

Equal power to shape society and one's own life

– The Swedish Government's gender equality policy 2010–2014



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of Sweden



Gender equality between men and women, girls and boys, is about tearing down barriers, creating opportunities and changing norms and attitudes that hold people back. Every girl and boy should have the same opportunity to grow and develop without being restrained by violence, preconceptions or injustices. The Swedish Government is continuing the major reforms that started in 2006. We have a higher level of ambition and we are allocating more resources than before – the most equal country in the world is still far too unequal.

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Gender equality policy

The struggle for gender equality has a long history and widespread support in Sweden. In the 1900s we progressed and made a lot of achievements – but plenty still remains to be done. As already mentioned gender equality policy today is about tearing down barriers and ensuring equal opportunities for women and men, for girls and boys. This is done by changing norms and attitudes that restrain people from becoming who and what they want to be. Every person has a right to the same opportunity to develop and shape their

own life, without being confronted with obsolete perceptions about gender.

One of the most important tasks is to improve equality in the labour force, schools and the business sector. Other urgent challenges involve combating men's violence against women, honour-related violence and oppression, and prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes.

1921

Women gain universal suffrage and the right to hold office at the national level.

1935

Equal basic pensions adopted for women and men.

1964

Birth control pill approved in Sweden.

1965

Rape within marriage is criminalised.

1971

Individual taxation replaces joint taxation for spouses.

1974

Parental insurance that gives the parents the right to share parental leave is introduced.

1980

Law against gender discrimination in working life.

1994

One-month parental leave for the father is inserted into the parental insurance.

1995

UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing adopts the Declaration and Plan for Action.

1998

Act on Violence against Women (amendment of Penal Code). The Equal Opportunities Act tightened concerning sexual harassment.

1999

Act Prohibiting the Purchase of Sexual Services.

2006

Decision by the Riksdag on new gender equality policy objectives.

2008

Discrimination Act entered into force. Combats, among other things, discrimination on grounds of sex, and discrimination on grounds of transgender identity or expression. A new agency, the Office of the Ombudsman against Discrimination, is formed, replacing the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman.

Equal power to shape society and one's own life

Gender equality is a right in line with the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The overall objective of the Swedish gender equality policy, which is to promote an equal distribution of power and resources, is that women and men are to have the same power to shape society and their own lives. The Government's objectives for gender equality and high economic growth go hand in hand. Gender equality contributes to economic growth by promoting and making use of people's skills and creativity. If women's labour market participation and pay were the same as men's, it would have a significant impact on the GDP.

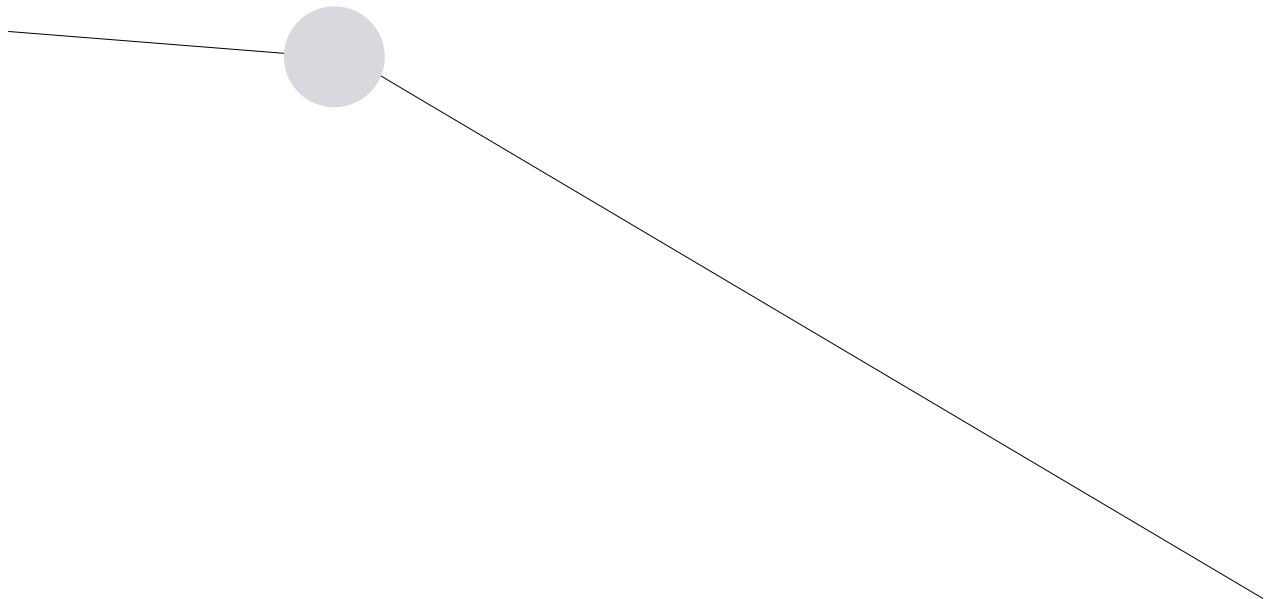
The following objectives indicate the direction of the Government's gender equality policy:

Equal division of power and influence
Women and men must have the same rights and opportunities to be active citizens and to shape the conditions for decision-making.

Economic equality
Women and men must have the same opportunities and conditions for education and paid work that provides lifelong economic independence.

Equal distribution of unpaid housework and provision of care
Women and men must have the same responsibility for housework and have the opportunity to give and receive care on equal terms.

An end to men's violence against women
Women and men, girls and boys, must have the same right and opportunity to physical integrity.



Power and influence

Women do not generally have the same access to power and influence in society as men. There is still plenty to do before we realise the equal division of power and influence between men and women.

By and large, women and men in Sweden work the same amount of time, but in different fields and different positions. Women often work in the public sector in the areas of education, health and social care, while men often work in the private sector. More men hold management positions and men dominate company boards and management teams. Political power is more equally distributed than economic power, but women are still underrepresented in senior positions in municipalities and county councils.

What the Government is doing

In June 2009 the Government presented a strategy for gender equality in the labour market and the

business sector. The strategy includes initiatives to increase the proportion of women on company boards and support authorities and organisations in appointing more women at management and expert levels.

Acting on instructions from the Government 2009–2010, the Swedish Council for Strategic Human Resources Development carried out the Women's Career Advancement within the Swedish Central Administration programme. The aim was to increase the proportion of state-employed women in management and senior expert positions, and thereby help reduce pay gaps between women and men. The programme attracted a great deal of interest. A continuation to make use of and further develop these efforts, including the development of a public online education programme, will run until 2014.

On boards of state enterprises – i.e. boards of partly or wholly state-owned enterprises – almost half of the board members are women (46 per cent in 2011). In wholly state-owned enterprises, 49 per cent of the board members are women. The proportion of women who chair boards has risen from 22 per cent in 2006 to 37 per cent in 2010, while the proportion of women managing directors rose from 11 per cent in 2010 to 25 per cent in 2011. On agency boards, 49 per cent of the board members and 39 per cent of the chairs were women in 2010.

In the private sector, which employs 37 per cent women and 63 per cent men, the proportion of women managers was 28 per cent in 2010. Gender inequality is greatest in senior management. Among 231 listed companies, only 7 per cent had a female managing director (2011). The proportion of women on company boards has increased steadily from 5 per cent in 2002 to 24 per cent in 2011.

In the Swedish Riksdag, 43 per cent of the MPs are women and 57 per cent are men. Women make up 42 per cent of the members of Sweden's municipal councils, and about one third of Sweden's municipal commissioners.

Economic equality

Having a job and an education is the foundation of women's and men's opportunities to develop and earn a living. Women and men are to have the same opportunities to enter the labour market, and to be able to remain and develop there. Nonetheless, the opportunities for doing so differ for men and women, as does the opportunity to combine work and family. Women often take greater responsibility for the family than men.

Women have a higher education level and better grades at school than men. Despite this, women often have lower pay. Men also still dominate management teams.

What the Government is doing

The Government has launched an extensive gender equality initiative in schools. The aim is to discourage a tendency to make gender-typical educational choices by encouraging girls and boys, women and men to make non-traditional career choices.

Even though women have a higher absence from work due to illness compared with men, women are significantly less often granted occupational

injury life annuity. The Government has therefore assigned the Swedish Council on Health Technology Assessment to assist the Swedish Social Insurance Agency with state of knowledge reviews on work-related injuries. To prevent women being expelled from working life due to problems related to work environment, the Swedish Work Environment Authority has been tasked with developing and implementing special initiatives in this area.

The earned income tax credit has contributed to improving the financial situation for both women and men, enabling people to save money and create greater financial security.

In October 2011 the Government appointed a Delegation for Gender Equality in Work, tasked with analysing how social partners can contribute to achieving gender equality in employment, and gathering and analysing knowledge and good examples of gender equality in practice. The delegation is to produce a proposal concerning how to increase women's participation in the labour force.

On average, women earn 15 per cent less than men. When weighing in factors such as education, profession and hours of work, the pay gap is 5.9 per cent (2010).

In 2011 women made up nearly 60 per cent of those who received sickness benefits. More women than men are also on long-term sick leave.

Thirty four per cent of working women worked part-time (fewer than 35 hours a week) in 2011. Many women who work part-time would like to work more. Part-time work means lower pay, which in

turn affects pensions, as well as sickness and unemployment insurance benefits.

The proportion of entrepreneurs is lower among women than men, although entrepreneurship among women has increased. The division between women and men varies also depending on the branch of industry. During a ten-year period the proportion of new women entrepreneurs increased from 27 to 34 per cent.


In 2011 almost 2.3 million women and 2.6 million men participated in the workforce, which corresponds to 68 per cent of all women and 73.9 per cent of all men aged 15-74.


Unpaid housework and provision of care

Gender equality in the labour market is subject to gender equality at home. Women and men should take equal responsibility for housework and have the opportunity to provide care on equal terms. According to a survey carried out in 2011, women devote four hours a day to unpaid work, which is 45 minutes more than men. Women are still taking a greater responsibility than men for unpaid housework, which affect women's participation on the labour market. However, the survey showed a positive trend, with women increasing time spent on paid work and reducing time spent on unpaid work since the last survey was conducted ten years ago. Equally, men have reduced the time spent on paid work and increased the time spent on housework.

What the Government is doing

The distribution of unpaid housework and providing care is closely related to women's and men's ability to combine parenting and family life with professional work. The Government will therefore continue to create opportunities for men and women to take responsibility for unpaid housework on equal terms. A step in this direction includes the tax credit for expenditure for household work and the gender equality bonus in the parental insurance which were introduced during the previous term of office. These measures have contributed to create equal opportunities for men and women to participate in the labour market.

 Women take out a majority of the parental benefit days, even if men's share is gradually increasing. In 2011 men took out almost 24 per cent of the all parental benefit.

 On average, women aged 20–64 spend about four hours a day on paid work as compared with five hours for men. Women spend almost three and a half hours a day on unpaid work, while men spend just over three hours.

An end to men's violence against women

Women and men, girls and boys, are to have the same right and opportunity to decide over their own bodies, sexuality and reproduction. Violence against and oppression of women is multifaceted and represents a serious obstacle to gender equality. In 2011, 33 000 cases were reported where women had been threatened, beaten or raped. Behind the violence to which women are subjected is often a male perpetrator who, in many cases, is closely related to the victim. Because women who have been subjected to violence do not always report the crime, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention estimates the number of unreported cases is innumerable.

Honour-related violence and oppression affect not only women and girls, but also men and boys. Those affected live in fear of being subjected to threats, coercion and violence by parents, siblings or other relatives. Especially children and young people are at risk, as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes is a reality in Sweden today. It constitutes a serious obstacle for social equality, gender equality and the enjoyment of human rights. Prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes must therefore be combatted with measures in several different areas.

What the Government is doing

The Government is continuing to work on preventing and combating men's violence against women and improving the prevention of honour-related violence and oppression. Protection and support for those exposed to violence will be improved, as will the standards and efficiency in the judicial system. In cases where children are the victims of crime or are in other ways affected by violence, particular attention must be paid to their

needs, rights and situation. The Government has intensified its work to prevent and combat rape and other sexual abuse by increasing the support to the victims and increasing the efficiency of the judicial management of rape cases.

In April 2012 the Government appointed a Swedish Domestic Violence Coordinator, tasked with bringing together and supporting the relevant authorities, municipalities, county councils and organisations to increase the effectiveness, quality and sustainability of the work against violence in close relationships. The Coordinator is also tasked with proposing how to develop the support and protection given to the victims. The National Board of Health and Research has been commissioned to focus on measures that address the perpetrators of violence and the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention is to conduct a national survey of crime in close relationships.

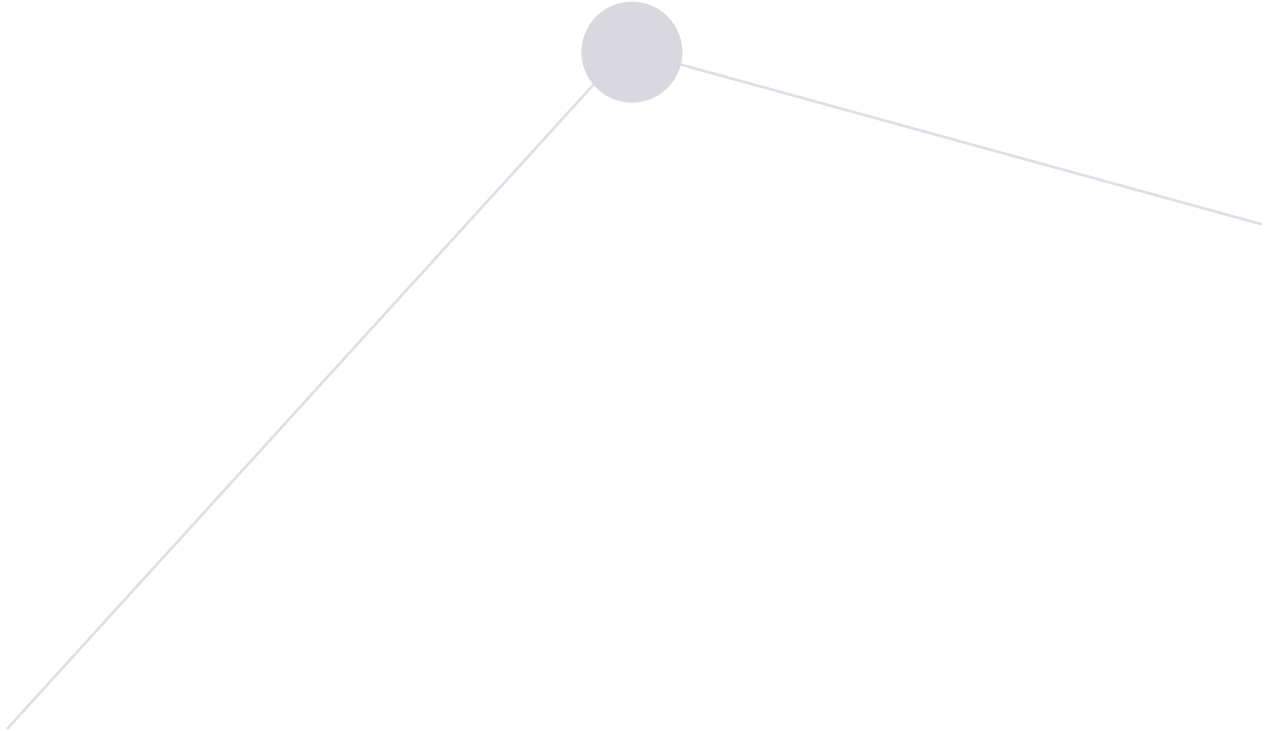
Women who have been granted a residence permit on the grounds of personal ties to a man who is a resident in Sweden, and who are subjected to violence, have a particularly difficult situation. To gain more insight into the scope and nature of the problem, the Government has appointed an inquiry to survey and analyse the different forms of violence, threats and violations that may affect these women.

The Government instructed an inquiry to propose measures to strengthen the protection against both child marriages and forced marriages. The inquiry was submitted in May 2012 and proposed, among other things, criminalisation of child marriage. Another proposal involved establishing a national institute with a mandate to manage, coordinate and support work against forced marriage, child marriage and honour-related violence and oppression.

In 2010 over 27 000 cases of abuse against women over the age of 18 and almost 6 000 reports of rape or attempts of rape were reported to the police. However, every instance of abuse is not reported to the police for a variety of reasons and, according to the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, the estimated number of unreported cases is probably high.

On average, 20 women and 3–4 men are killed every year by a close relative according to crime statistics.

In Sweden there are some 180 women's and young women's shelters. Almost all are members of either the Swedish Association of Women's Shelters and Young Women's Empowerment Centres (www.kvinnojouren.se) or the National Organisation for Women's and Young Women's Shelters in Sweden (www.roks.se). In addition, municipalities in larger cities run shelters. More information about young women's shelters is available at www.tjejjouren.se.



Gender mainstreaming as a strategy

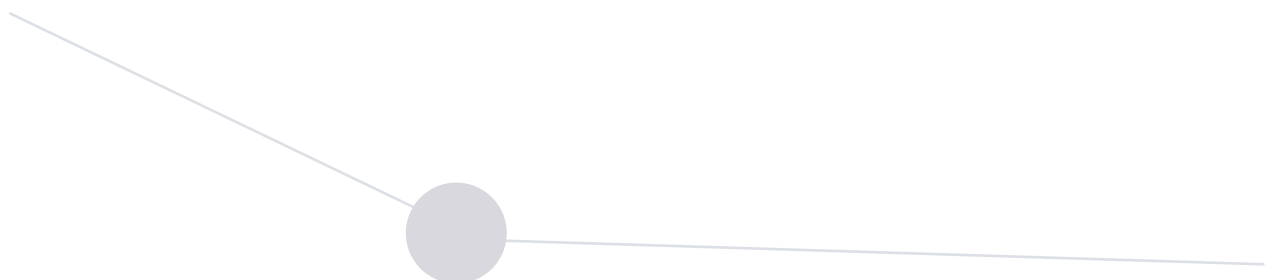
In Sweden, as in many other countries, gender mainstreaming is the principal strategy for achieving the national gender equality policy objectives. Gender mainstreaming means that decisions in all policy areas and at all levels are to be permeated by a gender equality perspective. The fundamental idea is that a gender equality perspective must be an integral part of day-to-day activities where decisions are made, resources are allocated and norms are created. Gender mainstreaming as a strategy has been developed in order to counteract the tendency to neglect gender equality issues or consider them secondary to other political issues and activities.

Unfortunately, there are still many examples that people in Sweden are treated differently and receive different service and treatment on the grounds of gender. Some men and women also risk being subjected to multiple forms of discrimination, such as gender in combination with ethnic origin, sexual orientation or disability.

Gender mainstreaming is to ensure that services are provided and resources distributed to all people on equal terms. Members of society must know that they are treated equally regardless of gender – whether it is a matter of heart surgery, a place in a home for the elderly or funding of children's sports. The Government has given considerable funding to the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions to support the development of gender mainstreaming in their core activities.

Successful gender mainstreaming efforts require clear leadership, dedication at management level, well known objectives, support and coordination.

In recent years much work has been done at the Government Offices of Sweden to strengthen gender mainstreaming as a strategy. Lessons learned during this process are the foundation for continued efforts at the Government Offices and other Government agencies, and for support at regional and local level. One important aspect involves gathering and disseminating best practices and knowledge of practical work and research in this field.



Gender equality in international cooperation

Gender equality is a priority issue for Sweden in international cooperation. In the EU, strategic gender equality work is conducted based on five-year action programmes set up by the Commission. In the current Strategy for Gender Equality 2010–2015, prioritised areas include equal pay for equal work of equal value, gender equality in decision-making, and dignity, integrity and an end to gender-based violence.

The European Institute for Gender Equality in Vilnius, Lithuania, is responsible for providing technical support to the EU institutions and Member States to fight discrimination based on gender and promote gender equality in all EU policy areas. The Institute is also gathering and spreading information concerning research and method development in the gender equality area as well as creating opportunities for experience exchange between Member States.

In the UN, Sweden takes a proactive role to mainstream a gender perspective into the work of the UN. The UN body for gender equality and the position of women – UN Women – plays a crucial role to assist in this work.

The UN Commission on the Status of Women has the primary responsibility for the policy development in the gender equality policy area. The Commission meets for two weeks each year at the United Nations in order to assess progress, identify new challenges and formulate new policy initiatives to strengthen gender equality and empower women. An important task for the Commission is to follow up the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Commission is made up of 45 member states, decided by their geographic location. Sweden is a member until the end of 2012.

To achieve the UN's overarching objectives of gender equality, development and peace, long-term objectives and actions are needed to empower women. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 to enhance gender equality efforts around the world by promoting development in 12 critical areas of concern. The strategic objectives and actions are:

- Women and poverty
- Education and training of women
- Women and health
- Violence against women
- Women and armed conflict
- Women and the economy
- Women in power and decision-making
- Institutional mechanism for the advancement of women
- Human rights of women
- Women and the media
- Women and the environment
- The girl-child

Implementation of the Plan's actions is monitored by both the Commission and the EU, where Sweden is taking active part.

Gender equality central in development cooperation

The promotion of gender equality and the role of women are highly prioritised in Swedish development cooperation. A gender perspective is to be integrated into all development measures, bilateral as well as multilateral, including the EU. This work encompasses both the Swedish development aid as well as measures undertaken to promote development as part of the Swedish policy for global development. It also includes measures taken by other actors within aid administration, such as researchers, business and civil society organisations.

What the Government is doing

As with national policy making, the Swedish Government's starting point is that a gender equality perspective is to permeate its international cooperation and cooperation in the EU. Gender mainstreaming is the established strategy. In the EU, this means integrating a gender perspective into all relevant legislation, budgets, programmes and funds.

The Government wants to strengthen women's rights and opportunities to influence public decision-making and the content of politics at all levels. Furthermore, the Government wants to increase women's and girls' rights to decide over their own bodies and to improve girls' right to an education. Reducing maternal mortality through access to safe and legal abortions, and preventing and combating all forms of gender-related violence are also high-priority areas.

In 2010, the Government adopted a policy for gender equality in Swedish international development cooperation 2010-2015. The overarching goals are gender equality, greater influence for women and greater respect for women's rights in developing countries. To achieve the goal, the policy focuses on women's work conditions, their political and economic participation, as well as sexual and reproductive health and rights. Another central element is to combat all forms of gender-related violence and human trafficking.



2012

2013

Follow-up aids development

Gender equality is a policy area of its own, but its implementation is mainly within the scope of other policy areas, such as economic policy, social policy and labour market policy. Gender equality policy is currently followed up in many different ways, including the appendix to the annual Budget Bill. A follow-up system for the gender

equality policy is presently being prepared that uses a number of indicators linked to the gender equality objectives. The purpose of the system is to measure to what extent national gender equality objectives are fulfilled over time. The indicators and the follow-up will contribute to continuity and structure in the gender equality policy area.

Gender disaggregated statistics reveal differences

Gender disaggregated statistics are a key tool in highlighting gender differences and visualising the different conditions faced by women and men. Statistics Sweden gathers a great deal of data which is important from a gender perspective, both in following up implemented policies and identifying areas in need of stronger measures (www.scb.se).

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention provides information and reports, and follows up measures in the judicial system against violence against women (www.bra.se).

The statistical office of the European Union, Eurostat, gathers statistics to enable comparisons between the Member States in various areas, including gender equality. Eurostat's website can be found at www.ec.europa.eu.



2014

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