

**Modern Apprenticeships:  
Training for the boys?**

**An Equal Employment Opportunities Discussion Paper  
for the Human Rights Commission**

**Dr Judy McGregor and Lance Gray**

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## Executive Summary

1. The Modern Apprenticeships Scheme has been well received by the New Zealand public with strong demand by employers for apprentices. Recently the Associate Minister of Education (Tertiary Education) announced 500 extra places for the present financial year. For Modern Apprenticeships to be taken seriously as a “modern” initiative, however, equity issues must be addressed. Two years since the introduction of the Modern Apprenticeships Scheme females represent 6.6 percent (381) of total participants (5739). European males, alone, represent 76.4 of total apprenticeships, while Māori represent 14 percent of total apprenticeships compared to 1.9 percent for Pacific Peoples.
2. The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in its latest report expressed direct concerns about the Modern Apprenticeships Scheme and the apparent reinforcement of stereotypical gender roles in targeting industries that would “appeal” to women.
3. The low participation of young women in Modern Apprenticeships is the result of a number of historical issues. First, participating industries have strongly entrenched gender barriers which make them particularly unattractive to young women. Second, the parents of secondary school children have traditionally seen apprenticeships as a pathway for non-academic young men. Finally, secondary schools have promoted tertiary study in the form of University or Polytechnic as their priority and young women, in particular, have chosen educational pathways.
4. The Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinator is the key link between the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) and employers. It is the role of Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators to link “potential” apprentices, from pre-trade courses, private solicitations, Gateway programmes and secondary schools with employers. Employers in particular are dependent on Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators for removing much of the administrative and recruitment work that was normally associated with apprenticeships.
5. Modern Apprenticeships are currently over-subscribed by young males with Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) providing training agreements for approximately 25 percent more apprentices than they are being funded for. This is driven primarily by the demand from employers who appear desperate for skilled young people, and partly because of the administrative advantages of the new system.

6. Many ITOs appear acutely aware of the gender disparities in their industry and would like to help employers recruit from a broader labour pool if they could. What appears to be happening is that ITOs and Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators are turning into “proxy” recruiting agents for their industries.
7. As the Electricity Supply Industry Training Organisation (ESITO) has found, even with financial incentives, it could not place young women because there was no “pool” of young women wanting to enter the industry. Any financial incentives need to be provided in unison with a campaign of explaining the new system to parents, as well as directly addressing students in secondary school as to why young women in particular would want to take up an apprenticeship in an industry.
8. Experience in Germany with a large vocational training system shows that certain industries such as construction maintain gender barriers regardless of efforts, while other industries have supported the employment of women. There appears no reason why industries such as Agriculture and Horticulture that create so much of New Zealand’s income could not improve the gender balance of Modern Apprenticeships.
9. Overseas experience of introducing apprenticeships into the office administration, tourism and retail sectors suggests that while female participation statistics improve on the face of it, there is a great deal of “churning” of participants because of low pay and lack of a genuine career path in these industries. The new industry areas are required to develop qualifications to provide a range of skills “lifting” young people from low paid and low status jobs and propel them into management. Whether this will overcome the CEDAW Committee’s stated concern of perpetuating occupational segregation remains to be seen.
10. Finally, the inequities of Modern Apprenticeships reflect pervasive imbalances throughout many industries in relation to gender, ethnicity and people with disabilities. Addressing barriers to the recruitment of these groups in the industries that dominate the apprenticeship scheme and in combating discriminatory attitudes and practices are current policy challenges. There needs to be political acceptance that recruiting from only “half” the population will not serve New Zealand well in the future.

## Recommendations

1. Work with **Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators** in developing strategies to encourage the recruitment of young women, Māori, Pacific people and people with disabilities into Modern Apprenticeships as supported by Section 15 of the Modern Apprenticeship Training Act 2000.
2. Encourage the Government to promote Modern Apprenticeships to **parents** as a pathway for young women, Māori, Pacific people and people with disabilities in any industry.
3. Support current industry initiatives (Industry Training Organisations & industry representatives) regarding the recruitment of young women, Māori, Pacific people and people with disabilities through **secondary schools** for Modern Apprenticeships.
4. Encourage the Tertiary Education Commission to make **reporting against targets** for more diverse participation, a contractual requirement for Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators as supported by Section 13(1) of the Modern Apprenticeship Training Act 2000.
5. Ask the Tertiary Education Commission to ensure prospective Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators undertake **training** in diversity and gender awareness before undertaking co-ordinator roles.
6. Work with “**champions**” of equity issues within Industry Training Organisations to provide ideas, “role models” and best practice for reducing barriers to participation.
7. Support the provision of **incentives**, including financial incentives, for the recruitment of young women, Māori, Pacific people and people with disabilities, where particular Industry Training Organisations have made a commitment to diversity.
8. Support the Industry Training Federation (ITF) in its continued “show-casing” of **case studies** addressing equity issues.
9. Support a **review of the funding criteria** for Modern Apprenticeships so that it aligns with the intentions of the Industry Training Act 1992, Section 13b, which specifically encourages the promotion of training to people to whom such training has not traditionally been available.
10. Ensure that **information** and **marketing** of the Modern Apprenticeship scheme is relevant to community groups that focus on employment issues for women, Māori, Pacific Peoples, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities.

11. Encourage the Associate Minister for Education (Tertiary Education), who has responsibility for the Modern Apprenticeships scheme, to lead initiatives to increase participation rates of diverse groups.
12. Encourage relevant **Government departments** to increase the number of **public sector** apprenticeships of women, Māori, Pacific people and people with disabilities.

## Introduction

*Deliberate policy measures aimed at ensuring equal access to, and equal opportunities in, the acquisition and maintenance of educational and skill endowments are crucial to redress inequities in labour market outcomes across social groups. They act as a powerful device to overcome unproductive, volatile, low-paid and low-status work in which groups that are discriminated against are often clustered. From a society's perspective, the benefits derived from more productive and more responsible citizens may surpass private returns.*

Time for Equality at Work, ILO Global Report, 2003

The purpose of the present report is to analyse **Modern Apprenticeships** in terms of the functions of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner under S.17 (e) of the Human Rights Amendment Act 2001, which are to monitor and analyse progress in improving equal employment opportunities in New Zealand, and to report to the Minister on the results of that monitoring and analysis. Section 22 (c) of the Human Rights Act 1993 regarding the provision of less favourable terms of employment with regard to opportunities for training is also relevant.

The Modern Apprenticeship Training Act 2000 commenced on 1 January 2001 with Modern Apprenticeships launched in July 2001. Modern Apprenticeships are described as:

**... combining the strength of the apprenticeship tradition with the latest in workplace education thinking.**

The aims are to help **young people aged 16-21 years** on entry, achieve national qualifications at levels 3 and 4 of the National Qualifications Framework. A caveat does provide, however, for older people who wish to change their career to become modern apprentices. No other detail is provided through print or web-based media about what this actually means. All supporting media consistently and deliberately project a youth focus. Two years since the commencement of **Modern Apprenticeships** the following participant demographics are available (TEC, 2003).

**Table 1: Gender of Modern Apprenticeships as at 30 June 2003**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	5,358	93.4
Female	381	6.6
Total	5739	100.0

As Table 1 shows, the percentage of women in Modern Apprenticeships is 6.6 percent. An interesting comparison with Modern Apprenticeships is with the numbers of female Industry Trainees who represented 24 percent of all trainees in 2003. The Tertiary Education Commission (2003) states that women represented 13 percent of all trainees in June 1996 four years after the introduction of the Industry Training Act 1992. They also make the point that women represent 46 percent of the workforce. The Commission sees the Modern Apprenticeships Scheme as a subset of the wider industry training strategy but acknowledges it has its own identity.

**Table 2: Ethnicity by gender of Modern Apprenticeships as at 30 June 2003**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
European	4,385	94.0	280	6.0	<b>4,665</b>	81.3
Māori	745	91.0	74	9.0	<b>819</b>	14.3
Pacific Peoples	88	80.0	22	20.0	<b>110</b>	1.9
Other	124	96.1	5	3.9	<b>129</b>	2.2
Not Stated	16	100.0	-	-	<b>16</b>	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,358</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>5,739</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 2 shows that while Māori represent 14 percent of total apprentices, reflecting national proportions, Māori female participation at 9 percent compared to 91 percent of Māori men is poor. While Pacific females are 20 percent of total Pacific Peoples participation, they only represent 1.9 percent of total modern apprentices. The figures show that Modern Apprenticeships are dominated by European males and that the heavily resourced scheme has not made an impact on labour market segmentation issues that have historic roots.

**Table 3: Modern Apprenticeships by Industry  
as at 30 June 2003**

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Building & Construction	934	99.3	7	.7	<b>941</b>	16.4
Engineering	902	98.7	12	1.3	<b>914</b>	15.9
Motor	783	97.6	19	2.4	<b>802</b>	14.0
Electro-technology	437	98.0	9	2.0	<b>446</b>	7.8
Forestry	419	98.0	9	2.0	<b>428</b>	7.5
Agriculture	320	85.3	55	14.7	<b>375</b>	6.5
Horticulture	279	81.6	63	18.4	<b>342</b>	6.0
Boating	259	100.0	0	.0	<b>259</b>	4.5
Bakery	136	74.3	47	15.7	<b>183</b>	3.2
Electricity Supply	165	92.2	14	7.8	<b>179</b>	3.1
Hospitality	82	63.1	48	16.9	<b>130</b>	2.3
Flooring	122	99.2	1	0.8	<b>123</b>	2.1
Printing	101	84.9	18	15.1	<b>119</b>	2.1
Contracting	104	100.0	0	.0	<b>104</b>	1.8
Furniture	80	98.8	1	1.2	<b>81</b>	1.4
Sports Turf	58	100.0	0	0.0	<b>58</b>	1.0
Public Sector	13	23.2	43	76.8	<b>56</b>	1.0
Telecommunications	30	96.8	1	3.2	<b>31</b>	0.5
Plastics	28	96.6	1	3.4	<b>29</b>	0.5
Aeronautical Engineering	28	100.0	0	0.0	<b>28</b>	0.5
Retail	13	48.1	14	51.9	<b>27</b>	0.5
Road Transport	25	100.0	0	0.0	<b>25</b>	0.4
Tourism	9	36.0	16	64.0	<b>25</b>	0.4
Seafood	13	92.9	1	7.1	<b>14</b>	0.2
Architectural Aluminium	6	100.0	0	.0	<b>6</b>	0.1
Plumbing	6	100.0	0	.0	<b>6</b>	0.1
Food Processing	4	80.0	1	20.0	<b>5</b>	0.1
Dairy Manufacturing	2	66.6	1	33.4	<b>3</b>	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5358</b>	<b>93.4</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>5739</b>	100.0

As Table 3 shows the industries with the largest numbers of Modern Apprenticeships are dominated by males with Building & Construction, Engineering, Motor, Electro-technology and Forestry having 98 percent or more male apprentices. Only with Agriculture, Horticulture, Bakery, Hospitality and Printing is the balance less than 85 percent male. Three sectors, Tourism, Public Sector, and Retail did have more female Modern Apprentices than males, but they have comparatively low numbers.

### **Participation by Gender in Tertiary Education**

As the Ministry of Education (2003) figures show (see Table 4), there are greater numbers of females than males participating in formal education in New Zealand. Even at the ages (16 to 21) targeted by Modern Apprenticeships, there are greater numbers of females participating than males in formal education. Where then are these significant numbers of females studying?

**Table 4: Numbers in Formal Education by Age and Gender**

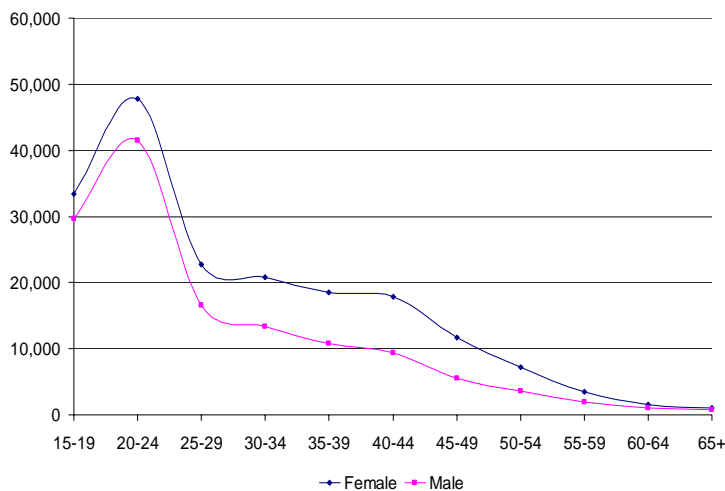


Table 5 shows that great majority of females have bypassed industry training and Modern Apprenticeships in favour of degree and post-graduate degree qualifications at polytechnics and universities (Ministry of Education, 2003). One suggestion from TEC is that women have simply made intelligent education decisions. The implication with this argument is that it suggests that the primarily male Modern Apprentices have made poor decisions. This line of argument is exactly what the Industry Training Federation (Personal Communication, 2003c) does not want to encourage because they want young people, male and female, to see Modern Apprenticeships as something to aspire to and not to be stuck with stereotypes of the past that suggested apprenticeships were for less capable males. As TEC notes, the introduction of Modern Apprenticeships was intended to re-establish an apprenticeship pathway into employment for school leavers (and some others), as young people were under-represented in formal industry training and had been for much of the 1990s.

**Table 5: Women's Participation in Tertiary Education**

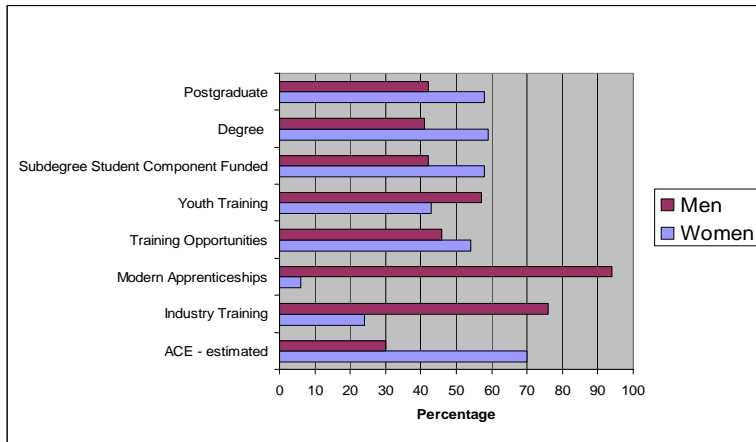
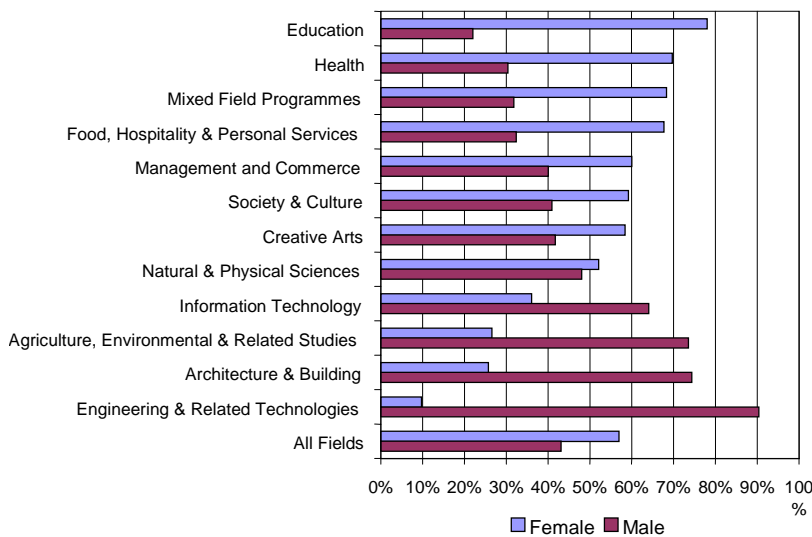


Table 6 illustrates that areas of study such as engineering and related industries are dominated by males. Table 6 reflects the significant stereotyping that is already present in education with females over-represented in fields such as education, health and hospitality (Ministry of Education, 2003).

**Table 6: Students by Field of Study and Gender, 2002**



In conclusion, while female participation in tertiary education is higher than male participation it still does not hide two key features of female participation in education. First, females are grossly under-represented in any form of industry training including Modern Apprenticeships. Second, female areas of study are concentrated in relatively few areas.

## The International Framework

A recent ILO report on equality at work makes particular reference to vocational training:

Vocational training, by equipping groups that are discriminated against with the skills needed to improve their productivity and income, can play an important role in broadening and improving employment and income opportunities for these groups. However, vocational training policies and institutions must find and overcome the barriers that members of certain groups may face at different stages of the training process.

Access to training is specifically referred to in ILO Convention 111-Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 1958 which New Zealand has ratified. Discrimination is defined as “any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity and treatment in employment or occupation”, Article 1 (1a). The presence of intent is not necessary to identify a situation of discrimination, and both direct and indirect discrimination are covered.

New Zealand’s Modern Apprenticeships scheme is subject of international employment rights scrutiny.

### **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. CEDAW was ratified by the New Zealand Government in 1985 and reports were submitted in 1988, 1994, a 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> combined report in 1998, and the 5<sup>th</sup> and most recently in 2002.

In the most recent report submitted to CEDAW (2002), the New Zealand Government addressed 16 Articles of which Employment (Article 11) along with Education (Article 10) and Health (Article 12) constituted the bulk of the report about progress on the reduction of discrimination against women. Significantly no progress regarding the **provision of training opportunities for women** is mentioned in the executive summary.

By contrast, in Article 11, Employment, under the heading “Modern Apprenticeships” the report states (CEDAW, 2002, p.92):

Although Modern Apprenticeships Co-ordinators are to “have particular regard to the needs of Māori, the Pacific Islands peoples of New

Zealand, people with disabilities, and women” (Modern Apprenticeship Training Act 2000), participation by women has been very low – women were 5 percent of total participants as at 30 June 2002. Thus far, the focus has been on establishing this initiative. Future efforts will be directed towards improving the participation of groups such as women, Māori and Pacific peoples.

The Government’s thinking is set out in the following statement:

... work is underway to increase female participation by incorporating **more industries to appeal to women**, such as office administration, retail and hospitality (CEDAW, 2002, p93).

Not surprisingly the CEDAW Committee (2003) picked upon this statement in its questions to New Zealand’s report when it notes (p.16):

While it is commendable to introduce the Modern Apprenticeship programme in sectors traditionally available for women, has the Government considered the implications of this approach in terms of the reinforcement of stereotypical gender roles? Has the Government considered an approach which would endeavour to make the sectors currently targeted by Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators more appealing to women through awareness raising and other gender awareness strategies?

The New Zealand Government’s response was to state (CEDAW, 2003, p.17):

The Tertiary Education Commission (which incorporates the former Skill New Zealand) has been directed to implement explicit strategies to increase the participation of women in Modern Apprenticeships. Strategies are currently being developed for consideration by the Social Development Cabinet Committee.

Most significantly this response also stated that (p.17):

The Tertiary Education Commission intends to pilot possible strategies in a sample of industries and regions in 2003/2004.

### **Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)**

The reasoning behind TEC’s approach was earlier revealed by Peter Palmer, Strategic Manager, who while acknowledging that gender disparity was an issue, reinforced the message that in “rolling out” Modern Apprenticeships, industries with existing training infrastructure such as construction, engineering and forestry were focused on (PSA, 2002). He goes on to say (p.20):

...Modern Apprenticeships have now been launched in hospitality, tourism and retail. An office administration apprenticeship, due to be launched next year should help **improve the statistics**.

Continuing this point, the Public Service Association (PSA, 2002) has conveyed an expectation that the Modern Apprenticeship scheme will achieve a greater gender balance by December 2003, where the government has set a target of 6000 Modern Apprenticeships.

However, the use of financial incentives as special measures to increase the representation of disadvantaged groups seems to have been eliminated as a policy measure. Skill New Zealand (2001) in the publication *Moving forward: Skills for the knowledge economy resulting from the review of industry training in New Zealand* said in relation to the issue of targeting funding to particular groups that (p.5):

... the funding criteria should not be allocated on the basis of very broad criteria such as ethnicity or gender.

Yet following this statement the final sentence under the heading of *Moving Forward: Government Decisions* states (p.5):

Skill New Zealand will also work with ITOs to extend the geographical coverage of training arrangements.

This is an area that warrants a policy rethink. Of interest is that for 2002, \$100,000 of the Industry Training Fund was reserved to fund industry training initiatives for small and medium-sized enterprises in industries where there was no training culture. A preliminary report by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research suggests that there are strong barriers to industry training in the SME sector primarily because of small profit margins, an entrenched distrust of government and a lack of direct benefits seen from training (NZCER, 2002).

While there appears to be reluctance by TEC to address equity issues such as gender and ethnicity, there is no such concern with other "broad" groups such as SMEs and geographical coverage.

The clearest signals about what TEC intends to do with Modern Apprenticeships and **female** participation rates is set out in the *Final Report Skill New Zealand for the six months ended 31 December 2002* (Skill New Zealand, 2002, p.16).

The extension of Modern Apprenticeships into Retail, Tourism and Hospitality is now well underway ...The piloting of Modern Apprenticeships in Office Administration in Auckland is now complete ...Modern Apprenticeships in Office Administration will be launched nationwide early 2003.

Along with the piloting of apprenticeships within these more “female” friendly industries a nationwide publicity campaign including print and radio was launched. To quote (p.17):

...a new Modern Apprenticeships marketing campaign was run during August/September 2002. The campaign strategy was aimed at both employers and young people with a particular emphasis on encouraging more women, Māori and Pacific peoples...

The report then goes on to say (p.17):

Although the marketing strategy appears to have been successful in increasing interest for Modern Apprenticeships, increasing the participation of under represented groups is still a major focus of the initiative.

The “new” Modern Apprenticeships industry areas are required to develop qualifications that provide a range of skills so young people can be “lifted” out of low paid and low status jobs and provide opportunities for advancement into management or supervisory roles.

The previous discussion shows that TEC is the Government agency responsible for funding and driving what has become a popular initiative: Modern Apprenticeships. Indeed the Prime Minister Helen Clark has been quoted as saying (Skill New Zealand, 2002, p.1):

“The Modern Apprenticeships initiative is, I believe, delivering the talented **young people** this country needs to build its knowledge economy in the years ahead.”

What is not provided in public documents from TEC is why it believes gender and ethnic disparities still exist and show little sign of improvement. The next section will discuss the major reasons why these inequities exist followed by a section focused upon possible remedies. TEC also suggests that two years is too early to evaluate Modern Apprenticeships with regard to gender, Māori and Pacific people’s participation. The opposite argument could be made that the greatest opportunity for making a difference with regard to these under-represented groups is to put in place initiatives early so that the structural inequalities of the past apprenticeship system are not replicated.

### **Inequity within Modern Apprenticeships**

An apprenticeship is described in the Modern Apprenticeship Training Act 2000 as fundamentally a contract between a young employee to receive training toward a recognised qualification in return for lesser wages based on the promise of future reward for skills. The traditional apprenticeship, which is familiar to parents of secondary school-aged children, was based in “trade” industries such as carpentry, electrical work and plumbing. Children that were not considered academically suited were often directed towards traditional

apprentices. Apprenticeships have never been considered a pathway for “exceptional” academic students with these students often taking the pathway of an engineering or technology degree at university (Personal Communication, 2003a)

In the 1980s, a combination of events such as the privatisation of large Government employers of apprentices, such as Railways and Telecommunications, high unemployment and poor economic conditions saw the traditional apprenticeship system collapse. The National Government’s Industry Training Act 1992 was an attempt to revive industry training and bring a more co-ordinated approach to funding and management.

The Labour Government’s Modern Apprenticeship Act 2000 has been well received by employers, with a strong demand for Modern Apprentices illustrated by the Minister of Education’s recent announcement of the funding of a further 500 Modern Apprentices. Unfortunately though, the gender and ethnic inequities of the past have been recreated and are perpetuated by the scheme.

Industries that have always had apprentices have taken up Modern Apprenticeships with the most significant change being the funding by TEC of Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators to remove the administrative burden from employers. These changes cannot hide the fact though, that the majority of apprentices are male.

In a soon to be released report (Curson, 2003) the Industry Training Federation (ITF) urges a “more in-depth understanding of the reasons behind vertical and horizontal gender segregation in the workforce will better inform the debate about gaps between women’s participation in training and the workforce. Indeed, the same applies for men – gaps in higher levels of education by men may warrant further investigation by government.”

### **What do young people and their parents think?**

Given the discussion about Modern Apprenticeships it might be considered that young people and their parents have an apprenticeship as a high priority when thinking about future employment choices. The reality is that Modern Apprenticeships barely register as a choice and certainly not a priority. For example, as noted by the “Destinations and Tracking Pilot” (Career Services, 2003), of the 1277 (22.5 percent) respondents who indicated they would finish school, only 73 (5.7 percent) indicated they intended to start a Modern Apprenticeship.

The Destinations study showed that parents (63 percent) were the key influence upon their children’s employment and study choices followed by careers information and advice from school (44 percent), a point well established in the international literature (Julien, 1999). Of interest is that with the follow-up survey, 136 respondents indicated they had started a Modern Apprenticeship suggesting that this alternative became available to respondents late in their decision-making. TEC believes that it is not

surprising that Modern Apprenticeships did not significantly register as a career option given the scheme's comparative youth and the fact that apprenticeships disappeared from public consciousness as a career option during the 1990s. Equally, it can be said that strong Government support and publicity for the scheme would have promoted apprenticeships as a career option in the public's mind.

With regard to gender and types of study undertaken, the results of the Destinations study reinforce existing gender stereotypes. Males were much more likely to be engaged in engineering, automotive and mechanical subject areas while females were more likely to be studying commerce. Similarly, with work undertaken females were more likely to be in retail and office administration compared to labouring and the apprenticeship areas of plumbing and carpentry. A point that may not be appreciated by many is that students were outcome focused with 58 percent indicating they were simply at school so they could get a job, while 61 percent noted that they were there so that they could move onto tertiary education.

A related issue is the Government school to work transition initiative of **Gateway** (TEC, 2003a) which is available to senior students (year 11-13) **only** from schools in the decile 1 to 5 range. This means that the incomes of the families with children at these schools are at the lower end of the spectrum compared to decile 10 schools. This initiative aims to provide a range of structured learning opportunities in the workplace which often lead to future employment opportunities as employers have had an opportunity to gauge the work abilities of these school students. The final report (TEC, 2003) shows that of 2170 participants, 40 percent were female, and 86 students ended up in Modern Apprenticeships. A disappointing aspect of this report is the failure to differentiate by gender with regard to reported successes. For example, the report notes that 25 percent of Māori who gained employment started a modern apprenticeship. What is not indicated, anywhere, is how many females received apprenticeships throughout the programme.

### **Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators**

The selection of modern apprentices gets to the "crux" of the equality issue. The traditional approach has been that individual employers advertise apprenticeship positions or that young people approach employers and request to be taken on as an apprentice. The apparent early success of Modern Apprenticeships has been that Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators have now taken on what employers considered an onerous task.

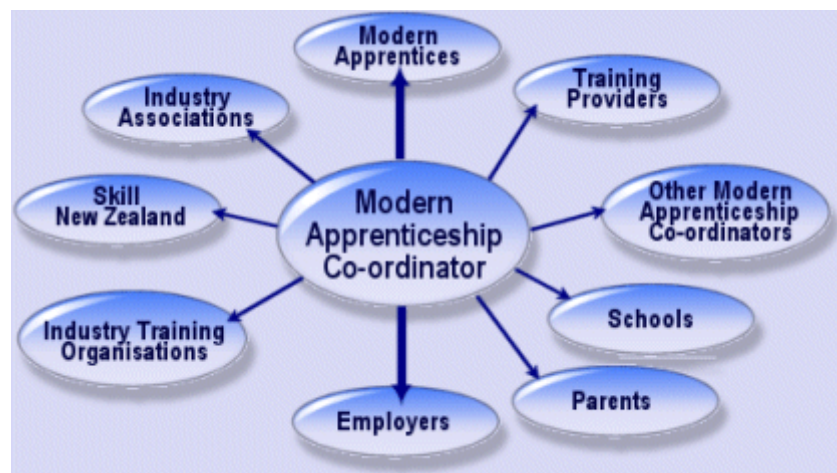
This role of **recruitment** gives the Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinator significant leverage in being able to address real change at the employer level. This view is well reflected in a quote to *Modern Apprenticeship News* (2003, p.2):

The traditional apprenticeship system was very time consuming for both the employer and the employee. Further, it was hard to define exactly what was required of those involved. Modern Apprenticeships remove those responsibilities and place them firmly with a co-ordinator...

Furthermore the employer quoted that **recruiting** young people was a barrier, giving weight to the suggestion that if employers were presented with capable young people and received “real” support from Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators, then progress could be made. Supporting this analysis is TEC’s nationwide publicity campaign launched in August which to quote *Modern Apprenticeship News* (2003, p,2):

... is aimed at supporting the marketing strategies of Modern Apprenticeships Co-ordinators.

Any initiative therefore, that directly targets Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators in their efforts to match and support employers with apprentices, has the potential to make significant impact simply because employers appear to becoming reliant on Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators to do the recruitment for them. As the graphic below shows, Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators are at the centre of any decisions made about the recruitment and selection of apprentices.



(BCITO, 2003)

All Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators are required to sign a contract setting out their performance obligations. These contracts have recently been amended to include what TEC (2003b) describe as a significantly stronger emphasis on co-ordinators encouraging and supporting the participation of under-represented groups compared to the previous agreement.

Section 15 of the new contract states that:

Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators encourage and support the participation of under-represented groups in Modern Apprenticeships, including Māori, Pacific peoples and women. The Co-ordinator reports to TEC on the proportion of apprentices in under-represented groups, by industry and region.

TEC states that it will be responsible for the oversight and monitoring of the Co-ordinator's performance particularly in relation to *opportunities for under-represented groups*. TEC will be looking to see how Co-ordinators demonstrate understanding and use of strategies to raise awareness and consideration of Modern Apprenticeships for those in under-represented groups.

TEC also request that Co-ordinators report six monthly on activities they have initiated and/or participated in to support the participation of under-represented groups in Modern Apprenticeships and the impact of these activities (TEC, 2003b). TEC note that the new agreements will be signed in December 2003. The jury is out on whether key performance measures such as the co-ordinator reports to TEC on the proportion of apprentices in under-represented groups, by industry and region, will increase the participation of diverse groups.

### **Electricity Supply Industry Training Organisation – Case Study**

The Industry Training Federation's (2002) report *Leading Industry Training* provides the most detailed response to the issue of improving industry training participation for women. In particular this report highlights the Electricity Supply Industry Training Organisation (ESITO) which has developed a **Responsiveness Plan**, aimed at improving the participation of Māori, Pacific peoples and women in training, with a staff member dedicated to implementing the plan.

This plan arose from an analysis of the demographics of the Electricity Supply Industry which showed that while women comprised 20 percent of their workforce they only represented 1 percent of industry trainees (ESITO, 1998). A recent report (ESITO, 2002) suggests that women's participation in the industry had increased to 29 percent with training participation (excluding Modern Apprenticeships) increasing to 5 percent.

ESITO has established a **Responsiveness Advisory Group** comprising Chief Executives and other senior figures from the industry, reflecting a distribution of ethnicity, gender, role, sector and regional participation tasked with implementing the responsiveness strategy. A key to the apparent success of ESITO's approach has been the "buy in" from the ITO Board and Chief Executive. The most important message to convey has been that responsiveness and equity policies are good for productivity. Another point

has been using the resources of organisations such as the EEO Trust, Careers Service, Te Puni Kokiri and TEC advisors.

ESITO has taken seriously its commitments to the Industry Training Act 1992, which encourages the provision of training to relatively disadvantaged groups. ESITO's primary motivation, however, has been strategic. It sees the need to increase the pool of possible potential recruits as well as to encourage training for existing employees, because the industry is experiencing skill shortages which it is feared will only worsen if they do not change their approach.

Michalle Deegan, Strategic Development Manager at ESITO, in further correspondence, has noted that presently there is a strong presence by some ITOs at secondary schools throughout New Zealand and their increasing role of promotion of their industries. In fact ITOs have inadvertently become the primary promotional vehicle for these industries as they go to schools and draw attention to the possible "pathways" into employment and a satisfying career.

ESITO is engaging in a number of activities to try and draw from the "larger" pool of potential applicants, given their concern that the pool of young European males is shrinking in relation to other groups who are presently under-represented in many industries. They are doing this through three main initiatives: 1) taster courses, 2) scholarships and 3) subsidies.

Taster courses of 4 weeks are run for primarily 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> form students where they are placed with a number of different employers and given a taste of the industry. Following from this are a number of scholarships that provide cash to support training in an industry, but importantly students are provided with a co-ordinator who will support them in finding opportunities in their selected industry.

The final incentive used has been a subsidy of \$6000 to any employer who signs a woman into a modern apprenticeship. On the face of it this initiative was unsuccessful with possibly only one taker but it did have the effect of drawing attention to the issue (Personal Communication, 2003a). To keep things in perspective, however, the electricity supply industry as at 31 August 2003 had registered 185 apprentices (ESITO, 2003).

### **Other Initiatives**

In the recent media two articles reflect the present interest with Modern Apprenticeship issues. For example, the Plumbing and Roofing Industry Organisation has launched a campaign whereby it says it will visit every secondary school in the country to try and raise awareness of an alternative to University education such as a Modern Apprenticeship (Bathgate, 2003). To quote (p.3):

"Our campaign is about lifestyle," Mr Wilson said. "We're telling people they can have good earnings, fast cars and overseas trips. We want to reinforce the image of rich trades-people."

This representative of the ITO also acutely aware of the issue of gender and makes the point that:

“At the moment, we’re only attracting half of the possible audience,” Mr Wilson said.

Whether money and fast cars will necessarily lure diverse groups to Modern Apprenticeships is another matter. The article concludes by saying that successful female trades-people will be among those speaking to schools about the benefits of training as an apprentice. In a similar vein Kevin Uncles, head of UCOL’s Applied Technology was reported in the media as saying (Matthews, 2003, p.30):

Parents also needed to rethink trades as careers for their children. The perception that trades were hard, dirty work, fit only for people who were not strong academically was out of date. Trades-people need to be good at maths and English and science.

Again the issue of gender was raised (p.3):

He hoped more young women would learn trades in the future. In the 1980s, governments pushed trades for girls in a Girls Can Do Anything Campaign with incentives ... Mr Uncles said women students he had tutored were outstanding...

These two media reports were not unusual and appear to not only support a significant amount of interest in Modern Apprenticeships, but also awareness that young women were simply not showing interest in these industries, and consequently were not then able to be recruited. Again, these reports highlight the significance of secondary schools and parents as key targets in being able to influence the direction of young women. Another key influence is peer group approval.

The ITF Report (Curson, 2003 draft) also suggests ITOs should include and emphasise the training needs of women within marketing and promotion activities, and when identifying skill needs within industry such as qualification development.

## **Conclusion**

The Modern Apprenticeships Scheme is presently attracting media attention given the demand for places as well as the deliberate efforts of individual ITOs to market themselves to school leavers as the end of the secondary school year approaches. TEC and ITOs are clearly trying to raise the profile of industry training and Modern Apprenticeships through targeting secondary schools and parents as well as the young people themselves. The effectiveness of such efforts is difficult to gauge, but what is clear is that parents presently do not understand and consider apprenticeships of any kind

as a pathway for young women, a reflection of outdated but persistent societal attitudes.

A separate concern is the relevance of information about, and the marketing of the Modern Apprenticeship scheme to community groups that have a particular focus on employment issues for specific groups such as women, Māori, Pacific peoples, other ethnic minorities and people with disabilities.

The leverage for immediate impact appears to be at the level of Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators because they are pivotal in linking employers with apprentices. Any initiative providing support and strategies for improving the recruitment of young women and diverse groups has the potential for the greatest success. Only through the generation of a “pool” of young women interested in Modern Apprenticeships does it seem that financial incentives would have any influence.

As described by the example of the Electricity Supply Industry Training Organisation some ITOs are actively creating opportunities, along with Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators, to get young people (and young women in particular) into workplaces so that employer and potential apprentices get the opportunity to see what life in the industry would be like. One concern expressed is that unless significant numbers of young women enter an industry existing gender imbalances would discourage many from continuing.

Any efforts to increase the understanding for parents and secondary schools about the opportunities for young women provided by Modern Apprenticeships should be supported given the pervasive lack of understanding at present.

The public service has a unique opportunity to promote equality at work through its selection of Modern Apprenticeships and the Public Service Association has taken an active interest in the current gender inequity.

The Modern Apprenticeship scheme, has great promise as part of a progressive employment strategy for an innovative workforce. For the scheme to live up to its promise though, political and policy commitment are needed to ensure it is truly modern.

Finally, the question of why does it matter that there are so few women in the Modern Apprenticeships Scheme? Nicky Murray of Lincoln University (Murray, 2003) provides three reasons. At a practical level women’s peripheral participation means they are denied equitable access to government resources particularly given that Modern Apprenticeship is such a well-funded initiative (approximately \$92 million over four years). Second, the gender figures illustrate a “lack of commitment to equity in the design of the initiative”. She indicates that governments must stop making arrangements for young men then make unsatisfactory running repairs to the system to accommodate women and other diverse groups. Third, she expresses concern over the low status of the “trades” which if not addressed will render them unattractive to high calibre candidates and impact not only on diversity

but skills shortages and increasing productivity. Finally, women's low participation suggests that there is little cause for optimism that the "knowledge society" is any better than that which it replaced at delivering meaningful opportunities for a wide range of women.

## Recommendations

1. Work with **Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators** in developing strategies to encourage the recruitment of young women, Māori, Pacific people and people with disabilities into Modern Apprenticeships as supported by Section 15 of the Modern Apprenticeship Training Act 2000.
2. Encourage the Government to promote Modern Apprenticeships to **parents** as a pathway for young women, Māori, Pacific people and people with disabilities in any industry.
3. Support current industry initiatives (Industry Training Organisations & industry representatives) regarding the recruitment of young women, Māori, Pacific people and people with disabilities through **secondary schools** for Modern Apprenticeships.
4. Encourage the Tertiary Education Commission to make **reporting against targets** for more diverse participation, a contractual requirement for Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators as supported by Section 13(1) of the Modern Apprenticeship Training Act 2000.
5. Ask the Tertiary Education Commission to ensure prospective Modern Apprenticeship Co-ordinators undertake **training** in diversity and gender awareness before undertaking co-ordinator roles.
6. Work with "**champions**" of equity issues within Industry Training Organisations to provide ideas, "role models" and best practice for reducing barriers to participation.
7. Support the provision of **incentives**, including financial incentives, for the recruitment of young women, Māori, Pacific people and people with disabilities, where particular Industry Training Organisations have made a commitment to diversity.
8. Support the Industry Training Federation (ITF) in its continued "show-casing" of **case studies** addressing equity issues.
9. Support a **review of the funding criteria** for Modern Apprenticeships so that it aligns with the intentions of the Industry Training Act 1992, Section 13b, which specifically encourages the promotion of training to people to whom such training has not traditionally been available.

10. Ensure that **information** and **marketing** of the Modern Apprenticeship scheme is relevant to community groups that focus on employment issues for women, Māori, Pacific Peoples, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities.
11. Encourage the Associate Minister for Education (Tertiary Education), who has responsibility for the Modern Apprenticeships scheme to lead initiatives to increase participation rates of diverse groups.
12. Encourage relevant **Government departments** to increase the number of **public sector** apprenticeships of women, Māori, Pacific people and people with disabilities.

**The EEO Unit of the Human Rights Commission  
is interested in your feedback to this discussion document.**

**Please email comment and discussion to:  
[emilias@hrc.co.nz](mailto:emilias@hrc.co.nz)**

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