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Equality starts from home. Raising children without paying attention to mail and female colours, to mail and female behaviour, gives the push towards the perception that we are all equal though we have different genders. Generally female self-confidence is slowly fading during her life.

The Association Leaders of Lithuania studies show that stereotypes affect the inner motivation of the individual, it is closely related to later business ‘and activities ‘choices and even results. Also, it leads to unconscious behaviour among decision makers in business, politics and elsewhere, where it becomes „normal“ to use the word „bunny“ addressing a woman colleague, though no one refers to a man using the same word. This is an example from my own experience.

The attitude complicates, and sometimes prevents, women from pursuing a career in the desired field of professional education, especially if it is understood to be masculine. According to PISA (2019), both girls and boys have similar skills in mathematics and science in adolescence, and show a similar interest in career opportunities. When the time comes to choose a study, the STEM field is five times less for girls than for boys. Only 9 percent of girls seeking higher education report STEM studies at first point, while young men's interest in STEM is much higher, about 49% of young men prioritise STEM studies.

This highly influences the income of women for they unfortunately choose less paid professions. In 2018 in Lithuania gender pay gap was 14 percent, it was lower than EU 28 (15 percent), but looking deeper into sectors, one can hardly believe that the pay gap in the financial and insurance sphere reaches even 38 percent.

According to the Government Strategic Analysis Centre (STRATA) study (2019), even after completing studies in STEM girls are more poorly established. One year after graduating, every second STEM graduate and every third girl graduate worked in STEM. Moreover, one year after graduation, the income of male colleagues working in STEM is almost 29 percent higher.

Moreover, the financial position of women is influenced by child birth, for she usually drops out from the labour market for 2 years. However, even when a mother returns to the labour market, she is no longer judged solely on her abilities. She rarely receives offers that fit her competencies, as she is seen as no longer fit for active work, because she becomes the first and frequently the only one responsible for the family. 2017 research showed that in the most active age of man 35-44 years, which usually coincides with the time of starting a family, the largest pay gap of 20.6 percent is recorded.

Formal childcare (up to 3 years) (%) i

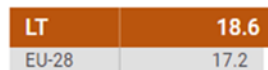
Not enrolled in childcare



Enrolled from 1 to 29 hours per week



Enrolled 30 hours or over per week



Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC, (ilc_caindformal), 2017. Provisional data.

It shocks that over 75 percent of the Lithuanians consider normal for a woman to be responsible for family, children and all household, but not for self-realization in career. This old „normal“ is in our brains and blood, even in our literature, where women are often portrayed as cultivators of traditional values, deeply ruled by the vocation of motherhood.

Therefore, we have quite low participation of women in decision making. It is important to notice that the participation of women in business is also quite low, For example, the recent overview of female participation in Lithuanian Business Confederation members proved that men not women usually take higher managerial positions and dominate in boards. Though it is obligatory to have equality plans in the enterprises having more than 50 employees, these plans still are not prepared, and if they exist, they are very superficial.

To conclude, first of all, it is necessary to raise awareness of the impact of stereotypes demonstrated by studies and to reduce them, to develop a culture of equality from the childbirth, not only concentrating tithe girls in STEM, but the boys in social science as well. „The new normal „should be based on gender equality, where dominates gender

unbiased attitude in families, in labour market and in the society. We should all make efforts to maintain women's confidence in moving forward wherever she wants.