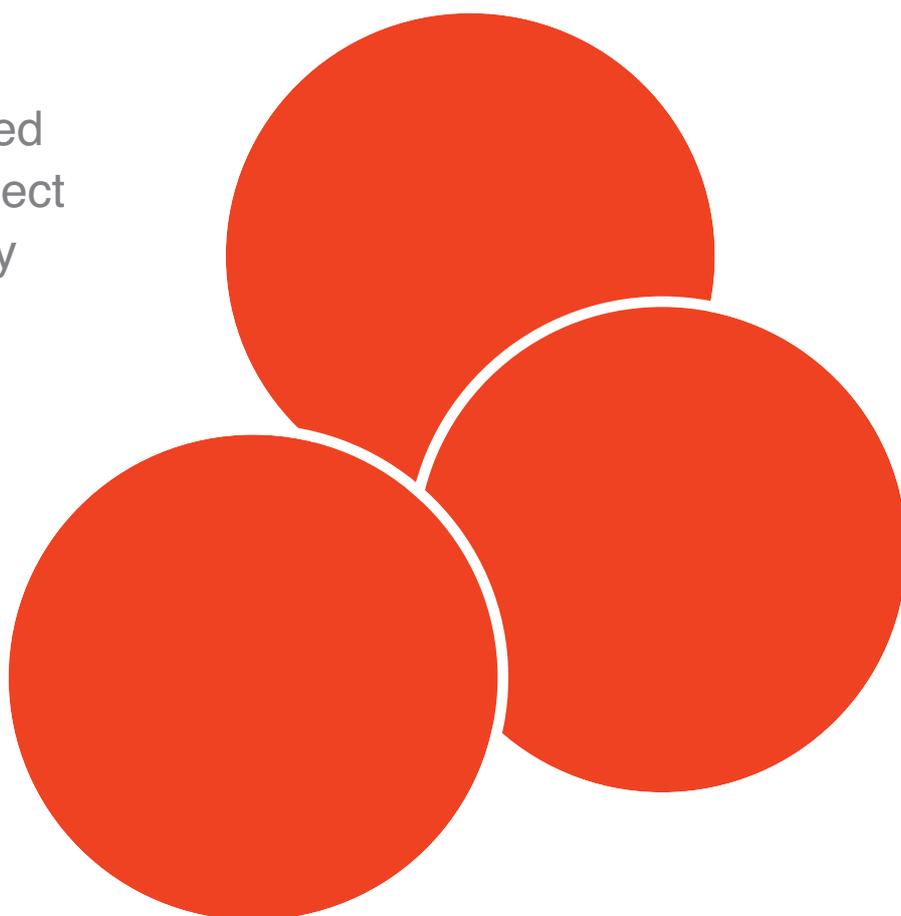


# Relations at Work and Equal Pay m/f

Become an Agent of  
Good Relations at Work

A Research Funded  
Development Project  
under FIU Equality



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Final Report, June 2013  
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# Preface

The FIU Committee has allocated development funds to FiU Equality in order to analyze what options the shop stewards have to strengthen the sense of community spirit at work and in what way the best possible awareness of equal pay can be developed as a tool the shop stewards can use to activate, involve and organize agents.

The project was launched as two two-day courses plus four company visits in the spring of 2013. Jo Krøyer, an associate professor at the Department of Psychology and Educational Studies at RUC, has been involved in the project from beginning to end and written the enclosed report, "A Research Funded Development Project under FiU Equality". Previously Jo Krøyer has been dealing with this target group in her PhD thesis and she continues to fine-tune her research in this project.

Adding to this, Køge Business School, represented by one teacher, Annette Færch, has arranged a two-day course in the use of coaching to become a good interlocutor with a view to discussing wages and gender at work. A brief report has been added as attachment 1. For several years, FiU Equality has been cooperating with Køge Business School to arrange teaching sessions for the Business Administration line, Coaching in Organizations. They have had a considerable impact as a method for enabling the shop steward to deal with colleagues and management.

The project report is aimed at both politicians from the LO Confederation and FiU instructors. The project has produced some insight into which methods will work with regard to addressing gender, pay and equality as a relevant subject for shop stewards. Additionally, the project offers some suggestions as to what it takes to integrate pay, gender and equality with the political system and with the current FiU training in a way that is relevant for shop stewards. Relevant in the sense that it will lead to initiatives at work. Then the purpose and goal of the project will be deemed as having been fulfilled.

We hope that results from the project will be used in future planning and development of FiU courses.

*On behalf of FiU Equality*  
*Annelise Rasmussen*

# The Development Project

## **Purpose**

There is a dual purpose to the development project;

The idea was to develop a model that would encourage the shop stewards to find it

- interesting to take part in training activities where equal pay is the central focal point relevant for their own work activities
- motivating and inspiring to continue their efforts with a focus on equal pay where they work
- a natural thing to include elements in the course which the shop steward sees as relevant parts of other, ongoing FiU courses.

In connection with this, a survey would look into the way equal pay can be better integrated into the shop stewards' activities at work. To that end the development project included a research part with a focus on

- the way in which the shop stewards interpret the reasons behind unequal pay
- the shop stewards' motivation for committing themselves to equal pay issues
- the shop stewards' own reasons for concern when dealing with issues relating to equal pay at work.

## **The Result: New Methods**

The results of the project will be presented here. The project has been developing and testing four new educational work models which have turned out to be constructive and efficient in making equal pay a part of FiU's courses. The four methods are the "Interview Mirror", the "Collaborating Reflexions", the "Coaching Conversation" and "Shop Steward's peer to peer". The methods have served as adequate training models where gender and pay is part of a course. With these tools it was possible to make equal pay an issue that seemed relevant and interesting for the shop stewards. It had the positive effect that the shop stewards changed their views on issues relating to equal pay. The shop stewards strengthened their ability to spot underlying problems in connection with gender and pay at work and they were also inspired to deal with these problems together with their managements and colleagues. The four methods are outlined in the report so those FiU instructors who are interested will have the opportunity to determine whether they want to adapt those work models and put them to use.

## **Organization**

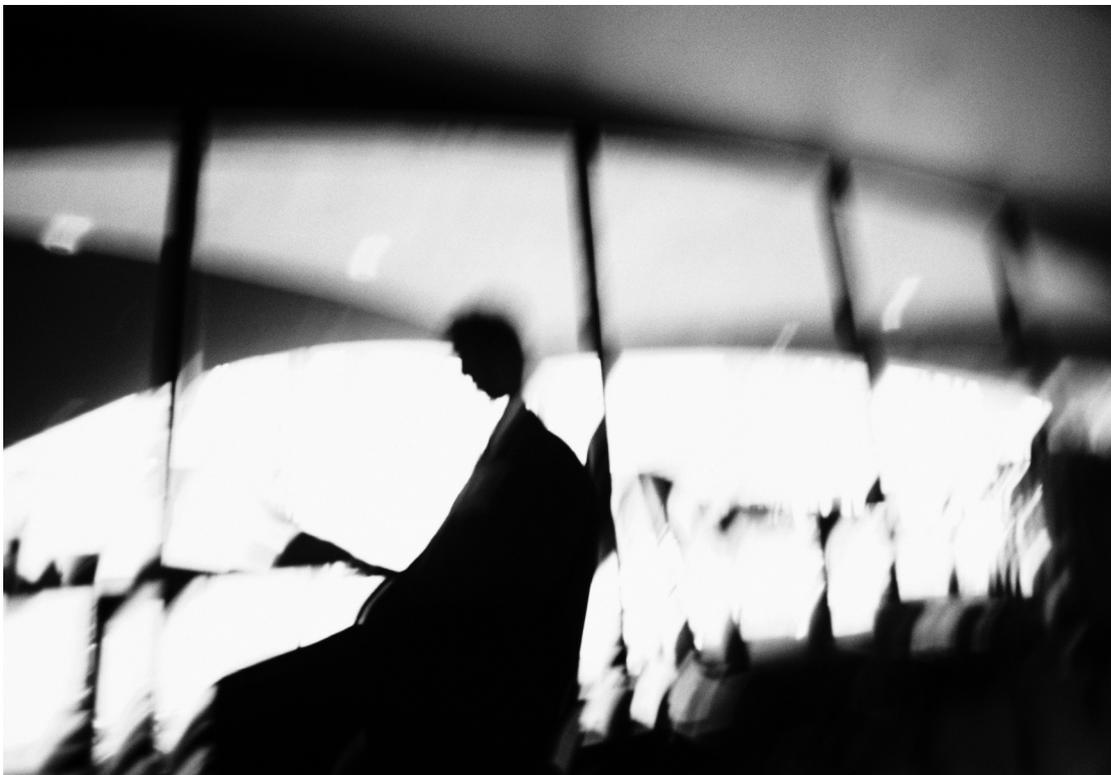
In order to meet both these goals a course has been started which combines research and developing. Thus the course includes a study/an identification of the shop stewards' understanding and perception of work-related problems in connection with equal pay plus their experiences from including equal pay as an issue in their activities.

In order to obtain more knowledge of equal pay in relation to the shop stewards themselves – where they work – it was also decided to use workplace visits as part of the course. Annelise Rasmussen and Jo Krøjer plan to visit three to five of the workplaces involved.

## **Recruiting – Participants**

The idea was to recruit both male and female shop stewards for the course, preferably from diverse places of work (public, private, larger, smaller, geographical distribution).

The recruitment proved an overall success; 14 shop stewards joined in, eight women and six men. Public and private employees had a fifty/fifty representation and the geographical distribution was significant.



# The Course

## Purpose

The actual course had several different purposes

- to broaden the participants' insight into unequal pay in various social scenarios
- to broaden the participants' understanding of what lies behind unequal pay
- to provide the participants with a knowledge of the legislation on equal pay
- to provide the participants with actual tools to identify what is implied by and work for equal pay at work
- to provide the participants with practical tools for calling attention to gender and pay at work
- to provide the participants with actual tools to find a constructive approach to problems that cause unequal pay.

## Structure

The course has been divided into two two-day parts, either having its own main focus. The first part was held in Silkeborg on January 16-17 2013 and the second part was held in Copenhagen on March 4-5 2013.

## Contents

### **Part 1:**

- Challenges faced by various sectors in terms of equal pay. 3 expert presentations.
- The complex links between gender and pay, including the gender-specific working life, social, horizontal and vertical division of labour based on gender, professional skills and status. Research presentations.
- **Collaborating Reflexions:** Gender-specific work experiences. Mutual reflections based on previous research/condensation.
- **The Interview Mirror:** Analysis of the participants' places of work in the light of equal pay.
- Double group interview and mutual reflections based on the reflecting teams method.
- The importance of social relations. Mutual discussions.
- Why an equal pay act? The statements in the equal pay act about rights and duties in relation to a gender-divided pay statistics.
- Equal pay and work of equal value. Presentation by professional consultant.
- Work place visits. Introduction and organization of visits to the participants' places of work.

## **Part 2:**

- **Coaching Conversation:** Coaching and relations – coaching tool as a means to resolving conflicts / dilemmas. Presentation by coach.
- **Coaching Conversation:** Circular and linear questioning. Training exercises.
- The shop stewards' experiences from their own places of work seen in a gender perspective – which knowledge is generated from training and workplace visit. Research presentation.
- **Shop Steward's peer to peer:** Overview of the shop stewards' positive experiences from their work for equal pay.

# Progression

## **Part 1:**

The participants dedicated themselves to all the various elements of the course. Many of them demonstrated their urge for learning more about the issues addressed in relation to equal pay. During the prolonged joint interview and reflection sequence in the Interview Mirror, a number of various topics from the participants' places of work were identified and analyzed. Along the way the participants conveyed that they highly welcomed the equal pay topics as being relevant. They pointed out that they would have preferred to have that knowledge and the skills accompanying it earlier on in their training as shop stewards.

”At our place there are some girls who deliver medicine to the departments in light transport boxes. But as for heavy boxes and deliveries, those tasks are undertaken by men. I have had a talk about it with my boss, because that team makes things inflexible, but the boss will not allow women on that team. Many are off sick because of that kind of work although there is assistive technology, for it is still heavy; there will be heavy lifting throughout the day. But between ourselves we as colleagues do not talk about it as being gender-specific division of labour.”

*Female Shop Steward working at a large public enterprise*

”Well, in our case I will say that there is a gender-specific division of labour, for that is what we call the power girls. I just did not think of it before. We do not discuss it at work. So I see it more like people being where they can and will be. Power girls are those workers who make wire sets for machines; they are standing at a desk. Actually they are 'assembly workers', but power girls have sort of become the 'official term'. What the women (power girls) are doing is not seen as flexible, and

they do not get many bonuses, because then they lack those functions. As such, we do not discuss wages there but I have begun to address equal pay a bit. But then some of the women said that it was a waste of time. They were the strong women, those who can say for themselves that they are worth a little more.”

*Male Shop Steward at a large private enterprise*

## **Part 2:**

In part 2 there was a focus on the participants’ adaptation of specific tools and they did exercises with each other. Here the participants learned how to use coaching in future as a daily routine to establish fruitful conversations with colleagues and management on equal opportunities and equal pay. Finally they got together to consider in what way the new questioning techniques might be used where they themselves were working. In addition to this the whole course was rounded off in a joint session, “Shop Steward’s peer to peer”. Here the participants worked together to develop proposals on further means of actions. They were documented and included in the training material that the participants received after the course.

”In my daily work I can begin by talking to and discussing with my colleagues – by means of coaching – and practice my way of asking questions. I believe that it would then garner some eye-opening experiences, so that I can move on and make progress. I will speak of coaching in our equal opportunities committee, so that hopefully some others may come to terms with it and start using it. Questioning techniques are a very important element when we discuss pay and equal pay.”

”If I ask the right questions the very person being coached will suggest tasks (things) that could result in higher pay.”

”The colleague/member identifies the skills and pay they have. The manager/ boss identifies the skills that are needed and rewarded.”

## **Workplace Visits**

Basically, all participants have been very positive at the prospect of having the coordinator and researcher from the course in to visit the places where they worked. In two places the management – in spite of being invited by the shop steward – did not want to welcome a 3F coordinator and researcher. Eventually, four workplace visits were made possible and that was precisely what had been expected beforehand. The places visited were two medium-sized businesses, two public, one semi-public and one private business, respectively. In three out of those four places the management had set aside time for taking part in the visit.

All in all, the four visits gave a fine insight into the different conditions faced by the shop stewards in their endeavors to work against unequal pay for men and women. The situation as it could be observed at the work sites would go from one of almost total support and harmony between the shop steward and the management because the management was sincerely interested, to one of having a non-existing and less enthusiastic management. It is remarkable how efficient the work place visits have turned out to be in terms of pointing out to the managements that equal pay is a relevant problem.

To sum up, the following can be concluded on the basis of the work place visits,

### **Factors at work that will work against equal pay**

- Pay is not a topic of conversation among the colleagues at work.
- No one has given it any thought whether there is equal or unequal pay where they work – not even the shop steward.
- The pay is not fully disclosed to the shop steward; if, for example, no running, total and comprehensive count is made (statistics).
- Some work functions can only be carried out by one gender.

### **Factors at work that help pave the way for equal pay**

- The shop steward and management work well together.
- The management makes it their priority to have a good working environment on the premises.
- All colleagues are trained to perform all functions – and they will do so.
- Someone finds out whether there is equal or unequal pay at work.

## **Follow-Up Questions**

By the end of the course the participants agreed to take part in a final, e-mail based questionnaire. The questionnaire was intended to make it possible to gain insight into the participants' perceptions of the relevance and usefulness of the course after they had been given the opportunity to make use of the insights and tools that they had been working with during the course.

Based on the questionnaire, the whole course can indeed be seen as having fulfilled its original purpose. In the light of experiences from a number of previous FiU courses dealing with equal opportunities, it is remarkable that the male participants in this course are those most positive in assessing the relevance and usefulness of the course. Below follows a short selection of answers to the questionnaire.

**Q: Has the course inspired you and given you the opportunity to deal with issues in connection with equal pay at your work?**

”Very much so; I try to see agreements and initiatives from an equal pay point of view. We are about to introduce a new pay system. Before the course I would not have given it any thought that there might also be loopholes in connection with the concept of equality. I have advocated that we, myself and the management and the shop steward, are also aware of equality issues when discussing our ideas. Thus, there have been some good discussions while preparing the proposal from the shop steward. I have ensured that the calculations of equal pay for skilled employees be changed. I have put the topic on the agenda in our works council. There is an investigation to find out whether there is a statistic explanation as to why skilled female employees on average get a lower pay than their male counterparts. I am all set to demand positive discrimination if it turns out that my claims with regard to discrimination are correct. Over the last two years, we have increased the pay for skilled employees in the wage group where women have an overrepresentation by 2 Danish kroner more than other wage groups. That is all there was to get, the art of the possible.”

*Male shop steward*

”I have a burning desire to achieve equality and because I cannot grasp why in the year 2013 we are still incapable of treating each other fairly. That applies for gender, ethnicity and gender/ethnicity. I made special use of the input I received when I was promised I could work out a local wage statistics – in connection with your visit to my work.”

*Male shop steward*

”I will continue my struggle for equal pay with all available means although I do not find them to be that many. I believe it was really fine for us to sit down in two groups with the researcher leading the conversation about equal pay in one group and the other group observing. I find I could make use of the things we were told about gender-specific division of labour.”

*Male shop steward*

”I have gained a considerable insight into problems concerning equal pay, indeed more insight than I would have expected. Believed the place where I work to be a bit of a “saint” in that respect, but I nevertheless found a small gap on the pay scale. That is something I now think about a lot in my everyday life. And I shall be thinking even more about it when we start wage negotiations at my work. The best part of the course was the day when we were split up into two groups and asked to answer questions (from the researcher). It was a very informative thing to both listen and be in the firing line.”

*Female shop steward*

”I think they should offer subjects dealing with equality at 3F’s internal courses, G1-G2-G3-G4 for shop stewards. It would be an ideal thing that you already as a newly elected shop steward have your eyes opened to the large wage gaps when you follow these courses.”

*Female shop steward*

# Overall Evaluation

To conclude, the course can be seen as having fulfilled the ambition to develop new ways to involve the participants in issues which relates to equal pay. Also, there has been a successful development of form and substance convincing the participants that in terms of knowledge as well as tools the course is substantially useful to them in their everyday work as shop stewards.

Some of the elements in the course that are recommended by the participants will take a certain amount of know-how and skills on the part of the instructors who intend to use them. The methods have been designed specifically for this course and it can not be taken for granted that the FiU instructors in general know them.

This applies to the Interview Mirror. First, this will require the instructor to have a deep understanding of work relations that are proactive or counteractive with regard to equal pay. Second, the instructor must be familiar with the actual form where he or she will operate as an interviewer in a turn-taking group interview and then operate as a guide for the reflecting teams and their responses to the group being interviewed.

Likewise, the Collaborating Reflexions is a special form that requires an awareness of the condensations and the way they are used in an open reflection.

**A Coaching Conversation** will require the instructor to be familiar with the coaching form.

**Shop Steward's peer to peer** is the most accessible of the methods used. Most people will probably be able to use this method on the basis of the description below.

Finally, the presentations on equal pay and its various social and legal aspects require the instructor to have a deep-rooted insight into this field.

The participants pointed out that equal pay as a theme would be useful in those parts of the Basic Courses that deal with pay, wage bargaining, et cetera.

The work place visits were useful for the way in which the courses developed but the verdict seems be that they are too costly to implement in a normal FiU process.

# Proposal for an Educational Framework of Equal Pay Training

The four methods are “The Interview Mirror”, “Collaborating Reflexions”, “Coaching Conversation” and “Shop Steward’s peer to peer”. As an inspiration to FiU instructors doing basic courses and other courses the educational framework below outlines the substance and form of those four methods. The FiU instructors who will then want to use the methods on their own may find it useful to adapt in practice the methods described.

- **The Interview Mirror:** The method is based on the ‘reflecting teams’ method, a method that is used for identifying problems and clarifying scopes for action. The Interview Mirror divides the participants into two; team X and team Y. The two teams take turns in participation, i.e. team X is interviewed about unequal/equal pay issues at work, one team member after the other, by the instructor. Meanwhile team Y will listen carefully to what is being said. After each interview the observing team will ask questions and pass on its comments to the team that has been interviewed.
- **Collaborating Reflexions:** The method is based upon a research project about the shop stewards’ experiences. From them a number of short texts – condensations – have been extracted. With these texts the Collaborating Reflexions brings the shop stewards into dialogue with one another on the subject of what kind of attitudes towards gender and gender-specific division of labour they encounter in their own daily work. The condensations enables a dialogue which transgresses clichéd ways of knowing and introduce a new kind of awareness.
- **The Coaching Conversation:** The method is based upon the discussion form that is used within coaching. By testing special interviewing techniques the shop stewards get the opportunity to speak to their colleagues in new ways, thereby finding other insights and perspectives when dealing with the problems they experience.
- **Shop Steward’s peer to peer:** The method is based on the ‘peer-to-peer’ model which is used for empowerment. It is used for systematically gathering and distributing the know-how and experiences of a training team. By the end of the course the team together with the instructor will formulate some good advice which, based on their own experiences, they will pass on to other teams/shop stewards. This is saved in PowerPoint and sent as e-mails to the participants. (See attached sample).

As for the three first methods, the FiU instructors must take part in workshops and similar activities in order to get a firsthand grip on the methods described. It is therefore essential that such activities are made available to the FiU instructors if know-how and awareness of the basic conditions in relation to equal pay is to be integrated into FiU's existing basic courses.

## Appendix 1

### **Become a good relations agent at work.**

### **A two-day professional instruction in coaching tools.**

*By Annette Færch*

*Educational consultant*

*Køge Business School, March 12, 2013*

I see coaching as a tool for generating reflection, learning and progress. My own teaching method has been to illustrate the tool through my personal conduct during the instructions.

My educational approach is that human beings will learn and develop when it makes sense to them. We have been working from the assumption that human beings are autopoietic systems acting on the basis of their own sensemaking. Therefore we have also been working from the assumption that coaching or a coaching approach must base itself upon an approving and appreciative inquisitive study of the other person's "universe" and not present itself as counseling. Thus we have been working with the concept of asymmetrical conversation in which the roles as coach and focal person, respectively, are different, and we have been focusing on a conversation that explores what works in stead of looking at factors that do not work. The coach is in a position to help while the focal person will define what he/she needs help for.

The purpose of coaching is to make the focal person reflect in terms of broadening the perspective, clarifying and/or developing a new readiness to act. For this to happen the focal persons must feel that it makes sense, and also that their sensemaking is challenged. Besides that, it is also necessary for the focal persons to feel secure and confident with their coach.

The coaching tools mainly consist of questions – we have based our work on Karl Tomm's question types. Among other instruments that help the focal persons' develop their own reflections we have mentioned "silence" – giving the focal persons

time to reflect, "pre-sensing" – helping the focal persons determine the future they wish for, "keywords, mirroring and hypothetical questions" as driving forces behind the conversation.

In our work we have focused on the way in which the participants can use coaching in their everyday practice to generate dynamic conversations about equal opportunities at work and equal pay, both in relation to their colleagues as well as the management.

By the end of this two-day training course the participants' had the following reflections on what they bring with them in particular and how they can and will use it,

"In my daily work I can begin by talking to and discussing with my colleagues – through coaching – practice my questioning technique. I believe that it would then garner some eye-opening experiences, so that I can move on and make progress. I will speak of coaching in our gender equality committee, so that hopefully others may get to terms with it and start using it. Questioning techniques are very important elements in relation to discussing pay and equal pay. I find that the course has been a huge eye-opener in terms of coaching and I believe it is a really good tool."

"I can use coaching to speak with my colleagues. Be attentive and inquisitive and abstain from giving answers myself. Essential tools are more investigative, inquisitive and challenging questions, also to make a "contract" with my colleagues, to try to be less biased and ask the clarifying questions."

"Coaching may be used in conversations with members where the subject is skills planning for the individual member. It can put focus on the members' ideas of what constitutes important skills. It is essential to establish the context and agree on the contract, to ensure that the questions are open and appreciative, to remain silent so as to give room for reflection, to ensure that the way questions are asked can be used in many other contexts."

"That colleagues/members will identify their skills and pay. That the manager/boss will articulate which skills are required and rewarded. To have the other person identify skills that are already at hand or are required. But right now coaching is probably not the kind of method I would associate with or even use precisely in connection with pay and equal opportunities at work – I'm not sure if it is because I did not attend part 1."

"If I ask the right questions the person being coached will suggest the tasks (things) himself or herself that could result in a pay raise. To ask the right questions, be neutral, be attentive, appreciative."

## Appendix 2

### Shop Steward's peer to peer

- Attend a FiU course.
- Obtain a systematic overview of wage supplements: Who has got what bonuses during the years that you have accessible information about.
- Identify who may be lacking in skills – and how they can achieve them.
- Get an agreement with management (and colleagues) to ensure that achievement of skills for all who may need it is a mutual goal.
- Get an agreement with management (and colleagues) to ensure that functional flexibility is a mutual goal.
- Agree on strict criteria for all bonuses: Identical skills will generate the same skills supplements and identical functions will generate the same functions supplements .

*Jo Krøjer*

*Associate professor, cand.techn.soc, PhD.*

*Head of CKMM Department of Psychology and Educational Research*

This report describes the experiences from a hands-on project which uses practice-based research and development work to establish and test three new, user-driven types of courses. Coordinator behind the development project for FIU Equality is Annelise Rasmussen, 3F. Researcher and sparring partner in the development work is Jo Krøjer, RUC

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Social Relations at Work and Equal Pay m/f  
– Become a Good Relations Agent at Work.  
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