



Women's Committee Report

to the Women's Conference 2011

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1 Women's Committee

The General Council have been represented on the Women's Committee during the year by:

Sheila Bearcroft	Janice Godrich	Brenda Sanders
Christine Blower	Sally Hunt	Alison Shepherd
Mary Bousted	Chris Keates	Eleanor Smith
Joanna Brown ¹	Lesley Mercer	Liz Snape
Jane Carolan	Angela Lynes	Patricia Stuart
Gail Cartmail	Gloria Mills	Fiona Wilson
Maria Exall	Julia Neal	
Sue Ferns	Christine Payne	

Members elected to serve on the Women's Committee at the 2010 Conference were:

Sue Bond	Susan Matthews
Tracy Clarke	Sujata Patel
Kathy Duggan	Hayley Pickles
Victoria Amanda Evans ¹	Linda Roy
Sharon Harding	Eleanor Smith
Diana Holland	Michelle Stanistreet
Max Hyde	Jane Stewart
Wendy Jones	Barbara White
Vicky Knight ²	Clare Williams
Pauline McArdle	Joanna Wright
Evelyn Martin	

¹ From September 2010

² Until September 2010

Pat Stuart chaired the Committee until May 2010 and was re-elected to serve in October 2010. Sarah Veale, Head of the Equality and Employment Rights Department, continued as Secretary to the Committee.

Members of the Equality and Employment Rights Department working with the Committee during the year were: Sally Brett (Senior Policy Officer), Scarlet Harris (Women’s Equality Policy Officer), Carol Ferguson (Departmental Secretary), Jane Cook (Administrative Assistant), and Julie Lawrence (Administrative Assistant).

2 Congress 2010

There were 49 unions registered to attend Congress, of which 38 returned delegation monitoring forms, a marked increase on the previous year. In 2009, 49 unions were registered, of which only 26 returned delegation monitoring forms.

Table 1 below shows the percentage of women attending Congress since 2002. While the number of women delegates registered for Congress was lower than last year, the percentage of women registered as proportion of all Congress delegates, rose slightly in 2010, The percentage of women delegates involved in the monitoring process also increased substantially.

Two hundred and sixty women were registered as delegates in 2010 as compared with 274 in 2009. As a proportion of all delegates, the percentage of women registered for Congress increased slightly, rising from 39.4% in 2009 to 40.3% in 2010. 216 women were identified on monitoring returns, representing 83% of registered women delegates which is a significant increase in the proportion of female delegates for whom returns were received as compared with last year.

Three hundred and eighty five men were registered as delegates, representing 59.6 of delegates and 298 (77%) of these returned monitoring forms, which was the same proportion as last year.

Table 1: percentage of women delegates since 2002

	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
Women as percentage delegates	40	39	38	40	38	34	38	36	35

Table 2: percentage of women speakers since 2008

	2010	2009	2008
Total motions/composites moved by women	20	19	16
Total motions/composites seconded by women	24	23	20
Total motions/composites supported by women	47	35	50

Twenty two black women were identified on monitoring returns, which is 4.2% of all delegates identified on monitoring forms and 9.4% of all women delegates for whom returns were received. This represents a fall in the proportion of black women delegates as compared to 2009 when 6.4% of all returns were from black women. This latter figure may however be unreliable due to the low return from women delegates in 2009.

In 2008, 24 (4.2%) of all returns were from black women. In 2007, only 2.7% of returns were from black women, which may be accounted for by the low return rate for women that year. In 2006, 27 (4%) of all returns were from black women, in 2005 3% of all returns were from black women and in 2004 5% of returns were from this group. The number of black women delegates attending Congress still remains low.

3 Women and the cuts

Resolution 10 called for the Committee to work with policy staff in ESAD and with affiliates to contribute to high profile campaigns defending public services. The resolution also called for the Committee to work with education unions to challenge gender stereotyping and emphasise gender equity as well as supporting campaigns against budget cuts affecting education.

Since the 2010 Women’s Conference, the political and economic climate has shifted dramatically and the call to defend public services and to fight cuts has become all the more urgent.

After the budget in June 2010, research carried out by the House of Commons Library showed that women would pay for roughly 72 per cent of the net cost of the changes in taxes, benefits and tax credits proposed by the government.

The Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010 ushered in further cuts and welfare reforms which shifted yet more of the burden of deficit reduction onto women and families.

Specific cuts likely to particularly disadvantage women with children include:

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- the abolition of the Health in Pregnancy Grant, a universal payment of £190 for pregnant women who are 25 weeks pregnant and have received health advice from a medical professional
- a three-year freeze in the value of Child Benefit, in addition to the withdrawal of Child Benefit from women living in a household where one adult is a higher rate taxpayer
- the abolition of the Baby Element of Tax Credits (worth a maximum of £545 to eligible families) and a reversal of previous government's commitment to introduce a Toddler Tax Credit (worth a maximum of £208 for eligible families)
- a cut in the proportion of childcare costs that are covered for families eligible for Working Tax Credit, from 80 per cent of costs to 70 per cent of costs
- a three-year freeze in the value of Working Tax Credit
- significant cuts to Housing Benefit, which the Department for Work and Pension's own assessment has indicated will hit families the hardest
- a cap on the total amount of out of work benefit that a family will be entitled to, which will mean that large families experience greater losses.

Although the government has announced above inflation increases in Child Tax Credit, many families will still be significantly worse off as a result of wider welfare cuts.

Since women make up the majority of the public sector workforce, government plans to axe hundreds of thousands of public sector jobs are clearly set to disproportionately affect women.

The TUC has also voiced concerns about the impact of service cuts on women, from sexual and reproductive health services, to rape crisis centres, to local transport and libraries, women stand to lose more from swingeing local authority cuts than men.

Policy Officers in EERD have been working closely with colleagues in ESAD, OSD and CCD to make the case against the cuts and, in particular, to show that the cuts have a disproportionate impact upon women and families.

On 19th October 2010, the TUC held a public services rally in Westminster. The rally was well attended and received good media coverage. There was a diverse range of speakers including many women speakers. Holly Dustin of End Violence Against Women spoke about the impact of cuts on women's refuges and rape crisis services.

In November 2010, EERD produced a briefing paper aimed at union officers and reps, on how the government's cuts programme will have a disproportionate and devastating effect on women and families. The 'Gender

Impact of the Cuts' briefing explored the ways in which women in both the public and private sectors will be hit by the public sector cuts, as workers, as benefits claimants and as service users.

In February 2011, the TUC and National Association of Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) organised an event for unions and the voluntary sector to explore the common ground between unions and NGOs and charities fighting against cuts to jobs and services. The event was well attended by women's organisations, including End Violence Against Women, Women's Aid, the Women's Resource Centre, the Fawcett Society and Maternity Action.

EERD is working closely with OSD and CCD to ensure that women are a strong, visible presence at the march for the alternative on 26th March 2011 – both in terms of women and children marching and ensuring that there is a diverse mix of speakers, including women speakers.

4 Equality Act 2010

After several years of campaigning by the TUC, trade unions, NGOs and the statutory equality commissions, all the old discrimination laws were finally brought together into a single equality law in 2010. The Equality Act 2010 received Royal Assent on 8 April 2010 – the final possible day of parliamentary business before the general election. However, it was up to the incoming government to commence the provisions of the Act and the TUC welcomed the coalition government's commitment to bring the majority of the Act into force from 1 October 2010 as planned.

A number of the new provisions in the Act were not commenced in October and since then the coalition has confirmed that it will be scrapping the new duty on public bodies to consider the need to tackle socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions in s.1 of the Act. The government is still considering whether to commence the provision on dual discrimination (s.14), which would allow an individual like a black woman who has experienced discrimination on the basis of a combination of sex and race to bring a combined claim rather than two separate claims. However, this provision would only apply to direct discrimination and it would only allow claims to be brought because of a combination of two characteristics and no more.

The government has confirmed that it will be commencing the provision on positive action in recruitment and promotion in s.159 of the Act from 6 April 2011. This will enable an employer to appoint someone to a job if they have a protected characteristic that is currently under-represented or has a disadvantage associated with it, provided that the person is 'as qualified as' the alternative candidates to do the job.

It has also been confirmed that the new public sector equality duty in s.149 of the Act will be brought into force from 6 April 2011, replacing the current

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race, disability and gender equality duties. It requires public authorities or those private and voluntary sector organisations carrying out public functions to pay due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations on the basis of eight protected characteristics: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, maternity and pregnancy, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. In autumn 2010, the coalition government issued new proposals for specific duties legislation to support the general equality duty in s.149 of the Act. The specific duties will apply to those public authorities that are listed in the Act and they are intended to help support compliance with the general duty. The stated objectives of the coalition's proposals were to 'remove time-wasting bureaucracy' and improve 'democratic accountability'. The focus shifted from prescribing procedures that organisations must carry out, e.g. workforce monitoring, training, consulting and involving stakeholders, and publishing a written equality scheme, to prescribing what information an organisation must publish about its equality performance.

The TUC submitted a critical response to the consultation and in January 2011 the specific duties Regulations were published which included some improvements. By 31 July 2011 public authorities listed in the Act must publish: sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with s.149, which includes publishing information about the organisation's policies on the workforce if there are more than 150 employees; analysis of the impact of its policies or proposed policies on different groups and what information it took into consideration when carrying out this analysis; and information about what consultation it has undertaken. By 6 April 2012 public authorities must prepare and publish: equality objectives that further s.149, information about consultation they undertook when preparing those objectives, and how they will measure progress against them.

The coalition government is pursuing a voluntary approach to gender pay gap reporting and it has reconstituted the group that worked with the EHRC to try and develop a set of agreed metrics that private sector companies with more than 150 employees should report on. The TUC is represented on this group. S.78 of the Act enables a Secretary of State to introduce legislation to require private sector companies with more than 250 employees to report on information related to the gender pay gap. The government has said it will not repeal this section but it will not use it while it is pursuing the voluntary approach. It says it will keep the success of the voluntary approach under review, including whether it needs to use the s.78 powers in future, and it intends to do this by carrying out annual monitoring exercises of the extent and quality of reporting on the gender pay gap in the private sector.

To promote awareness of the new Act, the TUC organised regional half-day seminars for union officers and representatives in Newcastle, Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham, Birmingham, Taunton, and London between September 2010 and March 2011. The seminars included a presentation from

Sally Brett, Senior Equality Policy Officer on the Act, a workshop session on how the Act's provisions apply in the workplace, and information from the EHRC's regional managers on what kind of guidance and support they can provide to trade unions. In total, about 700 people will have attended the seminars. The TUC is also developing an updated TUC Guide to Equality Law which will be available from the website in early spring.

The seminars included detailed information on s.77 of the Act, which makes any confidentiality clauses in individuals' contracts unenforceable if they have shared information about how much they earn with their colleagues to establish whether or not there had been any discrimination in pay, on the new public sector equality duty and possibilities for challenging public spending cuts (in line with Resolution 12), and on the potential of the new definition of direct discrimination which ensures protection for people such as carers who are discriminated against by association (in line with Resolution 8). Other briefings by the TUC on the Act have included information on these matters and they will also be highlighted in the new TUC Guide to Equality Law.

5 Multiple discrimination

The legal framework has always had difficulty dealing with discrimination cases that are based on more than one ground. The Single Equality Act 2010 contained limited provisions which if enacted would have allowed the tribunals to deal with cases of dual discrimination. However, the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition has signalled that they do not intend to action these provisions.

In October 2010 the TUC organised a seminar to explore how trade unions can pursue issues of multiple- discrimination legally and through collective bargaining. The seminar featured Jillian Brown an employment judge and leading barrister with Outer Temple Chambers discussed the legal context and a panel of senior trade union equality officers discussed action that could be taken by unions in the workplace.

Whilst it is not clear that the Single Equality Act 2010, which contains a general equality duty for public services, will make it easier to deal with issues of dual or multiple-discrimination the TUC will continue to lobby for the inclusion of multiple discrimination in the law and continues to ask unions to log information on cases as evidence of the very real problems that people face in the workplace.

6 EHRC

The Equality and Human Rights Commission opened its doors in October 2007. Since that time, Kay Carberry, TUC Assistant General Secretary, has been a Commissioner. She has regularly attended the Women's Committee to provide updates on the work of the Commission.

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One of the EHRC's major tasks in 2010 was the production of guidance and statutory Codes of Practice to accompany the Equality Act 2010. The TUC was part of the reference group for this guidance and facilitated feedback from trade unions on the Codes. EHRC staff from its regional offices have attended the TUC's regional seminars to raise awareness of this important resource (see section headed Equality Act 2010). The TUC will continue to co-operate with the Commission as it produces the statutory Codes of Practice for the new public sector equality duty which comes into effect on 6 April 2011.

In line with the concerns raised in Resolution 12 on the gender impact of measures to reduce the public debt and the need to ensure compliance with the public sector equality duty, the TUC organised a meeting between public sector union officers and the EHRC's public sector duties team in October 2010 on the launch date of the EHRC's guidance for public authorities on complying with the statutory equality duties when making financial decisions. There was a commitment to maintaining an ongoing dialogue on public sector duty compliance and the impact of spending cuts from this meeting. In December 2011, the EHRC announced that it would use its powers under s.31 of the Equality Act 2006 to carry out a formal assessment of the Treasury's compliance with the statutory equality duties when making decisions in the Spending Review 2010. It has invited representations from third parties and the TUC will be making a submission based on analysis it has carried out of the disproportionate impact on women, ethnic minorities and the disabled.

7 Equal pay

In line with Resolution 3, the TUC, UNISON, the EHRC and the Fawcett Society jointly hosted a conference on 28th May 2010 to mark the 40th anniversary of the Equal Pay Act.

The day explored four key aspects of addressing the gender pay gap: making the business case for equal pay; how structures and organisation of workplaces play a part in the equal pay debate; the adequacy of the legislative framework underpinning equal pay; and attitudes and culture surrounding equal pay.

Prior to the conference four think pieces were circulated on these four themes, which were then discussed in workshops. At the end of the day there was a panel session with Lynne Featherstone MP, Under Secretary of State for Equalities, Dr. Jean Irvine, business Commissioner for the EHRC, Ceri Goddard, Chief Executive of Fawcett, Dave Prentis, General Secretary of Unison, Sarah Veale, Head of Equality and Employment Rights at the TUC.

Out of the conference came a report which contained the following recommendations:

- To build a business case for implementing equal pay practices: encourage employers and trade unions that have implemented equal pay systems to publicise what they have done and how they have gained from it;

encourage business to take a longer term view of the business gains rather than focusing on short term budget considerations; and connect the positive effects for the whole economy to arguments for closing the gender pay gap.

- To change the way work is organised and support equal pay: extend the right to request flexible working to all workers; raise awareness among employers of innovative practices; and involve trade unions to negotiate and bargain for extending members' opportunities for well paid, high quality work and to tackle inequalities in the workplace.
- To improve the law on equal pay: make clear employers' obligations to tackle unequal pay; allow women to bring representative actions; include robust equal pay auditing obligations and increase the powers and sanctions available to employment tribunals.
- To change attitudes and stereotypes that perpetuate the gender pay gap: work with schools to incorporate gender equality education into the National Curriculum and raise young people's awareness of the gender pay gap.

Hard copies of the conference report *Equal Pay: Where Next?* were distributed by the TUC to affiliates and an electronic copy is available on the TUC's website.

Sarah Veale represents the TUC on the government Equalities Office's stakeholder group on voluntary gender pay gap reporting. The GEO is seeking to come up with a set of metrics related to the gender pay gap which private sector employers with more than 150 employees will have to report (see section on the Equality Act 2010, page 10). Once voluntary gender pay gap reporting is underway in the private sector the TUC will seek to take forward proposals in Resolution 2 on making an input to any review of the effectiveness of the voluntary approach.

8 Family-friendly and carers rights

In line with Resolutions 9 and 15, the TUC has continued its work on family friendly working.

The previous government did not extend the period of paid maternity leave from 39 to 52 weeks as it had earlier proposed because of the recession.

In 2010, the main pressure for further improving maternity rights was at European level, with proposals for a revised Pregnant Workers' Directive that would include 20 weeks' leave on full pay. The TUC sent letters to UK MEPs urging support for the proposals, which would mean more low paid women would be able to afford to take longer periods of leave than they do at present in the UK. This was something raised in Resolution 9. The European Parliament voted in favour of the revised Directive and the proposals now rely

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upon a majority of Member States to agree to them. The UK government is hostile to the proposals with Conservative and Liberal Democrat MEPs speaking strongly against them in the Parliament's debates.

The coalition agreement includes a commitment to introduce a new scheme of shared parental leave from 2015, which will be consulted upon. It has been confirmed that in the interim, the previous government's proposals for transferable maternity leave will be implemented from April 2011. This will enable a mother to transfer the remainder of her maternity leave and pay to the father from 20 weeks after birth if she returned to work. The TUC has welcomed this.

The coalition government has laid Regulations extending the right to request flexible working to all parents (previously it applied to parents of children aged 16 or under and parents of disabled children aged 17 and under). This will take effect from 6 April 2011. It also has a commitment to extend the right to request flexible working to all employees and will consult on how to do this. A universal right to request is something that the TUC has long campaigned for and it has welcomed this commitment. In addition, it is understood that the consultation will include ideas for reform of the flexible working regulations. The TUC will take forward issues raised in Resolution 15 when responding to this consultation.

9 Older workers

The coalition agreement contained a commitment to remove the Default Retirement Age of 65 and it consulted on how to do this in autumn 2010. The TUC responded to the consultation, welcoming the decision to get rid of the DRA and prevent any more forced retirements taking place under it, however, it noted that removing the DRA on its own would do little to improve the employment opportunities of older people and it called on government to do more to promote measures to extend working lives such as greater flexibility around retirement and adaptation of jobs and workplaces to the needs of older workers in line with Resolution 6. To encourage employers and unions to review their policies and practices once the DRA is removed, the TUC and CIPD are revising the joint guidance published in 2006 – Managing age – A guide to good employment practice.

The government confirmed in January 2011 that it would begin phasing out the DRA from 6 April 2011. It also has a commitment to make the right to request flexible working universal which the TUC has welcomed in line with Resolution 6.

10 Pensions

Pensions continue to be a key aspect of the TUC's work. The TUC works on employer-provided, state pension and public sector pension issues. In 2010, there has been a particular focus on public sector pensions.

In June 2010 the coalition government established the Independent Public Service Pensions Commission, chaired by Lord Hutton. The TUC submitted evidence to the interim and final calls for evidence to the commission and forcefully argued that public sector pensions are fair, sustainable and affordable.

Separate to the Commission, the TUC has made clear to the Chancellor that the impact of the increase in member contributions laid out in the Comprehensive Spending Review could result in many members ceasing to be members as they cannot afford it.

The TUC has also been focusing on the state pension age. Evidence was submitted to the DWP's call for evidence on "When should the State Pension Age increase to 66?" in August 2010. The TUC rejected both the increase in age and the possible bringing forward of any increase.

In November 2010 the government announced its intention to bring forward the increase in the state pension age (SPA) to 66 in 2018-2020 (rather than 2024-2026 as laid out in the Pensions Act 2007). This proposal is contained in the Pensions Bill published at the beginning of 2011.

The TUC will be lobbying against the increase in SPA during the passage of the Bill, setting out concerns about the impact of the change including the gender impact. As a result of the proposed changes some women born in 1954 will have to wait for 2 years to reach SPA.

The Budget in June 2010 announced that the basic state pension will be increased by the higher of CPI, earnings or 2.5%. The TUC has long campaigned for the reinstatement of the earnings link so this development was welcome. Over the long-term, the restoration of the earnings link will tend to produce a higher state pension than the old RPI link. However, earnings are currently lagging behind prices, so the switch to the normally lower CPI link for prices could well mean that pensioners over the next few years could lose out from the new system.

This year the TUC also submitted evidence to the independent review Making Auto-enrolment Work set up by the Coalition government. This examined the pensions settlement derived from the Turner commission in the mid-2000s. While not all of review's recommendations were in line with TUC policy, it stayed within the broad consensus established in the wake of Lord Turner.

The recommendations in the report and taken forward by the government are set out in the Pensions Bill 2011, and the TUC will be lobbying on the elements that are proposed to be amended that could have adverse implications. For

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example, the increase in the band of earnings on which contributions must be paid for someone to be auto-enrolled is proposed to be increased. This change will mainly affect part-time women workers.

11 International

The TUC continued to put women at the heart of international work, and especially international development. Sally Hunt continued to act as the General Council's spokesperson on international matters, with Gail Cartmail leading on international development.

Diana Holland continued to chair the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Women's Committee, and at the ITUC Congress in Vancouver in June, the TUC delegation (which was, as with all TUC international delegations, gender balanced) supported the election of Sharan Burrow as the first female General Secretary of the ITUC or its predecessor organisations. Sally Hunt represents the TUC on the ITUC General Council and the ETUC Executive Committee, which in December elected Bernadette Segol as the first woman General Secretary-designate.

The 2010 TUC Women's Conference carried four resolutions on international matters. Action on the resolution on Gender and International Development is covered below. The TUC supported the call for a UN Women's Agency set out in the resolution "Never forget the women of Africa" and welcomed the appointment of Michelle Bachelet – former President of Chile - as its first head. Swaziland and Zimbabwe were specifically mentioned in the latter resolution, and work in these two countries is set out below. The TUC also supported the campaign for a new ILO convention on domestic workers' rights, which included support for a domestic workers' union in Nepal (see below).

Two other resolutions were carried on Afghanistan and Kurdish rights in Turkey, and the TUC ensured that unions were aware of the situation highlighted in the Afghanistan resolution, as well as continuing to support Turkish trade unionists in their campaign for human rights in Turkey.

In addition, a great deal of work was put into follow-up with trade unions in Iraqi Kurdistan following their request for a project to support women's empowerment. Further discussion took place and a trip was made, but unfortunately, in the end, the time was not right for the Kurdish unions (undergoing a complex merger process) to undertake such a project. Further information about the situation facing women in Iraqi Kurdistan can be found at www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-17949-f0.cfm.

As usual, the TUC hosted an event at the beginning of the week when International Women's Day falls, and in 2010, this was in the form of a Philosophy Football event, attracting over 300 (mostly) women to hear from women artists and speakers including Angela Eagle MP, Bonnie Greer, Josie Long and Frances O'Grady. Hariyatu Bangura, from the Sierra Leone

Teachers' Union was the special guest speaker. At the event a special TUC pamphlet, *Raising our Voices*, containing case studies of eight women trade unionists from around the world, was launched – see www.tuc.org.uk/extras/raisingvoices.pdf. A course on women and globalisation was held in the same week.

The TUC continued to raise cases of women trade unionists who are being harassed and oppressed around the world, often in alliance with Amnesty International. In particular, Amnesty International and the TUC are promoting the case of Burmese trade unionist Su Su Nway and Colombian trade unionist Lilianny Obando, as well as the wives and families of the Miami 5 – Cuban national being held in US jails on trumped up charges and denied visitation rights.

In 2010 the TUC adopted a new international development strategy - Global Justice, Global Solidarity – which gave a high priority to women's equality. Examples of TUC international development work focusing on or especially benefiting women include the following:

- Promotion and protection of the rights of domestic workers in Nepal: a project aiming to support, via the national centre Gefont, a new domestic workers union and campaign for the ILO to agree a convention to protect the rights of domestic workers. The majority of domestic workers in Nepal are young women. In less than six months, 230 new members have joined the union, five new local committees been set up, 1100 signed a petition, and at least 80 domestic workers have received training. With TUC support, the NIDWU president attended the ILO conference in June. The union has produced a video and met the Nepali Prime Minister. More information is available at www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-17630-f0.cfm and www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-18352-f0.cfm
- Educating and organising workers in Palestine: as a result of this small TUC Aid supported project, 300 workers have raised awareness; at least 120 new members have joined unions; three unions across 18 worksites elected new workplace committees; working hours have been reduced in one workplace; and other negotiations are under way. The project was designed to ensure 50 per cent participation by women and is now complete. Further work is underway, including a recent visit to address the PGFTU's Women's Department conference and to explore the potential of future TUC Aid projects, focussing specifically on women and gender issues. More information is available at www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-17423-f0.cfm and www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-17905-f0.cfm
- Promoting legal rights and building union capacity in Guyana. This is a project to build the capacity of sugar industry workers in Guyana, many of who are low-paid women. The project is coordinated by GMB London and the IUF. In the first few months, detailed training courses were held for 170 representatives with positive feedback. A detailed handbook has been

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drafted and further training is underway. Media coverage secured. IUF coordinator gradually handing over to local coordinator. Exploring how to monitor training impacts across various sites ie. use of mobile text messages to pass info to HQ on specific cases. More information is available at: www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-17882-f0.cfm

- Through civic education training, around 1000 Zimbabwean women trade unionists have more awareness, knowledge and confidence about their rights, the current constitution process, the legislation that affects them and how they can have an influence in the way their country is governed. The TUC has also supported the latest conference of the women-led Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations, and a report is available at www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-18813-f0.cfm
- Trade union national centres in Malawi and Tanzania commissioned research that documents the gender situation within their organisations and their affiliated unions, the leadership and women's committees have received training and they have run gender based campaigns, and ITUC Africa ran a good practice seminar on Gender Mainstreaming in African trade union organisations in Lome, Togo. Recognising the failures and celebrating successes, men and women trade unionists from Africa, Europe and North America debated what the ingredients for successful mainstreaming are and at the end a small group, led by ITUC Africa and the TUC, resolved to undertake a meta-analysis on Gender Mainstreaming in 2011, with a view to improving the effectiveness the movement's approach in 2012.
- The Building Trade Union Capacity to Combat HIV/AIDS Project in Nigeria takes into account the gender dimension of the pandemic - specific vulnerability of women and contributory factors to it - and their role both as mothers of children living with HIV/AIDS and carers. This is addressed in training, VCCT and advocacy. The special needs of women workers living with the disease are also dealt with on the bargaining agenda with employers with emphasis on sexual and reproductive rights of HIV positive women.

In October 2010, the TUC Women's Committee signed a twinning protocol with the Zimbabwean ZCTU Women's Committee to allow for ongoing support, solidarity and the exchange of ideas and experiences.

The TUC responded to the Department for International Development consultation on maternal and child health, entitled Maternal rights, decent work and public services, available at www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-18716-f0.cfm

12 Unionlearn

Women continue to benefit from the workplace learning agenda that drives the work of unionlearn. In 2009/10, 233, 458 learners across all sectors chose their trade union as their route to learning. Of these learners, 13% were able to progress the literacy numeracy and English language learning. Women often in low paid employment doing part-time, shift, or agency work have been able to access learning through their union learning reps (ULRs) in thousands of workplaces across the country.

Unionlearn in the TUC's regions continues to support women-specific initiatives including support for regional women's conferences and women reps around confidence building and skills development.

Most of these ULRs will be supported via their union's ULF project. Unionlearn's most recent ULR survey showed that 43% of ULRs are women and of the 37% of respondents for whom this was their first union role, 50% are women.

The Skills, Recession, and Recovery project began in late 2009 as a response to the economic crisis and has been supporting members to improve employability and access learning opportunities for re-skilling or up-skilling. For example at Celanese in Derby through Unite, 15 women have been accessing Cogent's Women and Work programme.

Unionlearn has continued to work with the Women and Work Sector Pathways initiative through participating on the Operations group and promoting these schemes for up-skilling women to gain access to non-traditional roles where there is a skills shortage.

In 2010, the TUC's Apprenticeship project highlighted the occupational segregation issues and the consequent gender pay gap issues facing women apprentices in a report on gender and apprenticeships. The report can be accessed via the TUC website <http://www.tuc.org.uk/equality/tuc-18578-f0.cfm>.

The TUC Education programme continues to support the development of union professionals and 49% of those undertaking the training have been women. This has also included the annual Women's Summer School. The 'Working Women' workbook continues to be used on the TUC Education programme as well as other TUC resources such as the Domestic Violence workbook.

The TUC has continued to work in partnership with the UKRC (the UK Resource Centre for Women – an organisation which promotes women in Science Engineering and Technology) to promote particular initiatives to women working in or interested in working in those sectors. This has included promotional and web activity to highlight women role models in SET. The TUC responded swiftly to news at the end of 2010 that the government was to

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cease funding the UKRC's activities. The TUC wrote to the relevant government ministers expressing its dismay at the decision to effectively close down the UKRC. The government has since reconsidered and agreed to award the organisation a further £500,000 over 2011–12. However this still amounts to an 80% cut to resources.

13 End violence against women

In line with Composite Resolution 2, EERD continues to work with the End Violence Against Women coalition to campaign against violence against girls and women and to influence policy makers on this issue. The TUC's Women's Equality Officer, Scarlet Harris, was nominated to the board of EVAW in December 2010 and is also on the advisory group of EVAW's prevention network.

The TUC publicised EVAW's survey into sexual violence and harassment in schools to relevant affiliate unions. The TUC also wrote to the Home Secretary urging the government to commit to ending VAWG.

EERD has sought input from women's committee members to research being carried out by EVAW into good practice examples of VAWG prevention schemes in the workplace.

Holly Dustin of End Violence Against Women spoke about the threat of cuts to women's refuges, rape crisis centres and domestic violence services at the TUC's public services rally in October.

14 Violence against women in betting shops

Resolution 27 called for the committee to support Community's campaign to stop violence against women in the betting industry and to call for minimum standards to be set for the industry.

An initiative called the Safebet Alliance was launched in April 2010. Community was involved in the roundtable discussions, as was the Susy Lamplugh Trust, Lacors and others. The Safebet Alliance will be reviewed after a year in operation. Community will be surveying betting shop workers to find out what the impact of the agreement has been.

15 Sexualisation of young girls

Composite Resolution 3 called for the Committee to incorporate issues around the sexualisation of young girls into its work with End Violence Against Women. In October 2010, EVAW published a survey of girls' experiences of sexual harassment in schools. The YouGov poll found that one third of girls had experienced unwanted sexual touching at school. Other key findings included:

- 71% of 16-18-year-olds say they have heard sexual name-calling such as “slut” or “slag” towards girls at school daily or a few times per week.
- Close to one in three (29%) 16- to 18-year-old girls say they have experienced unwanted sexual touching at school.
- Over a quarter (28%) of 16- to 18-year-olds say they have seen sexual pictures on mobile phones at school a few times a month or more.
- Close to one in four (24%) 16- to 18-year-olds said that their teachers never said unwanted sexual touching, sharing of sexual pictures or sexual name calling are unacceptable.
- 40% of 16-18-year-olds said they didn't receive lessons or information on sexual consent, or didn't know whether they did.

EERD circulated the findings of the survey to committee members and drew it to the attention of education unions in particular.

In February 2011, the government launched an inquiry, led by Reg Bailey of the Mothers' Union, into the sexualisation and commercialisation of childhood. The survey has been circulated to all committee members and EERD will be coordinating its response with EVAW.

16 Gender and occupational safety and health

Resolution 41 called for the Women's Committee to continue to build upon its existing work on gender and health and safety. The TUC has continued to coordinate a GOSH (Gender and Occupational Safety and Health) group and has produced a GOSH checklist for Health and Safety Reps.

In February 2011, the TUC held a GOSH seminar for health and safety reps and officers as well as equality reps, and equality and women's officers. Professor Amanda Griffiths of Nottingham University presented her new research into how the menopause affects women at work. Helen Smith of the HSE also gave a presentation on the HSE's work on equality and gender.

The seminar was well attended and there was a good deal of interest in the topics discussed, in particular the effects of the menopause on women at work.

Workshops were held on the reasons why there are so few women health and safety reps, leading to action plans for health and safety reps to take the issue up at branch level, national level and in the workplace.

17 Women and STEM

Resolution 40 called for the TUC to work closely with the UKRC and WISE to develop policy on gender segregation in STEM industries. EERD has met with the UKRC to discuss the issues facing women in STEM.

Women's Conference 2011

Furthermore, Unionlearn produced a report in 2010 on gender segregation in the apprenticeships system, specifically looking at the absence of young women in the higher paid STEM apprenticeship programmes and recommending steps to redress the balance.

The TUC has written to the government expressing concern and dismay at the recent announcement to cut all funding to the UKRC and WISE. The TUC will continue to work with the UKRC on projects which still have funding. In particular, there will be TUC representation on the steering group of a UKRC project to encourage more young women into STEM apprenticeships.

18 Women's National Commission

In September the General Secretary wrote to the Minister for Women and Equalities, Theresa May, objecting to the decision of the government to close the Women's National Commission. The TUC pointed to the magnificent work done by the WNC over the years, particularly with regard to violence against women and girls. Unfortunately, the government pressed ahead and the WNC was closed in December 2010.

19 Abortion rights

The TUC continued to prioritise abortion rights in 2010. The committee has worked closely with Abortion Rights to campaign for access to safe, legal abortions on the basis that this is fundamental to women's reproductive rights and to their employment and education prospects, incomes and opportunities.

Abortion Rights briefed the Committee on the threat to sexual and reproductive health services posed by the government's cuts programme.

In the field of reproductive and sexual health there is great concern and uncertainty around the future of contraception and abortion services – both in terms of funding and service delivery – once responsibility for public health is transferred to Local Authorities, who are themselves facing 28% cuts over the next four years. As Primary Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities prepare for their own abolition, while at the same time having to identify possible areas to cut back, professionals working in the health service report a dangerous paralysis in the commissioning of vital sexual health services.

Both the Independent Advisory Group on Sexual Health and on Teenage Pregnancy were abolished in the government's quango cull. These groups were not just talking shops – they guided strategies which have made genuine improvements to reproductive healthcare in this country. The teen pregnancy rate is at its lowest for 20 years, with some areas seeing a 45% fall in the number of teenagers becoming pregnant. Access to abortion has been significantly improved (LINK 1), with the NHS now paying for 94% of abortions in England and Wales (up from 75% in 1997), and 75% of abortions

now take place at under 10 weeks gestation, when the procedure is safest, compared to just 51% in 2002 – a sign that waiting times have fallen.

The TUC continues to work with Abortion Rights to put the case that cuts to services will have a knock-on effect on whether women feel able to start or expand their families, limiting genuine reproductive choice.



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