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ABSTRACT

Based on a three-month visit by the author in mid-1987, this paper examines the experience of women in technical and vocational education in England, Sweden, and the Federal Republic of Germany. The observations are often compared to women's experience in Australia. Following an overview, the report summarizes general approaches to vocational education in England, Sweden, and Germany. It next examines initial vocational training, including the dual system in Germany, the Manpower Services Commission and Youth Training Scheme in England, and integrated education in Sweden. The fourth chapter looks at adult women's vocational education in the context of lifelong learning. Issues related to the role of collective bargaining and increasing women's representation in unions are discussed next. The final chapter, on industry development and regional policy, describes how industrial policies may be used to improve women's position in employment. An appendix lists the organizations visited during the study. The document concludes with a bibliography. (SK)

MAN-MADE SKILL:

WOMEN CHALLENGING THE TRADITION IN ENGLAND, SWEDEN AND GERMANY

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....IDEAS FOR AUSTRALIA

Barbara Pocock

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IDEAS FOR AUSTRALIA

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PREFACE

This paper summarises observations on women's technical or vocational education in England, Sweden and the Federal Republic of Germany and is based on a three month visit I made to Europe in mid-1987 sponsored by the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development.

Upheaval in Education

In the period of this project, vocational training has been a major topic of discussion in Australia. Education and employment portfolios are being reorganised by Federal and State governments; wage bargaining increasingly reflects skill formation and productivity issues; the trade union movement is promoting discussion about training and the deficiencies of our current systems; and the Technical and Further Education system (TAFE), the main organ of technical education in Australia, is under fire from many sides: government, unions, employers, women.

Australia's trade crisis has stimulated this concern, and focused attention on our education system. Anyone who listens to the radio or reads the newspapers will probably be able to quote the relevant figures: for example, that only about 60 percent of school leavers in Australia continue with their education, compared to 90 percent in countries like Sweden and Germany.

Our vocational training system is in a state of change. How will women be affected?

We have to ask this question because it is clear that the operation of our education system is not neutral with respect to gender: women are invariably affected differently and usually fare worse than men.

This report examines the experience of women in three Western European countries. These countries are often positively (and sometimes negatively) compared to Australia. The discussion often pays particular

attention to Sweden and Germany because of their high levels of youth vocational education and the priority placed on skills development for work. The experiences of women have rarely been discussed.

For example, an analysis of Sweden's vocational education system and labour market programs which neglects to describe action for women which runs throughout 'like a red thread' (in the words of the Labour Market Board), misses a major lesson of their approach.

A detailed examination of overseas experiences reveals an enormous amount about the hidden experience of women within these systems, and the measures that have often been taken (or should have been) to improve women's participation.

As we approach the close of the decade, with a wealth of international and domestic experience from which to learn, there is no excuse for taking the 'gender blind' approach to vocational education and change. We know that half of all employees and students - women - will be negatively affected by almost any change which does not give particular consideration to their situation. The comfortable concept of equal opportunity will not suffice: women don't start in an equal position with men and, without action, they never catch up.

The architects of change to our current vocational education system - unions, government and employers - have a unique opportunity to run their own 'red thread' for women through their innovations to redress the imbalance. History will judge their success.

Background to This Study

In 1987 a national report on women's experiences in TAFE, together with recommendations for change, was published (Pocock, 1987). Volume three of that report included a survey of the literature available in Australia in 1985 concerning women's vocational education in several countries: USA, England, Germany and Sweden. This paper goes beyond that literature study. It analyses the systems in these countries (excluding the USA), as well as drawing upon recent experiences and on conversations with practitioners - material which may not otherwise have

found its way into English print. There is nothing quite like seeing systems or programs in operation and meeting students and teachers and members of local communities, in order to more fully understand them.

STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

Following an overview, the report begins with a summary of general approaches to vocational education in England, Sweden and FR Germany. It then sets out, under thematic headings, the experiences relevant to Australian discussions, beginning with the area of initial vocational education, then vocational education for adults, collective bargaining around women's employment and training, and, finally, how industry policies may be used to improve women's position in employment. Throughout, conclusions relevant to Australia are set in bold type.

All research has some degree of subjectivity and this review reflects, both in the selection of material and its analysis, my own approaches and beliefs. Put simply, I don't believe that relying upon 'natural' solutions in the labour market will improve the position of women. Beyond this, the concept of 'equal opportunity' is inadequate in the face of women's disadvantage. All our experience, and that in each country under review, is an argument for a stronger role for government and more action from trade unions and employers to improve women's position and to ensure a fairer sharing of vocational training, paid work with its rewards, and domestic and family responsibilities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Bill Hall and Peter Thomson of the TAFE National Centre for efficiently facilitating this project. Many people in Europe generously made available their time and extended hospitality in exceptional ways. In addition to all those I met during the study period, I would especially like to thank for their support and assistance, Claire Stentiford, Roy Green, Georgina Watkins, Bernd-Georg Spies and Florence Gerard. Wendy Richards and Penelope Curtin provided editorial assistance.

Closer to home, my thanks to John Wishart, my friends at the United T ades and Labour Council of South Australia, who relieved me from my normal work to undertake the project and, as usual, to Joy Thomas for her technical help.

RESEARCH STRUCTURE

Of the 13 weeks of the project, two weeks were spent in field visits in each of England, Sweden and Germany. The remaining seven weeks involved establishing contacts, organising the visits, collecting and reading references, visiting information centres and libraries and writing the report.

A systematic attempt was made to contact representatives of the following in each country:

- trade unions and labour federations
- employer organisations
- ministries of employment
- ministries of education
- women's training organisations
- colleges and vocational training providers
- non-college providers
- employment and training projects specifically for women
- equal opportunity agencies
- independent research agencies
- local government

Interviews were conducted with each agency contacted, and extensive notes of interviews kept. Additional telephone and written contact was made with agencies not available or accessible for personal interview. The process of selection was, of necesity, flexible and designed to unearth any interesting vocational innovations for women and to permit a summary of the system.

CONTENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
ATS	Australian Traineeship System
AMS	National Labour Market Board, Sweden
AMU	National Employment Training Board, Sweden
BIBB	Federal Institute for Vocational Training, FR Germany
BMBW	Federal Ministry of Education and Science, FR Germany
CEDEFOP	European Center for the Development of Vocational Training
CILMP	Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs (Kirby Report) Australia
DGB	German Trade Union Federation
DM	Deutschemark
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission, UK
GLC	Greater London Council
IG Metall	German Metal Workers' Union
ITeC	Information Technology Centre
JTS	Job Training Scheme, UK
LO	Swedish Trade Union Federation (Blue Collar)
Metall	Swedish Metal Workers' Union
MSC	Manpower Services Commission, UK
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SAF	Swedish Employers' Confederation
SEK	Swedish Kroner
SCC	Sheffield City Council
SNBE	Swedish National Board of Education
TAFE	Technical and Further Education

TDCS	Trade Development Council Secretariat, Australia
TUC	Trades Union Congress, UK
USS	Upper Secondary School, Sweden
YTS	Youth Training Scheme, UK

CHAPTER 1 : OVERVIEW

1.1 WOMEN AND TRAINING

Training is an important issue for women. It is a route by which women are either cemented more firmly into their positions of second-rate paid work, or through which their position is improved. The message from our own experience to date is that, without conscious inspection of our own training system and its outcomes, the status quo is strengthened: women are further embedded into lesser- and semi-skilled jobs, in a narrow range of occupations and industries, with low pay and poor conditions. These outcomes are unfair and wasteful.

Changing things for women through training is a difficult and slow process. It cannot be pursued against a political tide (as current English experience demonstrates), in isolation from the provision of childcare and parental leave (as Sweden demonstrates), or without consideration of industrial realities.

Whether changes in women's training can result in changes in women's paid employment status is a subject of debate. The apprenticeship system is the result of industrial bargaining between employers, and workers and their unions, rather than the technocratic invention of government or industrial training authorities (although the system is increasingly subject to their influence). Whether technocratic planning in the training system can shape and influence workplace reality - and change women's position - remains to be seen. It can probably only be achieved in a lasting and penetrating way when the forces at work in the workplace (especially unions), and in society more generally (in providing childcare and loosening sex role constraints), move in the same general direction as training innovation for women.

Thus, while we can't expect revolutionary change for women through technocratic interventions in training, they are an essential part of the process of evolutionary change.

The major lesson from overseas training experiences is a realisation of the need for conscious and planned intervention for women. The ongoing evolution of the system - whether into youth traineeships, new forms of collectively bargained on-the-job training or new training centres - does not automatically bring improvement for women. At the same time anti-discrimination laws are incapable of ensuring that such changes occur.

The evolution of the system does, however, constantly present opportunities to improve women's position. The main question, then, is to choose the most important targets and opportunities and organise to exploit them.

This paper explores some of those experiences in vocational education in England, Sweden and Germany. Some of the lessons are negative: in England, for example, the long shadow of the Thatcher Government and the awesome influence of the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) affects all aspects of vocational training, with generally few benefits for women.

Efforts to improve the position of women in Western Europe have declined since the early eighties under the weight of public expenditure crises and declining rates of industrial growth. Questions of equality are not as fashionable in 1987 as in 1981. This is especially the case in countries where social democratic governments have been succeeded by more conservative ones: in the FR Germany, England, France and, for a period, in Sweden.

Similarly, it appears that a long period of growth in education is over. There is increasing attention to vocational education (which is sometimes posed to compete with 'general' education), to costs, to less expensive ways of accommodating the unemployed, to youth at the expense of adults.

Despite the relative decline in attention to women's issues, the legacy of the laws and programs initiated in the seventies and early eighties is being reaped and, in some places, being extended (especially in the Nordic countries, most notably Sweden).

Women's Situation in Vocational Education

Women's share of vocational education hovers around 50 percent in most OECD countries. The problem for women is not participation, but relevance. Girls tend to be evenly or over-represented in the general institutions or branches and under-represented in the vocational ones'. (OECD, 1985, p122).

This is true in all three countries under study: most women are employed or are in training, for the most part, in clerical, service and sales jobs in each country. Changes in patterns of segmentation have not been dramatic in the past decade. In Sweden, for example, where commitment to, and action on, broad-based social change in gender stereotypes has been a government priority, there is little shift.

In a recent survey of women's participation in education in the OECD area, the OECD concludes that differences between women and men in aggregate levels of participation have tended to narrow, especially in compulsory schooling and also in post-compulsory education. In many areas of general education at the upper secondary level, young women share equally with men. However, the OECD observes:

> [E]nrolments of girls in vocationally-orientated education and training still lag behind their participation in general education programmes. The second and possibly more serious, caveat is that subject choices are still markedly divided by gender and that the typically female tracks, in both the general and vocational sectors, tend to be precisely those that now suffer declining value in the job market (OECD, 1986, p12).

The OECD states that vocational education is firmly segmented by sex, with only slight improvement since the early seventies. Further, it concludes that:

> [M]uch of the progress that has been realised has been concentrated among those from privileged social strata. A

student who is both female and of working-class origin, on the other hand, faces a double educational handicap (OECD, 1986, p27).

Comparative educational data is complex. However, by any measure, the general level of participation in vocational education is higher in each of the countries under consideration than in Australia. Most notably:

- In Sweden, about 90 percent of 16 year olds enter upper secondary (vocational) education for at least two years. Adult access to retraining and further training is the highest of any of these countries.
- In England, the growth in expenditure on vocational training and labour market training programs, mainly through the MSC in the 1980s, has significantly increased the participation rate of youth in some form of initial vocational education.
- In Germany, about three quarters of current groups of 16 year olds are entering a 2½-3½ year contract of training under the Dual System.

Table 1 compares the qualifications of Australians, Germans and Swedes in their respective labour markets.

TABLE 1 Vocational Skills of Labour Force
Australia, Sweden and FR Germany, by Sex

	Percent without Vocational Qualifications			Percent with Trade, Technical Level Qualifications			Percent with University Level Qualifications		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Sweden (1984)	43.0	41.0	n.a.	39.0	41.0	n.a.	18.0[1]	18.0	18.0
FR Germany (1985)	36.2	23.9	28.7	57.2	65.1	62.0	6.6	11.0	9.3
Australia (1984)	59.9	53.7	56.0	29.1	34.3	32.3	7.4	9.0	9.0

Notes: (1) Includes all with Post-secondary technical qualifications in Sweden

Sources: Statistics Sweden, 1985, p29
CILMP, 1985, p264
Federal Ministry of Education and Science, 1987, p7

1.2 CHANGING WOMEN'S TRAINING: MONEY, STAMINA, ASSERTIVE GOVERNMENT

In the three countries under study, improvements for women have generally been secured only through a combination of resources: of teachers and administrators, equipment, training facilities, childcare, wages/income support for trainees, and sustained effort.

The continued provision of these resources has generally relied on government support and often active trade union support or sympathetic employers.

Generally, short programs of one or two years or even less, which rely on one or two individuals appointed to conduct 'special' programs for women have had much more limited success than those which are embedded within an existing system and can draw on its resources over a longer period of time. Examples of the latter are:

- Targets on women's participation in training;
- Changes in general pre-school, compulsory school and post-secondary curriculum to change and support women's vocational choices;
- The establishment of workplace-based equality committees to examine and improve, amongst other things, women's vocational training;
- Requirements on companies - whether through law, contract compliance or other industry policies - to improve women's share of vocational training; and
- Ensuring that in newly emerging areas of training - for example in computer-related office technology - the curriculum (including course structure, location, content, selection methods, and so on) assists women's participation.

This is not to say that specific initiatives for women do not work. In many ways the successful German pilot program for women in traditionally male areas of training in their Dual System (see Section 3.1), is a special women's initiative. Its distinguishing features and possible sources of success are its sustained conduct over a number of years, its placement of a substantial number of women in the mainstream training route alongside men, its planning with regard to potential employment, the support provided to trainees and particular efforts to monitor and

evaluate its effectiveness. The problem of the scheme in its failure to ensure access to long term skill-related employment at the end of training; is an important lesson but does not detract from other positive features. The success of this initiative demonstrates that the effort must be long term, it will cost money, and must be properly planned to ensure that the outcomes for women are access - not to disappearing areas of skilled work which men are abandoning - but to the technical heartlands of secure, well paid, skilled work.

In contrast, many short term programs funded to improve women's skill or influence their career choices, often do not provide access to the accredited training routes. We have many of our own examples in Australia which provide taster or introductory courses to prevocational courses which are by no means an assured route to apprenticeship or other technical training or employment. They are often, instead, an expensive and prolonged effort at queue jumping to improve trainee chances of securing a job.

In its survey of in-company training and equal opportunity in the European Community, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), make the same point:

> There is a need to avoid isolation. By this we mean that a single scheme, of limited duration, is not sufficient; it must be part of a long term trend. The position of women cannot be changed by periodic public relations activities which last only the length of an international women's year.
>
> (CEDEFOP, 1984, p22)

Swedish experience supports the model of a well resourced and sustained approach to improve women's participation in training. The success of introductory summer technology schools for women about to make vocational training choices, has resulted in their rapid expansion and repetition. This makes them less of a strange experiment and more a normal part of educational life for schools, students and communities. In this way, Sweden's educationalists and labour authorities have funded innovative projects of relatively short duration, but provided resources to build and

expand successful initiatives, shifting responsibility for them to local authorities and removing their special status. In contrast, in Australia, many of our innovative and successful projects have remained outside the mainstream and consequently have died prematurely - only to be succeeded in many cases by more pilots and experiments which are unconnected to the previous batch - encouraging managers, teachers and students to think of improvements for women as special rather than integral.

Unfortunately, the same is true of much experience in England where resources for improving women's training have been relatively fewer and the emphasis has been on youth employment/training programs which have reinforced rather than challenged women's second-rate training and employment status. Stop/start funding of meagre amounts has characterised many projects and the valuable lessons of some programs have not been sustained or extended by government.

The level of funding for women's training is highest in Sweden compared with Germany, England or Australia. This is true in the areas of initial youth training, and in-house and formal training for adults. In addition to these efforts (described in Sections 3.3 and 4.2, respectively) the Swedish Ministry of Labour has skillfully used small amounts of funds for women's employment and training, to change systems in firms, schools (at all levels) and the community, and establish models of good practice. These have included projects with unions in equality committees in individual workplaces (see Section 4.3), with teachers in preschools to develop new ways of familiarising girls with technology, with local government authorities developing regional employment programs, and so on. A small national coordination unit in the Ministry of Labour, with resources of SEK 3 million (A$650,000) per year, has thus encouraged and assisted what is, without doubt, a lively community and women's effort to make change. The results are substantial. They reflect the value of sustained effort and continuity of resources.

1.3 FAIR TRAINING ROUTES FOR FEMINISED FIELDS

One of the major training problems for women in Australia is that formal training arrangements (e.g. apprenticeship, traineeship) have not generally

been constructed in feminised occupations such as clerical work, children and community services, and so on. Some interesting issues are posed by a review of experiences in England, Germany and Sweden.

In England the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) extends a formal training arrangement to many new occupations or - more narrowly - tasks, while apprenticeship is in deep decline. The results for women have not been good: women's participation is sharply segmented and concentrated in a narrow range of lower status occupations. Few initiatives have been developed to challenge that segmentation, despite the very considerable resources of the Manpower Services Commission. It appears that many of the old difficulties associated with women's access to technical education and employment remain: concentration in shorter training with poorer employment or career prospects, and vulnerability to technological redundancy and occupational disease related to speed and repetition on a narrow range of tasks. In many ways, the MSC programs bear close examination by educationalists wishing to improve women's chances (see Sections 2.1 and 3.2): the dangers of their reproduction in our own evolving training system are very real.

A similar situation exists in Germany. Although the same training route (the Dual System) extends across both traditionally male and female occupations, the status, length, career opportunities, wages, employer recognition and employment outcomes in most feminised fields lag behind men's. Section 3.1 describes how the existence of formal training arrangements in traditionally female fields in parallel with men's does not guarantee equality. Where there is no effective curriculum development, accreditation, industrial organisation and negotiation, monitoring and affirmative action, secondary status often evolves for women's training areas.

This consistent experience suggests that better outcomes through training for women in traditionally feminised jobs rely on a re-examination of occupational definitions. For example, instead of training a machinist in the clothing industry, the occupational training should be more broadly inclusive of related skills and advanced work opportunities in the firm and the industry as a whole. This means widening and reorganising the boundaries defining women's skills to embrace more tasks, and give more

breadth and depth to women's training fields. This is relatively unexplored territory in all the countries under review except, perhaps, in some areas of evolving technology which are closely connected to office or clerical work. In short, the problems of low status and/or narrow training in many traditionally female fields - with their consequent costs on the job - are far from solved.

There is a pressing need to examine options in this area in Australia.

1.4 MORE TECHNICAL SKILLS FOR WOMEN

All the countries reviewed here emphasise that the changing technology and trade opportunities in industrialised countries are creating highly skilled, technical jobs in many sectors (for example, in vehicle production, electronics, and generally throughout the manufacturing and services sectors). The need, therefore, is for highly skilled, flexible workers with the ability to learn new skills. As a result, much effort on behalf of women workers concentrates on increasing their share of technically skilled jobs and training. In Sweden, the emphasis is on women's share of technical 'lines' in vocational training in Upper Secondary Schools (Section 3.3) and in-firm training (Section 4.3). In Germany, the emphasis has been on women's access to technical areas of study in the Dual System (see Section 3.1).

The successful initiatives described in these sections bear many similarities to various Australian programs. The main differences are the amount of resources, the sustained level of effort and the attempt to steadily build on experience rather than begin successive and short-run initiatives which are not generally well coordinated, resourced, evaluated or backed by even medium term funding commitments. Without these, we are failing to consolidate gradual changes. The elements of success in challenging occupational segmentation are now well known and, as the MSC demonstrates in its efforts in England, await only the allocation of appropriate resources on an ongoing basis. It is also clear from the effort in the countries under study, that change will occur slowly and unevenly, and will be influenced by labour market conditions.

1.5 PASSIVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY vs POSITIVE ACTION

Since the late seventies, equal opportunity policies have proliferated in industrialised countries around the globe in trade unions, employer associations, individual companies and all levels of government. While detailed policy on issues affecting women's employment cannot be dismissed, such policy has frequently been used as a substitute for change. In many places, the adoption of policy is followed by the appointment of an officer to implement it; someone whose task it is to straddle the impossible breach between those in power and those who want a fairer deal, and often without the power or resources to implement change. Many of these positions have been substitutes for action; others have been the engine of real improvements. As one Swedish woman described women's officers in unions, 'They are often hostages to the cause, powerless symbols in impossible jobs'.

While the adoption of policy has usually preceded improvements for women in all three countries under study, a strong contrast exists between policy which embraces the concept of passive equal opportunity - the optimistic opening of long-closed doors to provide equality of opportunity - and policy which endorses positive action to redress the effects of past discrimination. The programs of the Manpower Services Commission and the Thatcher Government are, generally, in the passive mould. Increasingly, passivity also characterises the actions of the Federal German Government and that in most of the German states.

By contrast, many educationalists, trade unionists and women in all three countries call for action beyond the mere opening of doors, arguing that the institutions and environments which women enter need major reorganisation. This is best illustrated in Sweden, where positive action is enshrined in legislation, and pursued in many places.

The contrasts between the English and Swedish experiences illustrate the inadequacy of the concept of equal opportunity which relies simply on the removal of overtly, directly discriminatory barriers. Equal Opportunities implemented in this way fail to take action to ensure that women can take advantage of new opportunities and are not affected by the many subtle, indirect aspects of organisation and circumstance that affect their training.

1.6 UNI NS AND WOMEN'S TRAINING

In many ways, real change for women can only happen in the workplace. Sections 4.3 and 5.1 explore some examples of union-supported change in the workplace, mostly in Sweden. The important role of unions in making change is illustrated by these experiences. Better access to the broad range of jobs and training is dependent on unions advocating women's interests in workplace negotiation and union organisation through to peak organisations. The simultaneous effects of union-supported and initiated improvements, the protective effect of anti-discrimination legislation and the use of public resources to stimulate change are illustrated in Sweden and, generally, supported by those working in the field in Germany and England.

Much work remains to be done to improve women's representation in union structures and ensure that appropriate oriority is placed on bargaining around issues that affect them in the workplace, and at industry and national levels.

Closer Connections: Wages, Skill, Productivity and Workplace Bargaining

A common feature of wage negotiation in England, Sweden, Germany and Australia is the growing role of productivity and skill in wage bargaining and a variable, but generally consistent, trend to more workplace-based wage bargaining. The implications for women and their vocational skills are significant. Where this trend is not underwritten by a commitment to improve the pay of low skilled workers, the capacity of many women to argue for productivity and skill related increases is limited. Wage differences between women and men could widen.

Many women in Sweden are concerned about the current trends to greater workplace say over wage increase allocations between workers. They point to weakening of the nationally negotiated wages solidarity policy which underwrote distribution of increases in the fifties, sixties and seventies, effectively halving differentials between higher and lower paid workers. In the current environment of a weakened commitment to narrow differentials, and a growing emphasis on relating pay increases to skill upgrading and productivity, there is concern that differentials will

widen. Since women are concentrated in public employment and are not vocal and active participants in many workplace structures, the danger is that they will fall further behind. In this light, the question of redefining women's skills to include a broader and deeper range of industry-relevant skills becomes central, along with the issue of ensuring their access to emerging areas of skill development and areas of traditional masculine training and employment. It also emphasises the necessity that any move towards productivity/skill-related wage bargaining must be underwritten by measures to protect and increase the incomes of low skilled workers - mainly women.

1.7 ADULT TRAINING

Compared to many countries, Australia devotes relatively few resources to adult education, skill upgrading and retraining. Chapter Four explores initiatives in Germany and England, including the Open Tech, return to study and work programs and entry to areas of technological advancement. The positive lessons include the effectiveness of single sex training, and a specifically developed curriculum. On the other hand, the unrealised potential of England's ITeCs is obvious: that a major training innovation can so quickly become a mainly masculine preserve has important lessons for Australia, most especially the need for a specified target on participation by sex and a carefully structured curriculum which does not offer traditionally male and female skills as mutually exclusive alternatives (i.e. programming vs. keyboard skills). Similarly, only about 3 percent of enrolments in England's Skill Centres are women, reflecting their orientation to traditionally male skills and their failure to be developed in relation to women's fields of training or to take positive action to increase women's share of places.

In contrast, Sweden has developed a considerable array of opportunities for adult education which encourage women (and men) to learn at the level of compulsory general schooling, and to retrain, advance or develop their vocationals skills. The Swedish system (described in Section 4.2), especially through the AMU Centres, illustrates the necessary integration of general education in maths, science and literacy alongside specific skills. The Centres provide education in an adult environment where courses are flexible in organisation, learning is self-paced, and

accreditation is national and integrated with the compulsory and advanced education sectors. This exciting example of adult vocational education makes any analytical separation of 'general' and 'vocational' education absurd: many adults need a continuation of maths and language taught in parallel with specific skills so that their immediate relevance is obvious. Any successful vocational education organisation must have this combination available. The significance to women of flexibility, an adult learning environment and self-paced learning, is obvious. The model is worthy of close examination and emphasises the general inadequacies of our own technical education system and its specific failures with regard to women.

1.8 PRIVATISING TECHNICAL EDUCATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN

In England a considerable share of vocational training is contracted by the MSC to private agencies. Similarly, in Germany, most adult training is contracted to private training agencies. In both countries, this produces special costs to women, (or indeed any disadvantaged group). It is cheaper and therefore more profitable, to provide short courses in specific skills rather than offer a general education program which may, in the case of women, include confidence building, support for entry to traditionally male fields, and so on.

While women's experiences in many public education institutions are far from perfect, observations in Germany and England suggest that the proliferation of private training organisations means more limited access for women and poorer outcomes.

1.9 MORE ON-THE-JOB TRAINING FOR WOMEN

Women's access to in-firm training is much more limited than men's. There is little evidence of significant change in this area, even in countries such as Germany, where the level of in-firm training is much higher than in Australia. Some exceptions exist in Sweden and are outlined in Section 4.3. The examples of guidelines on Sweden's Renewal Funds, and specific initiatives at Volvo, Saab and some other plants, emphasise the role of positive action for women in any in-firm training. Without

it, women will not participate in fair numbers and are further entrenched in low skilled, low paid work.

1.10 ESSENTIAL CHANGE: PARENTAL LEAVE AND CHILDCARE

Without improvements in childcare, parental leave and the fair distribution of domestic work, women's entry into paid work will continue to be mainly through the secondary labour market and mean a double working day. Women in England, Germany and Sweden, as in Australia, are very conscious of this and have attempted to win improvements in these areas. The gains are small, especially in England and Germany. However, even in these countries some amount of paid maternity leave is generally available to most women workers. Many find it difficult to believe that very few women working in Australia have access to any paid maternity leave.

The most significant advances in these areas exist in Sweden and are described in Section 2.2. They include an extensive parental insurance scheme with up to a year of paid parental leave (270 days at normal pay and another 90 days at a standard benefit rate). In addition, parents have the right to up to 60 days' paid leave per child, per annum, to care for sick children. Parents of pre-school children are entitled to a six hour working day, but without any compensation for loss of earnings. Childcare services are also well developed, with costs shared between the community and parents.

Without similar changes in Australia, improvements in women's share of skills and jobs will be constrained by their major responsibility for children, families and housework. Real advances for women depend on both changes in the organisation of parental and domestic work and improved chances for women in vocational training.

CHAPTER 2 : GENERAL FEATURES: ENGLAND, SWEDEN, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

2.1 GENERAL FEATURES OF THE ENGLISH SCENE

There are a large number of small, innovative projects for women in various locations in England, with positive lessons for Australia. These are overshadowed, however, by many negative experiences which have great relevance for women's vocational education in Australia. Not least among these are training and employment programs for the young unemployed, with the Manpower Services Commission appearing centre stage.

More than most European countries, England's vocational system has been subject to significant change in the seventies and eighties. With the growth of the MSC, vocational education has been reshaped and made 'workplace relevant'.

Prior to the seventies the British vocational education system was not unlike Australia's. Apprenticeship provided the major, formal training vehicle mainly used by men. Entry into most traditionally female occupations (retail sales, service and clerical work) was characterised by full-time pre-employment education or, more likely, informal on-the-job training 'sitting next to Nellie'.

Although vocational education, and the state role in funding and administering it, grew significantly from 1945, England's overall training effort lagged behind its competitors. The interest of government in formalising training arrangements was recognised in 1964 with the Industrial Training Act and the establishment of Industrial Training Boards whose task it was to initiate policy and oversee implementation.

However, attention to the vocational education needs of women does not figure in England's training history in any significant manner until the mid-1970s, about the time of the enactment of law on Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination. Discussions about equality in the education system

focused more upon class than gender or other issues. As in Australia, employers, government and unions, unconsciously or otherwise colluded to make training, and the training debates, essentially about masculine skill and work.

In 1973 an Employment and Training Act was passed which reorganised training, established the MSC and made mention of women and girls and special opportunities for them. Public policy recognition of the issue had begun. Concerted action and real change still lag a long way behind.

The Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) and the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)

It is important to note the general assessment of many women in England that the SDA and EOC have 'proved to be far from satisfactory as far as women are concerned' (Wickham, 1986, p31). This is also the view of many women involved in unions and individual education projects for women. While legal mechanisms may have guarded against slipping further backwards, in their English formulations they have not been powerful levers for change. This is true in both education and such fields as comparative wage justice (equal pay for equal work). Despite recent amendments to the Equal Pay Act (resulting from European law demanding toughening of UK provisions), women have found it near impossible to win equal pay for equal work cases because of the administrative complexity of the arrangements and what seems to be an inherent conservatism in the operation of the law.

In the area of vocational training, the Sex Discrimination Act includes specific provision for women: Section 47 of the Act allows for positive discrimination in the provision of single-sex training courses where men and women are training for jobs in which the numbers of their sex were small in the previous year. It also allows for special schemes in certain areas and special action for those returning to work.

Unfortunately, the careful reading of these provisions by bodies such as the MSC has made them unwilling to target for a greater share of women's participation or run single sex initiatives for women in any programs which have a general vocational role: for example, the MSC's lawyers have

encouraged them to believe that such action would be illegal in the one-year Youth Training Scheme (YTS), which has, in theory, a broad occupational structure.

The effect of the operation of the SDA, despite its appearance of support for positive action for women has, in practice, often inhibited (or been used to inhibit) positive action.

In addition to the above shortcomings of government action, many women in England are disappointed at the unassertive role of the EOC which administers and oversees the Act. Despite a considerable publicity effort, advice to government to take further action on certain issues, and the undoubted efforts of many committed workers, the role of the Commission is severely constrained by political parameters. It is confined to perpetual redefinition of the problems and to exhortations for change, rather than the initiation of positive action on most issues of systemic discrimination.

The passive and even regressive operation of law in women's interests, which provides a mantle of respectability for government, is all too clearly illustrated.

The Thatcher Legacy

Vocational training in England now bears the heavy imprint of the Thatcher Government, together with the effects of general manufacturing industry decline and high unemployment. Major features are:

1. A sharp decline in apprenticeships. Although women have never had more than about 2 percent of apprenticeships (excluding hairdressing), men's access is now also severely curtailed. This reflects not only the structural decline in employment and apprenticeable trades, but also the government's commitment to lessening the influence of unions in training.

2. A rapid growth in the role of the MSC in all vocational training, but especially that of youth. The MSC now controls a significant part of the driving mechanism of vocational education - having

removed it from the control of the education system (Local Education Authorities (LEAs)), colleges and skill centres and the apprenticeship system. While not without its own disputes with the government, the MSC is seen by many to be a compliant instrument in Thatcher's plans for reshaping employment.

3. A shift towards the privatised provision of vocational education, with over four thousand training providers now selling their training services to the state, and providing places in new schemes. These include individual employer, profit-making training management agencies, local authorities and colleges, all of whom are contracted by the MSC for their services. A similar situation has long existed in FR Germany.

4. A shift of vocational training costs away from employers (who would previously have borne much of the cost of apprenticeship training) towards the state (which bears most of the 'wage' costs - at benefit level - of such schemes), and trainees (who are receiving much lower 'wages' than workforce entrants to similar jobs in earlier years).

5. This shift in the incidence of costs of training is in the context of a sharp growth in the overall training contribution of the state: the MSC alone directly employs over 20,000 people, is responsible for the training of over 600,000 and spent in excess of £2.3 billion in 1985/86. It should also be seen in the context of a traditionally low contribution to training by employers.

6. A cut in the income of young workforce entrants. According to officers of the MSC, most YTS trainees are receiving around 30% of the rate for the job that would otherwise be paid.

7. A preoccupation with youth, shifting training attention and resources from adults. The emphasis in programs is to usher youth into available jobs, not to train individuals in broad occupations with widely recognised accreditation. An overriding priority is placed on the number of 'traineeships' generated.

8. Increased employer control of vocational training, with a sharp

decline in the influence of educators, local education authorities and unions. In the words of David Young, the chairman of the MSC:

> Training is about work-related skills and is intimately concerned with employment. It is for this reason that training in this country must be employer-dominated and ultimately employer-directed.
>
> (Young, 1982; quoted in Wickham, 1986, p62)

9. Growth in the Youth Training Scheme to around 400,000 entrants in the one year program for 16 - 18 year olds in 1986. One in four 16 year olds was in a YTS placement in that year.

10. A direct shift of approximately 25 percent of funds previously flowing to Non Advanced Further Education (approximately equivalent to Australia's TAFE system) now relegated to the control of the MSC It is estimated that already in 1983, MSC funding made up 8 percent of the further education budget, 'but that in some areas ... it represents as much as 70 percent' (Wickham, 1986, p8).

11. The elimination, in 1979, of 16 of the 23 Industry Training Boards, undermining co-operation between unions and employers for long-term industry training planning.

Who Provides Vocational Education?

Prior to the expansion of employer-provided and -located training through MSC programs like the Youth Training Scheme, most post-compulsory vocational education in England and Wales was provided through the Non Advanced Further Education (NAFE) system. There are over 500 grant-aided further education establishments in England and Wales, which are the major further education providers. They offer courses in a range of prevocational areas through to national certificates and diplomas, and general education courses. Adult education centres also provide some further education.

Attempts are being made to rationalise the system of vocational qualifications and the government has endorsed initiatives in this area in its 1986 White Paper Working Together - Education and Training.

In terms of administrative responsibility, the NAFE system is primarily funded by the government through Local Education Authorities (LEAs) which provide funds to local colleges and take a role in policy and planning with colleges. The relationship between these bodies appears to vary, however, with some tension between colleges and LEAs over the power and independence of colleges (not unlike the tension existing between some state administrations of TAFE in Australia and local colleges). Increasingly, MSC influence can be discerned in colleges, since it plays a growing role in purchasing training from colleges. The government is currently developing plans which will significantly decrease the role of LEAs and create a direct funding relationship between national government and training institutions.

What is Women's Experience in NAFE?

Women's experience in NAFE does not appear to be significantly different from that of women in most Australian colleges - and probably worse in some areas.

Although women made up 54 percent of total NAFE enrolments in 1985, up from approximately a third in 1977, their participation is sharply segmented according to fields of study. Students in secretarial courses are almost exclusively female, and hairdressing, fashion, hotel reception, and travel and tourism courses had over 90 percent female enrolments in 1985. On the other hand, men accounted for over 95 percent of enrolments in construction and engineering courses.

There does not appear to be a systematic analysis of the experiences of women students of NAFE in terms of the effects of allowances and income support, childcare, college facilities and resources for traditionally female fields of study. However, all the indications are that the systematic disadvantage of women in England closely resembles the Australian situation (Pocock, 1987).

For example, class sizes appear to be significantly larger in fields where women are concentrated (business studies and health and community services) (DES, 1987, p109). Technical staff are available at a ratio of 1:3 for science and technology courses compared to 1:20 for business and general studies where women predominate.

On the teaching side, 75 percent of teachers in 1984 were male and there is detailed evidence of discriminatory procedures in promotion in at least one NAFE College where the EOC formally investigated complaints of discriminatory behaviour. The picture emerging in the published report of the EOC on the Ebbw Vale College is a fascinating account of the culture of at least one NAFE institution, its 'old boy' personnel practices and the ethos which makes women marginal in its management and workforce (EOC, 1984).

In terms of college environment and the experiences of women, many observers point to poor provision for women. Most importantly, very few colleges provide childcare on campus. Other problems of inappropriate timetables, hostility to women in traditionally male courses, and inadequate income support, especially for older women, are mentioned by many observers (Storey and Reid, 1981; Wickham, 1986; Cockburn, 1987; Further Education Unit, 1985), leading Wickham to conclude:

> [F]ar from helping to mitigate the effects of a difficult problem which has its roots in the existing system and social values in general the FE [Further Education] sector is playing a part in helping to ensure that the situation is reproduced and perpetuated.
>
> (1986, p87)

Initiatives for Women in England

Against this background, many projects are under way in various locations to improve women's training. At the local government level a number of smaller projects are being conducted, especially in the areas of new technology and traditionally male training. From the union aspect, women are working to improve the responsiveness of unions to women's training needs and to bargain around them in negotiations with employers. There are now a very sizeable number of re-entry programs for adult women. The

development of the Open Tech is also potentially an important initiative for women. All of these positive initiatives are discussed below.

Juxtaposed against these initiatives is the enormous weight of women's deteriorating employment position, the weakness of the law and a lack of positive action for women.

A growing number of women of all ages are working in part-time and temporary jobs in the secondary labour market. Their training options are very limited. Furthermore, the promise of many initiatives for women is unrealised: for example, the Information Technology Centres, the creation of new training routes in traditionally female fields (through the YTS), and the opportunity to increase the number of women in traditionally male training through the YTS.

2.2 GENERAL FEATURES OF THE SWEDISH SCENE

In many ways the Swedish education system presents the best general opportunity for women in the countries under review. Its integrated secondary-vocational education offers paths to a variety of fields without reliance on a trainee contract with a firm, so that women can choose their area of vocational study without relying on a trainee-job offer. At the end of compulsory school at age 16, almost 90 percent of young people enter vocational training; the remainder are guaranteed some form of employment. The main features of this initial vocational education are discussed in Section 3.3.

In the adult area, education is integrated across all levels to encourage re-entry to a wide variety of vocational and general education options. Opportunities are diverse and supported by rights to unpaid training/education leave and some paid leave.

Full Employment: An Active Labour Market Policy

Most importantly, a vigorous labour market program is pursued by government. The National Labour Market Board (AMS) is the main administrative arm which implements the government's priority policy of full employment. A wide variety of labour markets are 'cleared' through

effective local labour market offices under the direction of local, tripartite committees. Changes in employment patterns and industry restructuring are facilitated by a labour market program through which displaced employees are retrained and re-employed close to their previous wage level, rather than being sentenced to long-term employment.

A strong emphasis is placed on skill formation and lifelong learning and, through a series of funds levied on employers, the contribution of firms to adult and youth education and in-firm training is ensured.

Almost eighty percent of women of working age in Sweden are in paid work; this compares to about 53 percent in Australia, 59 percent in England and 50 percent in FR Germany.

Unemployment currently hovers around 2-3 percent. It has, however, within the recent past been considerably higher for youth, which has strengthened support for labour market training programs directed towards youth. The level of expenditure on these measures in Sweden is much higher than in most other developed countries. Unlike Australia, emphasis is placed upon jobs and training, not on income maintenance while unemployed.

Most importantly, the Labour Market Board (AMS) has a strong placement role: it is notified of <u>all</u> employment vacancies and, with the decentralised operation characteristic of most Swedish administration, it effectively clears a wide range of geographical labour markets. Structured unemployment is therefore minimised. Its effective role relies on both the involvement of local people in decision making (unions, employers and others) in keeping an accurate local picture of employment needs, and strongly emphasising training and retraining. The main adult training facility is the AMU centre. Its operation is discussed in Section 4.2, along with the specific features of women's participation in in-firm training in Sweden.

The educational needs of adults are accommodated in a system distinct from initial vocational education in the Upper Secondary Schools. AMUs currently provide vocational training for over 120,000 participants in a system which is individually structured, self-paced, backed by income

support, closely tailored to local labour market opportunities, and reflects a strong commitment to identifying and meeting the needs of women. In addition, Study Circles, Adult Municipal Education organisations and Folk High Schools provide access to further general education for over two million Swedish adults per year.

Labour Market Programs: Different Emphasis

Compared with Australia, much less expenditure is directed to income support for the unemployed or 'make work' programs in the public sector. It should be stressed, however, that income support for those who are unemployed (or in retraining) is relatively higher than in Australia. The emphasis is upon active, effective training and placement to ensure low unemployment - not the threat of loss of unemployment benefits.

Because all people under 18 years are either in training in Upper Secondary Schools, or provided with work mainly in the public sector, most labour market training programs apply to those over 18 years.

Recent research confirms and helps refine the Swedish approach. It concludes that the greatest emphasis should be on better placement services and on training and retraining and less on job-creation in the public sector, of which researchers say:

> ... an increasingly vivid picture conveyed by evaluations ... both in Sweden and internationally is that the net effects are smaller than had been previously expected.
>
> (Ministry of Labour, 1986, p8)

They conclude that measures such as short-term wage subsidies and job creation which are not directly targetted at disadvantaged groups, are not very effective. They prefer programs carefully targetted at those disadvantaged in the labour market:

> ... above all wage subsidies combined with intensified placement initiatives and employment counselling. International studies suggest that more selective wage subsidies of this kind can have relatively favourable results.
>
> (ibid, p8)

The Swedes conclude:

> Perhaps the most important field when it comes to improving the efficiency of the labour market is that of educational policy. There are many arguments in favour of putting more emphasis on this field ...
>
> (ibid, p11)

Underpinning Sweden's very high level of female labour force participation is an exceptional level of access to paid maternity and parental leave, quality, cheap childcare provision, and rights to educational leave. Equality for women has been an issue within the labour movement since 1946 when the confederation of blue-collar unions, the LO Congress, took its first steps on equal pay and in 1948 initiated its first women's committee.

These rights reflect a long tradition of active women in the Swedish labour movement and the almost uninterrupted Social Democratic Government (excepting 1976-1982). Equality for women has not been seen simply as a matter of access to 'men's' paid work. Greater (or at least commensurate) emphasis has been placed on improving the conditions under which parents (especially women) bear and bring up children. The connection between paid and unpaid work, and the quality of women's lives, appears more explicit in Swedish social organisation than in any other developed country.

Nonetheless, the Swedish labour market remains among the more sex-segregated in the European area, and there is an increasing trend to part-time work for women - reflecting their difficulty in balancing full-time work with childrearing and domestic work.

Women continue to bear the primary responsibility for these tasks, despite very significant public efforts since the early 1970s to increase men's participation in this area. According to recent research, Swedish women in the 25-44 year age group spend about 35 percent of their time on housework (25 percent in paid employment) compared with 13 percent for men (36 percent in paid employment). (Quoted in Statistics Sweden, 1985, p24).

In terms of childcare, the Swedish Government plans to meet all childcare demand by 1991. Although there is currently a waiting period for childcare places, all children between 18 months and 7 years are legally entitled to municipal day care. In 1983 almost 40 percent of all children 0-6 years were in municipal day care and 55 percent of children of working or studying parents.

Through the parental insurance scheme, a full year's paid parental leave is available to parents on a shared basis. For the first 270 days of this leave, the level of pay is 90 percent of the relevant parent's salary and a fixed lower rate thereafter. Women are the major users of parental leave.

Parents are also entitled to 60 days' paid leave per year to look after sick children. Furthermore, parents of young children are entitled to work a six hour day (with pro rata payment). Unfortunately, women's use of this right means that in some workplaces, especially in private, manufacturing industry, their opportunities are limited to work which is, in the employers' judgement, amenable to part-time organisation. As a result, they miss out on skill development, a broader spectrum of tasks, and promotion.

These rights and facilities are astonishing in comparison with our own. Many Europeans find the low level of family support in Australia surprising - most especially the absence of paid parental leave in most employment.

In both Germany and England, some amount of paid parental leave is available to most women, even those in part-time work.

Social Partnership

Almost all facets of social organisation involve the social partners - unions, employers, other groups and government - in active decision-making. This participation is evident at the local, community and national levels, throughout education, employment, health, and so on. Emphasis is on decentralised administration.

The social partnership has a much more active life at company, community and government level than we observe in our own tripartite frameworks or social administration. The Swedish model is underpinned, especially, by extensive community education and organisation.

Union Organisation

One of the most notable features of the Swedish trade union movement is its lively local organisation. Apart from the high level of union membership in the Swedish workforce (over 80 percent), there is a strong emphasis on local and regional organisation. Most medium and large workplaces have full-time shop stewards, many in the ratio of one full-time officer to 400-600 workers. Their salaries are usually paid (along with office, phone, etc.) 'out of production' by the employer under law.

Members are organised in about 44 unions along industry lines. There are, however, separate unions for traditionally blue and white collar workers.

Union negotiation extends to such issues as training, work organisation, pay systems, technology, and to some extent the position of women. This involvement has a legal basis under Co-determination Law and is boosted by funds from a variety of sources, including funds collected from employers and from general government resources.

It is generally accepted that union business encompasses more than just issues of pay to most social and political issues, including equal opportunity. This extends to a legal right of representation on larger private company boards.

Laws and Collective Bargaining

In light of this strong workplace organisation, it has generally been the view of unions that questions of improving women's status at work and in training should be taken up in negotiations at the workplace, rather than regulated by national law. Employers have also been against legal measures and both groups opposed the introduction of the 1980 Act on Equality between women and men at work, unions because they believed

equality questions were more appropriately bargained collectively and employers because they opposed such legal interventions.

Prior to the introduction of this law, women had some protection against discrimination through the Swedish Constitution, which proclaims discrimination on the basis of sex illegal. The 1980 law reinforces this protection, extends it to indirect discrimination, and promotes equality especially in employment: it requires employers to actively promote equality at work, and permits positive actions to redress past disadvantage. The Equal Opportunities Ombudsman enforces this Act.

However, collective agreements have been in place between the social partners at peak council level in many areas for a number of years. They are considered in Chapter 5.

Positive Action

There is commitment by the unions, government and amongst some employers (especially larger employers) to positive action to improve opportunities for women. This commitment, on the whole, amounts to more than support for a passive approach to equal opportunity and the mere elimination of barriers to women in work or education. The emphasis is on taking action to improve conditions, whether in education, vocational training or family support. For example, in labour market programs, activities directed towards women, such as particular programs and specific targets for women's participation, and so on, are an integral part of the program. In the words of the Labour Market Board (AMS), action for women runs 'like a red thread' through all work and organisation: not as a peripheral concession or passive policy.

Women's Wages

A point of particular interest to many is the relation between male and female wages in Sweden. Women's wages are around 80-90 percent of men's (for those in full-time work), higher than in Australia. One of the major reasons for the narrower Swedish differential is the Solidarity wage policy pursued in the 1950s and 1960s. This policy was designed to narrow the spread of wage differences by upgrading the pay of lower paid

orkers more than higher paid workers. This minimised 'the spread around the mean wage [and] dispensed with job evaluations that were likely to be fraught with dispute over particulars':

> [T]he policy's accomplishments have been measured in term of the reduction in wage differentials. In the late 1950s such spreads amounted to about plus or minus 15 percent of the mean wage. By the late 1970s, these spreads were reduced to approximately plus or minus 6 percent.
>
> (Heclo and Madsen, 1987, p117)

In this light, it is interesting to note the concern of many women unionists in Sweden about the current trend to more local or workplace control over the distribution of increases in wages between groups of workers in a workplace. In the absence, now, of an overriding commitment to narrowing differentials and instead, considerable emphasis on relating pay increases to skill upgrading and productivity, there is concern that differentials will widen. Since women are concentrated in public employment and areas of low skilled work in industry, and are not generally active vocal participants in local wage bargaining in Sweden, or likely to have their skills upgraded alongside men, they may fall behind again. This is an interesting experience, in light of current changes in the Australian wage fixation system and proposals to strengthen the relationships between wages and skill/productivity. These proposals do not serve the interests of pay equity unless underwritten by other measures such as comparable pay for comparable work. This last issue is being pursued - without much success to date, it must be said - in both England and Sweden.

2.3 GENERAL FEATURES OF THE GERMAN SCENE

The main engine of German vocational education is the Dual System by which young people enter apprenticeship or traineeship-type contracts with firms. Their training involves both on- and off-the-job components (hence their 'Dual' nature) and, in a style which is typical of the German vocational system, is highly regularised.

Overall, the vocational training system is complex. It is underpinned by

a school system which includes some vocational education and which streams students along different paths of vocational or professional/further tudy. The number of comprehensive schools offering all options in the compulsory section is still relatively small.

At the post-compulsory level, all students, whether they are amongst the 75 percent who win a training contract with a firm in the Dual System or not, must attend vocational school for two days per week or be involved in some other form of training.

A relatively large number of young people are currently unable to find a training contract (estimates vary widely: in 1985 one of the lower estimates made by the Government was over 30,000). This is attributed to the effects of the 'baby boom', structural change in industry and deficient demand for labour.

A number of features of the vocational system are changing. There is a growth in some fields in full-time prevocational education, an increase in numbers of students in other forms of full-time education, and an increase in on-the-job experience provided in group-firm training centres. However, the Dual System remains the German vocational education centrepiece. It is discussed at length in Section 3.1, because of its parallels in current Australian arrangements. These similarities include the costs and benefits of a largely employer-driven training vehicle, the opportunities for countering discrimination or taking affirmative action, the specific outcomes of the Pilot Schemes for Women in Technical Occupations and trainee wage subsidies, and are all relevant to the Australian situation.

There are about 1500 vocational schools (Berufschulen) providing the 'school' or off-the-job sections of Dual System training, with about 1.8 million students.

In addition, about 400,000 pupils are in full-time education in 2000 Berufsfachschulen, learning technical skills, or occupations such as nursing or teaching. Advanced technical skills can be learned in other technical schools. Many of the various types of school are found in the one location.

Who Pays?

The sharing of costs between employers, government and trainees is different from England or Australia. In Germany employers make a greater contribution in the form of trainee wages and infrastructure. In return, they have more say over the features and amount of training. Similarly in Sweden, the contribution of employers to vocational training is greater than England or Australia, but that contribution is collected in the form of payroll taxes and other payments, and centrally redistributed to provide initial and adult vocational training through public sector mechanisms.

The costs of in-plant training, including on-the-job training under the Dual System, are borne by individual firms at an estimated DM17,700 million($A13,700m) in 1985, and the costs of school-based training by the public sector at DM2600 million ($A2010m). There are additional costs paid by the Government for promotion of training, construction of new facilities, etc., and specific initiatives for women and disadvantaged groups.

A major proposal to restructure the financing of vocational education arose in the seventies out of the concerns of the Federal Social Democratic Government and the unions about the quality of training. The proposal was to levy all individual firms and to finance vocational training out of a central fund. This would generate more funds for training, and permit more systematic planning and quality control. After vigorous debate, the proposal was eventually defeated and the system remains driven largely by employers' individual firm arrangements.

The response of the current Federal Conservative Government to the shortfall of training places offered under the Dual System is to rely upon economic recovery and deregulation of the youth labour market. They reject the more interventionist proposals of their parliamentary opposition and the unions who would like to see less employer control, a more systematic financial contribution from employers who benefit from cheap youth labour, and greater investment in more broadly-based vocational training.

Initiatives for Women in Germany: Financial Inducements

The German approach to improve vocational training for women has been characterised by financial inducements to private employers: the examples of the Pilot Schemes for Women in Technical Jobs and Wage Subsidies are discussed in Section 3.1. According to research summarising programs in the European Community overall, such training incentives have been very important in securing advances for women in Europe, even though they create a dependence on state support:

> Generally it can be observed that governmental financial incentives can be effective in launching the notion of training and employment for a female workforce. Such a concept should not, however, be made dependent on them. When recruiting their female staff, many firms had been attracted largely by the offers of bonus payments and subsidies, schemes which jeopardised the success of the entire measure when public funds were cut. Even most of the employers who had been successful in their project to train female personnel reported that their future recruitment of women would depend on the continued availability of such financial assistance.
>
> (Oels and Seeland, 1985, p47)

Clearly there is a limit to the amount of change that can be financially induced by governments. Conflicting views exist in Germany on this question. Some, (especially employers, their representatives and the current Federal Government) are more comfortable with less government expenditure on inducements and more effort into moral suasion and attempts to change attitudes. In the words of one employer representative: 'We prefer to see change because employers believe in it, rather than because it pays. On the other hand, experience is what changes attitudes'.

The pilot projects are no longer being initiated. Instead, the Federal Government is emphasising changes in attitude and improved vocational guidance. In the meantime, many women in Germany would like to see stronger action - including legal penalties, loss of government contracts, etc., to force the pace of change. This is unlikely to eventuate under the current government.

There is little current reliance on law to force improvements for women. Equality between men and women is enshrined in the German Constitution and binds legislation, state authorities and judges. It has been strengthened mainly in response to pressure from the European Community which judged that German law did not comply with EC guidelines, and lacked sufficiently strong penalties. Despite its strengthening, however, case law has developed only slowly and many women are cynical about its effectiveness. There is no law creating a basis for affirmative action. Similarly, there is little evidence of extensive collective bargaining in the workplace to improve training for women, despite the existence of 'Works Committees' in most workplaces, which have legal rights to negotiate with management on a broad range of employment, recruitment and training matters.

CHAPTER 3 : INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

In some ways a debate about the relative merits for women of different initial vocational training vehicles (for example, apprenticeship, traineeships, or school-based vocational education) has been made less relevant in Australia by the decision to implement the Australian Traineeship System (ATS). Table 2 sets out current ATS data. However, the ATS is still young and experiences in comparable schemes in both England (under the MSC's YTS scheme) and FR Germany (under the Dual System) are relevant at least as cautionary notes.

In both countries the extension of formal vocational education structures to a broader range of occupations, including those in which women predominate, has not automatically improved women's range of training options and choices, or improved the status of feminised occupations. The reasons are complex but in both systems - as in the ATS - employers' choices determine training opportunities and young women's choices remain largely traditional. Positive action to counter these effects is necessary.

3.1 THE DUAL SYSTEM IN FR GERMANY

Training authorities in Australia and elsewhere often comment positively on both the level of vocational training in Germany and the system. Under the Dual System, trainees are in the firm for the equivalent of three days per week and in vocational school (Berufschulen) for two days per week (increasingly in block release).

The Dual System is highly regulated. Under the Vocational Training Act of 1969, the training of young people in any of 430 occupations must occur with a contract, according to nationally recognised curricula, and provide minimum levels of skill. Examinations are conducted by the employers' chambers, and unions are involved at all levels of discussion - from firm to national level. The main features of the Dual System are set out in Table 3.

TABLE 2 Australian Trainee ship System: Trainees Anticipated and Commenced, May 1987

Industry	Anticipated Number	Commenced Number
Automotive Services	136	57
Banking	66	35
Building and Construction	61	20
Finance	70	70
Furniture Removals	129	84
Timber	22	22
Tourism and Hospitality	203	108
Office and Clerical	2348	1717
Information Technology	38	30
Advertising	12	12
Retail	1000	410
Surveying	20	0
Warehousing	34	8
Manufacturing	22	7
Public Sector	5751	4838
	9912	7418

Source: ACTU/TDC Australia Reconstructed 1987, p119

TABLE 3 Main Features of the German Dual System

No. of D.S. trainees, 1985	About 1.8 million
No. of new contracts, 1985	700,000
Proportion of year group	74 percent
Proportion female	40 percent
No. of training firms	500,000
No. of vocational schools	1,500
No. of interplant training centres	600
No. of places at interplant centres	73,000
No. of trades	430
No. of dropouts	80-100,000
Length of training	2-3½ years

Source: Inter Nationes, 1986, Bildung and Wissenschaft

Similarities and Differences: Australia/Germany

The main differences between the German Dual System and the Australian apprenticeship system are:

1. The German system extends formal training arrangements to a wide range of occupations including many that are female dominated such as doctors' assistants, sales, several types of clerical workers, dressmakers, etc. Similarly, new arrangements under the Australian Traineeship System (ATS) will gradually extend formal, contractual arrangements to a wide range of occupations, including many traditionally female jobs. A fully fledged ATS, across a wide spectrum of occupations operating alongside existing apprenticeship arrangements, would bear many structural similarities to the German Dual System.

2. Around three quarters of current school leavers enter a traineeship contract under the Dual System, compared to less than a third of Australian school leavers entering apprenticeships.

3. Around 40 percent of new trainee contracts are held by women, compared to around 7 percent of apprenticeships in Australia.

4. Wages of German trainees are generally lower, relative to adults in the same field, than in Australia. In Germany they are around 20-30 percent of adult rates, compared to around 50-60 percent in the first year of training in Australia and the difference increases further in subsequent years.

5. While both employer and union representatives are involved in establishing the system, negotiating pay, developing new curriculum, etc., (as in Australia) it appears that employer influence is stronger in FR Germany. This is reflected in the key role of the Chambers of Industry and Crafts (employer bodies) which are mainly responsible for monitoring the quality of on-the-job training and supervision, often - according to union critics -

without adequate attention to quality. In Australia, this task is the responsibility of independent government departments.

6. The Germans also distinguish between craft-based, and industry- and commerce- based firms. They are organised in different employer federations and many features of the training offered in the smaller 'craft' employers - which include small and craft-based businesses such as butchers, shop keepers, opticians, etc., differ from the training in larger industrial employers. The overall picture is one of a higher training ratio amongst smaller craft employers, with the result that some of these trainees lose their jobs at the end of their training contract and do not have training appropriate to labour market opportunities. A common German training joke is that the largest conglomeration of butchers in FR Germany can be found on the car assembly line at VW.

The main <u>similarities</u> between the German and Australian systems are:

1. They combine learning on-the-job (or close to it in a firm training centre) with theoretical education in a public vocational school or TAFE college. However, the German system has the equivalent of two days per week in 'Berufschulen' (vocational school) compared to one day in Australia, with what appears to be more general education, including German language, politics, and so on.

2. In both the Australian apprenticeship and German Dual Systems, the employer is effectively in control of the number of trainees, the quality of on-the-job training, the selection of trainees, and their prospects for ongoing employment. While employers in both countries are prevented from 'training' young people in the regulated occupations <u>without</u> a contract, there is no compulsion on the number of training places to be offered by an employer, only regulation of the terms of contract and content of training, once trainees or apprentices commence.

3. Both systems are highly segmented by sex in occupations. (This is explored further below) However, there does appear to be more change in Germany in this respect in recent years, compared to

Australia, mainly due to specific programs offered by both the federal and state governments.

4. In both countries, the only significant (but by no means revolutionary) increases in the number of women in traditionally male trainee occupations have occured in situations of either shortages of male recruits or substantial state subsidy for young women. In other words, in both cases, women are the second choice and largely play the role of a reserve army.

5. As in Australia, there is a trend towards full-time, broader-based pre-vocational training in a family of occupations in certain fields, with possible shortening of the subsequent trainee or apprenticeship contract negotiable (usually 6-12 months).

6. In both countries, there is an increase in the number of applicants with university entrance qualifications for admission to apprenticeship or trainee contracts. With similar high levels of youth unemployment in both countries, there is also a shortage of trainee or apprenticeship places, with long queues of applicants in many locations and occupations.

7. It's fair to say that, in neither country, is the quantity or type of training planned. It is led by the behaviour of employers with governments in both countries exerting influence only through varying levels of subsidy or moral suasion (pleas to offer youth more places). The vagaries of lead and lag time and serious geographical labour market differences, along with the unpredictable effects of subsidies and low wage costs, often result, in both countries, in serious imbalances. Individual employers are not always the best judges of their own medium term skilled labour needs, let alone those of their industry, region or country.

In both countries employer control of selection has exercised a significantly damaging effect on women's employment opportunitites. A considerable public sector effort has been expended in both countries

attempting to convince employers that women can do a wide variety of nontraditional jobs, and are not a wasted investment. Unfortunately, high unemployment and an increasingly qualified, large pool of male and female applicants permits employers to discriminate against women without penalty - either in terms of shortages of good trainees or, in FR Germany, even legally, given their weak anti-discrimination legislation. While better legal protection exists in Australia, in a situation of labour oversupply it is difficult to prove discriminatory behaviour. The same is true of other groups of potential trainees, such as physically handicapped or migrant applicants.

In a few areas of Germany the perceived failures of the Dual System are leading to new training facilities, especially for those disadvantaged in the conventional routes. In Hamburg, for example, the State Government has established a large training facility, the Foundation of Vocational Training for the Unemployed, which is contracted mainly by the Labour Market Board to provide training. In a sense, the existence of such organisations - servicing mainly women, migrants, and others disadvantaged - is a testament to the problems the Dual System creates for those with difficulties.

In general terms, compared with Australia, the German Dual System provides a much more broadly based formal training route, in a wide range of occupations, to the majority of 16-18 year olds: almost three-quarters of young people currently gain a contract, which results in a qualification recognised throughout the country, and a good basis for working life. The Germans also argue that there is room for flexibility in the curriculum process, so that training keeps up with new technology.

Against these important advantages, there are a number of disadvantages and controversial debates about the system, along with a number of specific features which adversely affect women. These are often not recognised in the generalised debates over the virtues of the German system.

Current Debates and Adverse Features

1. Quality of Training

There is an ongoing debate about the quality of current German education: about whether it is desirable to increase the school-based learning which precedes the contract, with more full-time prevocational education in a family of trades. A significant number of employers reject this approach, arguing that this trend to "schoolify" vocational training results in skill of less immediate relevance. Many employers seek more individual autonomy over the content of the training they provide to "encourage a committed attitude and initiative" (Inter Nationes, 1986, p17).

2. Insufficient Training Places? Inappropriate Training?

Estimates of excess demand for places in the German Dual System vary widely. The Federal Institute for Vocational Training annually calculates the excess demand/supply of training places. In 1985, they estimate that employers offered 719,110 places and that 755,994 places were sought, leaving an undersupply of 36,884 (or 4.9 percent of seekers).

These figures are hotly disputed by those who point to large numbers of young people who become discouraged and no longer register as seeking a place, or are channelled into a government scheme 'and "enter" waiting loops but still have to be considered training seekers' (Spies, 1985, p23). On this basis, the German unions calculate that almost 300,000 young people under 25 do not have recognised qualifications.

In some regions, there has been a rapid growth in the share of places offered through the public sector, almost 40 percent in some states.

3. Postponed Unemployment?

It is clear that, except for some significant difficulties especially for young women and migrants who fail to gain a trainee place, the German Dual System provides a better path for more youth than the current Australian system. Of course the ATS, should it expand as the Government plans, could go some distance towards improving formal entry routes into work for youth, with on- and off-the-job training along the lines of the German system: the ATS would redress the current imbalance whereby entry to most traditionally female jobs is not accompanied by training and a subsequent career path.

However, while the German system accommodates relatively effectively the majority at the point of transition from school to training contract, a second problem has developed at the second point of transition: from training contract into work.

Some critics of the German situation argue that the Dual System, along with other training measures (such as the provision of places in full-time vocational education which have grown in response to high youth unemployment), only temporarily remove people from unemployment: that they are only a deferral of the problem of unemployment, that many are receiving training in skills which they will never be paid to use but will instead, be under-employed in jobs unrelated to, or under-utilising, their training and skill. There is, it seems, especially a tendency amongst smaller firms in the craft and small business areas, to take advantage of cheap, young trainee labour. One commentator describes an example of the problem:

> [B]etween 1970 and 1980 the numbers of apprentices trained to become bakers grew by 124.1 per cent, while overall bakery employment in the same period declined by 25.4 per cent. While apprentices made up 13.1 per cent of the overall workforce in this trade in 1970, their share rocketed to almost 40 per cent in 1980.
>
> (Spies, 1985, p24)

Young apprentices state the problem clearly from their perspective: they see firms employing young trainees at low wages, in jobs like hairdressing or clerical work where many may spend a great deal of time as cheap unskilled labour, then, at the end of their 2½ year contract, find themselves qualified, but without work and with bleak prospects, replaced by another young person in a contract to their old employer likely to face the same odds.

The Federal Institute for Vocational Training undertook an extensive stratified random survey of 10,000 1984 trainee graduates in 37 selected recognised training fields.

The results indicated that in 1984, six months after graduating, only 50 percent of those surveyed were gainfully and permanently employed in the occupation in which they had trained. The survey also showed that:

- 4 percent of respondents were temporarily employed in their occupations
- 12 percent were permanently employed in unskilled work or work unrelated to their training
- 3 percent were temporarily employed in unskilled work work unrelated to their training
- 13 percent were in further training
- 9 percent were in military (or alternative 'civilian') service
- 9 percent were unemployed.

(Herget, 1986, p4)

Overall in Germany the number of successful trainee graduates who are unemployed after their final examination has risen from 9.3 percent in 1980 to 14.0 percent in the mid-eighties (Herget, 1986, p5).

There appears to be little difference in the survey by sex: 61 percent of men graduates were offered a contract compared with 63 percent of women. Chances appeared to be better in larger

companies, in the public sector, and in clerical and sales occupations than in the private sector or metal and electrical industries.

Obviously, with higher unemployment, the transition from training contract to permanent work related to skill is an important problem in such dual systems. In addition, training for training's sake - when no suitable employment exists - is not always the choice of youth. Attention needs to be paid to mechanisms such as collective agreements and government intervention which might be used to encourage or regulate the employment of trainees at the end of their contracts. This is an important issue arising from current German experience and relevant to the development of our own Dual System in the ATS.

Women in the Dual System

The main features of women's experience in the German system indicate that they face serious disadvantages:

1. They are concentrated in a narrow range of occupations.

2. Overall, their level of technical training is lower than men's: 65.1 percent of men in the labour force have technical qualifications compared to 57.2 percent of women. In 1986, women achieved, for the first time, a 40 percent share of all new training contracts sealed under the Dual System.

3. Women are concentrated in shorter occupational lines of study with less status. They are also disproportionately concentrated in full-time, vocational school-based training, as opposed to holding a contract with an employer. Employers consider this route of training inferior to training in the Dual System, and it has much poorer employment prospects.

4. Most importantly, women make up two thirds of those who are seeking but cannot find a place in the Dual System, despite their superior high school qualifications.

5. Evidence relating to the employment prospects of women and men at the end of their Dual System training is not conclusive. Many observers indicate that women appear to have worse chances of employment at the close of their contracts.

6. New technology is having an impact on many aspects of traditionally female training, especially in the clerical and secretarial occupations. While considerable attention has been focused on technology in the 'male' fields of electronics, metals and general manufacture, women's fields appear to attract less attention.

The problem has been summarised in one government journal, as follows:

> At the present time, the typically female professions have, in the main, an inferior qualification level to that of the "male professions". Here, trade courses lasting two years predominate. Subsequently, employment and promotion opportunities are limited. It is therefore essential to make jobs in the service industry more attractive - in the interests of young women's training and promotion chances and that of the firms themselves.
>
> This means new content, particularly new technologies, which must be included in training courses. There must also be an upvaluation of professional promotion opportunities.
>
> (Inter Nationes, 1986, p37)

Clearly, in FR Germany as in Australia, 'women's' fields of study suffer from a legacy of low status, so that curriculum and career development, along with subsequent employment prospects and on-the-job pay, lag behind men's. It would appear that the development of formal training arrangements in traditionally female fields does not guarantee equality between women's and men's training fields. Without effective curriculum development, accreditation, industrial organisation and negotiation, monitoring and affirmative action, second-rate status can evolve for feminised fields.

From interviews with trade unionists at all levels in Germany, it is evident that women's occupations suffer the same problem as in Australia.

They are under-organised and, therefore, less effectively represented in the training system's decision-making bodies which are invariably tripartite. In the optician areas, for example, less than 20 percent of workers are in unions, and around 20 percent of office or bank workers are organised, compared with much higher levels in industry and craft occupations. While the German industrial system is much more streamlined than Australia's - with only 17 inoustry unions, and all but one in a common federation - the problem of women's under representation exacts a heavy cost in terms of training development.

Thirty-six percent of all women training in the Dual System are found in five occupations of study, compared with 23.7 percent of men in the five largest fields of male students. The segregation of women and men by occupational training area is shown in Table 4.

It is interesting to note, however, that women's entry into traditionally male vocational training has taken place much more rapidly in Germany than in most developed countries. In 1977 , made up 13,000 or 2.2 percent of trainees in traditionally male fields in the Dual System (that is, in fields where women were less than 20 percent of all trainees in 1977). By 1986 this had increased to 56,000 or 7.4 percent: quite a remarkable feat.

According to German observers the increase can be attributed to the cumulative effect of the oilot schemes, and wage subsidies described below, together with a change in attitude in some firms, especially some of the larger companies.

Overall, the German approach to reducing the segregation of women in training has relied upon inducements and subsidies to private employers, mainly in the form of wage subsidies and pilot group employment/training projects. There is no law requiring employers to adopt affirmative action programs, no threat of penalty or loss of contracts in the event of unfair treatment of women, and no targets on training or employment of women (except those informally set in some local public training agencies). Such punitive measures would undermine the foundation of the Dual System which, as we have seen, places employers in the driving seat of the major vocational training route. In addition, they would run counter to the generally non-interventionist traditions of German training by which employers, unions and government co-operate in organising

TABLE 4 German Apprentices in the Dual System, Largest Occupational Groups, by Sex, 1985

F E M A L E S

Rank	Recognised Occupation	No Females	No Apprentices	% Female	% Share of all Female Enrolments
1	Hairdresser	66,028	71,102	92.8	8.9
2	Salesgirl (Stage 1)	64,994	82,231	76.6	8.5
3	Salesgirl in Foodstuffs	49,577	50,207	98.7	6.7
4	Office Clerk	48,055	59,776	80.4	6.6
5	Industrial Clerk	41,154	66,154	62.2	5.5
6	Doctor's Receptionist	38,967	39,014	99.8	5.2
7	Dentist's Receptionist	29,385	29,399	99.9	4.0
8	Bank Clerk	28,683	55,848	51.4	3.9
9	Clerk in Retail Trade	27,165	44,773	60.7	3.7
10	Office Girl	25,506	59,776	42.7	3.4
					56.4

M A L E S

Rank	Recognised Occupation	No Males	No Apprentices	% Male	% Share of all Male Enrolments
1	Motor Vehicle Mechanic	81,168	81,791	99.2	7.5
2	Electrical Fitter	53,366	53,794	99.2	4.9
3	Machine Fitter	47,504	48,129	98.7	4.1
4	Painter & Varnisher	38,138	41,718	91.4	3.5
5	Joiner	37,938	40,987	92.6	3.5
6	Gas & Water Fitter	32,059	32,347	99.1	2.9
7	Bricklayer	29,900	29,993	99.7	2.7
8	Clerk (Wholesale & Foreign)	29,306	51,239	57.2	2.7
9	Baker	28,706	32,461	88.4	2.6
10	Bank Clerk	27,165	55,848	48.6	2.5
					36.9

Source: Federal Ministry of of Education and Science (1986/87) Basic and structural data, pp44, 45.

training. Penalties would introduce a generally uncharacteristic discordant note.

One exception to this rule is the targets set in employment for handicapped people. These are sometimes cited as an example of the failure of targets in assisting the disadvantaged since many employers choose to pay a fine rather than meet the nominated target.

A Major Initiative: Pilot Projects for Women in Technical Occupations

In 1978-81, twenty-nine pilot projects were commenced in twenty-one locations in an attempt to provide a breakthrough for women into a broader range of training.

These programs are of importance to those considering ways of improving women's access to technical occupations since they were methodically planned, well resourced and evaluated, and large; in the period 1978-81, 1232 young women entered training in the pilots. They have attracted considerable attention throughout Europe and in Germany.

While local arrangements varied, the main features of the pilots were that:

- Young women entered normal training contracts under the Dual System with firms and training agencies, mainly in traditionally male technical occupations, and particularly in the metal (52.5 percent) and electronics (34.5 percent)industries, in which skilled labour shortages were predicted (but did not eventuate).

- The pilot projects were co-ordinated federally and involved State governments and local companies, who shared costs.

- Arrangements varied, but the governments provided coordination assistance, funds for monitoring and project support and, in some cases, wage assistance.

- Young women trained mostly under normal arrangements alongside young men, usually in small groups of women (but in some cases in their on-the-job training, in isolation).

- Some firms participated individually in the pilot projects and in others young women held a training contract with a group training organisation (public or private) and moved between a group of employers for their on-the-job element of training.

- As is the normal practice, all attended vocational school for the equivalent of two days/week and most trained alongside male students in the normal way.

The goals of the pilot projects were:

1. Expansion of occupational opportunities for girls.

2. Reduction of women's concentration in 'women's' fields which have shorter training periods.

3. Establishment of any prerequisites necessary to the success of women in traditionally male fields.

4. Investigation of any constraints with respect to:

    - motivating girls and finding training firms
    - coping with an atypical situation (girls and trainers)
    - recruiting groups of girls rather than individuals

Some details of the pilot projects are:

- 196 firms participated;

- 1232 women entered into contracts in the pilots;

- 69 percent of places were with firms of 1000 or more employees; 5.8 percent were with very small firms of less than 19 employees;

- 79 percent of places were with <u>industrial</u> firms, rather than smaller craft-based employers.

According to the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (Alt, 1983 and personal communication with Alt), major outcomes were:

1. Pass/Fail

Of the 980 young women examined in 1982-85, 963 passed their examinations, which is a higher pass rate than generally achieved by men in these occupations. Furthermore, many of the young women in the pilots were not training in their first occupational choice and had lower educational qualifications than the average Dual System trainee.

2. Dropouts

The dropout rate of around 13 percent in the early years of the project was double the male dropout rate, and double the rate for women in areas of traditional study. Most female dropouts had a low level of schooling. Women fared better in larger firms.

3. Transition from Training into Work

Of young women who graduated, 56.3 percent found permanent work in their training firms. Three years later, 80 percent of women were still working in their firms. A further 8.4 percent found permanent work using their skills in another firm. This is a better result than usual in these occupations in this length of time, but men in the training program with women also tended to do better than average, probably reflecting the intense support provided to the pilot schemes and their high public profile.

Overall the post-graduation outcomes in the period 1982-85 were:

- 56.3 percent in permanent work in training firm
- 8.4 percent in permanent work in another firm
- 11.8 percent in permanent work in unskilled work
- 8.8 percent in further study
- 6.8 percent unemployed
- 7.9 percent homemakers

4. Competence of Women Trainees

These pilot projects demonstrated unequivocally women's ability to competently undertake training in traditionally male fields. According to one program co-ordinator in Hamburg, a initial lack of tool-knowledge and familiarity, relative to boys, was quickly overcome in the first six months and many women demonstrated superior skills and diligence in their occupations. There were, however, some difficulties in work requiring night or shift work and in some areas of maintenance where lifting equipment was not available.

5. Women's Satisfaction with their Choices

About 70 percent of the young women would recommend their occupation to other women, and most viewed their work as a long-term proposition which would probably be interrupted by childrearing. Given the lack of part-time work opportunities in many of these fields in Germany, the quality of life of mothers in many of these occupations may be poorer and their situations more complicated than men's. However, many of the women said in followup interviews in 1987 that they would prefer to work with children. In addition, they now felt that interrupting their working life to look after children might be impractical, taking into account the need for two incomes in a family.

6. Do Women Graduates do the Same Work as Men?

A recent followup survey of the women by BIBB shows that many are doing tasks that are different from men's: less varied, less skilled and less related to changing technology. After two years' post-graduation work in defined tasks, skilled workers can go on to advanced technical school. According to the followup interviews, many women are not gaining this experience. Women are in the lesser skilled of the skilled jobs.

To sum up, although the pilot projects proved that women are clearly competent to undertake the work in traditionally male occupations, it

appears that with the discontinuation of the scheme, many employers, especially in smaller firms, have reverted to their traditional practices of recruiting males. Rising youth unemployment has strengthened these tendencies. While public attention and government funds focused on women in these pilots, action was undertaken, but many doubt their long term impact on employer preferences. They have, however, provided significant publicity and role models for other women.

Also on the negative side, many point to the failure of a number of women to gain employment using their skills. They argue that future training incentives for firms should carry an obligation to provide appropriate skilled work for women. Nonetheless, the employment outcomes for women graduating in the pilots are positive; they are at least at the level of the average for men in these occupations, and probably better than for many traditionally female occupations in small firms, such as in hairdressing.

In evaluating such measures in Europe for CEDEFOP Oels and Seeland (1985) conclude:

> ... the continued support for the pilot projects to open up the technico-industrial sector to women has lent an air of credibility to the call for skilled training opportunities for girls. Girls who wish to enter occupations in the technico-industrial sector are now regarded less as strange exceptions, and the experience gained with the pilot projects is gradually causing ripples as far back as the general education establishments, which are now offering more instruction intended to broaden the occupational choice open to girls. (p46).

In light of the overall favourable evaluation, and based on these experiences, it may be appropriate for a similar set of projects in several states to be coordinated amongst larger companies in Australia. Such a program could train groups of young women in selected high-demand existing and emerging occupations, in larger companies and group schemes, inviting financial support from Commonwealth and state governments and industry, and involving universities in practical support, monitoring and

evaluation. This would result in a relatively cheap project offering long term benefits for firms and women. Drawing on the German experience, its success would be assisted by:

- ensuring a connection between training and ongoing employment;
- training in high labour demand occupations;
- well resourced co-ordination, support and evaluation; and
- women in groups, both on- and off- the job training.

Wage Subsidies for Women in Non-Traditional Occupations

A subsidy is available for the employment of women as trainees under the Dual System in certain occupations which are currently non-traditional. According to the Hamburg Chamber of Crafts, the effective level of subsidy is up to 40% of wage costs for the three years of the training contract. Opinions differ as to the effectiveness of this subsidy. In Hamburg, it was estimated that only a small number of craft-based employers were receiving the subsidy. Others argue that it is a significant contributor to the overall increased number of young women in non-traditional training. According to researchers involved in work for the European Commission, the significant effect of the subsidy has been established by research undertaken in Germany and reported in recent years (personal communication Florence Gerard, IFAPLAN, Cologne).

The importance of financial incentives in effecting change is well recognised in Europe, and suggests that similar methods should continue to be pursued in Australia and, in some cases, expanded.

Full-time Pre-vocational Education: Opportunities for Women?

Vocational school-based education provides an opportunity for public educators to aim for more balanced participation by sex in different occupational family groups, and to ensure appropriate educational support for women making non-traditional choices.

Increasing numbers of young people unable to find a place in the Dual System, together with a widespread conviction that full-time pre-vocational education provides a 'more pedagogic and systematic first

phase of training' (Munch, 1982, p160), has led to a rapid growth in the Basic Vocational Training Year (BVY) in 13 occupational fields. According to Munch (1982):

> ... in the fulltime, school-based BVY we find, in the main, those pupils who, because of their poor performance at school have failed to find a training place. As training firms are not obliged to take young people who have successfully completed this form of BVY as trainees - in fact some employers have a negative attitude towards this type of BVY and its products - completion of such a BVY does not always mean an improvement in the young person's occupational prospects. (p163)

Currently about 86,000 young people are in training in the BVY whose curriculum is most developed in the fields of engineering and agriculture. Unfortunately, there is no evidence of concerted attempts to increase the number of young women in these areas of pre-vocational training.

On the other hand, 70 percent of those in full-time schools offering preparatory training for work (the Berufsfachschulen) are women, training mainly in commercial studies, childcare and technical assistance. Most must go on into a contract under the Dual System before they have a recognised qualification. In other words, many young women getting a training place in the Dual System already have a year's full-time vocational education but, in order to have it recognised, must complete a Dual System apprenticeship as well.

3.2 THE RISE AND RISE OF THE MANPOWER SERVICES COMMISSION: THE YOUTH TRAINING SCHEME

This phenomenon is worthy of a report in itself. Indeed, in England the MSC has been the subject of several books. More than one writer has characterised the MSC as 'a dangerous monster' (Robinson, 1986, p123). Some have been sufficiently disturbed by disruptive, employer-driven MSC initiatives to romanticise the decades before the entry of the MSC as a kind of golden age when 'education' held out against 'training'.

By any equity criteria, the English education and training system cannot seriously be promoted as a good model of equality, whether in terms of class, sex, race, ethnicity or disability, even before the entry of the MSC. Certainly, in terms of sex, the education system and especially its vocational wings, are far from perfect, servicing as they do in the main, masculine skill. However, the contraction of funding for further education (and its shift to MSC-type activities closely related to a reshaped labour market), has especially hit marginal innovations that were, and are, developing for women in vocational education.

Prior to the rapid growth of the MSC in the eighties, the vocational education system in England was long overdue for renovation to better provide for the majority who are not well serviced by curricula in compulsory schooling and are disadvantaged by sex and race in post-compulsory education and training.

Unfortunately, by almost any criteria, the MSC has not improved things for women. As Cynthia Cockburn says of the YTS, the MSC's major initiative:

> Here was an unprecedented opportunity to break down the sex-segregation that was producing such persistent inequalities in life experiences, in earnings and career prospects between adult women and men in Britain.
>
> (Cockburn, 1987, pix)

After detailed examination of the YTS at work, she concludes that there are real grounds for fears 'that the scheme is reinforcing rather than shattering the mould of sex inequality' (ibid, pix).

The Youth Training Scheme

This scheme was designed to provide a place in training, or in a training/employment combination, for all 16 - 17 year olds. It replaced the Youth Opportunities Program (YOPS) in 1983 and was offered as an improvement on that much maligned 'make work' scheme with its poor training provision.

Through YTS, the government aims to provide an opportunity for all 16 and 17 year olds to gain a broad-based foundation of training. Entry to the

scheme is voluntary but the majority of school leavers enter a YTS. Its planned outcomes include:

- competence in a job and/or range of occupational skills;
- competence in a range of core skills;
- ability to transfer skills and knowledge to new situations; and
- personal effectiveness. (MSC, 1985, p17)

The MSC estimates that 60 percent of YTS 'graduates' (who all receive a descriptive certificate) go into employment.

Trainees receive about 20 weeks off-the-job training each year for two years (13 weeks in the old one year scheme).

In addition, there are plans to rapidly expand another MSC scheme - the Job Training Scheme (JTS) to 'hoover up the unemployed of 18-25 years', as one senior MSC officer described it.

In this way, with its YTS/JTS package, the government aims to have unemployment 'covered' by mass training programs. Even more than the YTS, the JTS will rely on employer-driven 'individual' training/employment packages. Income support will be only at benefit level. Many of the criticisms levelled at the YTS (for example, that it is simply replacing existing employment at award conditions with cheap trainee labour, it is not general skill development, it does not provide equal opportunity, and so on) are already being directed against the JTS. After an initial period of 'critical involvement' the Trades Union Congress has now withdrawn its support for the JTS, in light of the low level of income, employment replacement and the unaccredited nature of training (TUC, 1987B, p8).

In 1985/86 there were 398,700 YTS trainees. Of these, 56 percent were male, 95 percent white, 92 percent 16 year old school leavers and 8 percent 17 year old school leavers. The cost of the YTS was £818.2 million (around £2,430 per trainee in an employment-based (rather than training institution-based) scheme (MSC, 1986 (a), p16)).

From 1986 the YTS was expanded to a two year scheme. There are now over

4,000 managing agents who are contracted by the MSC to provide places for YTS trainees in a wide variety of occupations, including those where apprenticed training previously existed, for example, in construction occupations. Trainees are paid at the equivalent of unemployment benefits by the MSC. This means £26.25 in the first year (around A$58) and £35 in the second year (A$76); this is far below the normal entrant wage in most occupations (the MSC suggest about 30% of the 'normal' wage). Some trainees (the Trades Union Congress (TUC) estimate about 20 percent) receive a top up contribution from employers which has been collectively bargained by the unions directly with employers.

About 80 percent of trainees are in YTS schemes run by private companies, nationalised industries, Industry Training Organisations or consortia of employers such as Chambers of Commerce (previously named Mode A Schemes). These managing agents (now named Approved Training Organisations (ATOS)) provide their own on-the-job training and normally purchase the off-the-job component from an educational institution. In a smaller number of schemes the workplace is simulated (for example, in ITeCs), and trainees are mainly full-time in the ATO organisation with limited periods of work experience (Mode B). The costs of Mode B provision are higher. Under the new arrangements for the two year scheme, the differences will not be as clear cut. The MSC will pay all managing ATOS a rate for each trainee with a 'premium' rate for disadvantaged trainees - regardless of whether they are located in a workplace or training institution.

In 1985 the MSC undertook a review of the YTS, and its recommendations were adopted by the Government, including a move to the two year scheme.

An Assessment of the YTS?

While this article does not attempt a general assessment of the YTS and its impact on the labour market, some comments are relevant. The scheme has had a dramatic impact on young people and reduced the number receiving unemployment benefits. However, its critics are many. They include trade unionists, young people, independent organisations and educationalists. Major concerns are:

1. Employer-controlled training: the Government is quite explicit in

its view that appropriate training for work is employers' business, not that of unions or government. This means that, in practice, many trainees do not receive training in accord with the MSC's objectives (stated above). They receive training in non-transferable narrow skills, or little real training at all.

2. Cheap Labour: at £28 a week, trainees are certainly cheap labour. Additionality to normal employment levels is not a monitored requirement of employers, so substitution of trainees for ordinary employees is a common practice.

3. Accreditation: is by a certificate which is descriptive and not well recognised or linked in a systematic way to education generally.

4. Reinforcement of Inequality: the YTS has reinforced, not challenged, the disadvantages facing non-Anglo youth, blacks, women and those with disabilities.

There are many other criticisms. The Greater London Training Board, for example, has argued that:

> The Government is undertaking a step-by-step plan of action, described in veiled terms in the New Training Initiative [document] and is transforming the labour market by stealth on behalf of the employers' interests.
>
> (GLTB, 1984, quoted in Wickham, 1986, p63)

Others argue that training generally is being devalued and that young people are simply being broken in to accept intermittent employment in the secondary labour market (Benn and Fairley, 1986; Wickham, 1986). The TUC has been embroiled in a debate about the benefits of representation on the MSC.

Improving Things for Women?

The establishment of a major new vocational training route for youth, with the substantial costs of income support and training infrastructure borne by the state, presents an historic opportunity to make changes for women.

The government has the chance to shape its outcomes since it is paying the bills. The opportunity exists to:

1. Reshape Training in Traditionally Female Occupations: organising curriculum in ways that include a broad range of skills rather than the conventional emphasis on speed in a narrow range of skills; and opportunities for advanced training in skills;

2. Challenge Occupational Segmentation on the Basis of Sex: by setting targets for, and monitoring the share of places by sex in different training occupations, and by withdrawing financial support to training agents who fail to meet such targets.

According to observers and recent statistics, the MSC has failed to do either.

The MSC has demonstrated considerable capacity to 'get the numbers' and deliver the training places the government seeks. Regardless of its level of commitment to do so, this limits its ability to provide quality training for women.

Table 5 illustrates the degree of segmentation on the basis of sex in the YTS.

The MSC is committed to the passive practice of equal opportunity. While it has articulated an equal opportunity policy since its early days, the policy does not come to grips with the disadvantages of women. It is a commitment to the removal of direct barriers to access for women, without any real mechanisms to do so, and it fails to take action against the historical legacy and dead weight of indirect barriers to equal participation or equal outcomes.

The MSC recognised the ineffectiveness of its position in the YTS in its 1985 review but its focus has not changed:

TABLE 5

YTS - Two Year Trainees, By Sex and Occupation, December 1986

Occupational Group	No. Female	Total Number	Percent Female
Administration ° Clerical	47 841	65 056	73.5
Creative, Education, Recreation	2 538	6 888	36.9
Health, Community, Personal	33 189	36 093	92.0
Selling & Storage	25 041	41 666	60.1
Scientific	458	1 718	26.7
Catering & Food	7 783	15 013	51.8
Agricultural	3 796	16 778	22.6
Fishing	3	238	1.3
Transport	216	2 639	8.2
Construction & Civil Engineering	1 244	45 066	2.8
Mining, Oil, Quarrying	5	173	2.9
Electrical & Electronic Engineering	531	12 303	4.3
Mechanical Engineering	878	25 172	3.5
Motor Vehicle Repair & Maintenance	530	23 111	7.3
Non-Metal Processing	684	3 390	20.2
Printing	471	2 311	20.4
Clothing & Textiles	6 362	7 937	80.2
Security Services	3	25	12.0
Others	4 339	13 140	33.0
OTF Codes *	10 387	26 180	39.7
TOTAL	146 309	344 897	42.4

* Carry over one year YTS - showing similar patterns of segregation when disaggregated by occupation.

Source: MSC, Unpublished Document, May 1987.

We shall redouble our efforts to break away from sex stereotyping, but this problem is particularly intractable since stereotyped views are held by so many of the parties involved, not least of them the young people themselves. We have liaised closely with the Equal Opportunities Commission in the development of our policy and shall continue to do so. We have developed special publicity and marketing material, including a video film. We have funded "positive action schemes". We have held workshops and seminars for managing agents. We will continue to do everything possible to provide that trainees should have genuinely open access to the full range of

possibilities within the developed Scheme and should be encouraged to consider non-traditional avenues.

(MSC, 1985, p32)

In fact, the MSC's expenditure upon such action has been minimal. In the opinion of MSC lawyers, positive action in the YTS one year version was considered illegal under the Sex Discrimination Act. As one MSC officer involved in equal opportunity programs commented 'obviously one cannot go against legal advice'. As a result of this decision, this officer was able to name only two women-only YTS programs in its first three years: one related to the specific occupation of engineering apprenticeship and the other to equip and modify a bus.

Some MSC-assisted ITeC YTS schemes 'unofficially' target women but the MSC is uncomfortable with such an approach and 'turns a blind eye' (personal communication, MSC Officer).

In developing new approaches in the two year YTS, the MSC examined both single sex schemes and those which offered a premium payment for places in non-traditional occupations. Around 17 projects involving reserved places for women are underway. The Industrial Training Agency Ltd. in Sheffield is offering ten reserved places, out of 170 total places, to young women in a broad-based introductory YTS involving basic engineering and construction skills. The young women have an extended period of 20 weeks of workshop training as a group followed by work experience and then further workshop training. It would appear that such well coordinated and successful projects are exceptional.

Some single sex schemes have also been trialled by the MSC. In the words of one Sheffield officer:

> In mid-1986 we put the word out to managing agents for experiments in single sex schemes or reserved place schemes. We couldn't put pressure on them, but we did offer extra money to cover their estimates and they varied widely, of what it would cost to run a special scheme for women. Some began in September 1986 but only two are still running [11 months later]

- and they are the ones who received quite a lot of extra money. Twenty or so tried and advertised but only three started. One folded fairly quickly.

(Personal communication, MSC Oficer)

Unsatisfactory experiences with hastily-conceived projects are notorious for encouraging pessimism about change and intervention. The considerable North American, German, Swedish and Australian experience of such projects demonstrates this repeatedly.

Although the legal restrictions on single sex schemes 'are becoming irritating' for some of the MSC, positive intervention is inhibited in the Commission because of its overriding commitment to numerical goals and the need to avoid alienating the managing agents, especially major employers. MSC officers had no knowledge of training agents being publicly rejected for failure to operate according to equal opportunity principles or penalised for a poor record on women's employment.

A good example of the failure to ensure adequate women's representation is provided by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), the largest of the MSC's managing agents, with many hundreds of YTS trainees. It is estimated that less than two percent of trainees are women - approximately the same proportion previously apprenticed in these occupations under old arrangements. A similar proportion are non-white and non-Anglo. Nonetheless, with such a notorious record, the CITB is shortly expected to be granted Approved Training Organisation (ATO) status, which involves assessment on equal opportunity practice. This approval illustrates the MSC position: the race for training places to meet the government's political objectives means that scope for punitive action is severely inhibited, even if the will existed within the MSC.

The MSC is currently undertaking an assessment of all managing agents with respect to granting ATO status. Ten criteria are used, including equal opportunity, financial status, health and safety, staff competence, training record and premises and equipment. In terms of Equal Opportunity, the MSC is 'looking for good intentions, especially a policy

and a plan of action - with respect, of course, only to the YTS. The 'rest of the organisation is not our concern' (MSC officer, personal communication).

It appears that of the 4000 current managing agents, around 1000 have been granted approved status, and a further 1000, provisional status. The group with provision status will be further reviewed in twelve months time to assess those areas in which they were previously rejected. Only about a dozen have been rejected, although some have not sought ATO status, recognising that they probably would not receive it, and have consequently withdrawn from involvement in MSC programs. According to MSC officers, about 250 provisional approvals have involved Equal Opportunity difficulties, sometimes along with other criteria.

Concern at YTS outcomes led the EOC to commission a study of sex-segregation in the YTS (Cockburn, 1987B). The study concludes:

1. Broad-brush occupational statistics (as in Table 5 above) seriously underestimate sex segregation in the YTS.
2. The political leadership of the MSC is opposed to positive action and many YTS staff viewed positive action as 'undesirable social engineering'.
3. Improvements required include encouragement of single sex schemes, more reserved places for women in existing schemes, the appointment of specialist officers, new procedures in the MSC, and new training and recruitment arrangements.

In her recent book, Cockburn has expanded upon her detailed study of the experiences of young YTS trainees closely examining operation and effect of sex-segmentation in training (1987).

Beyond the MSC: Women in Engineering Skills

Unlike the general re-entry programs for adults, courses which challenge the sex-segmented workforce are fairly infrequent. A number have been run by local governments (for example, in Sheffield, training young women in plastering). Some have been conducted through the MSC but these are rare (see 'Lost Opportunities' below).

The Engineering Industry Training Board (EITB) is one of the few tripartite industry bodies which has persisted with positive initiatives for women in engineering, including a publicity campaign, and work and scholarship schemes to attract women to their industry. The programs have concentrated on encouraging women to university level study, prompting the Further Education Unit to comment that the campaign has tended to ignore the potential of craft and technician levels of study. An assessment of the technician level training scheme was undertaken in 1986, with generally positive conclusions (Peacock, 1986). While employers' assessments were also positive, some of the young women had 'experienced some problems and feelings of isolation ... especially in those cases where they were the only girl' (ibid. p4). A total of 346 young women were recruited by engineering employers for technician training in the first two years of the EITB Girl Technician Grant Scheme initiated in 1979/80. The preliminary work of the evaluation concludes:

> The EITB Schemes for young women technicians have helped to increase the number of women entering technician training. However, the proportion of women among technician trainees, still only just over 5 percent in 1983/84, has not yet reached the critical point where it is considered as natural for girls to go into engineering as for boys. Positive action still needs to be taken until this point is reached ...
>
> (ibid, p3)

Unfortunately, while the positive outcomes of such affirmative action are demonstrated, these initiatives are rare in England.

Lessons for Australia?

Many of the lessons of the above can be derived from analysis of our own recent employment and training experience. In some ways, however, aspects of our own programs, (for example, setting targets to increase women's employment in the Community Employment Program), are models of better practice.

Australian programs, like their UK counterparts, demonstrate that:

1. Political will, resources and a clear understanding of the difficulties in achieving change for women in training, are crucial in any fundamental innovation.
2. Passive concepts of equal opportunity result in the replication and reinforcement of women's disadvantage. Affirmative, counter-sexist action is necessary and should include schemes which promote single sex and reserve place targetting by occupation in schemes, backed by proper recruitment, teaching, in-service teacher training, monitoring and punitive action in the event of failure to meet planned outcome for women.
3. Attention needs to be focused not only on the question of women's entry into a wide range of occupations but also on the curriculum and training in traditionally feminised areas such as in the retail and clerical industries and occupations.

Cockburn makes an interesting observation on the potential of training based initiatives:

> Designing training placements to integrate male and female roles and skills [business skills integrated with office skills, for example] ... is little use if the real jobs ... are specialised and sex-typed. The Scheme could use the very thing for which it is often criticised - its closeness to employers - to challenge their practices and influence them to change patterns of recruitment, relations of work and in particular the gendering of jobs.
>
> (1987, p203)

Unfortunately, this powerful potential remains untested by the YTS or any other training programs in Britain.

3.3 INTEGRATED EDUCATION: SWEDEN

The history of educational reform in Sweden is a fascinating account of public enquiries, followed by experimentation, vehement public debate and legal reform. (See Stenholm, 1984, for a full description). The Swedish education system of comprehensive education in the compulsory

sector, integrated with a comprehensive upper secondary education (including technical and university qualifying education) has been under way since the 1940s. Comprehensive education in the compulsory sector was introduced after debate and experimentation in the sixties. In the upper secondary area, a variety of pre-existing types of vocational education were amalgamated in the late sixties and a single three year 'gymnasium' or upper secondary school was established.

This 'gymnasium' approximates to a combination of Australia's university qualifying education in senior high school, and most of TAFE's initial vocational education activities. In Sweden it is considered a school for everyone, whether training to be a typist or planning to enter university.

The Swedish Upper Secondary School has few counterparts. There are no distinct technical schools or colleges providing initial vocational education like Australian TAFE colleges: it is all done in the Upper Secondary School.

Overall, the system is characterised by a strong commitment to local influence over education within a national accreditation framework; emphasis on individual development but with close attention to future work and vocational training; active equal opportunity policies; and a strong commitment to post-compulsory education for all, including adults who have previously missed out on secondary education.

Of the 10 percent of 16-18 year olds who do not enter Upper Secondary School, all are entitled to (indeed, are required to take) a place in employment, usually in municipal employment for about 4 hours per day, along with some form of education.

Upper Secondary Schools (USS)

There are 26 'lines' (or fields) of study in the USS. Subject to certain conditions, all of these can confer formal eligibility for university entrance. The lines are of 2-4 years' duration and combine a theoretical and practical instruction of varying levels, along with general education (such as English) and vocational learning. The major 4 year line confers

TABLE 6 Sweden's Upper Secondary Schools: Sectors and Lines of Study, 1984

Sector / Line \ School year	2	3	4
Arts and social sciences sector	liberal arts		
	social sciences		
	music		
Nursing, social and consumer sector	consumer		
	social services		
	nursing[1]		
	social		
Economic and mercantile sector	distribution and clerical		
	economics		
	economics		
Technical-industrial sector	clothing manufacturing		
	building and construction		
	operation and maintenance		
	electro-telecommunications		
	motor engineering		
	food manufacturing		
	process engineering		
	woodwork		
	workshop		
Technical-scientific sector	technical		
	natural sciences		
	technical		
Agricultural and forestry sector	agricultural		
	forestry		
	horticultural[1]		
All sectors	specialised courses[2] < 2 years		

[1] Vocational line with a substantial element of theoretical studies

[2] Specialised courses are taken on completion of compulsory schooling or its equivalent. Advanced specialised courses come after completion of a two- or three-year line of upper secondary school or the equivalent

an Upper Secondary School engineer's certificate. Most lines are 2-3 years in length.

The sectors and lines of study are set out in Table 6. The Government has undertaken to provide places in the USS equal to the number of 16 year olds, and ninety percent of compulsory school leavers enter the USS, although not all of them enter their preferred area of study. Many adults also enter.

About 55 percent of USS stuoents are studying in a two year vocational line (for example, in nursing, clerical, building and construction, technical, motor engineering, etc.). Almost 80 percent of their time is spent in vocational subjects with 20 percent in more general study. In the second year a considerable amount of time is spent in the workplace.

A number of significant changes are currently proposed for the Upper Secondary School. In future, three year vocational lines will be partly located in industry and curriculum will be structured in modules as in Municipal Adult Education and AMU-Centre training (see Chapter 4). (Swedish National Board of Education, 1986C, p2).

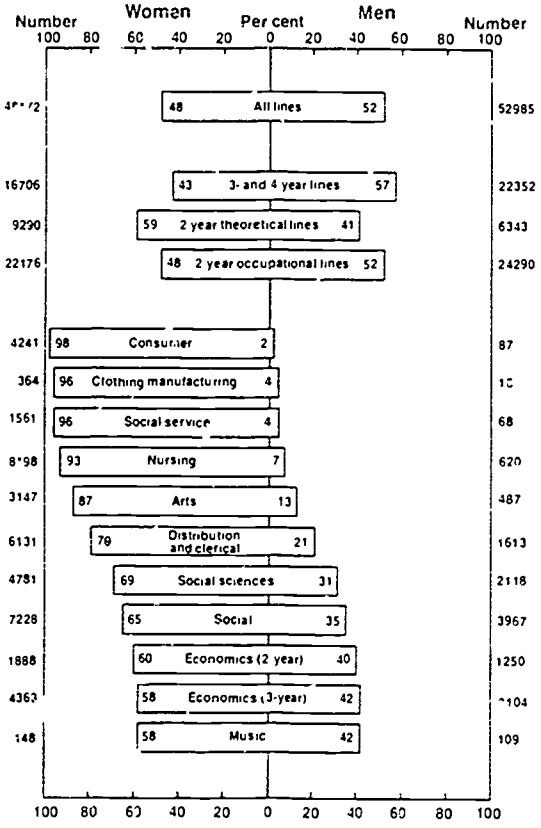
Segregation of Study, by Sex

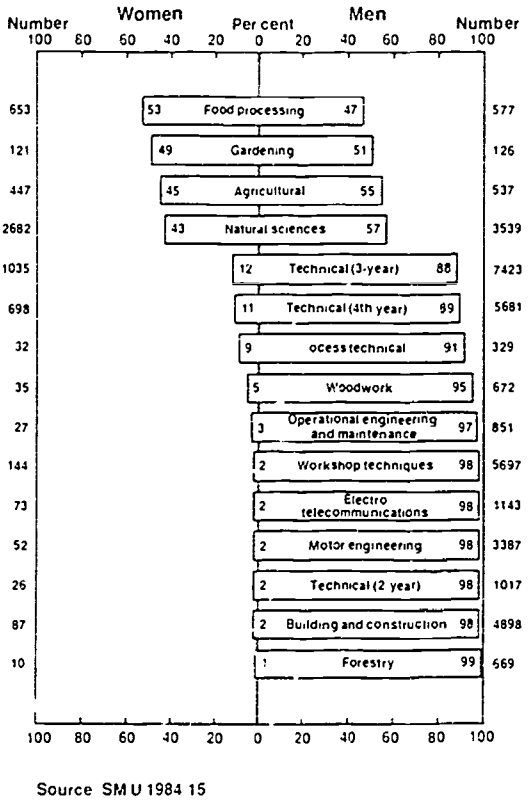
Table 7 sets out the relative proportions of women and men in each line of study in USS in 1982/83.

Women are generally concentrated in the shorter lines of vocational study, in a narrow range of conventionally femininised fields. However, there are some signs of change:

> The proportion of girls in the four year Technology Line, for example, rose from 5 percent in 1973 to 17.5 percent in 1984, in the two-year Technology Line they rose from 3 percent in 1973 to 8.5 percent in 1984 and in the Electro-telecommunications Line they rose from 1 percent in 1973 to 4 percent in 1984. These are small increases, but at least in the right direction.
>
> (Swedish National Board of Education, 1986A, p4)

TABLE 7 Upper Secondary School Leavers Completing Study in 1982/83 by Line and Sex, Sweden





Source SM U 1984 15

Source: Statistics Sweden (1985), Women and men in Sweden, SCB Stockholm, pp30, 31.

Upper Secondary Schools: Benefits for Women

The most important difference between Sweden, Australia, FR Germany and England is that Swedish vocational education occurs in a school-based system. While it involves on-the job experience, especially in its second year, gaining a vocational education is not reliant on securing a training contract with a firm. We have seen how the necessity for a training contract in Germany has led to a general problem of insufficient training places provided by private firms, in conjunction with the particular problem for women of employers' reluctance to employ women in nontraditional jobs/training.

The result of this difference in the Swedish system, is that efforts to improve women's access to vocational education have focused on changing women's choices, encouraging the support of families, peers and teachers, and examining and changing the curriculum in early education.

By contrast, in Germany most effort has focused on creating vocational training contracts which are mostly subsidised by the state, so that women have the chance to broaden their choices.

In Sweden, several benefits of the school-based vocational system can be observed:

- Theoretical education is combined with practical, on-the-job experience through extensive periods in the workplace in most 2 year vocational lines.

- Policy and programs improving young women's experience can more quickly and effectively be introduced. It is easier to change teaching methods and influence the attitudes of teachers in senior high schools than employers in thousands of workplaces where training of apprentices or trainees is in the control of firms not committed to placing women in new jobs.

- Women making non-traditional choices can more easily be grouped together and given instruction in single sex groups as necessary. This need has been recognised in many pilot programs in Sweden, and

teachers are encouraged to teach women on their own for some vocational studies, especially in the initial stages.

- Because the selection for courses lies with the education system (including its employer and union advisers) and students, targets for entry to some lines of study can be set and monitored.

Change for Women: Swedish Efforts

These favourable contrasts and advantages do not mean that problems of women's segmentation in Sweden have been solved. On the contrary, the above figures illustrate the strongly traditional paths for women.

Most young women generally do not choose training in the fields where jobs are expanding, most especially in the electronics, technical, engineering and workshop-techniques lines.

The Swedish Commission on the Effects of Computerisation on Employment and the Working Environment has estimated that almost 100,000 women in Sweden risk unemployment in the 1980s and 1990s (Swedish National Board of Education, 1986A, p1). This has made changing women's training choices and diverting them into 'men's' jobs the principal target of equal opportunity effort in vocational training.

What are the Lessons of Sweden's Experience?

The outstanding features of the Swedish effort are:

1. It is Sizeable. Each year the Ministry of Labour, through a special fund, and many County Education Boards, schools and technical or university organisations allocate considerable funds to specific activities for women, teachers, parents, etc. A national estimate of expenditure is not available, but compared to the level of activity in England or Germany, Sweden's appears considerably higher. It is generally recognised that changing conditions for women takes resources.

   In 1983, for example, the government set aside Skr 10 million

($A2.17m) for a campaign to increase women's interest and knowledge of new technology and, therefore, broaden their choices.

2. It is now sustained. Experience with early projects shows that a once-off effort to publicise broader options for women is unlikely to lead to sustained change. On the other hand, Table 3 demonstrates that a sustained effort over a ten-year period has increased female enrolments tenfold.

TABLE 8 Female Enrolments in the Technical Line, Greater Stockholm Area, 1974-1984, Sweden

Year	No. Women
1974	43
1975	47
1976	104(1)
1977	156
1978	158
1979	159
1980	166
1981	126(2)
1982	299(3)
1983	450(3)
1984	452

Source: Swedish National Board of Education, 1986B, p74.

The sharp movements in the level of enrolments is explained by:

(1) In 1975/77, special information was directed to girls about the 4 year technical education line.

(2) In 1981, the Upper Secondary School reduced information activities, hoping that efforts over the previous 5 years would have an effect.

(3) The increase in 1982/83 reflects a sustained effort throughout compulsory schools in publicising the technical line through brochures and videos.

The importance of active publicity to young women is clear. The Swedish National Board of Education (1986A) concludes:

> The information campaigns have paid off. Central information from [Ministries] and the parties in the labour market have resulted in local authorities and boards of education as well as individual schools intensifying their work towards equality of opportunity. In many cases, too, it has been found that local information has rapidly led to an increase in the number of girls applying for education on the technical lines. If information has flagged at any time and fallen to its previous level, this has been quickly reflected in the number of girls choosing male dominated lines. (p73)

3. It Starts Early. Considerable emphasis is placed on influencing the early experiences of boys and girls, beginning at nursery school and this is given priority in the education measures for equal opportunity. A curriculum involving magnetism, electricity and sound has been introduced in schools to encourage children's interest in technology. The Chalmers Institute of Technology in Gothenburg, for example, has produced a 'technical box' for play designed around technology. Preschool teachers introduce 5 and 6 year old children to its contents: rope, magnets, hosing for a voice pipe, low voltage material, bells, lights, etc.

   This project is currently being expanded. Its evaluation showed that the children (and teachers) were extremely interested in the play and learning, the 'students' worked actively, girls being just as interested and capable as boys. This type of project is under way in many Swedish preschools, also in relation to natural sciences. It has meant new equipment, teacher education and new ways of teaching and learning.

4. It is Community-based and Varied. Although some special funds have flowed from the Ministry of Labour, local schools and County Education Boards have themselves decided on the type of project to be established. Many different ways of encouraging young women have been tried, and generally involve accurate and widely available information about careers, the use of role models (women

counter-sexist work experience opportunities, the involvement of parents, and teacher development. The level of activity in compulsory and upper secondary schools varies, but in many it is sustained and is being offered for the fifth or sixth year in succession.

The involvement of many local groups (parents, employers, unions, teachers, students) and local control are features of successful projects.

5. Regular Evaluation and Dissemination of Findings. The Swedish National Board of Education and other bodies have ensured that universities are encouraged to evaluate projects and their results are widely available.

6. Change in Upper Secondary Schools. Unfortunately, despite increases in the number of women in traditionally male lines of study, there has been a high dropout rate for girls entering lines of study where boys predominate. In 1984, the dropout rate for young women in building and construction was three times the male rate, and in electrotechnical and motor engineering, more than double (Swedish National Board of Education, 1986A, p4).

This has focused attention on the need to change teaching methods and content, and actively support women students. New projects are under way in these areas, including teacher development.

Nevertheless, positive outcomes of single sex teaching groups have led to their expansion, both at the initial 'taster' introductory level and in vocational education itself.

Perhaps one of the most extensive and successful measures in Sweden has been the Summer Technology Courses conducted for girls about to leave compulsory school. They are now conducted in the majority of counties in the summer holidays, usually for a period of two weeks. Girls are introduced to industrial production, electro-technology and computer technology. Generally, girls attend these courses in Upper Secondary Schools, which are vacant

in the holidays, and teachers are paid to give up part of their holidays to teach. The popularity of these courses is so great that in many cases they have been oversubscribed. In light of their considerable success the National Board of Education persuaded the government to allocate SEK2.7 million in 1985 (A$586,000) to the expansion of the courses.

About 2440 girls participated in 200 courses in 1985. Most were in their second to last year of compulsory education. The participants usually received a small level of remuneration, varying from a free lunch to a few dollars. A two week course cost about SEK 15-20,000 (A$3,300 - 4,300), to run.

Apart from increased knowledge and interest among girls, the projects stimulated teachers.

> Teachers, particularly those at Upper Secondary School, were positively surprised by the girls' increased interest and better performance than they had expected. In some cases the summer courses have led to teachers trying out teaching technology separately to girls in elementary [compulsory] school.
>
> (SNBE, 1986B, p69)

7. Specified Targets. For the first time, the Swedish Education board has set a target of 30 percent for women's participation in the new electro-technical line of study in Upper Secondary School. Targets are viewed as an important way of actively encouraging the recruitment of women students into this new area of study. The Board is determined to ensure that a substantial effort is made to reach the targets and funding for the course may be withheld if the target is not met. However, some schools will probably gain an exemption from the target stipulation.

Positive Lessons

Overall, Swedish initial vocational education offered through Upper Secondary Schools has many advantageous features. It facilitates entry

into higher education. It releases technical education from dependence on employer-provided training places. It simplifies efforts to encourage women to make broader choices, since efforts can directly focus on young women's choices, encouraging them to change. It provides parallel and equivalent training routes for both traditionally female and male occupations.

Compared with the Swedish system, current Australian vocational education for women is inferior. The Swedish experience also demonstrates the importance of:

- Long term government support for change, especially supported by funds;
- A sustained, sizeable effort, rather than pilot schemes;
- Sustained publicity at school level, prior to students making vocational choices;
- Early intervention, including counter-sexist preschool curriculum;
- Single-sex classes for women when introducing them to non-traditional skills, and in subsequent training;
- Local autonomy in developing strategies and implementing them. Success depends more on sustained effort, than national uniformity;
- Evaluation and wide reporting of experience;
- Changes in the vocational school environment;
- Conduct of single-sex introductory sessions, such as Summer Technology Schools; and
- Targets on women's share of new courses and initiatives.

All of these features and efforts could be valuably replicated and extended in Australia, in order to improve women's vocational education.

CHAPTER 4 : LIFETIME LEARNING: ADULT WOMEN'S VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

In each of the countries under consideration, vocational education provisions for those over 18 years are far greater than in Australia although, within this group, it is relatively low in England and FR Germany where youth unemployment is high, and exceptionally high in Sweden where 10 percent of national education expenditure is upon adult education.

The main features of adult vocational education and women's experience are considered in detail below.

4.1 PILOTS AND PEANUTS: ADULT WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN GERMANY AND ENGLAND

In Germany and England, as in Australia, adult women (alongside adult men in many places) are confined to the fringes of vocational education.

Despite many years of 'pilots', the re-entry of women into work after having children is still funded as a fairly experimental activity; it is not part of mainstream education in either country. Consequently, many women find it extremely difficult to re-enter vocational education.

A significant potential exception exists in England with the development of Open Tech. Access to vocational education will be made possible for adults on a much wider scale with potential benefits for women. The Open Tech program was launched by the MSC in 1982 'to promote the use of open learning, that is, learning at a time, place and pace which suits the needs of the individual concerned' (MSC 1986A, p19). A considerable range of vocational training materials has been produced, marketed and distributed. By the end of 1986, about 3000 training 'modules' were for sale as a result of Open Tech initiatives. In 1985/86, the UK Government, through the MSC, spent £16.2 million (A$36.8m) in development of the Open Tech project with approximately 32,000 people using material produced through the program (ibid, p19).

The Open Tech initiative has recently been evaluated and the results will

be made available by the MSC. Obviously, its benefits for women depend upon the cost and difficulty of access to the programs. It remains to be seen whether women will reap the potential benefit.

A large number of varied Return to Work or Study programs now exist in England. In 1987, these were listed and described in Returning to work, published by the Women Returners Network (1987). The courses have been evaluated in Women returning to learning (Hutchinson, 1986) and in Wickham (1986).

Although they are numerous and extremely important for mature women, most initiatives exist on the edges of the Further Education Colleges or MSC programs. As a result, it is extremely difficult for potential students to find their way into further education, as many courses are not accredited or linked to further training and they change at short notice. Many are not closely connected to employment, their outcomes for women are often unknown, they are not always supported by childcare or income support, and they are open to accusations of providing education 'for middleclass women'.

The experiences and lessons of these programs replicate those in Australia:

- that there is a proven and substantial need and demand, well in excess of supply;
- that programs should be supported by childcare and income support;
- that content should be flexible, because the needs of women are diverse;
- that accreditation into further education should be organised where possible.

The MSC, alongside colleges and local government, makes a contribution to adult training for women. Within the overall MSC budget, however, the contribution is small: in 1985/86, 2,437 women entered MSC-funded courses especially for women (Wider Opportunities for Women) usually of 30 days duration, either in part-time or full-time modes.

Women comprise 40 percent of all those in the MSC's adult training programs (over 210,00)) in 1985/86.

However, the MSC's commitment to the needs of adult women is relatively slight and has been criticised in recent studies:

> The contribution of the MSC is dictated by the over-riding philosophy of market identification and pinpointing of training for specific purposes even though they themselves claim that 'a comprehensive strategy should not focus simply on narrowly defined economic objectives ...' MSC provision, in practice, is shortstringed, erratic and subject to changes of mood. It can be made use of but offers little of a settled base of competence in the emerging freshstart student or those providing for her. Women as a class are marginalized...
>
> (Hutchinson, 1986, p96)

In FR Germany, various groups of women are organising re-entry and vocational courses for women returning to work. They are making use of funding from a range of German and European sources.

Unfortunately, German education, as in England, is preoccupied with youth training at the cost of adults, most especially women.

Reliance on the Dual System creates an especially strong disadvantage for many older women wishing to re-enter work, retrain or specialise. The lack of systematic retraining and re-entry opportunities for adult women is a distinct deficiency in their system.

One of the rare examples of a government initiative attempting to meet this need is the Hamburg Foundation of Vocational Training for the Unemployed. Established by the Hamburg Government, the Foundation currently receives annual funds of DM 18 million (A$13.9 m) and provides 920 training places per day in courses of varying length (6 weeks to 3 years) offering a flexible curriculum, determined according to the needs of the mainly adult students. In many ways, the Foundation resembles the Swedish AMUs (see Section 4.2 below). Most trainees earn a government allowance which has been reduced to DM 220/month (A$170). Courses are

designed in close liaison with the local Labour Market Board which provides, in exchange for these courses, a significant share of the Foundation's funds. The majority of students are disadvantaged in some way in the labour market: they are immigrant, or long term unemployed, or older women and men.

In the words of one teacher:

> Our existence is a testament to the problems in our training system. Adults - especially the unemployed - don't get as many chances as young people. There is a need for special initiatives to meet their training requirements.
>
> (Teacher, Hamburg Foundation of Vocational Training, personal communication)

Women Learning New Technologies

A number of interesting initiatives in this general area exist in England and Germany, developed mainly through local government and the European Social Fund (ESF). At Sheffield, for example, the Women's Technology Training Workshop (WTTW), funded from these sources since 1984, has been providing training for over 40 women annually in microelectronics and computing.

Courses have been developed to suit unskilled women and most recruits are unskilled working class women over 25 years of age. Over 500 women formally applied for the initial course of 28 women. The courses generally continue over 48 weeks and are part-time. The Workshop helps organise childcare and meet its costs. No allowance (beyond ordinary benefits that might be payable) is paid to trainees. The Workshop is well resourced in material and teaching terms.

The 15 hours/week course provides trainees with a comprehensive overview of new technology, with equal emphasis in thirds on computing, electronics and mathematics.

All trainees have 6 weeks of work placement towards the end of the course. Despite a difficult local labour market, employment and further education

outcomes have been favourable. During 1985/86, expenditure of £117,633 was made on the Workshop program.

The enormous demand for places and its positive outcomes make this project an important model worth emulating in Australia. Its central characteristics are worth noting:

- close relationship to future employment;
- good equipment and high teacher/student ratio;
- part-time, year long training;
- well developed curriculum and structure;
- childcare.

The 1986 evaluation of the South Glamorgan Women's Workshop, also funded through local government and the ESF, concluded that the workshop 'has shown that new styles of training can help to overcome the problems that many women face in securing employment'. The main features of the workshop's success include:

- women-only training,
- geographical accessibility of programs;
- no cost penalty and provision of a training allowance;
- childcare provision;
- work-related skill as well as confidence building;
- high teacher/student ratios;
- women teachers;
- supervised work placement;
- active employment development and assistance to find work;
- ongoing support for successful schemes.

(Essex, 1986)

These conclusions reinforce the results of similar projects in Australia.

Similarly, in FR Germany a number of local initiatives are under way to encourage women to learn computer-related skills and administrative skills. In Schleswig-Holstein, large numbers of women of varying ages are gaining training in word processing, programming, etc., with applications to computer-aided manufacture and design. The length of

training is variable and can flexibly accommodate those with family responsibilities. The program is conducted by the state Ministry of Social Affairs.

Lost Opportunities: Information Technology Centres (ITeCs) in England

Newly created education and training workshops, providing hands-on, full-time instruction, in an employment area associated with women's traditional skills (keyboards and word processing), provide an important opportunity for innovative training for women. Almost all the fundamental characteristics of good educational practice for women are there: recruitment of new teachers with a commitment to women's education and achievement for women; introduction to non-traditional skills in a supportive, group environment; and full-time pre-employment education in a training centre, before introduction to the workplace.

Unfortunately, this potential has not been generally realised. Instead, ITeCs have become a new and expanding source of training in new technologies, mainly for men, except for some word processing training for women.

There are currently around 175 ITeCs in England. Most offer training in the areas of lectronics, computing and word processing. There are plans to expand places in ITeCs from 6,758 in 1985/86 to 10,000 in 1986/87 and to encourage them to solicit for 'adult training business with a grant paid by the Commission for every additional hour of adult training done' (MSC, 1986B, p20).

In 1986, 99 percent of 'l ITeCs had a majority of male trainees. Estimates of women's share of positions in ITeCs varies from 3 to 21 percent (Marsh, 1986, p162). The proportion of women ITeCs trainees in England is no greater than 1 in 5

Just as importantly, women are concentrated in the traditionally female tasks of word processing and office skills options:

> For every one female trainee learning computing skills in the

ITeCs there were six males. For every one young woman in electronics there were 18 young men.

(Cockburn, 1987, p149)

Further, the ITeC system is male-managed:

A survey in 1984 covered 108 out of 174 ITeCs. Of these 96 percent had male managers; 97 percent had a majority of male staff.

(ibid, p149)

As part of her study in the YTS, Cockburn made a detailed study of one ITeC in London. She concludes that by offering opportunities for specialisation, which quickly become male or female identified, and failing to take positive action (to increase women's share of traineeship positions or to organise some single sex training in the 'non-traditional' subjects, for example), the ITeC provided training that was 'more sex-stereotyped than the world at large' (ibid, p166).

This experience can be contrasted with the important advances for women in the single-sex technology centres in Sheffield and Glamorgan.

The passive practice of equal opportunity simply results in replication and reinforcement of women's training disadvantage. The MSC argues that the Sex Discrimination Bill prevents them from encouraging or insisting on ITeC setting targets for the participation of women and minority groups. They explained that a few ITeCs do set targets for women's share of places, but that this is strictly illegal, according to the advice of their lawyers (personal communication, MSC).

At the Sheffield ITeC, the effects of conscious attempts to increase women's share of places are evident in the 50 percent participation rate for women both as students and staff and, in addition, the high number of Afro-Caribbean trainees.

That a major training innovation can so quickly be appropriated by men offers important lessons for Australia. There is a necessity for detailed attention, and close monitoring, of both:

1) targets on overall levels of participation by sex and race; and

2) a carefully structured curriculum which ensures that women's choices, in such pre-employment broad-based introductory training, cannot result in a ghetto of low skill options for women.

The existence of low skill options ensures a 'selection' and streaming process for women and men with the usual hierarchy established:

> Males tend to create and preserve their own spheres of expertise, their own cultural space. They elevate its status. Women respond by creating their own safe places, and take the level technology on the cue ... If the skills on offer had been, say, hairbrushing and toothbrushing - the latter by battery operated toothbrush - it is certain that the thrust of male separatism and the minimal cues would have been sufficient to gender the former female and the latter male!
>
> (Cockburn, 1987, p167)

Skills Centres: Training for Men in England?

Skill Centres in England were constructed in the late forties to provide training in construction and engineering for those returning from war. Given the length and history of their establishment, it is not surprising that these Centres are male-dominated.

The development of similar facilities in parts of Australia makes a look at them in England salutary.

Considerable controversy has surrounded Skill Centre provisions for women - or their lack of them. There have been criticisms about indirectly discriminatory selection procedures, publicity not orientated to women, lack of childcare, and complaints of sexual harassment. There are few signs of change.

The national training policy as expressed through the MSC, with its focus on youth and on short-term, employer-directed training, has meant that Skill Centres have been rationalised and subject to commercialisation. The

number of Skill Centres (now under the umbrella of the Skills Training Agency (STA)), has been reduced from 87 to 60. Furthermore, centres are expected to recover their training costs either through contracts with the MSC or through other training purchasers such as employers or trainees. In 1985/86, the STA earned £65.4 million from training sold to the MSC and £5.7 million from employers. It provided 450,000 weeks of training for over 31,400 people.

Examples of Skill Centres' initiatives for women are extremely rare (only two came to my attention) and women's share of enrolments in Skill Centres is estimated at less than 3 percent:

> This percentage reflects the dominance of traditionally male trades and jobs in Skill Centres and their concentration of training support for skills in the construction, engineering and motor vehicle trades. In London's six Skill Centres only two courses are offered in 'female' trades - hairdressing and tailoring'.
>
> (Benn, 1986, p165)

Once again, the experience in England emphasises that the situation of women will not change without affirmative action programs, targetting, monitoring and the punitive withdrawal of funds. Passive equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation have not brought change.

The Costs of Commercialised Adult Training

The UK Government's commitment to privatised vocational education has special costs for women, or others disadvantaged in the current labour market. The contracting of private, profit-making agencies to provide training at a given cost per place is unlikely to serve women well. The costs of assisting them into training in non-traditional areas, for example, will require organisation and support which is more expensive than for a male student.

The MSC recognises this and pays a premium for 'special' places created by private training agencies (for example, for women in 'men's' jobs). However, experience to date in England under these arrangements indicates

that women's current sex-segregated participation in the labour market is unlikely to dramatically improve.

In FR Germany most labour market training for adults is organised by the equivalent of Labour Market Boards or Employment Offices and contracted out by them to an enormous number of private training agencies. Some of these are union- or church-based and many are ordinary commercial enterprises.

According to local observers, this creates difficulties in some areas. For example, in Hamburg with a population of 1.2 million and a high rate of unemployment (14 percent, almost double the national average) there are between 200-250 private training agencies. A few are conducted by trade unions or other community groups but many are straight commercial enterprises. The quality of training varies widely. Further, given the pressures to meet contractual obligations with the public labour market board, the support structures and the intensive teacher ratios necessary to teach migrants or women in non-traditional work are unlikely to be provided. Under most circumstances the particular educational needs of women are not met in a privatised method of delivery.

4.2 POSITIVE OUTCOMES: EDUCATION FOR ADULT WOMEN IN SWEDEN

A contrast with the inadequate arrangements for adults in England, Germany and Australia is provided by the approach adopted in Sweden.

As well as legal rights to unpaid leave from work to gain education, the unemployed are assisted into a wide range of vocational education options and supported while in training at a level at least equivalent to unemployment support (the level of unemployment support varies according to employment history but is generally higher than in Australia).

Besides the vocational training supplied through labour market organisations (mainly AMUs), adults are offered the options of education through the Adult Municipal System (mainly basic education in the compulsory and Upper Secondary System), the Folk High Schools and part-time Study Circles. These last two provide a variety of interest-related, informal study and discussions for adults. The

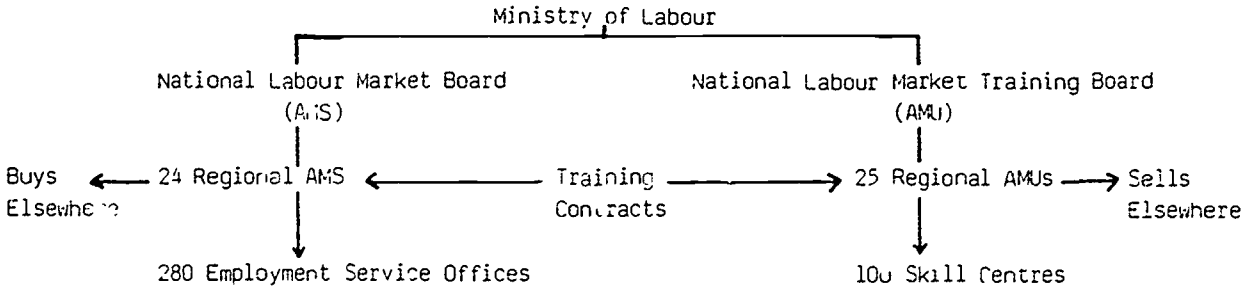
TABLE 9 Sweden: Sources of Adult Education 1986/87

	No. Participants(1) 1986	Expenditure 1986/87 (2) SEKm
Labour Market Training (mainly through AMU Centres)	80-90,000 (3)	2000
In-Firm Training	636,000	n.a.
Study Circles (or Adult Education Associations)	528,000	975
Municipal Adult Education	157,000	1000
Folk High Schools	39,000	500

Sources and Notes: (1) Swedish National Board of Education, 1986B, p1
(2) Director, AMU Board, Stockholm
(3) Labour Market Training through the AMU Centres is expanding quite rapidly

approximate relative size of the various training avenues are set out in Table 9.

FIGURE 1: Labour Market Training Provision in Sweden



Source: AMU Board, Stockholm.

As Figure 1 indicates, the Labour Market Boards (AMS) at regional levels are well informed about the local labour market, and are managed by employers and unions. They are provided with funds from the Ministry of

Labour to purchase training for the unemployed. Most of these 'contracts' go to an independent public authority, the AMU Group. The AMU Group, consolidated in early 1986, consists of a central board and 25 county authorities who supply training directly to their local Labour Market Board (AMS) office, through a network of 100 AMU 'colleges'.

The AMU Group is expected to finance its own operations through such contracts. Currently about 95 percent of AMU 'training business' is conducted through the public AMS system, providing training mainly for the unemployed or those threatened with retrenchment. The remaining 5 percent is training for private companies for in-house programs: the AMU Group would like to increase this share to 10 percent of their total work.

Main Features of the AMUs

The main features of the AMU system are:

1. There are 100 AMU centres (similar to, but not the same as Australian TAFE colleges).

2. They are locally managed and attuned to local labour market developments.

3. The Central Board is responsible for planning, development, coordination, syllabus preparation, overall financial outcomes, and government policy implementation, such as equal opportunity.

4. Tripartite management occurs at central and regional levels: these boards and committees are decisive, not advisory.

5. AMU Group turnover in 1985/86 was SEK 2 billion (A$434m). There are 5,600 employees and 80-90,000 students (AMU Officer, personal communication).

6. There is a strong commitment to women's education, in both the training contracted by the AMS and the educational practice of the AMUs. For example, many AMUs are contracted to conduct courses

introducing unemployed women to technical occupations and assisting them to update clerical, administrative or health-related skills.

7. AMU students can learn any of the 'lines' of study available in Upper Secondary Schools, or shorter specialisations. The AMU also tailors a wide range of courses to individual or group needs. Comprehensive education at compulsory school levels is also available in the AMUs for those with a weak school background. According to the AMU Board:

> This (school) education is an important element in the various forms of training offered by the AMU Centres. Without it, the labour market training can never become a route into a job for those with the least favourable prerequisites.
>
> (AMU-Styrelsen, 1986, p5)

Generally, syllabi are adopted centrally, but subject to local AMU Board agreement, tuned to local needs.

8. Many unemployed people enter a short introductory course in which they can sample different areas of study, decide which general skills they wish to update (Swedish, English, maths, science, etc.) and develop an individual training program in liaison through counselling with employment placement advisors.

An Adult Education Practice

The methods adopted in the AMUs which provide a useful model of adult education practice, include:

- courses conducted continuously, without term divisions;
- admission is flexible; entry is allowed as soon as places are available, and learning is self-paced;
- training is modular, often in the form of a basic course followed by further training and specialisation;
- training opportunities can be quickly adapted to changing labour market needs and skills;
- learning is a mix of practice and theory. General education in such

areas as maths, is usually taught in parallel with practical vocational instruction so that its immediate relevance is obvious.

According to the Director of the AMU Board, adult education breaks down any division between general/basic education and vocational skills. Many adults need some basic education in maths or language parallel with learning new skills. Any vocational training organisation must make the combination available. The AMUs are also designed to provide training for immigrant and handicapped people.

Most importantly, the AMUs create an environment for adult education, distinct from the classroom-like and supervised atmosphere of initial vocational education in Upper Secondary Schools. Most learning situations simulate the workplace.

What are the Contrasts with Australia?

1. Less Priority

Adult vocational education, on the whole, attracts less funding and resources in Australia. In general, adults, and especially women returning to work, are made to fit in around younger people in initial vocational training. The exception to this is upgrading of existing qualifications in trade fields, such as construction, metal, electronics and electrical and business studies. The main exceptions for women are the specific re-entry places available to around 4,000 adult women/year in Australia.

2. Adult Needs are Different

In Sweden, it is recognised that the learning needs of adults are different from young people aged 16-18 years. A similar adult system is currently being established in Holland, for the same reasons. Adults wish to return to work fairly quickly and need a flexible curriculum combining basic education and specific occupational skills. They benefit from self-paced learning and an adult, workplace-related environment. (Some in the AMU system in

Sweden argue that this pedagogical approach could usefully be extended to young students).

3. Benefits for Adult Women

This flexibility, attention to appropriate introductory courses and assessment of training needs, and combination of general and vocational education along with confidence building. is vitally important for women. The AMU centre provides a mainstream institutional route for women's re-entry to work and upgrading of skills. Its existence in Sweden highlights the absence of similar structures in most comparable countries, where the needs of adults, especially women, are met in a random, hit-or-miss way, tacked onto initial vocational education where the opportunities for better methods of adult teaching cannot be developed and followed, and success depends more on the persistence of individual women teachers or students, than on a good system. The importance placed on adult training, retraining and upgrading in Sweden, both for the good of the individual and for economic productivity, is a startling contrast. An overall ethos of 'equity and efficiency' informs the system and an integrated AMU meets the needs of all adults: women, handicapped, immigrant, educationally disadvantaged, and individuals or employers wishing to upgrade skills or to retrain in the face of industry restructuring.

Women's Participation

In both Sweden and Australia, adult women's vocational training is characterised by:

- a high concentration in nursing, office and service training (women make up only 16 percent of students in manufacturing related courses);
- a high concentration in preparatory training, more than specific vocational training;
- a lower share of vocational enrolments. Women made up around 37 percent of all adults in occupational training in 1983/84, and only

4 percent of all those adults undergoing retraining while still employed (mainly because of threatened redundancies).

There is also some concern that an increase in AMU business towards more training contracts with private firms will disadvantage women. The AMU will negotiate with the firm (and union representatives) on its needs, to determine a price and curriculum. AMU officials say that special efforts for women will be limited. On the other hand, this source of AMU work is expected to remain fairly small and will largely represent a shift from current in-firm training into training in the AMU, with potential benefits for students in the form of accreditation, better teaching methods, and so on.

A Good Model for Adult Women and Men

Overall, the AMU is worthy of close examination by Australian educators because of the opportunities it provides for women, its adult teaching methods, the positive employment outcomes, decentralised organisation, active programs for migrants and responsiveness to local labour markets.

During the current period of financial stringency, expensive new training institutions are unlikely to be established in Australia. However, many aspects of the AMU system could be adopted in the TAFE system to greatly enhance the opportunities of adults, especially women, and improve both their contributions to the economy and their personal situations.

4.3 WOMEN'S TRAINING IN THE FIRM

Outside this formal system of vocational education, some adults are fortunate enough to have access to in-firm training in order to upgrade and refresh their skills. According to research by CEDEFOP, however, women's access to in-firm training is much more restricted than men's. Most in-firm training is not systematically conducted. Furthermore, much of the current emphasis on skills upgrading in the traditionally male fields of electronics, metals and sections of manufacturing industry leaves women out, or lagging well behind. A similar situation is evolving in Australia.

There are, however, some interesting examples of specific measures for women in particular firms. Most of these are located in Sweden.

1. Sweden's Renewal Funds: A Special Chance for Women?

Although in-firm training is relatively higher in Sweden than most comparable countries, special efforts are being made to boost skills further, especially around new technologies in manufacture and computerisation. In 1985, as part of this effort, the Swedish Government collected special funds (an additional 10 percent of pretax profits) from companies with profits of more than A$122,000 into a Renewal Fund. About A$1.2 billion was collected through the Fund and is now available for use by contributing companies, provided that collective (union and management) agreement is reached on in-firm training or research and development.

There has been some debate about the relative emphasis within company training plans on general (Swedish, English, Maths) education (which unions tend to favour) as opposed to specific skills related to production (which management favour).

Guidelines have been developed, encouraging workplaces to pay particular attention to the training needs of women in the development of training plans.

The outcomes for women of the Renewal Fund training programs will be monitored by women's officers in the Ministry of Labour and the LO. Both are concerned that they should not replicate the traditional Swedish pattern of male domination of in-firm training.

An officer of the Swedish LO expressed the following concerns:

> Women have a low level of participation in many areas of skill development. Women are the minority in company education. Many men don't see women.
>
> The problem exists in the Renewal Funds. They target women, and we must always remember them. We (at the

LO) have written pages about women and Renewal Funds. But we wonder if they get read.

We must have women at every level to make change. Not one woman in a senior position writing documents to make them listen.

(Official, LO, Stockholm)

2. Volvo: 'We Need to Include Women'

This giant car manufacturing company has a reputation for considerable expenditure on internal skills development, as well as new forms of work organisation. Depending upon labour availability at various times, women have been actively recruited into Volvo. They have not, however, always participated equally in in-firm training. This has concerned unions and management in some plants. At Koping (where the Volvo plant produces axles and gear boxes) the Equality Committee of unions and management cooperated with other agencies to conduct particular programs for women, since their low level of participation in new skills development courses was leaving them vulnerable to technological redundancy. These groups, therefore, organised women to attend special one day meetings to be informed of courses, their benefits and protection, the unions' support for them, and to discuss any difficulties they may encounter in attending training. The attitudes of foremen to women's skill development, difficulties associated with travel, low self-esteem, lack of motivation, were identified as problems. It became evident that equal participation of women depended upon addressing these difficulties. As a result, women-only skill development programs are being organised and other barriers are being addressed.

This example of women's experience in the face of changing work practices, technology and skills indicates the need for:

- monitoring participation in in-firm training by sex;
- particular assessment of women's difficulties;
- measures to address them;

- efforts to counter opposition from supervisory staff, low self-esteem, inappropriate training hours or other problems;
- single-sex training, if necessary;
- active workplace equal opportunity committees, involving female and male unionists.

3. Women in Saab

The Saab plant at Trollhattan often faces skilled labour shortages in a town where women's unemployment is high. As a result, the local AMU, AMS and Saab decided to 'pave the way for women'. Forty women under 25 years were selected from 120 unemployed women on the basis of their motivation to work in industry. None had had previous industrial experience.

After a 6 week introduction, the women trained for a year in electrical engineering, telecommunications engineering and control technology. They then joined Saab where they trained for a further 40 weeks on Saab work teams, subsequently returning to the AMU centre for 24 weeks further training in electromechanical engineering and computer technology. Of the 40 women, 33 are now employed at Saab.

Their training reflects the reorganisation of car production in much of Sweden, into small work teams responsible for defined tasks, along with the operation and maintenance of equipment. As a result, in many plants, absenteeism and labour turnover has declined and quality has improved.

One of the outcomes from this project was that in future, women currently working in production would be released for skills training and that unemployed women would be recruited into their places, rather than directly into skills training. Once again, strong local union interest and the employer's willingness to actively address the problem, had a positive, long term result.

4. Training Women, Reducing Risk

At other plants (for example, in the steel industry at Oxelsund) reorganisation of work and greater variety of skilled jobs for women has improved workers' health by reducing neck injury sustained through repetitive work in crane driving. Since women were limited to crane driving jobs, it was necessary to offer them opportunities to do other work. Funds from the Ministry of Labour have been used to encourage women to enter skilled, traditionally male jobs, and to motivate women.

Another company offered resources to allow current women employees to try other jobs in the plant for 2 weeks, while being replaced in their ordinary jobs. Most of the 150 women working in the plant were concentrated in two sections threatened with closure within the next three years. This opportunity was provided along with a guarantee that they could return to their ordinary employment.

According to one of the union officials involved in this project, 'You have to think of the women first', and take action, otherwise women are left out and will be especially disadvantaged when redundancy hits.

The same official pointed out the need for careful planning in the workplace when change is being considered, and described the experience at a small metal firm:

> The company had a combination of old and new technology, and was finding it difficult to recruit skilled labour. As a result they tended to employ unskilled people and train them.
>
> One day I had a call from one of our officials there. He had just been made responsible in the union for equality questions in the region. He was already chairman of the union club (workplace branch) in his company.

He asked me what to do. I suggested working from a small project in an area he knew well.

As a result they decided to find out why there had never been a woman in his own workplace. After discussing this issue with all workers, it became clear (af[illegible].l the jokes) that it was possible for women to do all jobs, if they had the same training. But they agreed that the work environment might be difficult for women.

Having recognised that, they had discussions with management and it was decided to employ two women amongst the next four recruits.

At first the labour office said women couldn't do that work. But eventually the women started. And then the pinups came down, other changes happened.

(Official, Metal Union)

Experience demonstrated that moving gradually, building workplace and union support, organising recruitment and training, and changing attitudes and the environment, were the most effective means of changing women's place at work.

5. Avoiding Redundancy: Retraining

In Sweden, the Labour Market Office (AMS) is notified of likely redundancies so that action can be taken to find new employment and to encourage mobility and retraining. One of the largest recent examples is provided at Kockums in Malmo in the south where the closure of traditional shipbuilding has led to:

- Active encouragement to Saab, including subsidies for relocation and other costs to build a car assembly plant nearby and establish permanent, profitable, technologically advanced alternative employment;
- An active placement and training program which has enabled

> 1400 of the 1800 workers threatened with retrenchment to find further employment, or to retrain or to upgrade their skills.

This approach contrasts with Australian experiences, where much less active or effective policies are pursued for redundant workers. Usually their access to training is organised after redundancy, training is not closely related to labour market opportunities, and long term alternative permanent employment opportunities in the private sector are rarely planned. A few recent exceptions exist.

However, despite the considerable contrasts between the two systems, women fare badly in both Sweden and Australia. Women's share of general pre-retrenchment training is small in Sweden: around a quarter in 1983/84 (National Labour Market Board, 1985, p20). It is even lower in Australia. Less than 2 percent of the Labour Adjustment Training Allowance in 1983/84 went to women (CILMP, 1985, p288). Women's participation in such programs is also minimal in England and Germany, reflecting their low concentration in the high profile, highly unionised, male dominated industries of metals, shipbuilding and vehicle production.

However, a rare exception exists in Sweden in a project in the electronics industry, where the joint venturers Ericssons and Swedish Telecom (TELE) initiated a retraining program for women in the face of rapid technological change and threatened redundancy. With the computerisation of assembly work, many women were to lose their jobs. The company initiated training in work related to programming. Programming jobs were broken down into modules, and women's skills were upgraded so that they undertook standardised programming work. Work groups comprising five assembly workers and one engineer were established. In the words of one observer:

> The standard engineer is trained to be innovative. This is a nuisance in this type of standardised work. With this level of internal skill upgrading, the majority of the women's skills and pay were upgraded and their jobs protected.

It illustrates an enormous potential challenge for the enhancement of women's work in the face of technological change.

In this example, while women were upgraded and retained their jobs, the programming function was effectively de-skilled. The complexity of technological change and its effects on workers, and in particular, its ambiguous effects on female workers, are illustrated by the example.

Other projects in Sweden indicate that the majority of women in production and clerical work wish to increase their level of skill at work when the circumstances suit them. These are that:

- they won't lose pay;
- they won't be isolated or ridiculed;
- their hours don't change, interfering with childcare;
- they have information about alternatives and are actively supported by unions and management to participate.

In the words of one Swedish metal worker involved in these projects:

> Our workplaces are in danger of turning into two teams: an A team and a B team. The A team will have good work conditions, pay, skills. The B team will be unskilled, less protected - and mostly women.
>
> So developing women's jobs is a priority. Its basic to protecting all jobs. We have to work first, and especially with women. It's only when women are as protected as men that things can improve for all workers.
>
> (Official, Metall Union, Stockholm)

The experience in Sweden, where skills formation issues have such prominence, has been positively endorsed by the recent TDCS/ACTU mission to Western Europe. Workplace experiences and approaches described above, show the need for particular efforts to ensure women participate equally alongside men.

CHAPTER 5 UNIONS AND THE ROLE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

In England, Sweden and the Federal Republic of Germany, unions have played a significant role in improving the position of women in the workplace. Besides written policy (which most unions have developed), many have women's or 'equality' officers - some have had these officers for many years. There are a number of other worthwhile initiatives, for example aiming for the greater participation of women in union structures, union education and skilled jobs and training or conducting projects, as described in Section 4.3.

Many women in the countries under consideration believe that change through, and with, unions is crucial for long term improvements for women - alongside legal measures, government funds and better training for women.

5.1 THE ROLE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING: LAW OR WORKPLACE NEGOTIATION?

The union movement in all three countries emphasised the role of agreements bargained at the workplace in protecting and improving the position of women workers. In England, in the face of Government reluctance to take positive action for women, many have turned to collective bargaining and unions as a vital route (see TUC, 1983). Unfortunately, as in Australia, concern for women does not seem to figure high on workplace agendas, especially in England where unemployment, declining levels of active trade unionism and a hostile government, are creating larger fundamental challenges to unions.

A similar situation exists in Germany. Although there are examples of workplace agreements collectively bargained, which include measures dealing with women's employment and status at work (in the textiles and food industries, for example), they are not common nor, it appears, bearing significant fruit.

In both Sweden and Germany, workplace committees have legal rights to negotiate with management on a broad range of issues. Training issues

and women's position are generally low on the agenda and collectively negotiated improvements at the workplace remain more a possibility and a policy, than an actual practice. (See LO, 1980 for a description of the Swedish approach).

In Sweden, for example, workplace negotiation is active and often facilitated by full-time shop stewards. In addition, a series of agreements negotiated by peak union and employer bodies means that almost all blue and white collar workers are covered by collective union/management equal opportunities agreements to take active measures to promote and protect women.

The 1983 Agreement between the Swedish Employers Confederation (SAF), the LO and the Federation of Salaried Employees in Industry and Services (PTK) included agreement that:

- Women and men shall have equal opportunities for employment, training, promotion and development in their work;

- Women and men shall have equal pay for equal work;

- Work should be organised in ways that are suitable for men and women and so that gainful employment can be combined with parental responsibility.

The agreement endorses positive action to redress past disadvantages and the creation of opportunities for job switching, rotation, etc., to encourage women's entry to 'men's' work and vice versa.

(LO, 1984)

Generally, such agreements override the sections of Equal Opportunity Law requiring employers to take active measures to improve women's position. Clearly, Swedish unions have a legal charter and the practical resources to improve the situation of women members.

But, for many, progress has been too slow. Collective agreements, mostly

negotiated at peak council level (e.g. before the LO and SAF), do not always have an active life in the workplace. Section 4.3 above has explored a number of important exceptions where workplace equality committees have taken specific initiatives.

In Sweden, some women favour stronger legal penalties to force workplace action, arguing that unions are conservative on the issue and fail to initiate change, and that law requiring positive action in the workplace should override collective bargains. In the words of one woman in favour of the legal approach:

> There is not enough action for women in our unions. There are some women's officers, but they are hostages: their jobs are often so hard, and they lack power. We want to see the law strengthened so that the government can push change when the social partners collude to prevent it - or are just inactive.
>
> (Spokesperson, Equal Opportunities Commission)

Others are more forgiving:

> The agreements are only new and it will take time. But it must happen - and go beyond just a written agreement. Generally men run the unions. On some issues they are militant in enforcing them but not it seems on equal opportunity. It's time to take a close look and monitor progress. We may need to change the law.
>
> But the reality is, the day the social partners - employers and unions - are really interested in women, in their status and training, we will see some action.
>
> In the meantime the law has a role.
>
> (Spokesperson, Ministry of Labour)

Some unionists don't agree:

> Where does the power to improve women's place [in areas like training] lie? It lies in the workplace, in relations

between unions and employers. These are affected, but never determined, by law.

So collective bargaining and negotiation in the workplace is where real change must come from.

Unfortunately, it's slow. We need to help women be more confident, and increase their role in unions. After all, they are the real police for any law or agreement. Without them, nothing changes really.

(Spokesperson, Metall Union, Stockholm)

5.2 INCREASING WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION

Fundamental to improving women's access to training, are steps to increase their role in unions, and thereafter in all tripartite structures to represent women's interests. Most unions in the countries under study have policy designed to achieve this. As in Australia, a targetted program exists in some unions in England, Germany and Sweden, with regular reporting to annual conferences on progress, and specific programs of action.

A good example is provided in Germany where the large IG Metall union has a policy to increase the proportion of women in union positions at all levels. Furthermore, it has proposed that quotas be set for women's share of training places in non-traditional occupations in industry employment.

Similarly, the Swedish unions are taking action. The Swedish LO (peak blue collar union federation) has had a women's committee since 1948, a women's officer since the fifties and a women's department since the sixties, which is now integrated into various departments in the LO, especially in areas of social and family policy.

The LO has recently approved a plan, and allocated resources to improve women's role in unions. Based on extensive past experience, it is addressed to four specific groups of women with different needs:

1. Women Members who are Single Parents

Often difficult to motivate, these women will be offered special courses at a holiday location where they can take their children and participate informally in some union discussions, while on a cheap holiday. This program has been conducted for three years (around 300 women) with very encouraging results. Women are nominated in small groups from particular regions and, on return home, have often become involved in unions, shared childcare and supported each other. The new program plans to conduct a course for 25 women in each of the 18 LO districts and, hopefully, most larger towns.

The cost per course is high - around A$30,000 - but the motivation and continuing self-support for this group is considered a priority.

2. Most Other Women Members

The majority of women in the LO unions are not as isolated as the first group. They are not highly active in unions. This group is encouraged to be involved in a wide range of social, cultural and union activities, organised by groups of active women unionists at local level, who will receive some organisational funds from the LO. The emphasis is on enjoyment, a positive experience of unionism and a sense of the mutual support possible through informal organisation. It is expected that some will proceed to more active work in their unions.

3. Active Women Unionists

This group is being encouraged to take higher positions in unions. In three or four LO regions, special programs will be organised for up to 30 women, so that one day every third week for three years, and for one full week annually, they will meet to learn new skills in public speaking, liaison with media, and so on. The costs will be paid by the LO. The positive effects of the first year of this pilot program are already evident.

4. Regional Initiatives

Ten LO regions are organising groups of women, who are isolated in their union activities to meet 3 - 4 times per year, with a visiting speaker or for a social or cultural event, to develop local contacts and support.

A spokesperson on women's issues at the LO commented on women and their involvement with unions:

> Women must learn to be positive about themselves, to have self confidence in their own methods and approaches. Mutual support and skill development are the keys. We need more women running unions if the movement is really going to improve things for women in areas like training.
>
> (Officer, LO, Stockholm, personal communication)

CHAPTER 6 : INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL POLICY

Although government funded vocational education and training programs and legal measures encourage women's skill development, other avenues do exist, for example, access to government or contracts of supply can be made contingent on changed industrial practices towards women. In addition, regional and local authorities are an important potential site of planning improvements for women. Some examples of all of these initiatives are described below.

Overall, however, governments have tended to rely more upon punitive laws (of varying degrees of effectiveness) and financial inducements to change employers' behaviour, and less upon industry policy measures such as contract compliance, possible loss of industry assistance and active regional planning. It is mainly in Sweden that other measures in support of women's employment have been undertaken with considerable success.

6.1 LOCAL INITIATIVES

In England, in the face of a lack of action for women nationally, many have turned to local government. Innovations have flourished, particularly in the area of women's employment and training, with the support of both local government and European Social Fund resources.

Some of these initiatives have been described in Section 4.1. Unfortunately, many are currently contracting as a result of the elimination of local authorities (as in the case of the Greater London Council), the effects of the government's rate setting controls, and the exhaustion of many sources of Council reserves or innovative fundraising mechanisms. Local government's capacity to continue to fund, let alone expand, innovative measures for women's training in England is now severely constrained.

In addition, the government's current plans to permit local colleges to opt for direct funding from the national government, eliminating the role

and influence of Local Education Authorities (LEAs), will have negative effects for these programs where LEAs have been influential in more effective local education planning, co-ordination and equal opportunity provision. Several have initiated specific innovative programs for women. Eliminating their influence will lessen regional planning and remove a progressive influence in many locations.

By contrast, the Swedish government is promoting development of local plans to improve women's employment and training position. This is partly motivated by the realisation that small, pilot projects in parts of the education system (as described in Section 3.3) cannot, on their own, systematically influence women's position in the longer term.

This knowledge led the government in 1984 to instruct all 24 county authorities to pay particular attention to future employment opportunities for women. In addition to the annual employment and population forecasts, counties were required to provide analyses of the position of women in the labour market and education, and plans to improve their position:

> Many county administrative boards made excellent analysis of future employment opportunities for women. Problems connected with this assignment and the prospects for further progress at regional and central levels have been discussed at special conferences ...
>
> To sum up: it can be said that the instructions to the county administrative boards have helped to focus the attention of the regional bodies on the conditions relative to women on the labour market and in the education sector.
>
> As a result of the instructions, many county administrative boards have adopted programmes to cover several years and have also invested some of their own funds in special regional projects.
>
> (Ministry of Labour, 1987, p132)

As a result of this exercise, the Ministry of Labour has provided special funds to three counties to further develop their excellent models as pilots for other regions.

6.2 CONTRAC. COMPLIANCE AND GOVERNMENT PURCHASING

This form of affirmative action - linked to industry policy and planning - has important potential implications for the employment and training of women. Contract compliance originated in the U.S., where the Federal Government exerted pressure on companies supplying services to it, to follow equal opportunity procedures. In England in the early eighties the GLC and other Councils widened this approach to include additional factors such as health and safety and other employment procedures in the construction industry. In compiling its list of approved construction companies, the GLC found, for example, that 60 percent of the companies surveyed 'had no health and safety policy, or had one that was inadequate, whilst some were not even aware of the legal requirements' (McKay in SCC, 1984, p11).

The GLC evaluation highlights two essential ingredients in successful contract compliance policy:

1. Vigorous assessment of firms before they are put on the approved list.

2. Adequate monitoring of procedures.

(ibid, p11)

In Sheffield, the City Council has established a Code of Practice for firms providing services to the Council (which is the largest local employer, and pays out around £100 million to private firms). The Council has established a list of Approved Contractors like the GLC - who it can be 'reasonably sure will respect the Council's Standing Orders and Policies' (SCC, Undated, p19). Approval hinges upon appropriate standards relevant to equal opportunity practices, technical and financial standing, apprenticeship training ratios, minimal use of subcontractors, appropriate health and safety and employment practices.

Opportunities exist to extend contract compliance requirements in federal, state and local purchasing in Australia, to promote women's employment and training. Similar requirements already exist, and are being extended and tightened, with respect to the proportion of Australian produced content

and technology transfer in major contracts. These regulations could be extended to include criteria relating to women's employment and training. As the GLC concludes, monitoring then becomes crucial to positive change.

6.3 INDUSTRY ASSISTANCE AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

In only a few countries have governments specifically tied industry development or assistance funds to equal opportunity objectives. There appears to be a reluctance in some countries to take such interventionist, punitive steps on women's employment issues. In Germany, for example, while firms are required to meet targets for the employment of physically handicapped people or pay a fine, no similar measure has been introduced to ensure women's training or recruitment. Indeed, many point to the ineffectiveness of the target system: most employers elect to pay the fine rather than employ handicapped people.

In Sweden, on the other hand, in order to qualify for regional development support from the Government, firms must fulfil several conditions, including 'at least 40 percent of the jobs created should be available to either sex' (Ministry of Labour, 1987, p111).

An evaluation of the sex quota condition by the Ministry of Labour showed:

> [T]hat 38 percent of the newly created jobs at the companies receiving location support have gone to women.
>
> (ibid, p112)

A more detailed evaluation of this program will shortly be undertaken. Currently opportunities exist for exemption from this condition and there is concern that exemptions have been too liberal and/or women's longer term share of employment in these firms has declined over time.

CONCLUSION

In Australia, many opportunities exist at all levels of government, to more closely relate industry subsidies to women's employment. To date, both Commonwealth and State Governments have taken no action of this type. In addition, there is considerable opportunity for the negotiation of workplace agreements by unions with private employers. As in England, Sweden and Germany, the success of any of these initiatives will depend upon stronger union organisation of women, especially in feminised industries and occupations, supported by sustained government action and resources.

APPENDIX A ORGANISATIONS VISITED

SWEDEN

Nordistic Bryt Project

County Education Board, Vasteras

Metall Union, Stockholm

Jam-O: Office of Equal Opportunity Ombudsman

AMU - Liljeholmen, Stockholm

AMU - Head Office

AMU - Malmo

SIF (Swedish Union of Clerical and Technical Employees in Industry)

National Board of Education

S.F. (Swedish Union of Blue Collar Workers in Public Sector)

Ministry of Labour, Stockholm

Chairpersons Metall and SIF Unions, Saab Scania Plant Sodertalje

SAF - Employers Federation

LO (Swedish Trade Union Confederation)

Jamfo - Commission for Research on Equality Between Men and Women

Vattenfall Swedish Electricity Authority

Metall Trade Unionists, Kockums, Malmo

FINLAND

Nordiska Bryt Project, Helsinki

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

CEDEFOP - European Centre for Vocational Training, Berlin

BIBB - Federal Institute for Vocational Training, Berlin

Hamburg Vocational Training Centre

Hamburg Department of Employment, Youth and Social Services

Hamburg Department of School and Vocational Education

Hamburg Chamber of Crafts

Hamburg Department of Industry Development

Hamburg D.G.B. (Trade Union Federation)

Blohm and Voss AG, Shop Stewards Committee

Hamburg Foundation of Vocational Training for the Unemployed

Equal Opportunities Unit, Hamburg, Department of Mayor

BMBW - Federal Department of Education and Science

Fielmann Optik, Hamburg: example of Dual System training

Suzanne Seeland, Journalist and Researcher on Women's Vocational Education, Berlin

Florence Gerard, Programme Coordinator, IFAPLAN (Undertaking project for European Commission), Cologne

ENGLAND

Trades Union Congress:

- Training Policy Officer
- South East Region Coordinator
- Women's Officer

Labour Party

Manpower Services Commission (several officers)

Sheffield City Council

Equal Opportunities Commission (several officers)

Department of Employment

Department of Education and Science

Further Education Unit, Department of Education

YTS Projects, Sheffield

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