

Fantastic opportunity for SERTUC women to take part in an international exchange!

- Do you want to take part in an international exchange of trade union women?
- Do you hold a lay or paid union position?
- Are you interested in developing as a trade unionist?
- Are you interested in building international links?
- Are you able to travel to the USA in March 2009 for one week to attend a women's conference and participate in a research project?
- Are you able to attend a women's summer school in London over a one week period in July 2009?

If so, you could apply to take part in a cross-national network and research project involving women trade unionists in the UK and the USA. Flights, accommodation and subsistence allowances will be paid by the research project. We are looking for 10 women trade union office-holders. We are seeking of group of women who represent:

- a spectrum of ages
- different ethnic backgrounds
- a range of occupations, industries and unions
- different union positions including for example, branch secretary, workplace rep, equality rep, health and safety rep, regional official

To find out more about our project, see the next page.

To apply for a place, please download an application form from:

www.tuc.org.uk/sertuc/exchange or contact Darren Lewis at SERTUC (dlewis@tuc.org.uk or 020 7467 1220) or email: wtul-facilitator@qmul.ac.uk.

Closing date for applications: 1st November 2008

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Women and Trade Union Leadership Network

Sponsored by SERTUC

We are conducting a pioneering comparative research study of women's leadership in UK and US trade unions. Due to economic restructuring combined with women's increased employment participation, women make up a significant proportion of union membership – 40 per cent in the USA and over 50 per cent in the UK. More women than men are joining in both countries. Recognition of the importance of women to the survival and revival of the UK and US trade union movements has in many cases produced an unprecedented commitment to equality and inclusion at the highest level. The equality strategies pursued by the unions in the two countries contain both similarities and differences that we intend to explore. Women have made gains in both countries within union leadership and decision-making structures. However, existing research shows that climbing the ladder to leadership positions remains far from a smooth process and women face multiple barriers. The significance of minority ethnic women for trade unions is now recognised by the movements in both the UK and US, but these women are even less well represented in leadership and decision-making positions. Our cross-national research on trade union women will explore the implications and consequences of ethnic diversity for trade union organisation and gender equality strategies.

Our objectives are to:

- (1) facilitate an international exchange of ideas and experiences on women's trade union leadership development, with a special focus on the role of women's separate organising for advancing gender equality and democracy within unions
- (2) contribute to global research on women and trade unions by providing a cross-national comparison
- (3) engage women union leaders at all levels in the discussion and analysis via the establishment of an international e-network
- (4) disseminate findings to the UK and US trade union movements and academic community via a project report, workshops and publications

Expected benefits of participating:

- **make international links with trade union women**
- **time and space to develop your trade union skills**
- **build your confidence to go further in your union**
- **learn by sharing experiences cross-nationally**