like I provide enough input into relevant decision making in my work area						
I regularly work extra, unpaid overtime						
I am happy with the hours of work I put in						
I find my job stressful						
I think more diversity training within the company would be useful						

4(b) Please rate each of the following for its importance in *contributing to your happiness/satisfaction within your working life*.

	Completely unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Neither unimportant nor important	Somewhat important	Vitally important
Salary					
Job security					
Company values you					
Being challenged					
Company values					
Flexibility					
Opportunity to learn/train					
Social interaction					
Work/life balance					
Feedback on your work					
Other (please specify)					

Section 5. Other

5(a) Are there any other comments or ideas you would like to express about the organisation, working environment, work/life balance or any other aspects?

D. Target group discussion questions

Recruitment

- 1(a) Would you normally consider working in “non-traditional” areas (such as bus driving or craft services like painters or electricians)? If not, why not?
- 1(b) Would you be more likely to apply for a job if it sounded more appealing (for example, if it specifically advertised term-time hours or flexible working hours)? How can job descriptions be made more appealing?

Working Environment

- 2(a) Do you have any perceptions of the target sectors (e.g. public transport, construction, parks and amenities) and in particular the employer organisations (such as the City Council or Translink)?

WINS Programme

- 3(a) How would you feel about participating in “job tasters” in non-traditional sectors?
- 3(b) Would you be interested in a program that included training in work and life skills such as communication, working as a team, confidence building etc.?
- 3(c) Is there anything else you would like to see included in a course like this? Specifically would you like *job placements* to come directly out of this training?

Other

- 4(a) What would you consider to be good strategies for recruiting and retaining female employees?
- 4(b) Do you have any experience in the non-traditional sectors? How was it? If it was bad, how could it have been made better?
- 4(c) Are there any other comments or ideas you would like to express about the recruitment, working environments, the WINS Project or any other aspects?

E. Target group written questions

Section 1. General Information

1(a) Please provide the following information about yourself.

Age?	
Years of job experience?	
Longest time spent out of labour market?	
Number of dependent children?	
Highest educational qualification?	

1(b) If you are interested in returning to work, either full-time or part-time, what would you say are the main barriers preventing you from doing so (tick as many as apply)?

- Caring duties Lack of experience Lack of suitable qualifications
 Effect on benefits Can't find suitable job Travel difficulties
 Concerns about working environment Other (please specify)

Section 2. Recruitment

2(a) Please rate each of the following issues for the affect they would have on the likelihood of you taking up a position with a particular employer in a non-traditional sector (tick the appropriate box on each row).

	Very negative affect	Slightly negative affect	No affect either way	Slightly positive affect	Very positive affect
Provision of small scholarships from an organisation in the industry					
The presence of visible role models in the non-traditional sectors					
Knowledge that the employer organisations are eager to address problems and want your help					
Knowledge that there was a structured induction and training process at the beginning of the job					
Good salary opportunities					
Strong job security					
Excellent work/life balance policies					
Knowledge that there was a relaxed working environment					
Opportunity for further training as part of the job					
Opportunity for career advancement					
Better match with your previous job experience					
Female line management					
Other (please specify: _____)					

2(b) Where would you be most likely to hear about job opportunities?

- Newspaper Notice Board Word of mouth
 Other, please specify: _____

Section 3. Work/Life Balance

3(a) Please rate each of the following work/life balance issues based on how important they are to you when choosing an employer (with 1 being *completely unimportant* and 5 being *vitaly important*).

	1	2	3	4	5
Legitimate part-time working options					
Flexible working hours					
Reasonably priced on-site childcare					
Childcare voucher/subsidy					
Location of external childcare					
Job sharing opportunities					
Career break opportunities					
Structured maternity leave					
Available emergency leave					
Other (please specify: _____)					

Section 4. Working Environment

4(a) Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about working environments in the non-traditional sectors.

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	No opinion	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
I think there would be a lot of gender discrimination in these jobs					
I would be more interested in the organisation if I knew there was a mentoring programme					
I would be more interested if I knew there were organised women's networks					
I would be more interested if I knew there were team building exercises where I got to know my colleagues in an informal, relaxed environment					
I would be more interested if I knew there were opportunities for all-female teams					
I would be interested in participating on "job tasters" in non-traditional sectors					
I would be interested in a programme that included training in work and life skills such as communication, teamwork and confidence building					
Workplace uniforms are an issue for me					
Other (please specify: _____)					

Section 5. Other

5(a) Do you have any other comments on what would attract you to a particular job, or any other comments in general?