

# FACING EXTINCTION?



**Why Men Are Not Attracted  
to Primary Teaching**

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The views expressed in this publication are the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the project sponsors.

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## Chapter 6

# MOTIVATION FOR CHOOSING PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHING

### 6.1 ENTRY TO THE PROFESSION

The majority of men (61 per cent) and women (65 per cent) entered primary school teaching as school leavers who then graduated from Colleges of Education. A further one-quarter (24 per cent) had undergone a Graduate Conversion Programme. The remaining 15 per cent of male and 11 per cent of female teachers came into teaching as mature students.

*Table 6.1: Entry to Teaching*

Entry to Teaching	Male (No.)	Male (%)	Female (No.)	Female (%)
School Leaver (Education College)	216	61%	157	65%
Mature Student	55	15%	26	11%
Graduate Conversion Programme	86	24%	59	24%
Total	357	100%	242	100%

Nearly four out of five (78 per cent) male respondents had undertaken their teacher education in Ireland compared with 87 per cent of female teachers. A further one-fifth of men (19 per cent) and 11 per cent of women had obtained a teaching qualification in the UK. Only 10 male (3 per cent) and five female teachers (2 per cent) had studied education elsewhere.

## 6.2 CHOICE OF TEACHING AS A CAREER

Respondents were asked whether teaching was their first choice of career. Three-quarters (76 per cent) of male and 83 per cent of female respondents stated that it was their first choice.

The remaining 24 per cent of male respondents had other first choice career aspirations in business (12), journalism (7), law (6), physiotherapy (5), accountancy (4), secondary school teacher (4), archaeology (4), computer programming (3), gardaí (3), medicine (3), music (3), PE teaching (3), agricultural science (2), bank clerk (2), scientific field (2), sport (2). Other careers were mentioned by one male respondents only care-staff at special school, dentistry, engineer, architect, environmental science, lighting technician (drama), food processing industry, IT sector, librarian, archivist, machine operator, marine engineer, mental handicap nursing, office worker, priesthood, psychiatric nursing, psychotherapist, TV work/drama, veterinary surgeon.

A small number of male mature entrants referred to their previous careers such as 27 years in dairy industry, three years in chemical engineering, financial consultant, finance director for 17 years, retail manager/carpenter in Canada, industrial chemist, four years in the US Air Force.

Female teachers whose career in teaching was not their first choice had aspired to jobs in business/accounting (7), medicine (3), journalism (3), art (3), science (3), occupational/speech therapy (3) and physiotherapy (2). Other careers mentioned by individual female respondents include home economics teacher, sports scientist, purchasing, library, interior design, nursing, HR management, law, research, architecture, psychology, IT, hotel and catering management, social work, travel and tourism and marketing.

## 6.3 MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS

Respondents were asked to rate (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 as the strongest motivation through to 5 as the weakest motivation) a list of 12 factors that may have encouraged them to become primary school teachers. Figures 6.1a and 6.1b set out the key motivating factors (those listed as strongest or strong motivations) in order of importance.

Figure 6.1a: Motivations for Male Teachers (n=345)

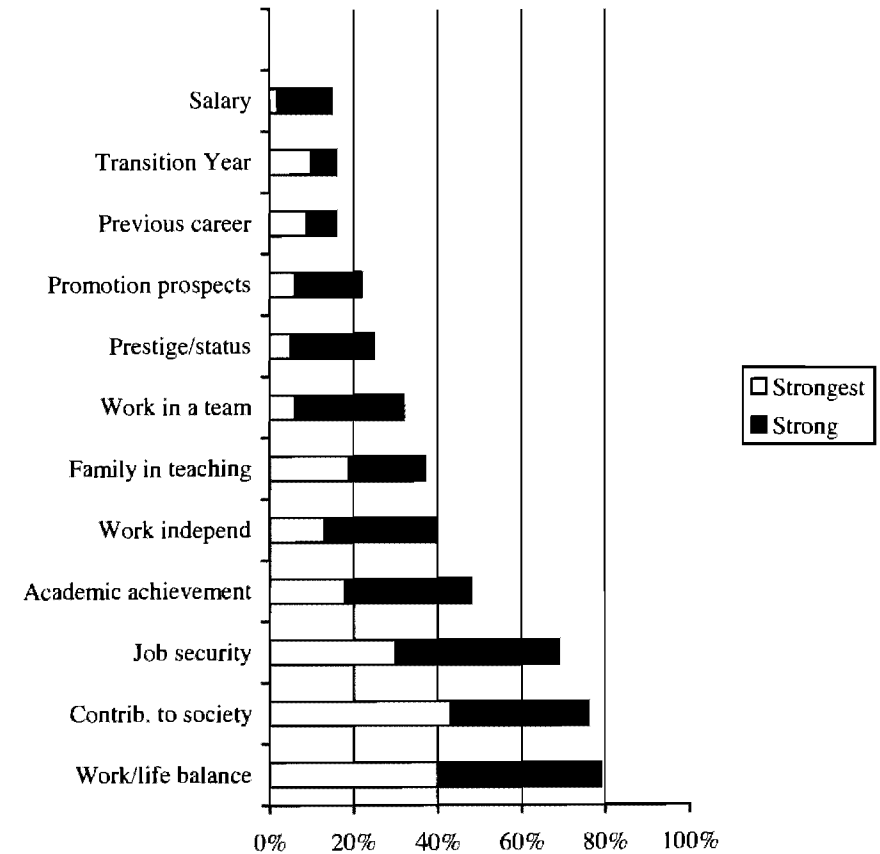
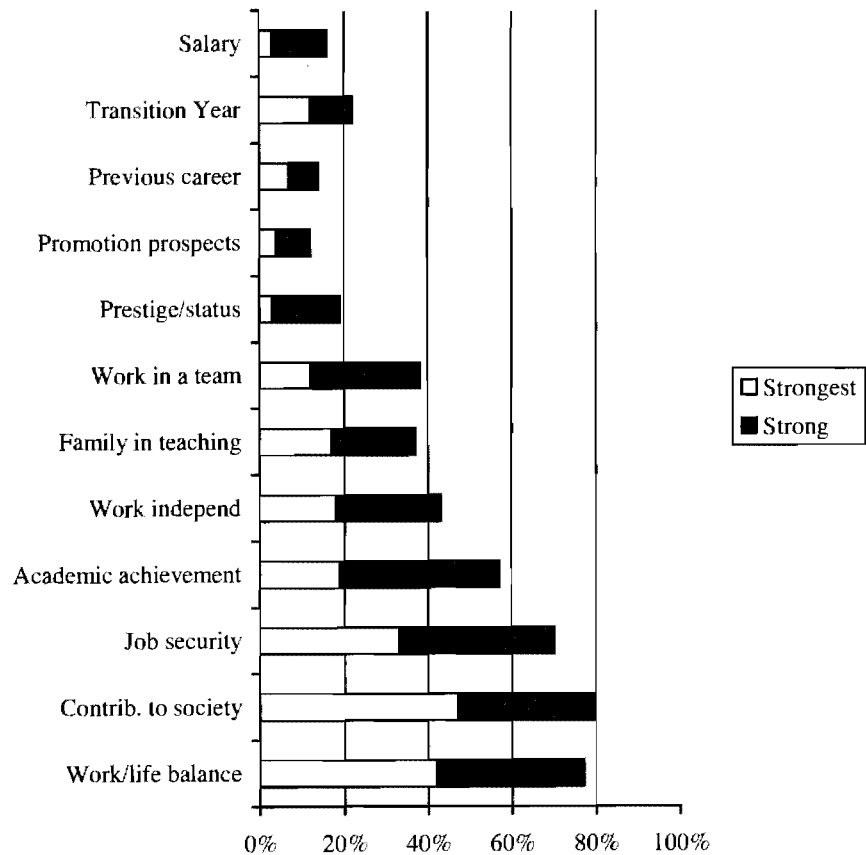


Figure 6.1b: Motivations for Female Teachers (n=234)



As Figures 6.1a and 6.1b show, there are only minor differences in the factors that influence women and men into primary teaching. Men ranked work/life balance as number one compared with women who ranked it number two. Women ranked contribution to society, working in a team and Transition Year experience higher than their male counterparts (Table 6.2).

The ranking of motivational factors for men and women is shown in Table 6.2

Table 6.2: Motivational Factors Influencing Women and Men

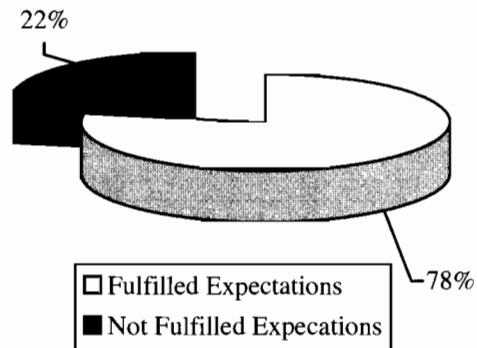
Potential Motivators	Men's Ranking	Women's Ranking
Work/Life Balance, inc. hours/holidays	1	2
Contribution to Society/Individuals	2	1
Job Security	3	3
Academic Achievement/Intellectual Challenge	4	4
Desire to Work Independently	5	5
Family Member in Teaching Profession	6	7
Desire to Work in a Team	7	6
Prestige/Status	8	9
Promotion Prospects	9	12
Lack of Progress in Previous Career	10	11
Transition Year Experience	10	8
Salary/Earning Potential	12	10

The least significant motivational factors for male teachers are salary level/earning potential, transition year experience, lack of progress in previous career and promotion prospects. For women the least significant motivational factors are promotion prospects, lack of progress in previous career, salary level/earning potential and prestige/ status.

#### 6.4 FULFILMENT OF CAREER EXPECTATIONS

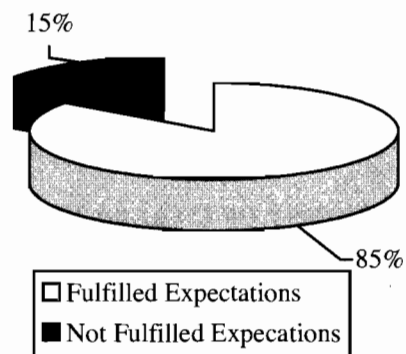
Respondents were asked if primary school teaching had fulfilled their career expectations. In total 277 male respondents answered "Yes" or 78 per cent of the total (Figure 6.2a). Only 79 male respondents or 22 per cent of those surveyed stated that their career expectations had not been fulfilled.

**Figure 6.2a: Fulfilled Career Expectations of Male Teachers (n=356)**



A higher proportion of women (85 per cent) than men stated that primary teaching has fulfilled their expectations, with 207 positive responses (Figure 6.2.b). The gender difference was statistically significant (chi-square 0.032).

**Figure 6.2b: Fulfilled Career Expectations of Female Teachers (n=244)**



Teachers were also asked if there was a difference between their prior conception of the job and the reality they have experienced. Similar proportions of men (61 per cent) and women (62 per cent) stated that there was a difference. Among the respondents whose prior conception of the profession had not matched reality, the main reasons related to the following:

- Lack of career progress/salary (Section 6.4.1)
- Nature of job/working conditions (Section 6.4.2)
- Political interference (Section 6.4.3)
- Declining status of teaching profession (Section 6.4.4)
- Behaviour of pupils/parents (Section 6.4.5)
- Colleges of Education (Section 6.4.6), and
- Other unfilled expectations (Section 6.4.7).

Sections 6.4.1 to 6.4.7 provide in depth insights as to the reasons why expectations were not fulfilled.

#### 6.4.1 Lack of Career Progress/Salary

Many male respondents referred to salary levels and the slow progression up the pay scale. They also compared their salaries, negatively, with those of graduates working outside primary teaching. Criticisms about remuneration related to the number of points on the teaching scale, opportunities for advancement and rates of progress. Typical comments made by male respondents are outlined below:

*"I have an MA in Education yet only receive €500 extra p.a. How farcical! I received no tax relief or funding as I studied in the [other country named]!"*

*"Few promotional prospects. Lack of prestige or status in today's society. Low pay and drawn-out pay scale."*

*"Salary doesn't justify work. As a result I give grinds and work part-time in a bar. Not possible to save for house on teacher's wage alone."*

*"Promotional prospects are quite limited especially if you switch schools early in your career."*

*"My career is restricted because I do not speak Irish."*

*"The salary has failed to match the astronomical rise in cost of living and as a result teachers are poorly paid."*



*"Pay structure is not as good as others who have no professional qualifications or training thus profession proves a stigma especially for younger teachers."*

*"Very disillusioned by the fact that, after achieving high points and for such a responsible job, the salary doesn't reflect this."*

*"Promotions area is very closed shop and certain cliques dictate schools/policies. Salary and rewards for qualifications are basic."*

*"Expected the salary and promotion opportunities to be better."*

*"Teachers have seen their work load increase at an alarming rate yet pay scales have not reflected this."*

*"Pay is not good considering all the time spent in college. No extra pay for correcting copies or doing sport after school."*

*"Pay is very poor considering other college grads."*

*"Very little possibility for progressing and you are unable to climb to another post."*

*"Present pay scale (length of time to reach the top), expenses and overall pay are not a fair reflection of my chosen career."*

*"After seven years I have yet to get even a post of responsibility, despite the best intentions of the principal."*

*"In country areas there is little opportunity to move once I am permanent. Teaching principal posts do become available but are not sought after position."*

*"Salary is less than expected. Posts are held by senior teachers. No promotion except to principal – the allowance for that is a joke and the work more difficult all the time."*

*"I will never have post of any sort as I probably will be retired before present holders as I am in the AVC scheme and they are not. In reality posts of responsibility go on seniority despite fanfare of interviews. Am sickened by the way full-time positions are filled in West Kerry – friends of the priest or principal always get jobs."*

*"It's unrewarding."*

*"Impossible to get promoted. Additional responsibilities taken on gratis."*

Only two women teachers mentioned salary/progression as a factor contributing to their unfulfilled expectations:

*"Increased salary. Bonuses."*

*"If salary was more in tune with industry a lot more men would enter teaching."*

#### **6.4.2 Nature of Job/Working Conditions**

Male and female respondents referred to the fact that primary school teaching is more challenging, demanding/stressful and/or requires more paperwork/workload than they had envisaged. Others noted that there is more responsibility and pressure than they had expected and that the skills required for the job are multiple and complex. One man expressed this as:

*"Would prefer if a teacher had just to teach, not be a psychologist, crowd controller, babysitter, banker, religious instructor and every other job we seem to have to do."*

Likewise women commented on the multiplicity of skills required for the job:

*"You're viewed as a doctor, counsellor etc. for children and also parents. There is a lot of emphasis on paperwork, whereas I thought there should be more emphasis on teaching."*

*"A lonelier profession than anticipated."*

*"I teach in a disadvantaged school and sometimes think I need qualifications in social work, nursing and parenting skills in order to fully help and educate children in class."*

*"Job entails a lot of 'people' skills for dealing with parents and children, whereas I believed intelligence to be the most important factor in teaching, being a good listener is far more important."*

*"Degree of multi-tasking is very high – teacher, carer, nurse, psychologist. A very high level of responsibility."*

Since the introduction of the new curriculum many male and female teachers have experienced a huge increase in workload that has allowed less time for teaching:

*"Too much interference from ex-teachers and other pundits in the Inspectorate and Department. Don't need constant direction and adding on of bureaucratic layers of paperwork from those who haven't taught children for a long time. Have to spend nearly as long writing notes/plans/schemes etc. as hours spent in the classroom. Find it especially infuriating to see the Republic's Department foolishly imitate Northern Ireland's curriculum and bureaucratic workload – they seem intent to copy the NI rationale and make the same mistakes."*

*"Felt I was achieving my primary goal but this has dissipated due to the huge and unnecessary workload heaped on teachers with the introduction of the new curriculum."*

*"Demands of a small classroom with 30 pupils in it. Feel that I am not able to deliver my desired curriculum and ideas in such a room. I am not listened to in my school due to my age (28)."*

*"Much more demanding/exhausting than expected. Workload increase – new curriculum, record keeping, huge classes – almost impossible to teach."*

*"So much more to the job than just teaching – responsibility to pupils and parents; stress; overloaded curriculum; preparation and work out of school hours (which other teachers only appreciate)."*

*"Bureaucracy, red tape and curricular constraints continue to disappoint."*

*"A bureaucratic and administrative nightmare – very surprised to see the Irish teaching body slipping inexorably down the same route. Thin end of the wedge now – crap to hit fan later!"*

*"Thought teaching would allow me to provide much more help and one-to-one attention, but there are too many constraints and*

*I find it difficult to teach all curricular areas in their entirety, let alone enhance their social or emotional development."*

Other male respondents criticised the volume of paperwork, class sizes and problems of working in disadvantaged areas:

*"Ardently feel that teaching and profession are wallowing in conservatism."*

*"Hidden workload, paper work etc."*

*"Less emphasis on quality of education. More time spent on catering for external activities, i.e. colouring/singing/projects/sports, which should be catered for outside class teaching time."*

*"Huge amount of distractional paperwork. Everything must be restricted because of legal implications."*

*"Teaching in a prefab with no support for our school (Gaelscoil) as regards resources, new curriculum, is a bit nineteenth century."*

*"Feel that constant control of large classes comes at a big personal cost, i.e. loss of free spirit, fun, spontaneity."*

*"Feeling of helplessness with regards to disadvantaged children."*

*"Become monotonous with little opportunity to diversify or be promoted unless willing to become a principal (Lack of respect)."*

*"Lack of care given to children by teaching profession who are primarily interested in their own welfare. The over-emphasis on paperwork and curriculum overload."*

*"Little funding, big classes, discipline problems. Too much paper work and not enough teaching."*

*"Due to the impossible workload I feel that my teaching is limited by time constraints and resources. Without more special needs assistants I have to lower the aims to suit the number of children that I can safely supervise while teaching one or two of the children at the same time."*

Similar criticisms and disillusionment were offered by female teachers:

*"Teaching has many hidden stresses caring for large group of children and responsibility involved. Schools may not have enough money, or they do and it is not being made available."*

*"A lot more pressure on teachers regarding special needs children within mainstream classes."*

*"Having to continually deal with challenging behaviour in conjunction with learning disabilities is more stressful than had been anticipated."*

*"Very idealistic situation, i.e. class size, uniform pupil ability, resources, e.g. classroom size, equipment, support for further career development."*

*"Idealism is waning of what you can do to help children progress – reality of educational disadvantage – bureaucracy in school etc."*

*"We are not provided with the necessary tools of our trade. Sometimes our profession is not respected by parents and Department as our findings on a child don't enter the equation when looking for resource help despite teaching them six hours every day."*

*"One meets difficult challenges. Dealing with parents, social problems affecting pupils. Lack of school funds and large class sizes."*

*"Paperwork is becoming very hard. Number of children with problems and behavioural difficulties is increasing."*

#### **6.4.3 Political Influence/Interference**

There was some disillusionment among teachers with the lack of support, constant demands and apparently blatant bullying tactics of the Department of Education and Science. Men said:

*"Far too much bitterness and politics in school systems. Many teachers slow to accept change. Only redeeming feature is that individuals are teachers and some teachers who inspire are voiceless. The profession obviously wishes to maintain the status quo."*

*"Board of management have all the power."*

*"Lack of support from Minister and lack of cop-on in the way the new curriculum was delivered."*

*"Politics within schools are ruining my positive outlook in schools and the education system."*

*"Except for the disdain with which the current Minister treats teachers."*

*"Lack of opportunity and necessity to move for political reasons."*

Only one woman referred to politics:

*"Micro-politics in schools make or break your enthusiasm and attitude."*

#### **6.4.4 Declining Status/Image of Teaching Profession**

There was a strongly held view that respect for the profession is a lot less than they had expected and that it is being steadily eroded through the media. This in turn reduced the respect from the general public or children. Male respondents claimed that:

*"In general because people tend to stereotype you and teachers are not too popular in society. People are jealous of hours, benchmarking and holidays."*

*"People do not realise the hours that teachers put in outside school hours with preparation and corrections."*

*"Lack of return for the effort put in can be demoralising. You are very much taken for granted in modern society."*

*"It's hassle and the post of teacher is now less appreciated."*

*"There is a lot less respect for teachers. Prestige and status are not words I would now associate with teaching. There is more respect in general in rural areas."*

*"Poor standing in community."*

Women shared the view that teaching is perceived negatively:

*"Am amazed at how answerable we as a profession are to parents and the huge amount of disrespect shown to us in general."*

*"My parents always respected my teachers and supported them and their actions. Feel that many of today's parents don't support teachers but view us as 'the enemy'."*

*"No respect for teachers anymore. Status once associated with teachers is gone."*

*"There is less respect from parents."*

*"Sometimes our profession is not respected by parents and Department."*

#### **6.4.5 Behaviour of Pupils/Parents**

Some respondents referred to the behaviour of pupils while some had failed to realise that the negativity of parents could be so strong.

Male teachers mentioned:

*"I find certain children like young adults and are very hard to control and discipline. Didn't realise so much crowd control would be involved."*

*"Students are abusive and violent. Our school does not receive the requisite support from the Department."*

*"Interfering parents."*

*"Teaching would be fine if there were no parents."*

*"A lot more challenging. Children are much more brazen and ungrateful."*

*"If teaching was left to teachers without outside trouble from parents it would be a much easier and more fulfilling job."*

*"Increased discipline problems and problem children/parents with no respect for school or learning."*

Women also felt unhappy about the attitude of parents:

*"Parents are on occasions too demanding."*

*"Parents are pushy and expect the world and its mother to be at their beck and call."*

*"Did not realise the influence of parents on job satisfaction."*

*"Demanding and difficult parents."*

*"Parental involvement was a lot more negative than when I was in school. Lack of manners and respect from parents. Have always thought the challenge would be with the children."*

*"Role and influence of parents much greater than expected."*

*"There is less respect from parents."*

*"Thought parents would be more supportive in helping with the 'nitty-gritty' of homework. There is a lot of energy required in parenting and I've recently encountered parents who don't understand the help they have to give to help their child."*

#### **6.4.6 Colleges of Education**

The view was expressed that teacher education was too academic/theoretical and that more practical issues should have been addressed. A small number of respondents felt that Colleges of Education prepare one for the ideal class in a middle class area situation. Little is done to prepare them for the realities of working class areas, discipline and disadvantaged children. Men summed this up in:

*"Lack of comprehensive direction/instruction in hands-on realistic fashion. College course unattached to actual requirement of teaching."*

*"Difficult to be an expert at everything. Training at college insufficient."*

Women also commented on being ill-prepared for classroom conditions:

*"College doesn't prepare you well enough to deal with everyday situations, e.g. aggressive parents, special needs children."*

*"Completely unprepared for non-teaching aspects in training colleges, e.g. parents, administration, organising events, religious sacraments etc."*

*"Encountered many things unmentioned in college, e.g. dealing with international children with no English, behaviour difficulties."*

*"College didn't prepare me in how to handle a whole class situation as well as they could have."*

*"Teaching is the easy part. It is all the extra things that are difficult and we are not taught how to deal with in college, e.g. problems, parents, bullying, fights in playground."*

*"Training could have been more relevant regarding certain subjects and day to day running of a class/school."*

*"Weren't prepared for day to day issues that crop up."*

*"When in college teaching is very idealistic and doesn't really prepare for the real job. Difficult in a class size of thirty trying to attend to all the individual needs."*

#### **6.4.7 Other Unfulfilled Expectations**

Male respondents volunteered a range of other responses reflecting very mixed attitudes towards teaching. Some men are disillusioned and considering whether or not to remain within primary school teaching.

*"I became a teacher because I was immature and had not got the self-esteem to match my intelligence. I am trying to get out of teaching now."*

*"Enjoyed my time teaching but don't see it as a job for life. In particular the number of unqualified teachers allowed to work in primary schools is upsetting and demotivating."*

*"I wish to become responsible for the running of a primary school or to influence lifelong learning at a training policy level."*

*"Have a wide variety of interests. Teaching only caters for some of these. Would like to set up my own business."*

*"On its own teaching a class from 21-65 years wouldn't fulfil career expectations for me. What you're doing when you start is what you're doing when you finish unless you make a conscious effort to do something different."*

*"Would like to explore other related careers."*

*"There may still remain talents of mine that are not fully used in teaching."*

*"The career expectations of a 17-year-old are not those of a more mature individual."*

*"Have only been teaching for eight months and have not yet fulfilled my career expectations."*

No female teachers voiced such views about continuing (or otherwise) in the profession.

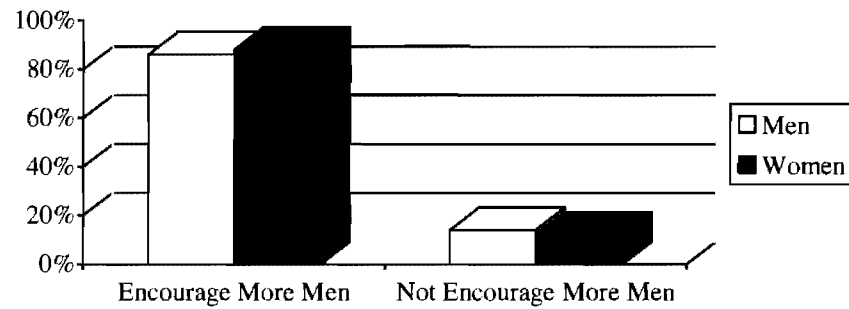
### **6.5 ENCOURAGEMENT OF MORE MEN INTO TEACHING AT PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL**

Despite some of the everyday frustrations with primary school teaching outlined in Section 6.4, nearly nine out of ten (86 per cent of men and 88 per cent of women) respondents would encourage more men to take up careers in primary school teaching (Figure 6.3).

A small number (13 per cent of all respondents) would not encourage men to follow this career path.

When asked to elaborate on their answers, male (55) and female (53) teachers acknowledged that there is a need for gender balance in primary teaching. Forty-four male and 25 female respondents stressed that teaching is rewarding work while 39 men and 32 women mentioned the need for male role models or models drawn from both genders. Typical responses are set out in Sections 6.5.1 to 6.5.4.

**Figure 6.3: Encourage More Men into Primary Teaching**



### 6.5.1 Gender Balance Sought

Many male teachers feel that the profession is too female-dominated and needs an infusion of men to rectify this.

*"The only way to have gender equality is with a gender balance. Anything else does not work. Am sure equality is also an issue for women in a male-dominated environment."*

*"A men/women balance in school staffing would be healthy for teachers and students."*

*"Children often ask me, 'Why are most teachers females?' For that reason children need to get a gender balance with regards to their teacher."*

*"Believe that men have a very important role to play in primary education, more especially in creating necessary balance."*

*"Far too many women in primary schools. A balance is needed."*

*"To provide a more normal view of the world in that both males and females have similar and differing views that pupils can interpret for themselves."*

*"A better balanced male/female ratio in staff would add to better and more realistic working atmosphere. Sometimes males/females are stereotyped into particular roles, which should be discouraged."*

*"Too many women. Too much touchy feely approaches. Too much talk about soaps in staffroom."*

*"Needs to be a greater gender balance within the profession and schools benefit greatly from having a gender balance."*

*"A larger number is needed to improve gender equality."*

Equally, women seek gender balance as a staffing practice and for the benefit of children they teach:

*"A balance of women and men is hugely important."*

*"Like it to be a more balanced profession."*

*"Balance is important in every career, both for staff and children."*

*"Feel a balance of male and female is important for the children considering the influence we have over them."*

*"Gender imbalance is startling."*

*"Important for gender balance and role models for boys as well as girls."*

*"Balance in staff room. Different perspectives."*

*"It is good for boys to get a balanced view of the world and to see men in roles that they assume are for women only."*

*"There is an important balance for the children having both male and female teachers. Healthy for the children to experience both male and female teachers."*

### 6.5.2 Rewarding Profession

Some men referred to their own positive experiences in teaching as a fulfilling career that should appeal to more men:

*"A very rewarding career. Working with children provides a myriad of challenges which provide me with a job that is never boring."*

*"An opportunity for men to use their sporting skills as well as developing children's skills both educationally and socially."*

*"Fulfilling job, nice change for pupils to have a male teacher. Very good working hours and holidays. Great to awaken an interest in children in your own interests."*

*"Job security and decent salary as opposed to a job in IT. Great holidays. Friends with other qualifications unhappy with their jobs or forced to emigrate."*

*"Love my job and think more men should become teachers. It's the best job in the world."*

*"Men are still held in high esteem by many parents especially if they love sport. Promotional prospects are very high."*

*"Teaching is a very fulfilling career that not only has great job satisfaction but leaves great time to pursue other interests."*

*"A great career for someone interested in it. Being a male teacher is something of a novelty in many schools, but you also have to be quite strong-willed to put up with the extra attention."*

*"Important role and a lot of diversity in the job. You can incorporate a lot of your own interests and hobbies into the job."*

*"Rewarding at senior class level. Good opportunities for further study/other career interest."*

Similar comments were made by female teachers about the positive aspects of teaching:

*"Huge job satisfaction."*

*"Enjoyable career which has a lot of job satisfaction."*

*"A challenging job if that's what they're looking for. Has its perks of holidays and shorter day."*

*"Job is very fulfilling and has a lot to offer outside of just being a job."*

*"Such a rewarding job."*

*"Good hours."*

*"Flexibility of location especially re expensive housing. Family-friendly hours. Scope to make creative use of summer holidays."*

*"It can be very rewarding."*

*"Offers security, job satisfaction etc. more so than in other jobs as reported by male acquaintances."*

*"Great holidays and sports are involved."*

*"Very fulfilling career."*

Some female teachers raised the issue that men get promoted faster than women:

*"Men still seem to get promoted quicker and more likely to go for promotion."*

*"Easier for men to find a job in teaching, they seem to gain respect more easily."*

*"Men tend to progress more rapidly promotion-wise."*

### 6.5.3 Role Models

The need for alternative and male role models for all children, though especially boys, was also mentioned by a number of male respondents:

*"A good career, high level of promotion available, i.e. higher percentage of men in roles of authority."*

*"Children need role models from both genders. Coming to the stage where teaching is seen as a female-dominated profession."*

*"It is increasingly becoming a female-dominated profession. It is important that children are exposed to positive male role models which I believe male teachers provide."*

*"The absence of men is alarming, especially with the demise of the standard family unit – male teacher role models are more necessary than before. Discipline issues."*

*"Male staff contribute positively in both staffroom and classroom as role models for discipline and a well balanced society."*

*"Absence of a father figure in many homes."*

*"Boys need male role models."*

*"More men are needed for staffrooms plus as role models in boys schools. Men seem to take more interest in after-school activities."*

*"Particularly because of the increasing number of children without male role models in their lives."*

*"More children do not have a positive male role model in their lives. It is important to provide this."*

Female respondents also agree that male role models are important:

*"Children (in certain areas) could use positive male role models."*

*"An obvious lack of male role models for male and female students – they often accept TV/music/sports personalities as realistic role models, due in many cases to lack of male parent figure."*

*"Important for gender balance and role models for boys as well as girls. Children from broken homes or single parent families have the chance to have some male role model in their lives. It's bad enough to have single sex schools without having to have the same in college and the workplace."*

*"Dire need for male role models – run the risk of feminising the profession. This will have negative influence on boys."*

*"Children need more experience with males, especially children with no father at home."*

*"Especially important for boys to have a positive male figure to model themselves on. Encouragement from a male figure seems to mean a lot more to the pupils."*

#### 6.5.4 Encourage with Proviso/Reservations

Another group of men felt that they would encourage more men into primary teaching but only if certain conditions were right. These related to pay/earnings but also to the men who might or might not be suited.

*"Yes, if you're not career-driven, not looking to earn a lot of money and have a useful other activity in your life to devote your free time to."*

*"You cannot support a family on the wages and have a quality of life that reflects the effort and sacrifice that goes with the job."*

*"Depends on the personality. A person would need to be patient, friendly, accepting of the limited financial reward, and have a competent level of Irish, PE and music."*

*"Great scope for creativity and autonomy but the idea of life-long learning and taking the initiative for proper development needs to be instilled from beginning."*

*"If they have a commitment to the demands of the profession and necessary skills, personality etc. it can be very rewarding."*

*"Profession is a thoroughly rewarding and enjoyable experience. The salary and the top point of salary is not very endearing."*

*"See no reason for them not to other than the stigma of it being a 'female' job."*

*"Teaching can be very rewarding provided you get on well with children."*

*"Would encourage anyone who has an aptitude for the job to do it. There are far too many people who should not have become teachers."*

*"Excellent satisfaction. No limits to what one can do. Many careers within teaching e.g. curriculum development – but one will not be able to support a family!"*

Some women felt that only men who are genuinely interested and who have the required attributes should be encouraged to follow a career in primary teaching:



*"If one is not worried about the money then one should apply."*

*"Men are often promoted with no evidence of their ability or commitment. If more men join the profession I would like them to recognise that their efforts will be rewarded – not inferred status where they do nothing to gain it."*

*"Don't feel many men would enjoy the job, however if they felt they would, encourage them as it is a very rewarding and interesting career."*

*"Inspectors tell us that gender equality in classes is necessary for the children and so this should carry through to the staff but money and promotion wouldn't entice career-hungry males into the profession."*

*"There is an imbalance and I believe this often gives males an unfair advantage when it comes to promotion. Also they tend to have ego problems."*

*"Why not? Men are generally more ambitious so that's probably what puts them off. Not many career opportunities."*

*"Yes if it's a vocation, but no if a man is seeking a prestigious highly paid job."*

Overall there were many more positive views expressed summed up in:

*"Feelings I have received regarding the gender imbalance from parents have been very strong. Parents are very positive when they learn that I am teaching their child. Role modelling is the term most used."*

However one woman raised the issue of "possible difficulties for men re child protection issues", though no men referred to this.

## 6.6 FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST MEN ENTERING THE PROFESSION

To complement the question about potential motivational factors that might encourage men and women to enter primary school teaching, respondents were asked to rate (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 as the strongest demotivation through to 5 as the weakest demotivation) a list of 11 fac-

tors that may have discouraged them from becoming primary school teachers. Figure 6.4a shows that for men better career prospects outside teaching, salary level/earning potential, slow career progress, fear of false sexual abuse claims and compulsory Irish/SCG are the five most important negative factors that might have discouraged or strongly discouraged them from primary teaching as a career.

Figure 6.4a: Demotivations for Men

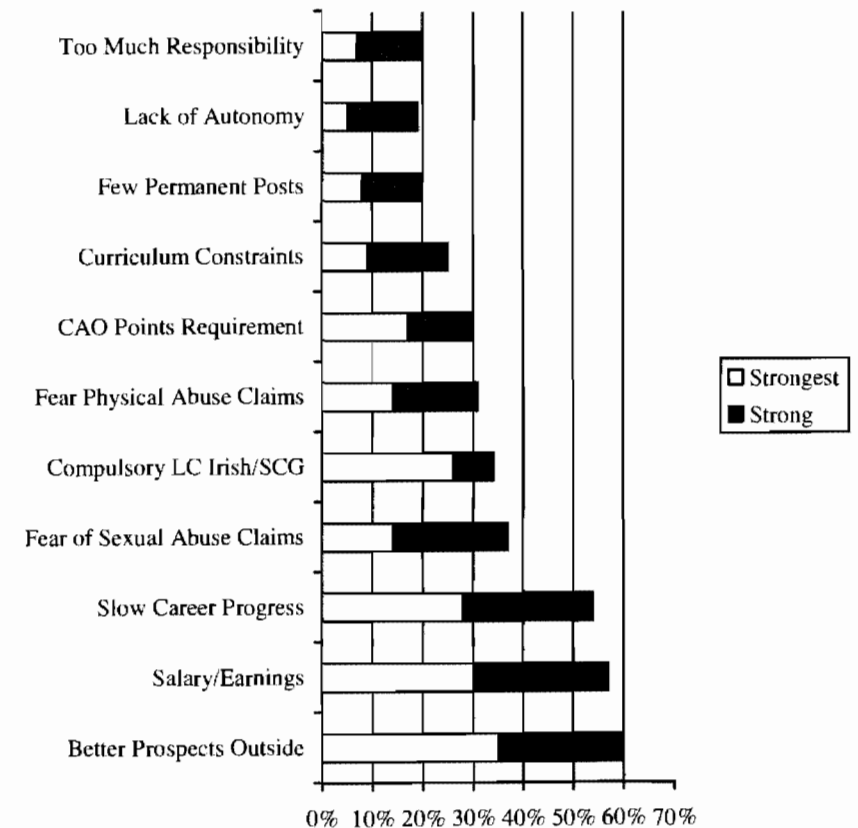
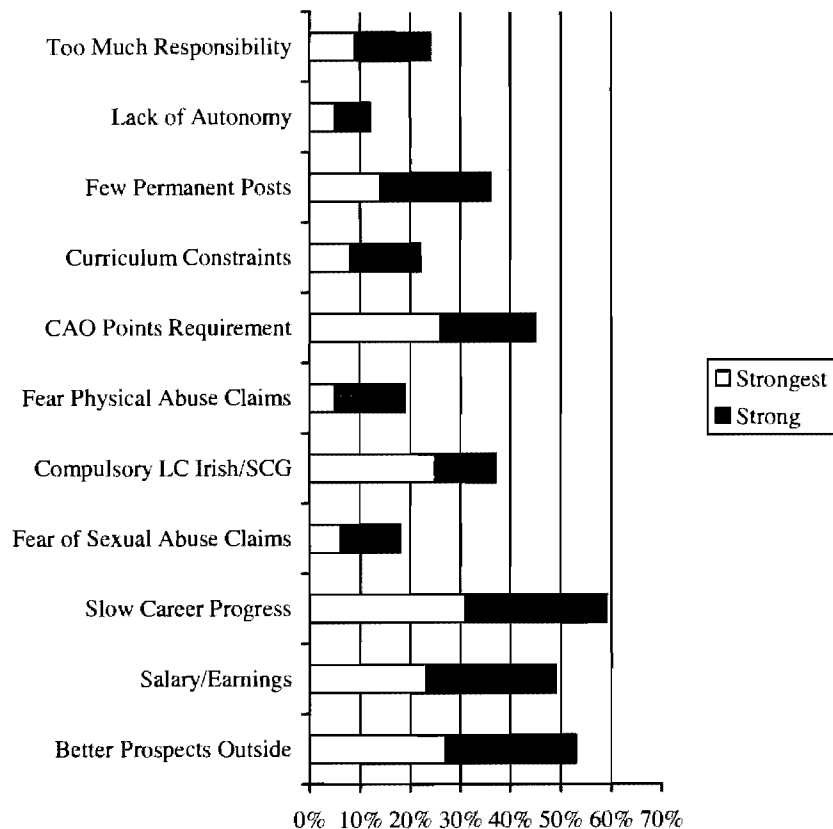


Figure 6.4b sets out the factors that may have discouraged women from entering primary teaching: slow career progress, better prospects outside teaching, salary/earnings potential, CAO points requirement and compulsory Irish. Fear of false sexual and physical abuse claims did not feature as highly for women and these gender differences are statistically

significant (chi-square .000). Lack of permanent posts was more important to women than men in primary teaching (chi-square .003).

**Figure 6.4b: Demotivations for Women**



Some female and male teachers elaborated on why they would discourage more men from embarking upon careers in primary school teaching. The most common and recurrent themes are salary level, especially for men who want to support a family, poor promotion prospects, followed by problems with the curriculum or discipline of pupils. A cross-section of the men's responses is set out below.

*"Poor salary and promotion prospects. Male response to learning/education is not heard in a largely feminine world of education."*

*"Not if they want to buy a home or have a quality of life comparable with their qualifications. Teaching is a hand-to-mouth existence whilst people with real jobs get real wages."*

*"Salary too low."*

*"Very difficult to raise family on wages. Very low status for men – seen as women's work."*

*"Level of Irish too high."*

*"You cannot support a family on the wages and have a quality of life that reflects the effort and sacrifice that goes with the job."*

*"Until the Department implements nationally an agreed, coherent, implementable and effective disciplinary code of practice re unruly etc. pupils, I would not recommend men or women to become teachers."*

*"Lack of promotional opportunities. Poor salary scale structure."*

*"Frustrated due to unqualified teachers in schools and low wages considering points needed in Leaving Cert."*

*"Ambition and hard work gets very little reward in this job. There is no incentive to better yourself."*

*"Primarily because of lack of males but it won't happen because of career prospects – nil – and earning potential."*

*"Level of preparation required is excessive. Impossible to teach the full new curriculum to junior classes."*

*"Pay not good enough – no chance of overtime – getting a mortgage is out of the question."*

Some women would also discourage men for very similar reasons:

*"Doesn't pay well enough."*

*"No, because it appears that they are favoured for management positions."*

*"Legalities are spoiling teaching. A lot of jobs being done to please outsiders (parents, inspector) regardless of impact on classroom learning. Paper trails are taking over, parent power can be very scary for new teachers."*

*"Salary and perks not enough."*

*"Pay not enough to entice men. Very little chance to gain promotion. No incentive to better yourself academically."*

*"Not a career that I would encourage to anybody – male or female."*

*"Seems more suited to females due to family commitments."*

*"This is inverse discrimination – only people who are dedicated to education and their pupils should take up teaching!"*

### **6.7 MEASURES REQUIRED TO ENCOURAGE MORE MEN INTO PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHING**

One of the major objectives of this study was to identify measures that could be adopted to encourage more men into primary teaching. Respondents were asked to suggest possible measures. There were 283 responses from men and 178 from women. More money (in the form of improved salary structure/financial rewards/promotion prospects) was mentioned by 140 male and 104 female respondents.

After greater financial rewards, 100 male and 36 female respondents sought measures to promote the teaching profession and improve the public image of the job. The third category of measures related to some form of relaxation of the Irish requirement, mentioned by 14 male and 5 female respondents. A further 41 respondents made various suggestions that fell outside these main themes. Among these was the proposal that there should be sex discrimination in favour of men getting into teacher education.

### **6.7.1 Increase Financial Incentives**

Almost half the teachers who responded to the question raised the issue of inadequate pay and the length of the salary scale making it difficult for many men to "support a family" or obtain a mortgage. Typical of these comments were:

*"Proper wage and salary structure."*

*"Salary scale. Promotion opportunities."*

*"Increase salary. I am not in a position to support any family if my 'intended' wishes to stop working."*

*"Salary needs to increase. This is a huge deterrent for men. Number of years on the scale should be reduced."*

*"Teaching for men is not a macho job. It would not appeal to business-minded people because of the pay. What sort of man would it appeal to?"*

*"Higher earning potential/higher promotional prospects."*

*"Better pay. Extra pay for extra-curricular activities."*

*"Shortening of the pay scale inasmuch as it would be possible to reach one's full earning potential in a realistic time like other professions."*

*"Increase salary at starting off point."*

*"Appropriate salary."*

*"Higher pay, more chances for promotion and diversity within profession."*

*"In today's world with housing affordability etc. men need better pay."*

*"Pay them [men] more but equality legislation prohibits that."*

*"Ensure that top salary scale is reached within a reasonable time-frame."*

*"Teachers who train school teams etc. should have financial reward."*

Women also referred to need for pay/salary scale adjustments:

*"Better pay structure. Create more opportunities for both genders to be promoted or get a sense of having something to contribute to development of schools."*

*"Higher salary and faster raising of it through the grades – it takes a long time to reach the highest point. Men value work by salary more than women I think."*

*"Job should be on a higher pay scale quicker for males and females."*

*"Better salaries and other benefits. Men still see themselves as the breadwinner."*

*"Higher pay. Greater opportunities to gain promotion (not just based on seniority within a school)."*

*"Salary needs to be far more attractive with greater promotional prospects and a shorter scale."*

*"Pay – if men are sole earner the pay would not sustain mortgage/ family."*

*"Up the salary and try to make people aware of the importance of the job and the contribution you are making to society."*

*"The pay is a deterrent for men – perhaps if teachers could climb the salary scale faster it may encourage more."*

However the counterview was also expressed:

*"If you have to use bribes they are not suitable candidates."*

### **6.7.2 Promote the Image of Primary Teaching**

There was a strong message that next to improving the pay and prospects of primary school teachers, measures to promote a more positive and appealing image of teaching, stressing its positive aspects and overcoming gender stereotyping, are required. Talks in schools, targeting of sec-

ond level and primary school students, media campaigns, advertisements and Transition Year work experience in schools were all mentioned by men:

*"Campaign at secondary level to promote profession. More selection of academic subjects at university level. Try to counteract current stereotype of teaching being a woman's job."*

*"Tackle the problem in secondary/VEC schools through career guidance. The myth that women make better teachers should be tackled in careers class."*

*"Career talks by male teachers in secondary schools."*

*"Possibly send male teachers to career guidance nights to stress the positives of the profession."*

*"Demonstration of the level of sport covered and effect males can have on a school/children to take it up, or follow a male teacher's example through taking part in a female-dominated activity."*

*"Have open days informing them of what the job entails."*

*"Advertisements on TV."*

*"Men with an interest in entering the profession could be given a number of days' experience as classroom assistants with other male teachers to let them see what actually goes on."*

*"Focus should be placed on Leaving Cert students that role models and motivators are essential for living today. This provides for a satisfying and rewarding career."*

*"Better communication of what teaching is all about, including benefits."*

*"Some men don't believe they would have expertise in many curricular areas. Perhaps it should be considered that you do not have to teach music and allow another teacher to do so."*

*"More media coverage on the positive aspects of teaching. Talks by male primary teachers in Leaving Cert/Transition Year classes."*

*"Marketing the profession at second and third level students."*

*"Highlighting fact that school is pivotal to societal structure and since Eire is becoming an 'economy', edifice is fast falling."*

*"Aspects of job such as autonomy, creativity, problem solving should be emphasised more along with possibilities for development."*

*"Target Transition Year and Leaving Cert. students to give a more balanced view of what is considered a woman's job."*

*"Informing potential students of the diversity and challenge posed by modern teaching, especially since the introduction of the revised curriculum."*

*"Cultural change, the government needs to tackle gender politics, push teaching as a meaningful job, not as the common myth 'if you can't do anything else teach'. It needs to promote teaching as young and dynamic not old, conservative."*

*"Focus on the benefits – working hours, holidays, sporting opportunities. Try to encourage more homosexual men to enter teaching."*

*"Male-directed advertising. A similar approach to that taken in UK of 'golden hello' to encourage men."*

*"Has to lose its tag of being a mainly female-oriented. Push the fact that there are loads of girls at college!"*

*"Inclusion of male teachers in media coverage. Stereotype of primary teachers in news items or publicity has young female teachers in classroom situations."*

*"An advertisement campaign like that done for Marine Corps."*

*"Interview men who are teachers on TV/radio/print media and let them air their opinions, experiences and recommendations."*

Women made similar suggestions:

*"An advertising campaign, perhaps using celebrities or sports stars to talk about male teachers who were role models for them and provided encouragement."*

*"Image of teaching needs to change with the times, perhaps bringing teachers in to speak to second level schools. Advertising campaign like that for territorial army on UTV."*

*"Colleges of ed. should consider how they can encourage men through their promotional material. Guidance teachers should also be made aware that male students may be interested in teaching and provide appropriate information."*

*"The TTA recruitment ads (UK) were good. Send male primary teachers to secondary schools to highlight how it is such a good career to complement holidays, sporting interests etc."*

*"From secondary school encourage more into work experience."*

*"Have younger present teachers (male) talk to prospective secondary school boys and even show videotapes of their experiences. More assigning of Transition Year job experience places in schools to boys."*

*"Maybe a media campaign highlighting male teachers in a positive light. Maybe hone in on male primary teachers in sport."*

*"Good, attractive adverts in magazines aimed at teenagers. Link in somehow with GAA, show that 'real men' can teach too."*

*"Media could encourage this aspect, also boys could be encouraged in secondary schools."*

*"More media coverage showing men teaching."*

*"More transition year experience or work experience for men in secondary school."*

*"Promote it as a parenting-friendly job."*

### 6.7.3 Irish Language Requirements

A number of respondents were critical of the Irish language requirements for primary teaching and sought a relaxation:

*"Qualification as Gaeilge."*

*"Loosen up the Irish requirement."*

*"I had many male friends who wanted to become teachers but . . . they had not enough Irish."*

*"Is a grade C in Gaeilge necessary?"*

*"Change SCG exam and compulsory Honours Irish to level closer to what is required to teach Irish."*

*"Less emphasis on Irish."*

*"Less emphasis on Honours Irish."*

*"Need for high levels in Irish are turning many talented men away."*

*"Relax requirements for Irish language."*

*"Reduce level of Irish language requirement."*

*"Possibly making Irish optional giving extra money for those who speak it fluently and hold the proper qualifications."*

*"Lower standard of Irish."*

The Irish language requirement was also criticised by women who responded:

*"Drop the requirement for Honours Irish, though I don't think this would necessarily be a good thing."*

*"Having to have an honour in Irish eliminates a lot of potentially brilliant men teachers so I would recommend that this should be lowered to pass level and there may be more uptake by men."*

*"Less emphasis on Irish so that they can get into the courses easier."*

*"Higher level Irish not compulsory."*

*"Look at entry requirements, especially Irish."*

#### 6.7.4 Other Measures

Alternative measures were raised by a substantial number of respondents. They related to reform of teacher education to make it more man-friendly, positive discrimination in favour of men in third level places/selection procedures, lowering the CAO point requirement for teaching and addressing fears of abuse claims against teachers, among others.

##### *Teacher Education*

It was mainly men who felt that Colleges of Education need to change:

*"Need to make colleges of education more suitable for males. Need to realise that males and females usually have different styles of teaching."*

*"Many men were refused admission to the post grad dip. in education. This should be remedied."*

*"Part-time conversion courses."*

*"Make the interview process more suited to male teachers. Many males apply every year yet only a small percentage are chosen."*

*"Easier access to college."*

*"Teacher training broken into two segments – junior infants to second class and third to sixth class, the latter more popular with male teachers."*

*"Please train them [men]! I have been rejected twice for the graduate conversion programme."*

Two women also commented:

*"Change the regime in training colleges – it's very old fashioned and males don't accept it as well as females."*

*"Training colleges, especially Mary Immaculate in Limerick, have a very negative attitude towards male teachers. They make teaching practice very difficult, i.e. more frequent visits of inspectors than female students."*

*Positive Discrimination*

There is support for positive discrimination, in favour of men, from male and female primary teachers. Male respondents said:

*"Allocate a percentage of places on B.Ed courses for men."*

*"The allocation of a fraction of college places to men only."*

*"Guaranteed places in colleges. Quicker career advancement for hard workers. At the moment it doesn't matter how hard you work or how little you do."*

*"Positive discrimination in teaching training colleges, concerning number of places available to men."*

*"Have one of the colleges for men only. Bring back an interview to get into colleges. Have a lower points scale."*

*"Positive discrimination at the point of selection."*

*"A quota system to more fairly reflect a male/female balance in training colleges."*

*"Promise of a principal's position in a few years?"*

Female respondents said:

*"Easier access to postgrad H.Dip."*

*"I agree with suggestions of positive discrimination. Lowering entrance requirements and targeting males at second level."*

*"Allocate a certain percentage of teaching places in college for male students as is done for Gaeltacht applicants."*

*Adapt CAO Points System*

Some men felt that the point system needs to be changed:

*"Drop the need for a certain amount of points."*

*"Develop a points system that rewards working in disadvantaged schools and allows transfers once a certain number of points is achieved."*

*"Drop the points for entry by a significant number and allow some points for extra curricular involvement that would be useful in teaching profession (i.e. sport, music etc.)."*

*"Lower points – it's not about having the academic qualification – some of the best male teachers were those who scraped in on third round offers/Gaeltacht scheme."*

*"Lower points. Perhaps sport as a more integrated subject."*

*"Maybe an interview process as opposed to simply points and the CAO."*

Two women agreed:

*"Points system – probably encourage more to do other courses if they have got 500 points."*

*"Lower the CAO points."*

*Abuse Claims*

Four women, but no men, raised the issue of possible physical/sexual abuse claims:

*"Men worry about sexual abuse allegations against any form of familiarity."*

*"Address issues surrounding litigation, e.g. sexual/physical abuse – puts men and women off."*

*"In our society there's anxiety and caution on the part of male teachers working with infants. Consequently many men will not work with young children for fear of being wrongly accused of anything underhand."*

*"Assurance that they can not be accused falsely of inappropriate behaviour."*

*Miscellaneous*

Other suggestions that were made almost exclusively by male respondents were:

*"Solve the lack of properly staffed rooms where unruly pupils can be legally sent. When such pupils are defiant there is very little teachers can do."*

*"More focussed curriculum/programmes."*

*"Social attitudes need to change. Teaching is not glorified child-minding. Our educators need to be valued more."*

*"Less paperwork, more specific posts like in secondary school."*

*"Remove the seniority factor."*

*"Allow parents to have a voice in who gets promotions."*

*"Changes in curriculum, too much airy-fairy material to be covered."*

*"Remove ignorant housewives from positions of power."*

*"Less paperwork. Constant changing of curriculum must stop, especially maths, Irish and English."*

*"Paternity leave."*

*"Bring suitability interview back. Emphasise sport and Irish as very important."*

*"Make discipline a word that is not taboo any more."*

*"More support and resources in areas such as art and music."*

*"More peer teaching, of older boys assisting younger students in primary and secondary education."*

*"Work experience in upper classes of secondary schools."*

*"A wider transition towards a more healthy, sustainable and fairer society would reduce many of the stresses evident in the classroom."*

*"Systematic disciplinary procedure for consistently disruptive children using a holistic approach."*

*"Make it safer and uphold teachers' rights."*

*"Improve management structures."*

*"Providing a route [that is] less language-based and more technology-based. Men are not language-orientated and tend to not excel in those areas, i.e. very few do further work in foreign languages, English etc."*

## 6.8 KEY FINDINGS

While the majority of teachers entered the profession via Colleges of Education in Ireland, a significant minority were mature students and/or had obtained a teaching qualification in the UK/elsewhere. Female teachers were more likely to have studied education in Irish colleges compared with their male counterparts. More women than men claimed that teaching was their first choice for a career.

The six strongest positive motivators for men entering primary teaching were work/life balance, contribution to society, job security, academic achievement, desire to work independently and having a family member in the teaching profession. For women the key motivators were contribution to society, work/life balance, job security, academic achievement, desire to work independently and having a family member in the teaching profession.

Nearly four out of five teachers believed that primary teaching has been rewarding and fulfilled their career expectations. Female teachers were more likely than male teachers to state this. However nearly two-thirds of men and women in primary teaching felt that there was a difference between the concept of the job and the reality faced, due mainly to low salary/career progression and adverse working conditions. Others referred to the low status accorded to the profession, pupil/parent behaviour and gaps in teacher education.

There is strong evidence from this survey that measures will be required to compensate for the relatively low salary/status now associated with the profession. Furthermore, many male and female teachers feel that the nature of their job and working environment make their work extremely demanding and highly pressured. Others are critical of political interference from Boards of Management and the Department of Education and Science.



Generally, male and female teachers would encourage more men into the profession to achieve a better gender balance which they regard as essential and to provide male role models, particularly for male children. Others felt that their career was highly rewarding in a non-pecuniary way. There was a strong consciousness that male teachers feel that their salaries would not allow them to get a mortgage/rear a family.

The six key factors identified as militating against more men entering the profession were better alternative career prospects, salary, slow career progression, fear of sexual abuse claims, compulsory Irish and CAO points. For women the demotivating factors were slow career progress, better prospects outside teaching, salary/earnings potential, CAO points requirement and compulsory Irish. Fear of false sexual or physical abuse claims did not feature as highly for women though lack of permanent posts was more important to women than men.

In response to the question, "How could more men be encouraged to take up primary school teaching?", money/salary was the most important measure, followed by the need to promote primary teaching in the media. The third most significant intervention sought was to abandon/relax the Irish language requirement. Other measures related to easier access to teacher education/positive discrimination/lower CAO points for men; more resources, improved teaching conditions, more emphasis on discipline and getting teaching experience for young men prior to CAO application.

## Chapter 7

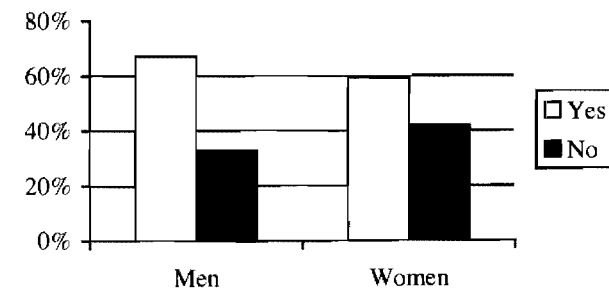
### CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER ISSUES

This chapter examines the career development experiences, including opportunities for training and promotion, for male and female respondents. It also sets out their views on women's and men's promotion prospects.

#### 7.1 TRAINING COURSES

More than two-thirds of male teachers (67 per cent) had taken career teacher education courses in the last three years compared with 59 per cent of female teachers (Figure 7.1) (chi-square .032).

*Figure 7.1: Undertaken Training Course in Last Three Years (n=597)*



#### 7.2 PROMOTION/ADVANCEMENT

Information was sought on whether teachers had sought promotion/advancement within or outside teaching in the last three years.