

**EQUAPOL: Gender Sensitive and Women Friendly Public Policies:
A Comparative Analysis of Their Progress and Impact**

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SWEDEN: STATE OF THE ART REPORT

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1. NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK ON GENDER EQUALITY AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING

1.1 General background

The foundation of Swedish gender equality policies can be traced back to a rather intense gender equality, or sex role, debate in the 1960s, which to a large extent has affected the way Sweden views equality issues. Equality was, from this point of view, no longer only a question for women, since both women's and men's roles were discussed. The building of the welfare state and the shortage of labour also influenced the deployment of gender equality policies. Thus, women's employment became the fundamental element or the basic principle. Because of women's entrance into the labour market, their contribution as breadwinners caused the male role to be challenged, since men were also expected to be responsible for domestic work (Baude 1992, Bergqvist 2001, Fürst 1999, Fredriksson 1987). The focus of gender equality policies on paid work is the distinguishing feature of official Swedish policies, though it is also found in the other Nordic countries (Fürst 1999). This is also reflected in the Swedish gender equality legislation.

The creation of gender equality as a political area in the 1970s was based on the notion that gender equality was to be regarded as a common societal problem to be solved by common efforts within the political frame (Ds 2001:64). In 1972 the Swedish government established the first formal organisation – the Equal Opportunities Commission, responsible for gender equality issues. The commission's primary task was to strengthen women's position in the labour market and women's right to employment (Ds 2001:64, Fürst 1999). During 1972-1976 the delegation was placed directly under the prime minister's office, but the work with gender equality moved in 1976 to the Ministry of Labour and at the same time the commission ceased to exist. Instead a cabinet minister with responsibility for gender equality policies was appointed. In 1982 the government office founded the Division for Gender Equality, a unit whose task is to handle gender equality issues. It has been placed within different ministries during the years, but from 1998 it is located in the Ministry of Industry.

The most important reforms that aimed at achieving equality between women and men (besides the general and equal right to vote) are to be found in labour market, family and social policies. The three reforms decisive for the path chosen by Swedish politicians are (Fürst 1999, Westerberg 1998):

- individual taxation,
- parental insurance, and finally
- the decision to expand the child care system. Today the law states that every municipality has an obligation to provide care for children from the age of one for parents who so wish.

Sweden is a state with great governmental responsibility for social security and social service and this leads indirectly to gender equality through social insurance, since the benefits are general and intended for the individual (Sundgren Grinups 1998). The parental insurance, for example, gives economic compensation for salary reduction while a parent stays at home to take care of their children. Furthermore, the allowance for the time a parent stays at home with his or her child is a pensionable income, or, in other words, these years are included (Westerberg 1998).

During the 1970s several voices were raised about legislation aiming at gender equality in the labour market, something the trade unions and the employers rejected. In 1977 the parties of the labour market made an agreement about gender equality in order to avoid legislation and

to show that gender equality issues can be solved by agreements, like other labour judicial questions. However, in 1980 the first Equal Opportunities Act (SFS 1991:433) was passed and there was legislation in Sweden against gender discrimination in the labour market (Ds 2001:64). The act clearly aims at improving women's situation in working life and it has over the years been made more stringent, developed and adjusted to EU rules regarding equality and prohibition against discrimination. At the same time, or as a consequence of legislation, the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman, JämO, was established in 1980, a public authority with the aim of supervising how the Act is to be followed. From March 1st 2002 JämO's responsibility has been extended also to overseeing the equal rights of students in higher education. During the 1980s the work with gender equality in Sweden continued with an official evaluation (SOU 1987:19) whose aim was to propose actions that would increase women's participation in, among other things, governmental boards of directors and committees. The intention was to ensure that every other position was reserved for women.

Today gender equality is prioritised in Sweden, with the overall objective that women and men should have the same opportunities, rights and obligations within all essential areas in life (Skr 1999/2000:24). This includes among other things:

- an even distribution of power and influence
- equal opportunities for economic independence
- equal opportunities and conditions regarding enterprises (businesses), work, working life conditions and increased qualifications
- equal access to education and opportunities to develop personal ambitions, interests and talents
- shared responsibility for home and children¹²

However, strategies are necessary in order to realise visions. In Sweden the governments' gender equality policy states that gender mainstreaming is the official strategy that will be used in order to attain a society where gender equality is reached. The policies on the national level can be summed up as follows:

- Gender equality is a comprehensive issue that is to be a concern for all departments.
- The gender equality perspective is to permeate all aspects of the government's policies.
- All ministers are responsible for gender equality within their respective areas.
- Gender equality is to permeate all levels in society.
- All governmental agencies are to give an account of their gender equality work.
- All government agencies are to have a policy plan for gender equality¹³.

1.2 Institutional architecture

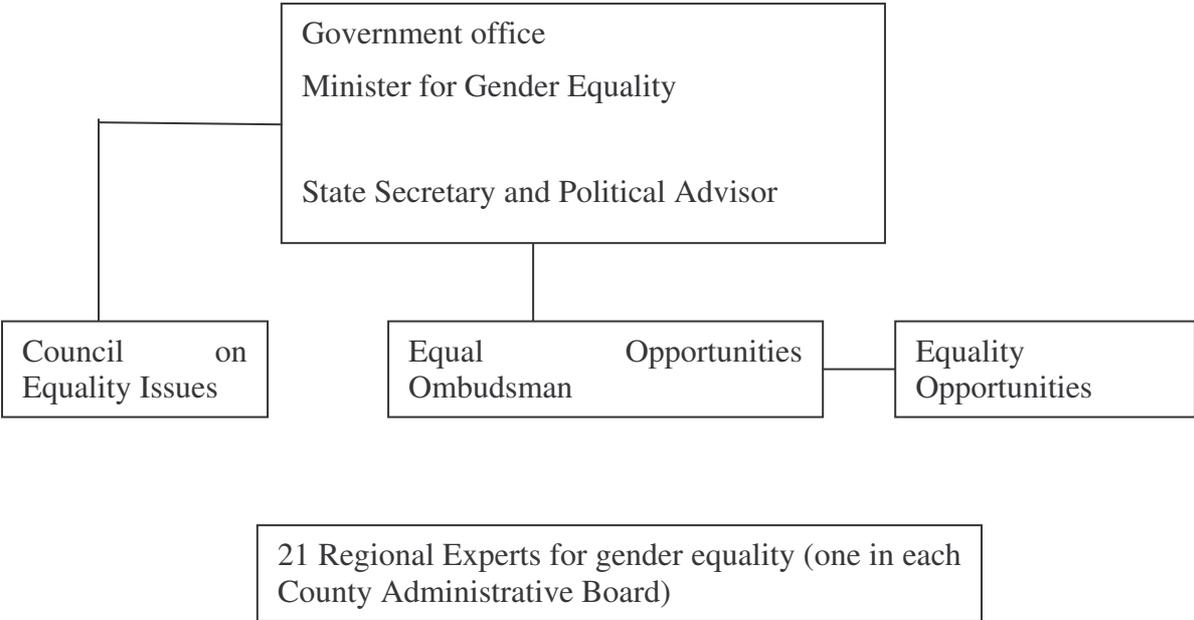
On the national level the gender equality policies are handled by the political staff connected to the Cabinet Minister who is responsible for gender equality issues. The government office located in the Ministry of Industry also has a special unit for handling gender equality matters

¹² <http://naring.regeringen.se/fragor/jamstalldhet/index.htm> [2003, feb. 5]

¹³ <http://naring.regeringen.se/fragor/jamstalldhet/metodutveckling/index.htm> [2003, feb. 5]

- the Division for Gender Equality. This unit, the government authority JämO, and the 21 experts on gender equality in every county administrative board, is the framework for the organisation of gender equality policies in Sweden. The organisation is illustrated in the following chart:¹⁴

Figure 1. Organisation chart for gender equality policies in Sweden.



1.2.1. Division for Gender Equality

The different units and their assignments can be described as follows: at the top we find the Division for Gender Equality whose task it is to support and carry out the gender equality policies at national and regional levels. The division is also responsible for developing methods to implement the governments’ gender equality policies. In other words, the division ensures the implementation of the governments’ policies, produces decision-making data for bills to the Parliament, and takes part in the work of designing these.

1.2.2. Council on Equality Issues

The Council on Equality Issues is a forum for exchanging ideas and discussion. The Chairperson is the Minister of Gender Equality. The council consists of approximately 40 representatives from different NGOs.

¹⁴ http://naring.regeringen.se/pressinfo/faktablad/PDF/n99_06e.pdf [2003, feb. 5]

1.2.3. The Ombudsman

In the middle we find JämO, whose chief task is to make sure the Equal Opportunities Act (SFS 1991:433) is followed. This is done through guidance, information and through negotiations with private employers and employees or their organisations. The authority can act if a report has been made, or can take initiatives of its own to raise issues regarding the regulation of legislation about active measures for gender equality. Organisations and companies with more than ten employees are obliged to draw up gender equality plans and JämO can call upon the organisations to submit these plans, in order to review them. JämO has also prepared manuals explaining how to plan for gender equality, which any organisation can order free of charge. Furthermore, the authority assists in disputes regarding transgression of the prohibition against discrimination and can also refer to other laws, for example the Security of Employment Act or the Parental Leave Act.

1.2.4. Equal Opportunities Commission

Finally, the Equal Opportunities Commission is an authority whose task it is, after an application from JämO, to order an employer to follow the demands from the legislation for active measures to promote gender equality.

1.2.5. Regional experts

Other units or functions responsible for the realisation of the governments' objectives are the experts on the regional level. From January 1st 1995 there are experts on gender equality in the 21 counties in Sweden. The intention is that the expert should be a support for the county management when it comes to promoting, operating and implementing the national, regional and local objectives for gender equality. The expert should also make sure that the gender equality perspective is taken into account in different areas. Today there are no homogenous organisations in the county councils and the municipalities responsible for the gender equality issues, but both the municipalities' and the county councils' gender equality work has recently broadened to comprise not only personnel policy but also the content of the activity.

1.3. Methods and procedures for mainstreaming gender into public policies

1.3.1. Statistics

At the national level there are a number of methods and procedures for gender mainstreaming. All the official statistics should be disaggregated by sex. The reason is that while working with gender mainstreaming it is vital to have access to fundamental facts and in Sweden there is legislation that states that all official, individual-based statistics should be disaggregated by sex unless there are particular reasons for not doing so (SFS 1992:1668). Thus the statistics should show women's and men's situation, be collected, analysed and presented by sex and also mirror gender equality issues in society (Ds 2001:64).

1.3.2. Gender impact assessment

All official investigations are obliged to analyse their proposals from a gender equality perspective (SFS 1998:1474). The purpose is to make visible underlying assumptions in order to estimate what effect reforms or other changes will have for women's and men's life conditions. Basic analyses are regarded as vital in order to be able to make these estimations.

1.3.3. Gender budgeting

The gender equality perspective should influence the governmental ruling of the public authorities. Through budget documents the government states what the public authorities

should give priority to in the following year, and the authorities, in their turn, account for their activity in the annual reports. One of the most important tools for the government is the Budget Bill. It contains suggestions for guidelines regarding the economic policies and a plan for the state incomes and expenses during the following year. A gender equality perspective is (or should be) integrated into the budget process with the aim of showing how a connection can be made between objectives, budget and results and also of developing a way of following up and evaluating the gender equality policies.

1.3.4. Training of politicians

Ministers, political experts and employees are educated in gender equality by the Division for Gender Equality, something that is seen as vital if the demand for integrating gender perspectives into ordinary work is to be successful (Skr. 1999/2000:24).

1.3.5. Models for gender mainstreaming

Other methods are used in the actual work with gender mainstreaming in organisations in Sweden. There are a number of methods and models designed to support and facilitate this work. One is the **Three-stage model**, which is a proposal for how a process of change can be implemented. The stages are inception, development and application¹⁵. Inception contains executive decision, initial management study and policy formulating. Stage two is a development programme, the purpose of which is to translate the policy intentions into action and also to review and analyse them. Finally stage three serves to formulate goals, follow up the work and then integrate gender equality issues into the regular operation.

Another method is called the **3R-method**; it was developed by Gertrud Åström and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities. The method has primarily been used by local authorities in order to review and analyse the degree of influence women as well as men have on local government operations. It also serves as an aid in systematically compiling facts and information about the situations of women and men in a given operation. The first R stands for Representation and has to do with how many women and men there are in the organisation, or in other words, how many of each sex. The second R stands for Resources and deals with how the organisation's resources are distributed between women and men. The third R, finally, stands for Realia and has to do with why representation and resource distribution are divided between the sexes the way they are. Later Ilija Batljan and Gertrud Åström (Ds 1999:33) have claimed that the 3R method is a good starting point for gender analyses, but its weakness is that it neglects restrictions. Therefore a fourth dimension (or R) has been added¹⁶. This R stands for Restrictions, by which is meant different kinds of limitations regardless of whether they have to do with access to data or the division of resources.

Finally we will mention here a method that has not yet become reality. The investigation of the division of economic power (SOU 1998:6) stated that Sweden, one of the most gender equal countries in the world (according to the UN 1995), is at the same time one of the most sex segregated. In order to do something about this the Swedish government evaluated the possibility for a voluntary **labelling of companies** and organisations from a gender equality view (SOU 2002:30). The investigation proposes the introduction of a system of voluntary gender equality labelling of goods and services, similar to the one of labelling goods and services on an environmental basis.

¹⁵ A description of the model can be found in Just Progress! Applying gender mainstreaming in Sweden.

¹⁶ http://www.lf.se/ag/arbetsomraden/jamstallthet/mainstreaming/verktyg_metoder.htm#4R-metoden [2003, feb. 10]

1.4 Key Non-Governmental stakeholders/actors

There are numerous NGOs in Sweden. To start with, there are the seven largest political parties, which all have a women's organisation, the different national trade unions and a great number of non-profit organisations. All these have opportunities to react to and influence political issues regarding gender equality and gender mainstreaming; many of them are involved as official referral authorities. Those who have one representative in the Council of Equality Issues (see figure 1) are all the seven political parties plus their women's associations, the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO) and the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (SACO). There are also participants from the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (which represents company owners) and the Swedish Agency for Government Employers.

1.4.1. Women's organisations

17 other different national associations have a representative each in the Council of Equality Issues. Among others there are the Women's International Zionist Organisation, professional Women's National Federation (BPW Sweden), Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILFP) and the Fredrika Bremer Association¹⁷ (FBF). The latter may be noted, since the association was established in 1884. It has from the very beginning worked for women's political rights and is politically and religiously independent. Today FBF is an official referral authority that works for the realisation of gender equality with a starting point in equal rights for women and men, rights and obligations at home, in their professional life and in society. Some questions of special importance for FBF are that power and influence should be equally divided between women and men, that the relation between fathers and their children should be strengthened and that the opportunities for women to be self-employed should be improved.

1.4.2. Female networks

During the 1980s another kind of women's movement emerged. It was mainly women in the sparsely populated areas that began to organise in so called female networks and their aim was to create opportunities that would make it possible to live and work in these areas. Since then networks have remained a fruitful way of organising among women. In the 1990s the Swedish women's movement was represented by Stödstrumporna ('the Support Stockings'), a network started because of the decreasing representation of women in the Swedish Parliament. Although they were fiercely questioned, they succeeded in starting a debate that affected the outcome of the Swedish election in 1994 so that a 'world record' of female representation in the government was attained (Rönblom 2002). Today 45% of the cabinet ministers and 44.4% of all members of the Swedish Parliament are women.

1.4.3. Swedish Women's Lobby

Another way for an NGO to influence is through umbrella organisations. In Sweden many NGOs are gathered in an umbrella organisation called the Swedish Women's Lobby, which also has a representative in the Council of Equality Issues (see Figure 1). This organisation unites about 40 different women's organisations, associations and other organisations with different backgrounds in one national network. Swedish Women's Lobby (previous SAMS – Swedish Women's Organisations Cooperation) was established in 1997 after the UN women's conference in Beijing 1995, and has today 1.4 million members. The intention is to gather the Swedish women's movement and thereby strengthen women's ability for action, and increase

¹⁷ Fredrika Bremer, (1801-1865) a Swedish pioneer for women's liberation; her contribution was of significance foremost in the areas of education and working life (Våra Lärmodrar och Läröfäder, 2000).

women's participation in the decision-making processes in society. Another objective is to work within the European Union through active participation in the European Women's Lobby (EWL), where Swedish women organisations are represented by the Swedish Women's Lobby.

1.5 Barriers to and facilitators of gender mainstreaming

The situation in Sweden today is that the factors (political will, a specific gender equality policy, statistics, knowledge and financing) that are seen as fundamental if gender mainstreaming is to be successful do exist (EG-S-MS (98) 2 rev.). Sweden has, almost from the 1960s, the political will, a special policy for gender equality, and even a Cabinet Minister responsible for the area. Furthermore, all official individual based statistics are disaggregated by sex and there is a huge body of knowledge, mainly at universities and thanks to gender researchers. At the national level it is not financial problems that hinder gender equality.

So, what does hinder then? Several reasons for this can be hypothesised. One is that the Swedish way of taking care of or arranging everything at the national level might constitute a risk. It looks and sounds good but the power of initiative may be weakened and the barriers become invisible (Rönblom 2002). Another reason might be the fact that the Equal Opportunities Act (SFS 1991:433) only regulates working life.

Further, there might be a risk in merging the issue of gender equality with issues of ethnic minorities and other diversity matters, as has been done at Umeå University. Today it is not clear what will happen to gender equality issues if they are merged together with other diversity or equality issues.

Finally Norén (2002) shows an example of barriers that hinder gender equality in her study regarding how female and male politicians are represented in a Swedish news programme. Female politicians are in minority, younger and speak for about five seconds less than men. They are treated differently, described as a subordinate in relation to the man and are more often filmed close up. The reporter treated the female politician differently, even rebuked them, something that never happened with a man. This is one example of subtle but insidious barriers that women have to struggle against in almost every area of life.

2. GENDER EQUALITY AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN SOCIAL PROTECTION AND TAX POLICIES

Sweden has a long and genuine tradition of fundamental democratic freedom and rights, democratic foundations that are also the prerequisite for gender mainstreaming. The long tradition of social democratic policies and the building of a welfare state are the causes of the well-developed social insurance system that exists in Sweden. The state is active, everyone has access to welfare services and Sweden has high levels of benefits. The fundamental principle is equality for all citizens, and this has been an important drive behind women's integration into paid work (Mósesdóttir, 1999), an integration that has led to adoption of the dual breadwinner model.

2.1 Treatment of gender in the policy content

A gender equality perspective permeates all parts of the government's policies, and working life and labour market are central areas for this. From the government it is pointed out that the parties in the labour market must take on the responsibility for ensuring equal pay for women and men, counteracting the gender divided labour market and creating conditions that will make it possible for people to combine work with family life. The long-term work for an equal representation of women and men in decision-making authorities and the intention that

the proportion of women in leading positions should increase are issues the government continues to strive for. Besides the active role of bringing about changes in the public sphere, the government also has the role of stimulating actors in other parts of society, not least in the private sector. During the last few years the government has also put emphasis on men and men's conditions, and on how to inspire men to participate more actively in the gender equality work (Budgetprop. 2002/2003:1 Area 14). However, in the Budgetproposition 2002/2003 there is no mention of how the future work with gender equality in the fields of social protection and tax policies should continue.

2.1.1. Income and tax policy

When it comes to income and tax policy Sweden has had individual taxation for income since 1971 (Fürst 1999), but still married couples pay property tax together. The Equal Opportunities Act (SFS 1991:433) regulates most issues concerning income, except salaries and wages. The government would like to ensure gender equality in income, but can only appeal to employers to ensure gender equality regarding income levels. This means that it is an important task for the trade unions to ensure gender equality regarding income and tax issues. On the other hand every company with more than ten employees is obliged to present a gender equality plan, which can be viewed as a device for influencing these matters.

2.1.2. Social insurances

In Sweden there is a health insurance system, which ensures that even if an employee falls ill, the economic consequences will not be too dramatic. There is also an economic support system for families during the period when they have to provide for children. Through income supplements the differences between families with and without children are reduced. Economic support to families with children is given by means of child allowances, maintenance support, housing allowances and parental insurances. The parental insurance, introduced in 1974, gives both parents the opportunity to combine work or studies with being a parent and today it comprises three kinds of cash benefits; pregnancy, parental and temporary parental benefits. The pregnancy benefit allows expectant mothers who are unable to work because of the physically demanding nature of their work to stay at home for a maximum of 50 days and amounts to 80% of their qualifying income. In connection with the child's birth the father gets ten days ("dad's days") temporary parental benefit in order to welcome and take care of the new-born child as well as its older brother(s) and/or sister(s). The parental benefit allows one of the parents to stay at home with their new child for 480 days (390 days with 80% of income and 90 days for SEK 60/day). The days are equally divided between the parents, 240 days each, but one of them can transfer all except 60 days to the other parent. In other words, 60 days are not transferable but have to be used by the parent himself. We write *him*, because this is what is called the "fathers' month" first introduced in 1995. Today there is an intention to further increase this period. The temporary parental benefit, finally, makes it possible for parents to stay at home with their sick children¹⁸. Sweden has finally built up an extensive child care service for which parents pay a monthly charge at a rate of three, two and one per cent of a household's income for the first, second and third child respectively. In 2002 a maximum fee was established, which means that the cost of having a child at pre-school (children up to six years old) will never exceed SEK 1 140 for the first child, SEK 760 for the second and SEK 380 for the third, and for a school child the fee will never exceed SEK 760 for the first child and SEK 380 for the second and third.

¹⁸ http://social.regeringen.se/pressinfo/pdf/familj/familjepolitik_en.pdf [2003, feb. 11]

2.1.3. Pensions

Already in 1914 Sweden had an obligatory general pension, consisting of age- and invalidity insurance. In 1948 it was replaced by the state pension and in 1960 the ATP (supplementary pension) system was introduced. For the first time Sweden had a system for everybody where pension was regarded as a delayed salary for performed work, not an allowance. The amount of ATP depended upon income during the 15 most successful working years and a person got full ATP if she/he had been working for 30 years. However, because of various changes - pensioners becoming more numerous in relation to persons working, people living longer and therefore receiving a pension during more years, increased costs for pensioners and low economic growth - a new reform was needed. This was settled in 1999 and what is significant is that pensions are based on the total income during the individual lifetime. The size of the pension depends on the amount of money the person has earned during her/his entire working life. The pension is divided into three parts; the income pension, the premium pension and the guarantee pension. The guarantee pension is a protection for those that have not worked, or who have a low income-related pension; it is the minimum pension a person can get. The premium pension is the part of the pension that every individual can place in funds. It is worth mentioning that since a woman's income is generally lower in comparison to a man's, the result is that women generally also get lower pensions. Today it is possible to take out a survivor protection policy, before or in connection with retirement.

2.2 Institutional architecture and policy-making processes

At the national level the responsibility for this issue rests first and foremost with the Minister and the Division for Gender Equality. At the next level is the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Finance. There are some public authorities that are necessary to mention and these are The National Tax Board and the National Social Insurance Board (RFV) and also The Premium Pension Authority (PPM). However, every department and every governmental authority is expected to have gender equality on their agenda, to make plans, carry out these plans and evaluate their work with gender equality within their area.

2.3 Methods and procedures for mainstreaming gender in policies

In the area of social protection and tax policies all the methods mentioned earlier (Chapter 1.3) are also used here. But it is perhaps in this area that the three reforms (individual taxation, parental insurance, and the child care system) have had the greatest impact as methods in order to reach gender equality (Fürst 1999, Westerberg 1998). Especially the expansion of childcare is an important method for reaching gender equality, according to the High Level Expert Group on Women in Industrial Research in their report to the European Commission (Women in Industrial Research 2002).

2.4 Key actors involved

The trade unions of course play a central part in gender equality matters. The biggest of them are the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO) and the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (SACO). The employers also have an organisation, the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise. Through the Council of Equality Issues all the 40 different NGOs mentioned earlier have possibility to influence the gender equality work in all areas in Sweden. This forum gives them the opportunity to act and react upon suggestions and propositions also on issues regarding social protection and tax policies.

2.5 Barriers and facilitators

In Sweden much progress has been made and the society has to a great extent got closer to its goal, a society where gender equality is a reality. Nevertheless, there are still barriers.

The system for how to value work used in Sweden cannot be regarded as fair e.g. to work as a nurse is less valued than working as a male engineer. Women in Sweden still earn less than men in general; today the figure is 82% of the male salary. The average salary is 23 300 SKR for men compared to 19 200 SKR for women¹⁹. In fact, the difference has increased; ten years ago women earned 84% of the male salary. It is also a fact that already ten years ago this issue was discussed (Boëthius 1993). This led to consequences in other areas as well, for example there is a “ceiling” of what amount one can get from the parental insurance, and that “ceiling” is quickly reached. In other words, the family’s total income will be lower if the parent with the highest salary stays at home and since in most cases it is the father who earns the most, the mother stays at home. There are cases when companies, in order to avoid this, have paid/pays the difference between the parental and/or health insurance and the salary so their employees not suffer economically during these periods (SOU 2001:44). To summarise, women have lower salaries, work more often part time during long periods, partly to have the energy to work and partly because they are on maternity leave. This, together with the fact that women live longer and therefore get a smaller amount of the pension gives them in general lower pensions than men.

Sweden has formal rules for gender mainstreaming but progress is rather slow, and this shows that barriers are to be found elsewhere. What is regarded as constituting a barrier differs among researchers. Rönnblom (2002) points to the difference in home work where women still have more of the responsibility which has the effect that they simply do not have the same amount of time available for other things. She also mentions norms and traditions as examples that make it harder for women to make a career. Mörtberg (1997) shows in her research that men in the IT sector take on more responsibility for the family, but still there are things that women are responsible for, which are never taken into account in time surveys, e.g. planning what clothes the children need when winter comes, which occupies the woman but not the man. This is confirmed by Frankenhaeuser (1993) who has showed that on their way home from work women’s level of stress increases while men’s decreases.

There are also signs that point to a positive development in the future, for example that young men are positively inclined to stay at home with their children for half the period (that is; 240 of the 480 days earlier mentioned) according to a Sifo²⁰-evaluation presented by Nordh (2003) (chairman of TCO²¹). The reason these men gave for staying at home with their children was not in order to reach gender equality but because they saw it as favourable for their children.

3. GENDER EQUALITY AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN EDUCATION POLICIES

In Sweden the educational system is the responsibility of two bodies. For primary, secondary and adult education the responsibility lies with the municipalities. The government states the objectives, through legislation and regulation, but the actual objectives and the details are decided on by the municipalities. As for higher (or third level) education, the responsibility lies with the government.

¹⁹ Figures from Statistiska centralbyrån (Statistics Sweden) at <http://www.scb.se/> [2003, mar. 9]

²⁰ Sifo research & consulting, an organisation that conduct opinion and society research.

²¹ Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees.

3.1 Treatment of gender in the policy content

In Sweden there is legislation in this area; the Act regarding equal treatment of students in higher education (SFS 2001:1286) requires every university to work actively in order to promote students' equal rights irrespective of, among other things, sex. Further, in its bill (Budgetprop. 2002/2003:1 Area 16) the government states that gender equality is important at all levels of education. The fact that gender equality is still not fully reached, either in the educational system or in society, makes it even more important that a gender perspective should be the starting point for programmes as well as for educational matters. Gender- and class-divided education is regarded as a huge waste of human resources that limits each and every individual's development, since it is still a fact that women and men choose different educational programmes (Högskoleverkets rapportserie 2000:8 R). Generally the number of men is higher in technological and natural science programmes, while women dominate in health care programmes.

Work in primary schools and adult education is regarded as decisive in order to increase gender equality in Swedish society. Every educational organiser at every educational establishment at every level should actively strive for breaking the gender-divided educational pattern. They are expected to carry out this work on their own initiative. Not least important is to make men choose women-dominated educational programmes like teaching and health care as well as to increase interest in studies among men with low education (Budgetprop. 2002/2003:1 Area 16). When it comes to higher education the universities have an assignment that obliges them to take measures in order to bring about a balance between women and men in educational programmes where one sex dominates. They should also work for increasing the number of female university teachers and researchers. The goal is that 25% of all the professors in Sweden should be women by 2008. A step in this direction was taken when the Swedish government decided to establish 31 chairs for the underrepresented gender, the so-called Tham chairs²² (Prop 1996/1997:5). Today this initiative is appreciated and the women who won the professorships can see the advantage of the initiative. They are all confident that their qualifications are the main reason for their appointments even though they got the title because they were women. There have been discussions regarding these professorships but Jordansson (1999) has shown that the discussions were inadequate because all the women were qualified for the work. However, new strategies must be created since a verdict from EU (for Sweden as well as Norway) states that reserving certain posts is not legitimate. Finally it should be emphasised that the government still considers it of vital importance to reach the objective of more female professors and also to increase the proportion of women in leading positions.

There are of course other kinds of state organisations that influence the work with gender mainstreaming at the national level. During the 1970s and later, centres for Women's Studies and Gender Research were built up at several universities in Sweden. Over the years an informal network has worked with these issues on a national level, with the aim of influencing government policies. This work resulted in a secretariat whose aim is to work for the enhancement of women's studies and gender research and information and co-ordination. The Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research was inaugurated in 1998. Two years earlier the Swedish Parliament decided that a comprehensive investment should be made in research from a gender perspective. Some of the Secretariat's primary tasks are to gain a general overview of gender research in Sweden, actively distribute research results both within and beyond the universities, work to increase awareness of the significance of the gender

²² Named after the then minister of education, Carl Tham.

perspective and finally to analyse the status and development opportunities of the gender perspective in all areas of study.

The Nordic Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Research (NIKK) was established in 1995 and is an interdisciplinary Nordic research institute, a body for co-operation regarding women's and men's studies, gender research and activities in the Nordic countries. The institute is part of the Nordic Council and Council of Ministers, which are two organisations for official Nordic co-operation. NIKK is meant to strengthen Nordic co-operation by being a platform in wider international co-operation; and its aim is to advance, initiate, co-ordinate and inform about women's studies and gender research both within the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, the Faeroes, Greenland) and outside in the adjacent areas of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and north west Russia, as well as Europe and other parts of the world.

3.2 Institutional architecture and policy-making processes

At the national level the responsibility for this issue also rests with the Minister and the Division for Gender Equality. Under them lies the Ministry of Education and Science. There are two public authorities involved, the National Agency for Education and the National Agency for Higher Education, and their task is to ensure that the national objectives are achieved. The National Agency for Education will, from March 1st 2003, be divided into two parts; the National Agency for Education and The Authority for School Development. The first of these will be responsible for supervision of national follow-up measures and evaluation. The latter will support the development work in primary, secondary and adult education. The Swedish state governs these authorities by two means: authority instructions, which can be legislation, regulations or the objectives in the Budget Bill. The Bill declares what the government wants the authority to accomplish during a year.

This area works in the same way as the others, every public authority is expected to have gender equality on their agenda, and since universities are public authorities all of them should make gender equality plans, carry out these plans and evaluate their work with gender equality within their area. These gender equality plans should have two perspectives, one for the personnel and one for the students.

3.3 Methods and procedures for mainstreaming gender in policies

Gender equality plans at the Universities show some examples of different methods used for mainstreaming gender in other policies (Högskoleverkets rapportserie 2000:9 R), such as:

- consider both women's and men's perspective while choosing literature for courses,
- education and/or seminars/days based on the gender equality theme,
- continuous review of the difference in wages,
- both a woman and a man should be suggested as members in different boards/committees,
- written examinations are numbered instead of named (in order to avoid unconscious effect depending on the students gender),
- re-organisation, with committees that should carry on the gender equality work
- mapping of attitudes.

3.3.1. Recruitment of women to higher education

Further, the Swedish government took in 1992 an initiative to recruit more women to higher education in mathematics, science and technology. Five universities, namely Göteborg University, Karlstad University, Stockholm University, Linköping University and Chalmers University of Technology, received about SEK 3 million each for this work. The result shows that three out of seven programmes were quite successful in recruiting and retaining female students to male-dominated study programmes. The initiative can be regarded as a first step in a process that will hopefully survive and continue in years to come. The result shows that three out of seven programmes succeeded in recruiting and retaining women and their common characteristics were included:

- many women were involved (students, lecturers and tutors),
- age, social background and experience varied a lot among students,
- the programmes were small, giving the opportunity for close relations,
- co-operative and problem oriented approach to learning,
- the teachers were deeply involved in the work of development (Wistedt 2001).

Another programme started at Luleå University of Technology 1995, with the all-women preparatory programme in computer science and engineering, abbreviated DTI. This programme was something unique, single-sex programmes in higher education are an untraditional action in Sweden. Only two other universities (Kristianstad and Blekinge) have also offered such programmes. The reasons for starting the programme were the decreasing proportion of female applicants to this kind of programme and the expected needs of skilled labour in these areas. It was regarded as necessary to broaden the recruitment in order to meet these needs (Wistedt 2000). The programme is still running.

3.3.2. Information society for all

The Swedish government consider Information Technology (IT) an important force in the creation of an information society for all (Proposition 1999/2000:86). This includes among other things that people need competence and equal access to IT. One way to secure this is the possibility for many employees to buy computers through their employers, in order to make it economically possible. The computers are paid for through a monthly reduction of wages. There is also much effort put into creating an IT-infrastructure with high transference capacity, or broad band. However, in a democratic information society equal access must be a basic principle. We know that men dominate the development of IT so it might reasonable to assume that the interests and experiences of men have formed the dominating discourse of information technology. Limitations of equal access are also made visible by a multiplicity of variables, such as gender, race, class, age, region, etc (Mörtberg 2000b).

3.3.3. Life long learning

Sweden has, besides the information society for all, a policy regarding life long learning in order to prepare citizens for a working life in learning organisations. The common thought is that the basis for learning will be offered in first level education, and will then be improved continuously throughout every individual's lifetime. A consequence of this is the adult education. In Prop 2000/01:72, the government states that all adults should have opportunity to broaden their knowledge and develop their competence in order to promote personal development, democracy, gender equality, economic growth etc.

3.4 Key actors involved

A key actor for first and second level education is The Swedish Association of Local Authorities. As for third level education there is The Swedish National Union of Students, which aims to protect Swedish students' interests in social welfare and educational issues. The union also represents Swedish students on a national and international level and among its purposes is to speak for the Swedish students, be a source of knowledge in educational matters, and to be a meeting place for students. Gender equality is an issue among others, the student union strives for. This is done through taking part in university board meetings, information and information campaigns, support to students that been treated wrongly or differently because of gender, and so on.

The Nordic Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Research (NIKK) and the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research of course play a significant role. Again the Council for Gender Equality Issues is involved since it is not limited to certain questions, as are all the NGOs mentioned earlier as key actors.

3.5 Barriers and facilitators

Today in Sweden and in many other countries there are no formal obstacles preventing women from entering fields that have traditionally been dominated by men. One of the strategies of gender equality policies has been to remove formal obstacles and give women and men the same rights to use resources in society, including education and professions in the information technology sector. This is a question of equal rights. The public discussions and gender equality programmes in Sweden has instead been dominated by other arguments such as the quality argument, where it is presumed that women are carriers of certain qualifications that enrich and improve the scientific development (Trojer & Gulbrandsen 1996) or the resource argument (Magnusson 1999, 2000). The resource argument is built upon the presumption that women contribute something that had earlier been absent in politics. Many projects are built on this, but since they hardly ever articulate what that 'something' is, it is hard or even impossible to follow up or measure (Mörtberg 1997).

3.5.1. The Meritocratic system is not followed

This means that here, as in all other areas, barriers are of the more subtle and informal kind. It is small-scale things, such as who is being initiated to projects, discussions and so on that makes it hard for women to get a foothold or be included/listened to. Informal things count and men choose first and foremost other men. That is, the meritocratic ideals and system are not followed and women are neglected, because there are other factors than qualifications taken into account when a post is to be appointed. For example certain posts are tailor-made for favourites and job advertising is done in obscure newspapers during holidays (Wold & Wennerås 2000)

3.5.2. Contradictory situations

Evaluation of the programme DTI in Luleå show another kind of barrier. Even though the university succeeded in recruiting more women it did not take on its responsibility, since women participating in these programmes meet a contradictory situation. On one hand the university takes initiatives to increase the proportion of women in this kind of programme but on the other they have to confront commentaries such as not being competent enough, that they sneaked in through the back door or that they attend the bimbo-programme (Mörtberg 2000a). Hence, results are not as high as expectations.

3.5.3. Lack of methods

According to Jämit (SOU 2001:44) the lack of methods, good examples as well as education and instructions are barriers for integrating gender equality as well as creating the knowledge based society. They suggest that a new public authority will be established, whose task would be to act as a national prompter regarding knowledge and resources for society and industry. The aim would be to become a centre of resources, or in other words an institutional support to the other public authorities, that develops and takes on a responsibility for the further work with mainstreaming gender. Jämit also points to the need for showing cultural, technical, economic, social and juridical structures, visible and invisible, that in one way or another contribute to the unequal society.

3.5.4. Not a priority issue for the universities

Egeland (2002) shows that gender equality is not regarded as a priority issue, for example for the universities. Her conclusion is that one has to examine the production of knowledge and the foundation of science, because "gender equality will not necessarily make obvious, or break, the gender barriers within the Academy. I rather believe that such a project should be shaped as feminist interventions in, and new negotiations around, the understanding of science, of the relationship between science and society, between quality and objectivity"²³ (Egeland 2001, p. 64, our translation.)

3.5.5. Time

Finally, Wistedt (2001) regards time as a barrier. In her evaluation of the five gender-inclusive projects she concludes that "From this follow-up study we have learnt that it takes time to design gender-inclusive programmes: time to create them, time to implement them, time to revise and refine them and, not least, to anchor them in their institutional settings" (Wistedt 2001, p. 124).

²³ "... att tydliggörandet och nedbrytningen av könsbarriärer inom Akademin inte nödvändigtvis uppnås med jämställdhet. Snarare tror jag att ett sådant projekt bör utföras som feministiska interventioner i och nya förhandlingar kring förståelser av vetenskap, av förhållandet mellan vetenskap och samhälle, mellan kvalitet och objektivitet." (Egeland 2001, p. 64).

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SOU 2002:30 *Märk – värdig jämställdhet. Slutbetänkande från FRIJA-utredningen*, ('Notable and Worthy. Final Report from the FRIJA Committee') (available at http://naring.regeringen.se/propositioner_mm/sou/pdf/sou2002_30a.pdf). [2003, feb. 14]

List of Centres of Competence and Expertise

Ministry of Industry / Division for gender equality
<http://naring.regeringen.se/inenglish/index.htm>

Nordic Institute for Women's studies and gender research, NIKK
<http://www.nikk.uio.no/>

Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research
<http://www.genus.gu.se/>

Swedish Women's Lobby
<http://www.sverigeskvinnolobby.a.se/>

Fredrika Bremer Förbundet
<http://www.fredrikabremer.se/>

Centre for Gender Research, Uppsala University
<http://www.gender.uu.se/>

Centre for Gender Studies, Lunds University
www.genus.lu.s

Centre for Women's studies, Linköping University
www.liu.se/org/kvinnoforum

Centre for Women's Studies, Stockholms University
www.kvinfo.su.se

Centre for Women's Studies, Umeå University
www.umu.se/umu/kvf/

Department of gender studies, Göteborg University
www.wmst.gu.se

Department of Gender Studies, Linköping University
www.tema.liu.se/tema-g

Division of Gender and Technology, Luleå University of Technology
www.luth.se/depts/arb/genus_tekn

Division of Gender, Man and Machine, Luleå University of Technology
http://www.luth.se/depts/arb/genus_maskin/index.htm

Jämställdhetscentrum, Karlstads universitet
<http://www.sam.kau.se/genusvetenskap/index.html>

Kvinnovetenskapligt Forum, Örebro Universitet
www.www.oru.se/forsk/kvinnov/
Stiftelsen Kvinnoforum [Women's Forum]
<http://www.kvinnoforum.se/>

Techno science studies, Blekinge Tekniska Högskola
<http://www.iar.hk-r.se/forskning/itg/>

Women's History Collections at Göteborg University
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