

Key points from the report Vocational education and training in the Nordic countries

Nordic information on Gender, NIKK, tasked by the NCM, has conducted a study focusing on gender segregation in VET in the Nordic countries. Based on the content of this report, the following can be distinguished as important elements to include in continuing work to combat gender imbalances in VET and associated labour markets:

- Legislation prohibiting discrimination and sexual harassment and requiring efforts to prevent discrimination and sexual harassment in workplaces and in education
- Sector organisations and employer parties actively taking responsibility for implementing efforts to prevent and combat discrimination and sexual harassment Effective support and follow-up in the implementation of the regulatory requirements
- Curricula and syllabuses that include developing skills in critical thinking and which provide VET pupils with tools to identify and counteract exclusionary norms and attitudes in their future occupational roles. A clear division of responsibilities in the education organisation regarding the implementation throughout the entire VET programme – in school-based as well as workplace based components
- Basic requirements to acquire knowledge about norms and gender stereotypes in vocational teacher education. Special consideration for the complex and sometimes conflicting tasks of vocational education teachers in combating limiting norms and strengthening the employability of pupils
- Continuing professional development for active instructors and teachers in the 48 workplace-based components of VET programmes focusing on norms and gender stereotypes, and taking into account in particular the complex and occasionally contradictory nature of VET in combating limiting norms and strengthening employability
- Study and vocational guidance counsellors basing their guidance on awareness of norms and gender stereotypes in order to prevent their guidance from reiterating and reinforcing limiting norms, including both the specific guidance provided in study and vocational guidance counselling and what is provided in the context of normal teaching

- A focus on changing exclusionary norms, and improving prospects and conditions through networks targeting under-represented groups in specific sectors. Awareness of the risks of reinforcing gender stereotypes where there are separatist elements
- A generally stronger focus on counteracting gendered occupational traditions and cultures, rather than a one-sided focus on changing the numbers of actual people of both sexes represented in the occupation
- A focus on changing exclusionary norms, improving prospects and conditions through interventions targeting under-represented groups in specific sectors. Awareness of the risks of reinforcing gender stereotypes where there are separatist elements

Read the report [Vocational education and training in the Nordic countries - Knowledge and interventions to combat gender segregation.](#)

About the report

The study *Vocational education and training in the Nordic countries* provides an introduction to what we know about VET and gender as an area of knowledge, describes how VET in the Nordic countries is organised, and gives examples of how these countries have worked to break patterns of gender segregation and to retain pupils who belong to the under-represented sex. The study also includes a concluding analysis section which discusses the results of the survey conducted against the background of current knowledge in the field.

The report shows that countering gender imbalances in VET programmes and their associated labour markets in the Nordic countries is a complex process. The research highlights several possible interacting explanations for the differences. When the differences are formulated as problematic, different strategies to counteract them appear as more, or less, desirable. However, it is clear that this complexity requires strategies and interventions at a number of levels and in most areas, regardless of what the problems look like in the forefront. A focus on individuals alone within the under-represented group in a particular sector appears to be a poor solution to the problem. Instead, a more comprehensive and distributed focus on norms and attitudes seems to be required, targeting actors and practices at a number of levels in the labour market and in the countries' education systems.