

MESSAGE FROM **THE EDITOR**



Gender segregation in education and the labour market is one of the outstanding challenges to achieve equality for women and men. In the EU, gender segregation in tertiary education is most pronounced in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), where men are over-represented, whereas women are over-represented in education, health, welfare, humanities and the arts (EIGE, 2017).

Gender segregation in the educational sphere is reflected in the labour market. Women usually take jobs in sectors that are generally characterised by lower pay, status, and value, with poorer career prospects, fewer options for upskilling and often have informal working arrangements (EIGE, 2017).

This edition of *Equality Matters* explores horizontal gender segregation in education and employment. Interesting facts are presented exploring this topic. *Equality Matters* interviewed the College Career Advisors and Career Guidance Teachers about how gender still affects school subjects' choice and career opportunities.

In addition, *Equality Matters* interviewed three professionals who were successful in breaking gender stereotypes in their careers and opted for professions that they enjoyed irrespective of gender. We hope that more and more women and men will follow suit!

Enjoy the read!



Emma Watson ✓
@EmWatson

Gender equality not only liberates women but also men from prescribed gender stereotypes.
[#heforshe](#)

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INTERESTING FACTS ON HORIZONTAL GENDER SEGREGATION

- **Horizontal segregation** refers to the concentration of women and men in different sectors and occupations. This contrasts with vertical segregation, which concerns the top positions¹. EIGE Gender Equality Glossary and Thesaurus
- In all EU Member States **men dominate specific fields**, such as engineering and technology, but are much less present in others, such as teaching and care work. A **number of jobs are still commonly considered as 'women only'**, for example pre-primary education, nursing or midwifery, secretarial and personal care work, domestic and related help².
- Chances of **finding a job matching their educational profile** are higher for women graduates in education, health and welfare (EHW) than for women graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and the opposite holds true for men³.
- Gender segregation in the labour market is **persistent** across Europe. The table below reflects the proportion of the employed population that would need to change occupation/sector in order to bring about an even distribution of men and women across occupations or sectors. The index varies between 0 (no segregation) and 50 (complete segregation). For the EU as a whole, the figures are still high: 24.1% for occupational segregation and 19% for sectoral segregation.

	Gender Segregation in Occupations			Gender Segregation in Sectors		
	2010	2015	2016	2010	2015	2016
EU 28	24.9	24.3	24.1	19.1	18.9	19
Malta	24	24.9	24.8	16.3	17.2	17.4

Source: 2018 Report on Equality between women and men in the EU

- The Gender Equality Index measures **sectorial segregation in employment**. Malta consistently ranked second out of the 28 EU Member States in the sub-domain of 'segregation and quality of work' with the following scores:

1 <http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/thesaurus/terms/1247>
 2 <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14624-2017-ADD-2/en/pdf>
 3 <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14624-2017-ADD-2/en/pdf>

Scores* (points) in the Gender Equality Index for Segregation and Quality of Work

	2005	2010	2012	2015
EU 28	63.3	63.7	64.0	64.0
MT	71.8	72.3	73.7	73.1

*Scores are assigned from 1 to 100 whereby 1 means total inequality and 100 for full equality.

Sectorial segregation in employment is measured through the participation of women and men in the sectors of education, human health and social work activities, where women are usually over-represented.

Source: European Institute for Gender Equality, 2017. *Gender Equality Index 2017. Measuring Gender Equality in the European Union 2005 – 2015*.

- The Gender Equality Index also measures **gender segregation in tertiary education**. In 2015, the score was 55.6, which is almost the same as it was 10 years ago. Malta ranked first out of the 28 EU Member States throughout the years in this area with the following scores:

Scores* (points) in the Gender Equality Index for Segregation (in the domain of Knowledge)

	2005	2010	2012	2015
EU 28	55.2	55.8	56.1	55.6
MT	77.0	72.3	73.0	69.5

*Scores are assigned from 1 to 100 whereby 1 means total inequality and 100 for full equality.

Source: European Institute for Gender Equality, 2017. *Gender Equality Index 2017. Measuring Gender Equality in the European Union 2005 – 2015*.

- **Traditional gender stereotypes:**
 - impact the choice of study fields or occupations that women and men take by driving interest towards specific subjects that are deemed 'appropriate';
 - make it challenging for individuals to remain in their chosen career pathway when opting for a course or a job that differ from what is socially accepted; and
 - can drive recruitment and employment practices⁴.

4 <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14624-2017-ADD-2/en/pdf>

- **The unequal sharing of paid and unpaid work between women and men:**

- affects their labour force participation over the life course; and
 - limits women's possibilities to participate in lifelong learning and to develop skills and qualifications needed to enter the labour market or new occupations⁵.
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- Gender segregation **narrows life choices**, education and employment options, leads to unequal pay, further reinforces gender stereotypes, and limits access to certain jobs while also perpetuating unequal gender power relations in the public and private spheres⁶.
 - Horizontal segregation is the **second biggest factor of the gender pay gap**. Women in the EU are over-represented in industries with low pay levels and under-represented in well paid industries, despite having better educational outcomes than men⁷. Gender segregation is also one of the major causes of the pension gap and women's overall economic dependence throughout the life course⁸.
 - Reducing gender segregation in the labour market is crucial for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. In addition, women and men would be **better able to realise their potential**⁹.
 - The **European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020** aims to 'eliminate gender stereotypes and promote gender equality at all levels of education and training, as well as in working life, in order to reduce gender segregation in the labour market'.
 - The Council Conclusions '*Enhancing the skills of women and men in the EU labour market*', which were adopted in the EPSCO Council in 2017 during the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union, emphasise the importance of combating horizontal occupational segregation by gender.



5 <http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/gender-equality-index-2017-measuring-gender-equality-european-union-2005-2015-report>

6 <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14624-2017-ADD-1/en/pdf>

7 European Union, 2018. 2018 Report on Equality between women and men in the EU.

8 <http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/gender-equality-index-2017-measuring-gender-equality-european-union-2005-2015-report>

9 <http://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/gender-equality-index-2017-measuring-gender-equality-european-union-2005-2015-report>



THE EFFECTS OF **GENDER STEREOTYPES ON STUDENTS**

NCPE spoke with College Career Advisors and Career Guidance Teachers¹ from the National School Support Services (NSSS) of the Directorate for Educational Services (DES) about how gender stereotypes can have an influence on the students' choice of subjects at school, and on the role of educators to challenge such gender stereotypes.

¹ The career guidance service is available for students and parents within State Colleges or through the National School Support Services, Fra Gaetano Pace Forno Street, Hamrun.

1. DO YOU THINK THAT STUDENTS' GENDER STILL AFFECTS THEIR CHOICE OF SUBJECTS IN SCHOOLS? IF YES, HOW?

Unfortunately yes. Although the Directorate for Educational Services (DES) is working hard to overcome the issue of gender stereotyping through various career guidance programmes held by career guidance practitioners, yet to a certain extent students' gender still affects their choice of subjects in schools. To start with, families exert quite an influence on their children and pass on stereotypical messages. Role models in the media are another factor influencing students in their subject choice. Students may also be influenced by their friends' beliefs and choose accordingly so as not to be left out or feel different.

2. HOW CAN YOU, AS EDUCATORS, CHALLENGE SUCH ISSUES? WHAT ABOUT GENDER STEREOTYPES?

As educators we can provide students with non-conventional role models. We can use resources which convey

messages that jobs and careers are not bound by gender. Apart from encouraging students to participate in career guidance programmes, educators can also involve students in group discussions which challenge their beliefs and open up for change. NSSS also organises career orientation visits and Career Exposure Experiences (CEEs) together with State Colleges whereby students are given the opportunity to observe any job/career which they aspire for, irrespective of any gender stereotyping associated to the role itself.

3. IN THIS CONTEXT, WHAT MESSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONVEY TO EDUCATORS, STUDENTS AND PARENTS?

Everyone is talented and if there is the will, nobody has the right to stop the way. If one is committed and ready to face challenges, there is no limit to what one can do and achieve. It's good to dream ('realistically' if possible), so one should follow his/her dreams and be happy!

BREAKING TRADITIONAL GENDER STEREOTYPES

NCPE interviewed three professionals who broke traditional gender stereotypes and opted for professions that are traditionally associated with the opposite gender. Their experiences shed light on how gender should not limit one's interests and potential.



**"I WANTED
TO DO WHAT
I ENJOY"**

OCCUPATION
Mathematician:
Full Professor-Researcher

DURATION IN EMPLOYMENT
25 years

QUALIFIED IN
Specific areas of Mathematics
and their applications to
Quantum Mechanics, Networks
and Electric Conductivity in
Nanotechnology

HOBBIES
Travelling, Films, Crafts,
Music, Swimming

PROF. IRENE SCIRIHA AQUILINA

1. WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO CHOOSE YOUR CAREER?

Discerning patterns and discovering how things relate to one another give one a sense of fulfilment. My research in mathematics is of the creative kind. When the theories one invents fit to devise new technology, to clarify poorly understood physical occurrences, to predict new structures or to develop virtual machines, one senses that one's contribution is worthwhile.

2. DID YOU FIND ANY CHALLENGES TO CHOOSE YOUR PRESENT CAREER?

The challenges were significant. As an undergraduate, reading for a degree in mathematics and physics, I was the only woman. For many years, I was the only woman academic in the faculty of science. The biggest challenges are to prove that a woman can achieve as much as any man, in spite of the attitude from society that a woman's place is elsewhere. One may think that the problem has been solved and that it is now easy for women to reach high positions in all fields. Statistics however still show otherwise.

**"FOR MANY YEARS,
I WAS THE ONLY WOMAN
ACADEMIC IN THE
FACULTY OF SCIENCE."**

3. DO YOU FIND ANY CHALLENGES RELATED TO THE UNDER-REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE STEM SECTORS WHEN CARRYING OUT YOUR JOB? IF YES, WHICH? HOW DO YOU OVERCOME SUCH CHALLENGES?

Women are different from men. This means that they do a task, traditionally done by men, in innovative ways. There are people, even today, who assume that women can never rise to the occasion. This is not said overtly but just implied.

4. DO YOU HAVE ANY MESSAGES FOR OTHER WOMEN WHO ARE CONSIDERING TO CHOOSE A CAREER IN STEM?

The study of mathematics, science and technology, at school and at university, was hard work but rewarding. Many had advised me that, at a time when married women were not allowed to work in the public sector, I was wasting my time and my parents' money to pursue such studies. However, I had decided that in life I wanted to do what I enjoy no matter how difficult. Since then legislation changed and I am reaping the fruits of my determination.

My advice is that if you see mathematics, science or technology beautiful, take up the challenge to overcome the initial hurdles so that eventually you can experience the joy of an ever changing occupation that never becomes routine work.



“ SOME PEOPLE TOLD ME THAT IT WOULD NOT BE EASY TO WORK IN A FEMALE DOMINATED FIELD ”

OCCUPATION

**Kindergarten Assistant,
Musician, Early Years Music
Practitioner**

DURATION IN EMPLOYMENT

3 years

QUALIFIED IN

**Early years Development,
Music studies**

HOBBIES

**Swimming, Driving my car,
Art history**

LUKE AGIUS

1. WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO CHOOSE YOUR CAREER?

From my teenage years, I always enjoyed playing and caring for kids and I was interested in their development, interaction, psychology and also their theology. I continued my studies, always keeping child development in mind so that I could have the possibility to further my studies in this profession.

2. DID YOU FIND ANY CHALLENGES TO CHOOSE YOUR PRESENT CAREER?

I must say that in Malta being a child minder is not easy. Since I'm the only male working with such young children right now - or one of the very few, I was not able to acquire much information or opinions from other men in this sector. Some people also told me that it would not be easy to work in a female dominated field because it could be hard for me to promote my ideas and views, and because I would not find support from men who might have the same mind set.

3. DO YOU FIND ANY CHALLENGES RELATED TO THE UNDER-REPRESENTATION OF MEN IN THIS EARLY EDUCATION SECTOR WHEN CARRYING OUT YOUR JOB? IF YES, WHICH? HOW DO YOU OVERCOME SUCH CHALLENGES?

Since I might think differently from others, it can sometimes be frustrating with no men who might possibly support me and have the same mentality. Although the school environment is changing and staff

nowadays are open to ideas, in some cases I still struggle to promote new ways and methods of teaching.

Another challenge of mine is fitting in, as I am not always comfortable to talk, joke and chat with all the staff. Building healthy relationships between males and females in the workplace is not always easy and one usually feels more comfortable to open up with people of the same gender. In short, there is the need for more understanding and acceptance of differences.

4. DO YOU HAVE ANY MESSAGES FOR OTHER MEN WHO ARE CONSIDERING CHOOSING A CAREER IN THIS SECTOR?

This is a job that men can feel capable and successful doing. In my opinion, we need the ideas, involvement and sometimes the different views of men in this sector. The father figure is also very important and we will slowly change the wrong mentality we might have. I am certain that kids in my class are very happy and that their development was not hindered in any way because I am a male, I can say without hesitation, that the gender of a carer does not have to affect the relationships one can form with children. My message is, do not listen to the negative thoughts people might express because if you have a dream to work with children, you should go for it, work for it, and also strive to change the wrong mentality some might have.



“I HAD NO DOUBT I WANTED TO BE A DOCTOR”

OCCUPATION

**Professor of Anatomy;
Chairperson – Gender Issues
Committee, University
of Malta**

DURATION IN EMPLOYMENT

45 years

QUALIFIED IN

Medicine

HOBBIES

Reading & travelling

PROF. MARIE THERESE CAMILLERI PODESTÀ

1. WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO CHOOSE YOUR CAREER?

I was motivated mainly by my father who was a doctor and who was my mentor. My father always used to mention a woman doctor - who was again my role model. So I had no doubt that I wanted to be a doctor. I got into academia when I decided to apply for a job at University. It was then that I started to climb the ladder.

2. DID YOU FIND ANY CHALLENGES TO CHOOSE YOUR PRESENT CAREER?

The challenges were mainly because I wanted to be fully qualified with a PhD and this entailed going abroad to study. It wasn't easy to get a scholarship to go abroad. At that time, if you were a female, you were automatically disqualified. Finally, when I was in London, I got a Wellcome Trust Scholarship which was a very good scholarship.

“IT WASN'T EASY TO GET A SCHOLARSHIP TO GO ABROAD. AT THAT TIME, IF YOU WERE A FEMALE, YOU WERE AUTOMATICALLY DISQUALIFIED”

3. DO YOU FIND ANY CHALLENGES RELATED TO THE UNDER-REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THIS SECTOR WHEN CARRYING OUT YOUR JOB? IF YES, WHICH? HOW DO YOU OVERCOME SUCH CHALLENGES?

I don't think that there are specific challenges as in medicine today there are a lot of women. I qualified in 1969 as a doctor and I used to work in hospital. At that time, we used to have patients who refused to be seen by a woman because women were not considered “as doctors” but as “nurses”. I don't think that this happens nowadays because the number of women doctors has increased significantly. Nowadays, I do autopsies and have contact with the relatives of the deceased. Meanwhile, the Gender Issues Committee at the University of Malta is working to ensure gender representation in the teaching profession at University.

4. DO YOU HAVE ANY MESSAGES FOR OTHER WOMEN WHO ARE CONSIDERING TO CHOOSE A CAREER IN THIS SECTOR?

I can say that medicine is very rewarding. My daughter also chose medicine as her profession. In general, I feel that the STEM sciences are more demanding. Therefore people choosing the STEM sciences need to realise this and have to be more determined.

**GENDER ROLES ARE
A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT,
WHEN WE ATTEMPT
TO ASSIGN STRENGTHS
AND WEAKNESSES
TO EITHER GENDER,
WE HALF OUR POTENTIAL
AS THE HUMAN RACE**

