

Eğitim-Sen Women's Commission Meeting Notes

On May 28, 2016, the Women's Commission of the Universities branch of *Eğitim-Sen* (Education and Science Workers' Union) held a workshop in Istanbul to discuss policies to be presented at the Union's Women Conference that will take place in November, 2016. As the PLOTINA team at Özyeğin University, we participated in this workshop both to follow the debates and policy proposals, and to introduce PLOTINA with an eye to see how we could collaborate with the Union's Women Commission and vice versa.

With approximately 120,000 members, *Eğitim-Sen* is the second largest public workers' union in Turkey operating in the education sector. Its membership is composed of teaching and academic staff as well as laborers working in different parts of primary, middle and higher education institutions. *Eğitim-Sen* is known to be a union with a strong commitment to upholding democratic values and practices, and among other things, to creating awareness about multiple forms of gender inequality experienced in the sector and nationwide.

In the workshop, three academics from Istanbul University and Aegean University delivered presentations concerning structural and historical aspects of gender discrimination and ways of overcoming it in academia. The first of those presentations, all of which we found extremely informative, was titled "Debate on the Gender-Sensitive University," and introduced the experiences of women struggling to create such an educational and work-environment primarily at Istanbul University. The presenter suggested that a gender-sensitive university can be materialized by (i) reforming institutional structures, (ii) gender mainstreaming in education, (iii) gender-sensitive budgeting and planning, and (iv) implementing mechanisms aimed at preventing sexual violence and harassment.

The second presentation focused on "Women's Labor in Universities" and covered data on the percentages of female workers at various institutional levels and the distribution of female students across academic departments. The last presentation was titled "Gender-Sensitive Budgeting and Strategic Planning in Universities," and argued that the following issues were of central importance to effect such budgeting and planning: (i) High administrations should commit themselves to a gender-sensitive financial policy and should openly declare that commitment, (ii) gender equality should be integrated into the policy-making processes, (iii) equality impact assessment and analysis of services should be made, and (iv) different budget designations should be linked to gender equality and their value analyses should be made accordingly.

After those presentations, we introduced the PLOTINA project to the participants and we are happy to state that the members of the Women's Commission of *Eğitim-Sen* expressed their keen support and interest in maintaining communication and exchange of ideas with us.

Attached, you can also find the proceedings of the commission's debate on the policies and proposals to be submitted at *Eğitim-Sen* Women Conference in November, 2016.