



“Equality will make a man of you”

Initiative to promote awareness, participation and involvement of men in favour of gender equality in the Autonomous Community of Euskadi

(PERIOD 2007-2009)



1. INTRODUCTION.

It is often thought that achieving equality between women and men is a matter that relates exclusively to women and this was indeed the case in the early seventies when public policies regarding equality in the international arena were focused solely on women and known as WID (Women in Development). Then in the eighties a new perspective known as GAD (Gender and Development) was brought to bear on the design and implementation of equality policies. This approach encourages that public policies pay gradually more attention to the role which men can play in challenging and changing unequal power relations between the sexes.

Thus, the Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, "encourages men to participate fully in all actions towards equality between women and men ". In the same vein, in the final document of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" it is emphasized that men should share responsibility for promoting gender equality with women.

However, the first time that we see any reflection and debate at the intergovernmental level regarding the role of men and boys in promoting gender equality was at the meeting of experts of the Division for the Advancement of Women of United Nations, held in Brasilia in 2003. It wasn't until 2004 and the 48th session of the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations held in New York that we saw any internationally agreed conclusions on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality.

Among other conclusions, the Commission recognized that there are still gender disparities which are reflected in imbalances of power between women and men in all spheres of society. Both women and men stand to benefit from greater equality between the sexes, since the negative effects of inequality lead to suffering in society as a whole. It also stressed that men and boys can bring about changes in attitudes, relationships, access to resources and decision-making all of which are key to promoting equality between women and men and the full enjoyment of human rights on behalf of women.

Moreover, The Commission urges that governments adopt the following measures;

- Encourage and support the ability of men and boys to promote gender equality.
- Create and implement programmes in schools, youth and sports organisations and other groups dealing with children and youth to promote positive attitudes towards gender equality.
- Develop education programs for parents, guardians and other caregivers including information on ways and means to enhance the ability of men to educate their children in a manner which promotes equality between the sexes.
- Encourage men through training and education, to participate fully in the care and support of other people, including elderly, disabled and sick and in particular children and other people in their families.
- Develop public information campaigns on the role of men in promoting equality.
- Develop and implement programmes to encourage men to be safer and more responsible in their sexual and reproductive behaviour and to use effective measures in the prevention of unwanted pregnancies and the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases.
- Encourage men and boys to take an active part in the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence. In particular the elimination of gender violence and the trafficking of women with the intention of sexual exploitation and to consider adopting measures to eliminate the demand for women and girls who form the object of this trafficking.
- Encourage and support men occupying positions of leadership to provide a positive model of equality between women and men.
- Encouraging the participation of men and boys in efforts to incorporate gender issues and their representation in institutional mechanisms to promote equality between women and men

In addition to these measures The Commission point out that there is a need to promote integrated policies of equality which avoid the creation of parallel policies for women and men. In this sense programs targeted specifically at the promotion of equality for men should be consistent with empowerment programmes for women and that they should not be detrimental to the funding of that programmes. Likewise, The Commission argue that it is important that women's organisations collaborate with those programs for men.

Moreover, in the European Union, The Roadmap for Equality Between Women and Men 2006-2010 (better known as The Roadmap for Equality) states that "men should

be encouraged to assume family responsibilities, in particular through incentives to take parental and paternity leave and to share with women the right to these benefits.

Furthermore, at meeting number 2767 of the EU Council on Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumers, held in Brussels in 2006, a series of conclusions about men and gender equality were adopted. Among other positions, the Council recognized that the issues relating to men and gender equality had not yet been fully studied, and that the issue must go beyond the reconciliation of professional and private life. It urged that Member States strengthen institutional structures that will promote equality between women and men in both public and private sectors, and that they support the participation of men in promoting and achieving gender equality

Regarding The Autonomous Community of Euskadi, following these internationally established guidelines; measures aimed specifically at men are confined within a comprehensive and holistic approach to promoting equality between women and men. This is reflected in the Act 4 / 2005 of 18 February for the Equality of Women and Men and the Fourth Plan for Equality of Women and Men adopted by the Governing Council in September 2006, whose principle objectives are; the strengthening of social, economic and political position and the promotion of personal autonomy of women while proposing measures to encourage the involvement of men as an aid and not as an obstacle to achieving these objectives.

In this regard, Axis II on Socio political Empowerment and Participation of Women in the Fourth Plan for Equality of Women and Men, states the following:

“Empowerment is therefore a valid strategy in the acquisition of power and the transformation of people who can exercise their individuality and independence in a context of full citizenship. At the same time, this is a necessary process if we are to achieve equal opportunities for women and men and this will only be achieved through the breakdown of hierarchical power structures and from the reconstruction of a new model of power that does not exclude women. Nevertheless, a new, inclusive model of social organisation that is not hierarchical will be difficult to achieve if the other 50% of the population are excluded from the process.

Therefore, alongside the empowerment of women, it is necessary to articulate processes and spaces that promote men, both individually and, where appropriate, collectively, to become aware and think about justice, legitimacy and the sustainability of the current patriarchal system which places women in a position of subordination with regard to men, as well as the negative consequences of stereotypes and gender roles arising from said system and confronting the development of their own personality, insofar as these stereotypes prevent or

hinder the achievement of their true potential and capacity, especially those relating to the world of reproduction and care giving.”

The forecasts of the Fourth Plan which are aimed more specifically at men are framed primarily in the aforementioned Axis II on Socio-political Participation and Empowerment of Women and in Axis III on Conciliation and Co-responsibility. These refer to actions aimed on the one hand, at the creation of groups of men who can analyze and work for a change in models of masculinity and towards a more egalitarian social system and on the other hand at the dissemination of information, and increased awareness through training programmes (campaigns, workshops, seminars, courses, etc.). The objective of these initiatives is that men should increase their knowledge and awareness about their responsibilities in domestic work and to motivate them to apply for licenses, permits, leave and reduced working hours for care of dependents. They are supported by the legal protection of Articles 35 and 3.1.c) of Act 4 / 2005, dated February 18, which respectively provide that "the Basque government will promote the men's responsibilities in the household" and that " although they present different treatment for women and men they are not considered to constitute sex discrimination if they have an objective and reasonable justification, among which include those actions that are based (...) on promoting the incorporation of men in domestic work and care giving.

There is therefore, a legal framework which enables governing bodies to promote initiatives which are aimed specifically at encouraging men to join and actively engage in achieving a more just and egalitarian society. This commitment is essential to stop the structural situation of inequality experienced by women in various walks of life and in particular to eradicate one of the greatest scourges of our time; male violence against women.

This new model of coexistence will not only benefit women but society as a whole. It is true that the current patriarchal social system grants men certain privileges such as the enjoyment of higher levels of income and greater authority in the public sphere while at the same time benefiting from the fact that the vast majority of domestic work and care giving is carried out by women. It is no less true that the current patriarchal system, based on its rigid differentiation of roles and expectations regarding gender exacts a heavy toll on men. For example they generally have a shorter life expectancy, are more likely to suffer from drug dependency, experience road traffic accidents, more serious accidents in the work place, become victims of violent crime or imprisonment. Moreover, as they have become socially conditioned to play the role of bread winner for their families they suffer greater pressure in their places of work to lengthen their

working day a fact which leads them to dedicate their lives to work and prevents them from fulfilling their full potential particularly in regard to reproduction and care giving. This is not to mention the cost of misunderstanding and even social rejection suffered by men who dare to go beyond their accepted social role and adopt behaviours and roles traditionally seen as “feminine”.

In conclusion, we live in a society which, apart from discriminating against women, generates dissatisfaction in both sexes. For this reason the challenge for this century must be the construction of a new, more democratic and more egalitarian social model where everybody enjoys freedom and independence in both the public and private sectors. Freedom to develop all their personal capacities and to take decisions without the constraints imposed by the traditional roles and stereotypes of gender. A system which takes into account and values the distinctive behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men.

2. DIAGNOSIS OF THE SITUATION.

In our community there are undoubtedly men who, from different fields, have joined the cause of achieving equality between women and men. These men have engaged in intellectual and public defence of the rights of women through their writing and by demonstrating publicly their participation in campaigns, conferences and by creating and participating in think tanks, etc..

Moreover, there are many more men who position themselves in favour of equality of the sexes. In this respect, the study, “Opinions of the population of the Basque Autonomous Community” which was carried out in 2004 by the Sociological Studies Office of the Presidency of the Basque Government, demonstrates the following facts;

- 77% of men (compared with 86% of women) considered the equality of women and men to be very or quite important
- 79% of men (compared with 88% of women) felt that more should be done to favour greater equality
- The vast majority of men (94%) considered that gender inequalities can be reduced or eradicated by assuming the following attitudes; Sharing the performance of domestic tasks, thereby setting an example for their children.
- The consideration of women as equals, giving value to their desires, opinions, efforts, etc.. (93%), being critical of disrespectful behaviour toward women with

their peers and friends (92%), Assume that equality has wider benefits, even for them (88%) and be active in defending the rights of women (89%).

However, these opinions are not reflected in the involvement of men in initiatives and programmes directed at gender equality. Neither is the sharing of housework and care giving a pervasive reality in our homes.

Data on participation of men in activities directed at raising awareness and training in equality demonstrate the following realities;

- Men account for 9% of the participation in the Forum For Equality Naro ¹ celebrated in 2007. This initiative is responsible for the greatest number of activities directed at fomenting awareness of issues relating to gender equality in the Basque Autonomous Community.
- Of all the students who have participated in the courses given by IVAP on equality between women and men during 2006 and 2007 under the training of the Basque Government, only 15% were men.
- Men represented 8% of the students attending the latest Masters in Equality of women and men at The University of The Basque Country and the Masters in Intervention in Violence against Women at The University of Deusto.

For its part, the statistics on the sharing of domestic work and care giving and also the use of leave and reduced working hours for care giving reveal the existence of large discrepancies according to gender;

- Men spend on average, 1 hour and 32 minutes per day on domestic work and care giving while women spend 3 hours and 50 minutes.²
- Men represent 6.1% of the total number of people who were conceded the benefit of shorter working hours and unpaid leave to facilitate care giving by the Basque Government in 2006. ³
- Only 3.5% of men shared maternity/paternity leave with their partners in 2006⁴.

¹ Forum for Equality Naro promoted by Emakunde and with the collaboration of a large number of institutions, entities and groups, is an initiative that since 2004 has been working to raise awareness, unite and strengthen the work they have conducted in favour of equality of women and men.

² Source; Survey of Use of Time. EUSTAT 2003.

³ According to data from the Department of Justice, Employment and Social Security of the Basque Government, since these aids were introduced in 2002, growth in the percentage of men who take advantage of these benefits is less than one percentage point from 5.2% in 2002 to 6.1% in 2006. Approximately 1,500 men have benefited from these measures over the same time period.

⁴ Source; Yearbook of labour and Social Affairs. Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs 2007.

Nevertheless, the low attendance of men in training and awareness raising programmes directed at equality is not only attributable to lack of interest in these questions. Other factors may help to explain this situation and these should be taken into consideration in the development of future initiatives. For example, to date equality policies in general have been aimed at women since to a large degree it is them who suffer the negative consequences of the current patriarchal system. That men also suffer under this system has perhaps not been fully appreciated to date and therefore may not have been sufficiently considered in the design of materials for training and raising awareness (content, staffing, medium of diffusion, etc.). These factors can have a very different impact on men given that this is a highly feminized field and there is widespread social stereotype that these are matters of and for only women.

In the same sense, alongside reluctance to lose the privilege and convenience of having another person in the home to attend to domestic affairs – work which is not valued socially or economically yet is absolutely necessary for the normal functioning of any society–, there are other factors to consider when interpreting the statistics on the sharing of domestic work and care giving between women and men, above all are those concerning the use of leave and reduced working hours for the care of people. As a consequence of the influence of gender based roles and stereotypes it is considered socially “normal” that women bear the brunt of responsibility regarding the work of reproduction, even though this acts to the detriment of their professional careers and they are therefore under greater pressure to make use of licenses and rights to reduced working hours and leave of absence to care for individuals. To this one must add that in many cases, families can not afford to lose, even temporarily, their main revenue source. Due to the pay gap between men and women this revenue source is usually derived from the man's wages.

Another factor which can not be overlooked is the volition of women who, in many cases are faced with the impracticality of both partners taking advantage of paternity/maternity leave and reduced working hours to care for their families. Instead these women opt out of work and accept all the negative consequences which this entails for their professional development. From another perspective, businesses are perhaps less likely to hire women who are anticipated to interrupt their careers. In any case the reality is that, although in theory the majority of men are in favour of promoting equality between women and men, in practice they remain insufficiently

involved in achieving gender equality as can be seen by their lack of participation in awareness campaigns and training programmes designed to develop their involvement in domestic work and care giving.

Measures have, therefore, been taken in order to promote greater awareness, participation and involvement of men towards equality between women and men, as well as to create a critical mass between them. A mass that will generate a multiplier effect on their environment thus enabling substantial progress in achieving this end. These measures would complement other initiatives aimed at promoting the empowerment of women. What follows are a set of objectives and measures, under the premise that awareness and training is the key to changes in attitude and behaviour. Specific measures to increase the awareness and commitment of men to gender equality and which will facilitate further progress in changing the currently prevailing models or cultural behaviour based on gender. These changes are necessary to rectify the factors causing the structural inequality suffered by women and to increase human development opportunities for both men and women.

3. OBJETIVES AND MEASURES

Objective 1: Increase the number of men in favour of equality between women and men.

Measures:

- 1.1 Conduct awareness campaigns specifically aimed at men on the importance of their contribution to gender equality and the benefits it can bring to them, and to promote an active stand against violence against women.
- 1.2 Organize an international congress on masculinity and daily life in the context of the Meetings *Sare*.
- 1.3 Incorporate masculinity as a topic of priority in the Naro Forum for Equality.
- 1.4 Award grants to promote men's groups and workshops for equality.
- 1.5 Develop, disseminate and collect membership of the Charter of the Basque people for equality and against violence towards women.
- 1.6 Present and work the Charter of the Basque men for equality and against violence towards women in schools, youth and sports organizations and other

groups dealing with children and young people to encourage their positive attitudes towards equality.

- 1.7 Create a portal dedicated to men and gender equality in www.euskadi.net
- 1.8 Implement an outreach program specifically for men, which addresses in a simple and informative format, issues of masculinity and everyday life: health care, responsibility, fatherhood, sexuality, violence, etc..
- 1.9 Provide a manual and other materials to raise awareness among parents on the birth of their first child, aimed at both giving guidance on practical issues regarding care and fatherhood, and to give advice and encourage reflection on the influence of the father figure in the transmission of non-sexist values
- 1.10 Organise a public event, chaired by the president of The Basque Autonomous Community to applaud those people who, in one form or another, have participated in the Initiative Gizonduz.

Agencies most directly involved

- Lehendakaritza-Presidency of The Basque Government.
- Emakunde- Basque Women's Institute.

Expected Results:

- Doubling the proportion of men participating in the Forum for Equality, Naro⁵.
- Aim for 10,000 men to join the Charter of The Basque Men for Equality and Against Violence Towards Women.
- Aim for the participation of 1,000 men in the specific awareness programme.

Objective 2: Increase the number of men trained in issues relating to equality between women and men.

Measures:

- 2.1 Take positive action to promote greater access for men to courses on equality organized by IVAP (The Basque Institute of Public Administration) in the field of staff training in the Basque public administration.
- 2.2 Take positive action to promote greater access for men to the masters or other postgraduate degrees specializing in the study of equality for women and men.

⁵ According to data from Emakunde-Basque Women's Institute, men represent 9% of people who have participated in the latest edition of the Forum for Equality Naro held in 2007.

- 2.3 Implement a training program specifically for men covering material related to gender equality and addressing such issues as gender relations and new forms of masculinity, traditional masculinity and its implications in relation to health, care, responsibility in reproductive work, high risk behaviour, sexuality, crime, violence, etc..
- 2.4 Develop and disseminate a document describing the experience of the Gizonduz initiative, the results and training materials generated.

Agencies most directly implicated:

- Lehendakaritza-Presidency of The Basque Government.
- Department of Finance and Public Administration.
- IVAP-Basque Institute of Public Administration.
- Emakunde- Basque Women's Institute.

Expected Results:

- Doubling of the percentage of men who have completed training courses in gender equality organised by IVAP in the context of training of staff in public administration⁶.
- Doubling the percentage of men attending the masters or other types of postgraduate studies at universities specialised in equality of women and men⁷.
- Aim for the participation of 100 men in specific training programmes.

Objective 3: Increase the responsibility of men in care giving and domestic work⁸.

Measures:

- 3.1 Grant the workers of the General Administration of the Autonomous Community and its autonomous bodies permission to attend childbirth preparation courses consistent with that of the mother.

⁶ According to data supplied by IVAP men represent 15% of all students in training courses on equality that were taught by them from January 2006 to October 2007.

⁷ According to the University of The Basque Country and the University of Deusto, men account for 8% of all students in the latest edition of the masters specializing in equality studies on women and men.

⁸ To further this goal, the Basque Government, through the Department of Justice, Employment and Social Security, have since 2002 been awarding financial assistance as part of measures to reconcile work and family life, and these are higher for men who choose to reduce their working hours and unpaid leave with the intention of care giving. These grants are governed by Decree 118/2007, of 17 July.

- 3.2 Expand paternity leave to men who have participated in awareness programmes and training offered by the Gizonduz Initiative and who work in the General Administration of the Autonomous Community and its autonomous bodies.
- 3.3 Extend by one or two weeks leave for childbirth for workers in the General Administration of the Autonomous Community and its autonomous agencies to qualify, respectively, for two to four weeks of such leave.
- 3.4 Increase credited hours of leave to attend to care of relatives with chronic illness or immobility for men who have participated in awareness programs and training offered by the Gizonduz Initiative and who work in the General Administration of the Autonomous Community and its autonomous agencies.
- 3.5 Promote in other areas of the public and private sectors the implementation of the measures referred to in the preceding paragraphs and / or similar efforts to encourage the co-responsibility of men in domestic work and care.

Agencies most directly involved:

- Lehendakaritza-Presidency of The Basque Government.
- Department of Finance and Public Administration.
- Emakunde- Basque Women's Institute.

Expected Results:

- To increase by 20% the amount of time dedicated by men to domestic tasks and care giving⁹.
- To double the percentage of men who share with their partners the right to maternity/paternity leave¹⁰.
- To increase to 10% the percentage of men receiving aid from the Basque Government for shorter working hours and unpaid leave in order to care for people¹¹.

⁹ According to data from the Survey of Use of Time, conducted by Eustat in 2003, men spend, on average 1:32 hours on housework daily.

¹⁰ According to the Yearbook of Labour Statistics and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services, 3,5% of men have shared with their partners, maternity / paternity leave in 2006.

¹¹ According to data from the Department of Justice, Employment and Social Security, in 2006 men represented 6.1% of total beneficiaries of aid granted by the Basque Government for shorter working hours and unpaid leave to care for family members. Although since 2002 men stand to gain more from these benefits the percentage of men receiving such benefits increased from 5.2% in 2002 to only 6.1% in 2006.

5. DURATION AND TIMETABLE.

The duration of the initiative will be from November 2007 to December 2009 according to the following timetable;

Measure	2007	2008	2009
1.1 Specific awareness campaigns to change attitudes and promote active positioning of men for equality and against violence towards women.	X	X	X
1.2. Organise an International Congress on masculinity in everyday life.	X		
1.3 Include masculinity as thematic content of the Forum for Equality Naro.		X	X
1.4 Give grants for men's groups and workshops relating to men and equality.		X	X
1.5 Develop, disseminate and collect membership of the Charter of the Basque people for equality and against violence towards women.		X	X
1.6 Present and work the Charter of the Basque men for equality and against violence towards women in schools, youth and sports organizations and other groups dealing with children and young people to encourage their positive attitudes towards equality.		X	X
1.7 Create a portal dedicated to this material in <i>www.euskadi.net</i> .		X	X
1.8 Implement an outreach program specifically for men.		X	X
1.9 Provide a handbook and other awareness materials for new parents		X	X
1.10 Organize a public event to thank those involved in the initiative.			X
2.1 Take positive action to promote greater access of men to IVAP courses on equality.		X	X
2.2 Take positive action to promote men's access to the masters and postgraduate courses on equality between women and men.		X	X
2.3 Implement a training programme specifically for men.		X	X
2.4 Develop and disseminate a document explaining the experience.			X
3.1 Grant workers from the General Administration of the Autonomous Community and its autonomous bodies permission to attend childbirth preparation courses consistent with that of the mother.		X	X
3.2 Lengthen paternity leave to men who have participated in awareness programmes and training of the Gizonduz Initiative and work in the General Administration of the Autonomous Community and its autonomous bodies.		X	X
3.3 To increase by one or two weeks the two or four weeks maternity/paternity leave currently granted to workers in public administration.		X	X

