



Frankfurt – CEMR, Paris – Roma – Rotterdam – Torino – Venezia – AÖF, Wien

**Creating a Gender Competence Centre
for European Cities and Municipalities**

**Gender Equality Policy and Gender Mainstreaming in Scandinavia:
An Example of Selected Cities**

Fact-finding Trip to Stockholm and Helsinki
21 – 25 June 2004

Report

Gabriele Wenner/ Werner Schneider/ Dörthe Jung

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A. Purpose of the Trip

Sister Cities Going Gender (SCGC) came into being in December 2003 as part of the EU's Fifth Community Action Programme on Equal Opportunities. The project takes the form of a European network comprising the following cities and organisations: Frankfurt am Main, Rotterdam, Venice, Turin, Rome, the Vienna-based *Autonome Österreichische Frauenhäuser* (the Austrian Association of Non-State Women's Refuge Centres, or AÖF) and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) in Paris.

The aim of the network is to develop local projects to implement and further develop gender mainstreaming (GM) at municipal level and to create a Gender Competence Centre for European Cities and Municipalities.

Within this framework, the project managers (City of Frankfurt) and the Sister Cities Going Gender Coordinator conducted a fact-finding trip to selected cities in Scandinavia (21 – 24 June 2004). The trip took in the cities of Espoo, Vantaa and Helsinki in Finland, and Stockholm in Sweden.

By participating in a range of SCGC meetings, representatives from Scandinavian cities were involved in the network's activities from an early stage in project planning.

The fact-finding trip had the following goals:

- Investigate the role of the gender mainstreaming strategy and the respective national approaches in implementing GM in the Scandinavian cities visited – particularly at municipal level. Gather information and learn from good practice examples and any negative experience gained in implementing GM in SCGC cities.
- Take account of the respective national and local conditions (gender equality policy: equal opportunities legislation, social/welfare policy, opportunities to combine family and work, etc.).
- Establish contact with gender equality policy and equal opportunities experts in the various cities. Initiate future cooperation with those experts within the framework of the Sister Cities Going Gender network and the planned Gender Competence Centre for European Cities and Municipalities.

Specific questions were drawn up to put to the respective discussion partners during meetings with city representatives.¹

¹ See Annex I: Itinerary and Key Issues

B. Summary Results and Conclusions

In their respective capacities, the project managers and the Sister Cities Going Gender coordinator conducted a fact-finding trip to selected cities in Northern Europe. The trip took in the cities of Espoo, Vantaa and Helsinki in Finland, and Stockholm in Sweden.

The aim of the trip was to assess the level of importance attached to the gender mainstreaming (GM) strategy in Scandinavian cities and gain an insight into the implementation approaches adopted by the two countries, taking account of the respective national conditions. Good practice examples were to be identified and contact made with experts in the various cities.

National and Local Conditions for the Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming

Compared with other countries in Europe and considering their size and potential for social and economic growth, both Sweden and Finland are sparsely populated. Concerns about birth rates and the participation of both women and men in the economy and society have thus long been a high priority with the respective governments and were an everyday item on the general political agenda from a relatively early stage.

Today, comparatively high *birth rates* despite an above average ratio of *working women* and above average *performance* and *qualifications* among *Swedish and Finnish school children* are all key social and economic growth factors that stem directly from this policy approach.

The key to this trend lies in the implementation of purposeful policies on gender equality and equal opportunities for women and men. These are seen as underlying social policy values in and of themselves and as key locational and growth factors. Gender equality policy is not primarily aimed at promoting only women's issues: from the outset, it has taken account of the needs of both women and men, and it promotes equality and cooperation between the sexes. Firmly rooted in the respective national social policies, it also penetrates other relevant areas of social and political life (e.g. the taxation system, gender balancing of party candidate lists for political elections, composition of government and administrative bodies). In 1995, the United Nations hailed Sweden's equal opportunity policies as a world-wide best practice example.

Gender equality policy in Finland and Sweden does primarily not focus on the family unit and the traditionally associated division of labour between the sexes. Women and men are seen as equals. This is illustrated by the principle on which Sweden's gender equality policy is based: *men and women have equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities* to pursue work which provides economic independence, participate in politics, unions and other social activities, care for children and the home and be free from and guarantee freedom from sexual discrimination.

In both Finland and Sweden, gender equality policy rests on two fundamental elements of social policy:

- A comparatively generous parental leave system and needs-focused, high-quality public childcare services.
- Quotas to ensure equal representation in government and administrative bodies, whether directly elected or appointed.

These two factors are the main reason why in the cities visited, equal representation by women and men in government and administration is either very far advanced (Finland) or has already been achieved (Sweden).

When it comes to management positions in public administrations, equal representation can at least be found among the staff in those areas most frequented by women (the Health Department in Stockholm, for example). With the pending retirement wave, it would be reasonable to assume that existing structural imbalances at administrative management level can be overcome in other areas of public administration within the foreseeable future.

Neither Finland nor Sweden are federal states and so neither operate a dual government system. The state comprises the national government and city councils. Sweden also has county councils. Thus city or county councils have broad responsibilities and correspondingly strong political influence: among other things, they manage the education system, childcare services and public health and transport (county services in Sweden).

Gender Mainstreaming

In contrast to the gender imbalances in government and administration, which have been significantly reduced by social policy (quotas) and welfare policy (parental leave/childcare services), imbalances as regards more traditional, stereotypical roles appear far more resistant to ongoing reform in both Finland and Sweden – especially when it comes to the division of labour between the sexes.

Thus, the women experts interviewed stressed an urgent need for action on gender equality policy to deal with the following problem areas in municipal public administration: unequal pay for equal work, gender segregation in the jobs market (e.g. male dominance in public transport, female dominance in health and childcare services), gender blindness to the impact and effectiveness of public services, a gender imbalance in bearing the burden of family management and childrearing, and the difficulties faced by both men and women in balancing family and work. In the cities visited, broad scope exists for gender mainstreaming to be applied in each of these areas.

Sweden and Finland have long traditions of policies on gender equality and equal opportunities, they have largely achieved equal representation in government and administration, and their municipalities have comparatively strong political and social influence. Compared with other European countries, this is an excellent base on which to implement gender mainstreaming at municipal level in the cities covered by this report.

The cities visited – cities that can serve as models for others in Europe – have all practised detailed planning in gender equality policy since the 1990s. This ongoing approach is further developed each year and takes account not only of staffing structures in public administration, but increasingly of those in public services. In Espoo and Stockholm, gender equality policy is an integral component of an holistic diversity management concept.

While the women experts interviewed were able to identify some remaining deficits in certain areas of government and society, in their efforts towards implementing gender mainstreaming the cities are able to draw upon national statistics that incorporate a comparatively large proportion of gender-disaggregated data (see Statistics Finland: Women and Men in Finland/Statistics Sweden: Women and Men in Sweden). Best practice models include Finland's 'Gender Barometer' and Sweden's *JämIndex* (gender equality index).

The gender barometer is based on national surveys conducted on a range of issues involving gender equality policy. It is updated every three years. The *JämIndex* is likewise unique throughout Europe and allows municipalities and districts to access data and compare trends in gender equality at the click of a mouse. It has fifteen different variables, including mean employment structures, working hours, public childcare services and composition of government bodies and committees.

In both Finland and Sweden, it is still mostly women who play the active part in gender equality policy. Conscious efforts are underway, however, to involve men to a greater extent. Finland's Council for Gender Equality is worthy of mention in this regard. The Council has a sub-committee which deals expressly and exclusively with gender equality issues concerning men.

In Finland, implementation of the principles and methods of gender mainstreaming has mostly been taken up at national level. City councils still have a long way to go. The situation is very different in Sweden, however, where gender mainstreaming is already a common practice that is consciously applied at regional and city level. Rather than the English term 'gender mainstreaming', Sweden has opted to use the Swedish word *Jämtegrering*.

According to *Svenska Kommunförbundet* (the Swedish Association of Local Authorities), 96% of Swedish cities have gender representatives. The 3Rs approach (representation/resources/reality) finds general application in the implementation of gender mainstreaming. A fourth 'R' (restriction) was recently added, which means that organisations that fail to apply gender mainstreaming will face sanctions. The situation varies greatly, of course, and the frequency and intensity with which gender mainstreaming and the 3Rs approach are applied within the different municipalities largely depend on the responsible gender officers.

Stockholm County Government was found to have the most advanced gender mainstreaming implementation model:

In implementing gender mainstreaming at the Health Department, the County Government's gender representative developed a specific model which emphasises the need for a top-down approach and places all county government employees

under obligation to inform themselves about the gender mainstreaming method. Rather than taking a confrontational approach, implementation of gender equality policy rests on more pragmatic, dialogue-focused *communication*, and also on cultural events. One successful approach to knowledge transfer takes the form of a gender issues exhibition at the Health Department. The exhibition is linked to compulsory meetings in which it is discussed.

In disseminating gender knowledge, great importance is attached to linking the cross-sectoral issue of gender equality to specific issues from the respective policy areas.

The Gender Mainstreaming *Steering Group* has equal representation, is positioned at the top level of management and its composition encompasses all areas of regional administration.

C. Meeting Reports

As compared to Germany and central and southern Europe, the implementation of gender mainstreaming in Scandinavia is shaped by gender equality policy developments dating back to the 1960s and 1970s:

In both *Sweden* and *Finland*, gender equality policy has – from the 1970s right up to today – primarily been structured around social and family policy whose foundations rest on a welfare state. The social policy conditions for achieving gender justice in these countries can thus serve as examples for other European countries: In 1995, the United Nations lauded Sweden's gender equality policies as the best in the world.

This is one of the key reasons why no real grassroots women's movement emerged in Scandinavia. From the outset, the women's movement was far better integrated² institutionally and, from a relatively early stage, issues like equal pay for women and men, and combining family and work, were an everyday item on the general political agenda.

² The work of women's organisations now largely focuses on issues like equal pay for women and men, prostitution, women and political elections, and violence against women and children.

I. Finland

1. Gender Equality Policy in Finland (National level)

Parental leave and childcare services

Gender equality policy in Finland is based on a comparatively well-developed social policy, particularly as regards the country's well-established public and private **childcare** services.

Parents in Finland are protected against dismissal from their jobs (*parental leave*) for a period of three years from the time their child is born. In the first three months of parental leave, the parent who takes parental leave receives 100% of his or her last pay. The amount reduces to 60% for the following eight months.³

Since the mid-1990s, every child in Finland has a right to a place in a publicly funded *childcare centre or nursery school* from the age of one year old.

The European Employment Strategy cites a well-established public childcare network as a positive indicator for two key factors of social growth: high numbers of women in employment and high birth rates. Thus, Finland has the second highest *birth rates* in the EU. The employment rate of women in Finland is similar to that of men.

Quotas

Finland passed its Act on Equality between Women and Men back in 1986. As a supplement to this legislation, a **quotas law** was enacted which required that women and men must each occupy at least 40% of positions on government boards and committees. Along with a well-established public childcare system, such legislation makes for highly balanced *participation* of both women and men in public administration and in *government*. Finland's highest public office (*president*) is held by a woman. In 2003, there was a brief period in which the offices of president and chancellor (*prime minister*) were both held by women.

During talks with representatives from the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, one of the issues discussed was the effect that Finland's quota regulation has on social policy and everyday government. What was remarkable was that despite considerable initial scepticism, male managers at the Association believe the regulation has proven both practicable and effective.

This positive assessment aside, there was still some scepticism as to the transferability of the quotas law from government to departmental level in public administrations.

Those interviewed pointed in particular to the relationship between the well-established childcare system and the high birth rates in Finland.

³ According to the women experts interviewed, the number of fathers who take parental leave remains negligible.

Three government bodies play a key role in implementing gender equality policy at national level:

- Gender Equality Unit
- Ombudsman for Equality
- Council for Gender Equality

The most influential organisation is the *Council for Gender Equality*. The Council is a parliamentary committee and is based at the Ministry for Social Affairs and Health whose remit includes gender equality policy. Apart from the various fractions in Finland's national parliament, the Council for Gender Equality also comprises representatives from national women's organisations. The Council advises the Finnish government and, according to the women experts interviewed, is so far the only one of its kind in the world.⁴

With regard to gender mainstreaming, the women experts interviewed at the Ministry for Social Affairs and Health pointed to the following:

- A sub-committee of the Council for Gender Equality which deals with 'gender equality issues specific to men'⁵. The sub-committee's members also include representatives from the Finnish army and the country's universities. It was founded in 1988.⁶
- Other sub-committees of the Council for Gender Equality are the Sub-Committee on Women's and Gender Statistics and the Sub-Committee on the Image of Women and Men in the Media.
- In accordance with the Act on Equality between Women and Men, women and men each hold at least 40% of appointments to the Council for Gender Equality and its three sub-committees.

⁴ See flyer: Equality Issues in Finland

⁵ For example: Social construct of masculinity, men and childrearing, men and work, men's cultural image, heteronormativity and the differences in men, fatherhood, men's research and men's movement in Finland.

The issues to be dealt with include: The position of men in medical treatments related to insemination, men and divorce (*child's right to access to both parents, men as clients in divorce counselling, the burden of maintenance on divorced fathers*), physical violence by men (*towards women and children*), men as victims of violence, suicide and social isolation.

⁶ See Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Eds.); Jouni Kempe: Men's Viewpoints on Gender Equality

Finland has enacted a *National Action Plan for Gender Equality* with goals and objectives for further implementation of gender equality policy. Although only very few men have worked on the various gender studies conducted in Finland – as is the case in other countries where the trend in gender equality policy has been more towards women's policy – the women experts interviewed claimed that the male standpoint is always taken into account.

With regard to implementing gender mainstreaming at national level, comprehensive *gender-disaggregated statistical surveys*⁷ were conducted and once every three years, the '*Gender Barometer*' is published with updates on key background issues in gender equality.⁸

The *Gender Barometer* is based on surveys conducted among the population and was first published in 1998. The 2001 edition took up the following issues involving gender relations:

- Thoughts and attitudes on gender equality (*men's attitudes are more reserved than they used to be, that women go to work is now a matter of course, family responsibilities affect both partners*).
- Equal opportunities in the workplace and in education (*greater criticism from female employees, are schoolgirls and women students today more aware of the differences in how women and men experience the world?*)
- Combining family and work (*unofficial standards as regards childrearing leave, ingrained attitudes regarding responsibility for housework, differences in combining family and work, lesser-educated mothers of small children have more responsibility when it comes to housework, too many responsibilities fall to mothers, the absence of fathers increases the burden for mothers, meeting the challenges of their jobs is now easier for fathers of school children than it was in the past, a division of responsibilities makes for happier couples*).
- Singles now have greater reservations towards partnerships and having a family than they used to.
- Is interaction between the sexes less caring? (*the feeling of arrogance and condescension towards women has increased in many areas, there has been an increase in the number of young female victims of verbal sexual harassment, who practices sexual harassment?, those with experience of sexual harassment are more afraid of experiencing it*).

Basically, the Gender Barometer looks at the similarities and differences in the perceptions of women and men. Compared with the results for 1998, the 2001 survey highlighted the following:

⁷ See also Statistics Finland: Women and Men in Finland (2003)

⁸ See The Council for Equality and Statistics Finland (Eds.); Tuula Melkas: "The Gender Barometer" (2001)

- Women doubt whether gender equity in the workplace and in childcare institutions has really been achieved.
- Parental or childrearing leave is only available to working women.
- Combining family and work has not really become any easier.
- Singles now have greater reservations as regards going into a relationship and having a family.
- Condescension and verbal sexual harassment have increased between women and men.

*Amended
Equality Act*

Although Finland's gender equality policy has for the most part become established as part of the state welfare system, there is also legislation which specifically aims to have private industry implement equality between women and men in the work place.

The **Amended Equality Act** of 1995 placed all Finnish businesses with more than 30 employees under obligation to draw up a gender equality plan. Because very few businesses seem to have taken any notice of this requirement, there are plans underway to fine privately run businesses with more than 30 employees if they fail to comply.⁹

According to the women experts interviewed at the responsible ministry, the funds allocated to gender equality policy at national level are inadequate and managers of private businesses in Finland rarely take up gender equality issues and are essentially gender blind. In particular, there are still huge differences in women's and men's pay, and, for the most part, Finnish women are still faced with the dual burden of work and family.¹⁰

⁹ Information based on talks with representatives from the City of Helsinki

¹⁰ See also Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Eds.); Liisa Horelli and Milja Saari: How to Mainstream Gender Equality – Methods and Praxes. Helsinki 2002

2. Implementing Gender Mainstreaming in Finland (National level)

Gender Impact Assessment

As part of a series of legislative impact assessments, a *gender impact assessment* was conducted as one of the first pilot projects within the remit of the Ministry for Social Affairs and Health. The ministry lent itself to the project because 70% of all its expenditures are required by law. The first pilot phase will be used to produce a model for transfer to other ministries.

Gender Budgeting

A *gender budgeting* project is currently being conducted by the Ministry for Social Affairs and Health in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance. One of the aims of the National Plan for Gender Equality is to complete the gender budgeting process by 2008, by which time Finland's entire budget should have been integrated into the project.

A policy paper is currently being drawn up at the ministry by Ms. Marjaana Juhola to prepare the way for implementing gender budgeting at local level.

The Development of Mainstreaming Methodology

In cooperation with other ministries, the Finnish Ministry for Social Affairs and Health conducted a project on *The Development of Mainstreaming Methodology*. The project is part of the National Plan on Gender Equity. The final report contained results on models from a range of policy areas. These included new gender networks, a self-assessment system for youth policy, and a pilot study on gender impact assessments for government legislation.¹¹



Gender Equality Monitoring

In 2001, work was started on a database to develop indicators for *gender equality monitoring* at local and regional level. The indicators take in a broad range of social policy issues which include population and families, childrearing and education, working life, staffing at public administrations, incomes, local decisionmaking processes, childcare, health and age. Statistics were used from a number of sources such as Statistics Finland, Social Insurance Institution of Finland and the Central Pension Security Institute.¹²

Gender Training

In 2005, *gender training* courses will commence for managers in national government.¹³

¹¹ See also Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Eds.); Liisa Horelli and Milja Saari: How to Mainstream Gender Equality – Methods and Praxes. Helsinki 2002

¹² See also Ministry for Social Issues and Health (Eds); Sari Pikkala: Gender Equality Indicators for Municipalities and Regions. Helsinki, 2002

¹³ See Unit for Gender Equality (Eds.); Hanna Onwen Paper: Mainstreaming in the Finnish Government)

3. Gender Equality Policy in Finland (Local level: Espoo, Vantaa and Helsinki)

With a population of 184,000, Vantaa is the fourth-largest city in Finland. Together with Espoo, Finland's second-largest city, and Helsinki, the country's capital and largest city, it is part of a region comprising around one million inhabitants (Helsinki 559,000, Espoo 224,000). One fifth of the Finnish **population** lives in this region. Helsinki international airport, the biggest and most important in the country, is located in Vantaa just outside Helsinki.

Population Age Structure

The region's **population age structure** is shaped by a comparatively high proportion of young people. This is largely due to the fact that, on the one hand, many young people have left the rural areas to live and work in the Helsinki region (where jobs prospects are so much better) and, on the other, many people of pensionable age have left the Helsinki region to retire to the country. The high birth rates mentioned earlier are also a key contributory factor.

Role of of City Councils in Gender Equality Policy

The state of Finland comprises a national government and administration and **municipal or city administrations**. There are no regional administrations. Finland's municipalities or cities thus perform a wide range of state responsibilities (childcare, education, healthcare), have relatively strong political influence at national level and employ a large number of people (*Vantaa 12,000 employees, Espoo 19,000 and Helsinki 40,000*). Over 50% of municipal employees work in welfare and healthcare.

Given the impact that Finland's concentration of welfare policy responsibilities at municipal administration level has on the jobs market, the local level plays a key role in gender equality policy.

Feminisation in Public Admini- strations

The trend towards feminisation in many European administrations is extremely advanced in the three Finnish cities visited. A large majority of municipal employees is female (around 80%). Along with the diverse options for part-time work available in public service, in Finland's cities – similar to the situation in Swedish cities – this is largely to do with the fact that childcare, education and healthcare services are all municipal responsibilities (in Sweden responsibility falls to both city and regional administrations) and that, in Scandinavia as elsewhere, the workforce in these policy areas remains largely women dominated.

It is interesting to note, however, that the structures of gender-specific segregation in the workplace have been maintained. Thus, the average income of male employees is still higher than that of their female colleagues (information on public service pay scales is freely available). This can be seen as an indication that most management positions are still held by men and that the work performed by men and women is not valued equally.

However, trends in the municipalities indicate structural change. For example, the head of the human resources section in Vantaa is a woman. Because most upper

and middle management positions remain a male domain, the pending retirement wave is seen as a chance to effect a significant swing towards increasing the number of women managers at both levels. In Espoo, some 50% of middle management positions are now held by women.

Gender Representation

...

... in Governments

Compared with other countries in Europe, Finland's well-established childcare network and the impact of its quotas law can be seen as key contributory factors in the relatively balanced representation at municipal level – as at national level – by women and men in politics and society.

... in City Councils

Of the 67 *city councillors* in Vantaa, 38 are men and 29 are women (43% women). In Espoo the proportion of women on the council is 51%. In 1999, Helsinki had 85 city councillors, 39 women and 46 men (46% women).

Vantaa's 16-strong *Executive Council* currently comprises 8 men and 8 women. In the 1990s, the office of Lord Mayor in Vantaa was held by a woman. Espoo currently has a woman Lord Mayor.

In 1999, Helsinki's City Council comprised 6 women and 9 men. That year, the Chair and Vice-Chair positions on the City Council Presidium were all held by women. In the City's 24 committees and management boards there was a male majority in 17 and a female majority in 7.

Gender equality policy in the cities belonging to the County of Helsinki takes the following form:

Espoo

Equal Opportunities Committee

The City of Espoo sees itself as a forerunner in the development of gender equality policy at municipal level – and its reach actually stretches as far as national level. The creation of gender equality institutions (1981 saw the founding of Finland's Equal Opportunities Committee) goes back to the 1970s and early 1980s, long before such organisations became institutionalised at national level or national equality policy was enacted.¹⁴

Diversity Policy

Gender equality policy from those early years has since been further developed into a 'concept of equality between people'. Gender equality policy for both women and men is now an integral component of diversity policy that takes account of the differences between women and men, culturally prescribed differences, age and other personal traits. The City of Espoo now operates a **diversity plan** which takes in the goals and objectives of gender equality policy. Thus, alongside the Committee for Equal Opportunity, Espoo now has an Advisory Board for Multicultural Affairs.

Tasks for the Future

Despite Espoo's advancements in gender equality, there remains a need for further action in key gender issues in the city:

- Ongoing gender segregation in the jobs market and the associated inequalities in women's and men's pay. ("Although women in Finland are now better

¹⁴ See also Annex: Anne Panigrahi-Herler, Presentation – Equal Rights Conference

trained than their male contemporaries, they still receive less pay for equal work").¹⁵

- The persistent division of work between women and men in home life and in childrearing, which poses particular problems for working women.

Vantaa

Gender Equality Plan

The City of Vantaa basis its *gender equality policy* on a *Gender Equality Plan* which was introduced in 1996. The plan comprises the following cornerstones:

- The Gender Equality Committee reports directly to the City Council.
- The plan contains gender equality goals and objectives, both for human resources and for city council operations.
- Equal pay and equal opportunities for women and men.
- Equal access for both women and men to key positions in middle and upper management.
- Equal treatment of women and men in human resources planning and recruitment.
- Zero tolerance of sexual harassment and all other forms of harassment.

In terms of gender equality between women and men, the following issues will be taken up in future:

- Further development of the Gender Equality Plan
- Education, training and greater availability of information on gender equality at all organisational levels
- Ongoing coverage of gender issues in human resources reports
- Integration of and discussion on new developments and results for those returning from parental leave
- Equal opportunities, multicultural affairs and diversity
- Better pay for women in the healthcare and welfare sectors.

Helsinki

Equality Plan

The City of Helsinki has firmly enshrined gender equality between women and men as an underlying principle of its policies and programmes. Helsinki's *Equality Plan* is particularly effective in achieving this goal and in implementing municipal gender equality policy. The City Council reviewed and amended the plan in December 1999 (the first one was originally agreed in 1996). The second Equality Plan was drawn up by a working group comprising representatives from the Council's Equality Committee, the different municipal administration departments and municipal

¹⁵ Ibidem

employee representatives.

The plan focuses on two areas of action. Firstly, it sets out goals and objectives for city council services to improve the quality of life for local people (operational level). Secondly, it contains gender equality goals for human resources development within the city council (personnel level). All 30 City departments are placed under obligation to draw up department-specific equality plans.

With regard to city council activities and services, the *Operational Equality Plan* covers the following areas:

- Living environment, planning and building
- Welfare and health
- Childcare/education and recreation
- Technical services

In human resources development, the *Personnel Equality Plan* takes in the following:

- Human resources planning and recruitment
- Human resources management and development
- Pay and other remunerations
- Workforce participation
- Health and safety in the workplace¹⁶

**Monitoring
and Control**

Monitoring and control includes a survey conducted every two years on the current status and the progress made in implementing the Equality Plan in each individual department.¹⁷

In contrast to approaches in which municipal equality policy focuses solely on human resources issues, the City of Helsinki has made it its goal to develop a broader perspective in this policy area and, in particular, to conduct gender impact assessments on city services and within the various sections. The survey conducted during the period 1999 - 2002 (the results of which were presented during the interviews held) clearly showed that, even in Helsinki, such efforts were still in their infancy.

While all departments have already drawn up their personnel equality plans, the survey turned up little data or results for City services. Thus, the next survey on the Municipal Equality Plan will be conducted by a mix of representatives from the human resources department and other City policy areas. The Equality Committee, which prepared and evaluated the survey and developed solutions for improvement, has proposed that the questionnaires used in the 2004 Gender Survey be more detailed and easier to verify.

In terms of human resources policy, the 2002 survey showed that issues in the following areas were an integral component of equality policy efforts and changes in the various departments:

¹⁶ See City of Helsinki: Equality Plan 1999

¹⁷ See City of Helsinki: Equality Plan – Enquiry 2002

- Equal pay for equal work
- Equal opportunities in recruitment (recruitment of male employees into traditionally female positions like secretary or telephonist)
- Further training and promotion prospects (increasing the proportion of women in management positions)
- Combining family and work
- Employee participation in decision making processes
- While the individual equality plans drawn up by the various departments contained goals and objectives, they failed to set timelines or target dates.

*Urban Youth
Work*

Following talks with representatives from the City of Helsinki, a youth worker from a youth organisation that works with boys joined the team to visit a youth organisation for girls which practices a gender-specific, educational approach.

In Helsinki, gender-specific services for boys and girls have been developed which focus on the needs of each group. According to the youth workers working with boys, there is no point in creating a 'boys' centre' because boys would not use it. To establish contact with boys and young men, an experience-based education model was developed and implemented. Youth services for girls are largely offered in the 'girls' centre'.

Helsinki has a total of 64 youth centres. Girls and boys use them in about equal numbers. With regard to implementing gender mainstreaming, criticism was aimed at the stereotypical employment structure in youth work and childcare (80% of youth workers and 95% of childcare staff are women). Attention was brought to the need to implement targeted staffing measures with the aim of reshaping this employment structure.

4. *Implementing Gender Mainstreaming in Finland* (Local level: Espoo, Vantaa and Helsinki)

Talks with experts in Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa, and with gender equality representatives from the Ministry for Social Affairs and Health, made it clear that at national level, the Finnish government had been more active than its municipalities in implementing gender mainstreaming.

In some respects, the Equality Plan now institutionalised at both national and local level (e.g. the operational equality plans in Helsinki and Vantaa) can be seen as a good practice example to support the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

Overall, it appears that Finland's cities have not yet acknowledged gender mainstreaming as an explicit requirement. A report published by the Ministry for Social Affairs and Health in 2002 notes in this context: 'A paradox is apparent in gender equality policy in Finland. We proudly tell foreign visitors that Finnish women are active in all areas of society, and especially in government and administration and in the jobs market. But the term 'gender equality' still fosters opposition and is a cause of irritation among the Finnish people'.¹⁸ Similar comments were to be heard from our interview partners in Espoo and Vantaa.

¹⁸ Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Eds.); Liisa Horelli and Milja Saari: How to Mainstream Gender Equality – Methods and Praxes - Summary. Helsinki 2002

II. Sweden

1. Gender Equality Policy in Sweden (National level)

Private and Public Childcare

As in Finland, Sweden's broad network of public **childcare** services is based on a well-established welfare state. Parental leave, which is financed solely from public funds, is guaranteed for 18 months from the time a child is born. Places in good quality crèches, nursery schools and pre-schools are widely available. This approach to families policy has led, among other things, to the pleasing performance of Swedish school children in the PISA study and to the fact that the employment rate of women in Sweden is similar to that of the country's male workforce.¹⁹

Quotas

Approximately 10 years ago, nearly all political parties in Sweden implemented gender balancing for their candidate lists in elections. In contrast to the situation in Finland, Sweden has no legal basis on which to implement **quotas**. According to the women experts interviewed, a voluntary code process is in place and the political parties are practically in competition with one another to have the largest possible number of women in their candidate lists.

National Principles of Gender Equality Policy

Sweden's gender equality policy rests on the principle that men and women have equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities to:

- Pursue work which provides economic independence
- Participate in politics, unions and other social activities
- Care for children and the home
- Be free from and guarantee freedom from sexual discrimination

Statistics

The Swedish government has at its disposal a comparatively large base of gender-disaggregated data which is annually updated in the form of a brochure entitled Women and Men in Sweden: Facts and Figures.²⁰

Gender Equality in Business

In 1994, Sweden enacted legislation which, similar to Finland, places **businesses** with more than 10 employees under obligation to draw up an equality plan. The plan must contain a list of the salaries of all employees.

¹⁹ See Hannes Gamillscheg: Soziales Schweden; in: Frankfurter Rundschau dated 16.07.2004

²⁰ See also Statistiska Centralbyran (Statistics Sweden): Women and Men in Sweden – Facts and Figures 2002

2. Gender Equality Policy in Sweden (County of Stockholm)

Role of County/City Councils in Gender Equality Policy

Like its Finnish neighbour, Sweden is not a federal state and does not operate a dual government system. The state comprises a national government, city administrations or councils and – in contrast to Finland – 21 county governments. City and county councils thus have broad responsibilities: schools and childcare services are run by the City, public transport and healthcare services are managed by the county governments.

The County of Stockholm is responsible, among other things, for the healthcare service (32,000 patients per day) and the public transport system (2 million travellers per day). With a 42,000-strong workforce (of which almost 40,000 work in the healthcare service alone), the county of Stockholm is one of the biggest employers in Scandinavia.

Feminisation of Public Admini- strations

Over 80% of county administration *employees* are women (healthcare service: 81.4% women, 18.6% men; transport: 36.1% women, 63.9% men). While in the healthcare service, a very large majority of nursing positions are held by women, the numbers of women and men among doctors is almost identical. In relation to the workforce as a whole, the aim is to increase the number of men in the healthcare service and, in the longer term, to achieve greater gender parity in nursing recruitment.

50/50 gender parity exists at *management* level in county administration.²¹

Gender Parity ...in County Councils

The *County Council* comprises 149 members, of which 80 are women and 69 are men (proportion of women: 54%). Apart from the conservative and liberal fractions, all fractions belonging to the County Council are women-dominated.

...County Government

Stockholm's *County Government* comprises eight commissioners and is equally represented by women and men. According to the women experts interviewed, the most important policy positions within the County Government are held by women. This includes the Budget Commissioner. Since 2002, responsibility for gender equality has been held by a member of the County Government.

²¹ See Annex: PowerPoint Presentation

3. Implementing Gender Mainstreaming in Sweden (County of Stockholm)

As in the rest of Europe, the public transport system in the County of Stockholm is heavily used by women and is largely in male control. This situation is one reason why the County Government chose to start implementing gender mainstreaming in the healthcare service first. The process is to be expanded to the transport system in 2005.

Women's Policy and Gender Mainstreaming

Similar to Finland, the main focus of Sweden's gender equality policy has never been the promotion of *women's policy* but of *gender policy*. The women experts interviewed believed that this approach made the implementation and application of gender mainstreaming in Sweden considerably easier. In contrast to Finland, where implementation has largely been taken up at national level, Sweden has already implemented and consciously applies gender mainstreaming at both county and city level. Rather than using the English 'gender mainstreaming', Sweden uses its own term *Jämställdhetsintegrering*, which is abbreviated to *Jämtegrering*.²²

Top-Down Strategy ...

To implement gender mainstreaming in the healthcare service, the County Government's gender representative developed a model that takes account of the specific conditions and the existing organisational culture. It emphasises the need for a top-down approach along with employee integration. One of its key principles is to influence the top level and link it with the bottom level.

... and Forms of Communication

Gender equality policy is not, however, designed to be confrontational. Its implementation rests on more pragmatic, dialogue-type forms of *communication*. The exhibition outlined below is one example of this approach. Another example is the use of culture for gender mainstreaming: the kick-off event in which the new gender mainstreaming programme was presented involved a three-hour party with a jazz pianist, poetry readings, brochures and a CD of poems.

Statistics

The women experts interviewed believe that the availability of gender-disaggregated statistics plays a key role in the implementation of gender mainstreaming. The lack of appropriate statistics on the healthcare service is seen as one of the biggest problems in implementing gender mainstreaming.

Steering and Management

In the County of Stockholm, the gender mainstreaming **implementation process** comprises the following components:

Gender Knowledge

- The Gender Mainstreaming *Steering Group* is located at top level and has gender parity in its composition. Its members are Brigitta Sevefjord (Commissioner) and the (male) Director of Health at the County Government. A strategy group was also established, with equal representation of 10 women and 10 men who represent various hospitals in the County of Stockholm.
- Participation in gender equality *seminars* to effect gender knowledge transfer

²² Definition: Integration of gender equality into all aspects of everyday life.

is compulsory for all employees in managerial positions within the healthcare service (this includes the 38 directors under the County Government). According to the women experts interviewed, the most difficult groups proved to be senior male doctors and male politicians.

All political parties have been integrated into the seminar programme. The Steering Group sees accountants as a particularly important target group in the seminars, which ideally should try to reach everyone in the health service.

With regard to the seminars, great importance is attached to linking the cross-sectoral issue of gender equality to specific topics from the healthcare service and its respective work areas. The overall *aim* of the seminars is to ensure that a gender perspective is added to decisionmaking at all levels throughout the county.

The women experts interviewed cited the gender exhibition in the Health Department as a specific and successful form of knowledge transfer. The exhibition is linked to compulsory meetings in which it is discussed. It is expected that all Health Department employees will have visited the exhibition within the next two years.²³

In October of this year, a series of gender seminars (2.5 days each) will be held at Sweden's only university hospital, the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm.

- Budget**
- The County Government gender equality budget amounts to less than 1 million Kroner (approx. EUR 100,000).

Gender Mainstreaming in Research

The women experts interviewed believed that for the most part, men in Sweden still receive better medical treatment because 'research and development money in health care is controlled, used and sold by male professors, and research is done gender blind'. Symptoms in women and men are often different (e.g. heart attacks), so that the application of gender mainstreaming is not simply a matter of gender equality but one of the quality of medical treatment as a whole.

Thus, for the first time, County funds for medical research (1.8 billion Kroner, or approx. EUR 180 million) will not be spent by senior professors alone but by a politically appointed committee and in consideration of gender issues.

²³ See Exhibition Catalogue: Health, Work and Gender

4. Gender Equality Policy in Sweden (City of Stockholm)

Feminisation of Public Admini- strations

The City of Stockholm itself employs a workforce of around 46,000 people (76% women, 24% men) in 50 different departments. The City works particularly hard at recruiting men into women-dominated departments within its administration (education, senior citizens).

Gender Representa- tion ...

With regard to **participation of women and men** in politics, the City of Stockholm is overrepresented by women (as is the County of Stockholm):

... in the City Council

Stockholm *City Council* comprises 101 councillors of which 66 are women (65%). The Presidium comprises three men (president, first vice president, second vice president) and a City Council secretary.

... the Council of Mayors

Stockholm's *Council of Mayors* comprises 13 mayors (7 women, 6 men).

Diversity Policy

In its gender equality policy (responsibility falls to the City's Human Resources Section), the City of Stockholm operates a *diversity plan* and has an *Anti-Discrimination Secretary* (Lena Ring) and four ombudsmen and ombudswomen who are responsible for the following policy areas: ethnic origins, gender, the disabled, sexual harassment. In her capacity as Head of the Anti-Discrimination Office, Lena Ring is also Secretary of the City Council Committee for Equality.

Equality Plan

Gender equality policy activities go back as far as 1997, when the City of Stockholm first started to draw up its annual '*Plan for Equality*'. Today, representatives from 50 different departments (the majority of whom are women) work on developing a general Equality Plan for the City of Stockholm, along with specific plans for the respective policy areas of the 50 departments.

Stockholm's primary **gender equality policy goals and objectives** in 2004 were:

- Equal pay for equal work. There are still considerable differences in the incomes of women and men, with women generally earning around 85% of men's earnings.
- A special working group at the City's Human Resources Section is currently drawing up job descriptions and conducting evaluations for all 46,000 positions in the City administration. An example of this work involves a comparison of the work performed by firemen and that performed by women childcare workers. It showed that while the nature and pay of both jobs was fairly similar, there was a severe gap in the social standing attached to both jobs (firemen enjoyed higher status). A key goal in this regard is to give transparency to the differences in pay for male and female employees.

- Gender balance in initial technical and vocational training at nursing colleges and in sport. To support these efforts, a survey was conducted to assess the level of motivation among men who already work in nursing. The results of the survey will be used to enhance the recruitment opportunities for men in nursing and healthcare.

Lena Ring pointed out that the City of Stockholm has excellent individual equality plans and a good reporting system. She sees a need for action in developing an holistic plan and identifying mainstreaming criteria.

*Gender
Equality
Policy and
Men*

Lena Ring stated that there have been many advancements in gender equality between women and men in Sweden since 1950 (examples: fathers' participation in childrearing, women's education) and that, today, the level of sexism addressed towards men is higher (example: presentation of men in advertising media increases men's stress levels in everyday life). She pointed out that men deal increasingly with the issue of gender equality, and an increasing number of men approach the gender representative for advice and are calling for more male staff in nursery schools.

5. Implementing Gender Mainstreaming in Sweden (Local level)

Swedish Association of Local Authorities

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities (*Svenska Kommunförbundet*) is a pioneer throughout the country when it comes to implementing gender mainstreaming at both city and county level. It started as early as 1995 with the development and implementation of gender mainstreaming in specific policy areas. The national guidelines for gender equality between women and men provide the basis for gender work within the Association. However, the Association has only 1.5 positions to which responsibility for gender equality is assigned.

3Rs Method

The 3Rs method developed in cooperation with Gertrud Aström is well known throughout Europe. The method lends itself particularly well to gender relevance assessment and has found broad application in Sweden's cities and counties since 1995 (in decisionmaking processes, for example). Gertrud Aström recently expanded the method by adding a fourth 'R'. This stands for restriction and means that organisations who fail to apply gender mainstreaming will face sanctions. It was, however, emphasised, that the 3Rs method is helpful in situational description and evaluation, but is inadequate in terms of shaping the gender mainstreaming process.

Gender Representatives

96% of Sweden's cities have gender representatives. The situation varies greatly, however, and the frequency and intensity with which gender mainstreaming and the 3Rs approach are applied within the different municipalities largely depend on the responsible gender officers. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities hopes that greater networking of equality representatives at local level will improve the gender mainstreaming process and make it more effective.

Monitoring and Control

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities pointed out that, regrettably, no evaluation takes place at local level regarding the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

Standards

The Association has developed seven standards for the application of gender mainstreaming at local level. These can also serve as evaluation criteria:

- Political support through appropriate decisions and resolutions of the City Council committees
- Availability of human resources
- Gender knowledge
- Identifying responsibilities
- Use of suitable methods and development of new ones
- Monitoring and controlling
- Foster and inspire motivation

JämIndex

Sweden's *JämIndex* (gender index) can be seen as good practice at municipal level. The system, developed in 1990 and unique in Europe, allows municipalities and districts to access data and compare trends in gender equality at the click of a mouse. It has fifteen different variables, including mean employment structures,

working hours, public childcare services and composition of government bodies and committees. See: www.h.scb.se/scb/bor/scbboju/jam_hm/jamknInframe.htm

The issue of gender balance in public nursery schools was a central topic in talks with women representatives of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities.

Gender Mainstreaming in Childcare

The following points were raised:

- Even Sweden has few male teachers in public childcare and nursery schools.
- As part of a project in a specific nursery school, the women staff filmed their daily work. Although they believed that boys and girls should be treated equally, they discovered that boys received considerably more attention and that girls received significantly more praise for good social behaviour.
- The Swedish government currently promotes some 18 different projects on gender equality in childcare organisations in a range of cities. These projects are not yet complete, so official results are not yet available. A national directive requires that each city has a specially trained gender equality representative for its nursery schools.
- Two universities are responsible for gender training for nursery school and childcare staff.

Stockholm

Stockholm took up the gender mainstreaming strategy in 1997. It takes a *top-down approach*: political stimulus comes from the Council of Mayors and trickles down via the gender representatives to the various departments and their employees, and from there to the citizens they serve.

The 3Rs method is widely used, although its use has not become the norm and no adequate structure exists for its application. In cooperation with the method's inventor Gertrud Aström, a major conference was held in 1997 to discuss introducing it within the City of Stockholm.

²⁴ Kajsa Wahlström (Gävle Municipality) has published a book on this subject.

D. Annex: Itinerary and Key Issues

Anlage I: Program of Visit/ Guiding Questions

Schedule

Institution/ Person	Guiding Questions
21. June/ 14.10 – 17:00 (Vantaa, Finland)	
<p><u>City of Vantaa</u></p> <p>- Ms Tarja Lumijärvi, Director, International Affairs</p> <p>- Ms Päivi Rainio, Planer, Human Resource Management</p>	
<p><u>City of Espoo</u></p> <p>- Ms Tuija Norlamo-Saramäki, Senior Expert, Social and Health Department, Information Quality and Development</p> <p>- Ms Lotta Harjunpää, Secretary, Committee for Equal Opportunities</p> <p>- Ms Eeva Honkanummi, Chairwoman, Committee for Equal Opportunities</p>	No Guiding Questions

Institution/ Person	Guiding Questions
22. June/ 9 – 11 (Stockholm, Schweden)	
<p><u>Svenska Kommunförbundet,</u> Stockholm</p> <p>- Ms Dahlenborg Expert for Gender Equality</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your organisation has developed in cooperation with Gertrud Astöm the 3R method for implementation Gender Mainstreaming (GM) („Jämtegrering“). Which importance has this method for the implementation of GM and achieving equality in the different municipalities? 2. Do you have examples of men discrimination recovered and analysed by 3R or are there mainly examples of women discrimination according the gender division of work? 3. Do you have some activities to promote men for balancing responsibility in the private sphere (f.e. homework; child care) and in typical women professions (kindergarden; health care) Do you develop meanwhile other methods which are effectiv in Jämtegrering on the municipality level? 4. Which are the main problems / forces in the municipalities to implement Jämtegrering (GM)? 5. Does „Jämtegrering“ (GM) play any role in the Swedish Kommunförbundet? 6. Do you have information on the „Jäm-Index“?

Institution/ Person	Guiding Questions
22. June/ 14:00 – 16:00 (Stockholm, Schweden)	
<p><u>County Council of Stockholm</u></p> <p>- Ms Birgitta Sevefjord County Commissioner of Health Care (Verantwortlich für Gender Equality)</p> <p>- Ms Birgitta Evengard Expert</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you follow a specific concept in the County Councils of Stockholm, to achieve gender equality in the political and administrative area? 2. Does the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming (GM) – „jämställdhetsintegrering“ is of importance? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In which way? When the process has started? - Can you give some examples of – „jämställdhetsintegrering“ activities or projects in County Councils 3. Do you have some activities to promote men for balancing responsibility in the private sphere (f.e. homework; child care) and in typical women professions (Kindergarden; care work) 1. Do you make a difference between equal right policy for women and „jämställdhetsintegrering“? Can you specify the differences with some examples? 5. Which kind of bodies for promoting gender equality and implementation Gender Mainstreaming do you have in the County Councils? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have the position of an ombudsman/ - woman for equality? • Who is responsible for equality issues in the city (department of equality?) • Does exist a „commission or committee of equal opportunity for women and men“? • Do you have any serious activities from men concerning equal opportunity in the County Councils in Stockholm or Sweden?

Institution/ Person	Guiding Questions
23. June/ 9 – 10 (Stockholm, Schweden)	
<p><u>City of Stockholm</u></p> <p>- Ms Lena Ring Diskrimineringsfunktionär</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you follow a specific concept in the City of Stockholm, to achieve gender equality in the political, administrative area and in the municipality? 2. Does the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming (GM) (“jämställdhetsintegrering”) is of importance? In which way? When the process has started? Can you give some examples of GM in the field of: political decisions (city council), administration and in the municipality. 3. Do you have some activities to promote men for balancing responsibility in the private sphere (f.e. homework; childcare) and in typical women professions (kindergarden; care work) 4. Do you make a difference between equal right policy for women and Gender Mainstreaming? Can you specify the differences with some examples? 5. Which kind of bodies for promoting gender equality and implementation Gender Mainstreaming do you have in the city of Stockholm? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have the position of an ombudswoman for equality? • Who is responsible for equality issues in the city (council, department of equality?) • Does exist a „commission or committee of equal opportunity for women and men“? 6. Do you have any serious activities from men concerning equal opportunity in Stockholm or Sweden?

Institution/ Person	Guiding Questions
24. June/ 8 – 8:45 (Helsinki, Finland)	
<p><u>Ministry for Social Affairs and Health</u></p> <p>- Ms Hannele Varsa, Secretary General, The Council for Equality</p> <p>- Ms Marjaana Juhola, Secretary for Research and Development Section</p>	No Guiding Questions

Institution/ Person	Guiding Questions
24. June/ 9 – 11 (Helsinki, Finland)	
<p><u>City of Helsinki</u></p> <p>- Mr Paavo Salonen, Secretary, Equality Committee</p> <p>- Ms Leena Taisto Expert for Human Resource Management, Youth Department</p> <p>- Mr Pekka Metsola Youth Department</p> <p>-Members of the Equality Committee</p> <p>Kontaktperson war: - Ms Outi Taavela City of Helsinki</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you follow a specific gender equality concept in the City of Helsinki in the political, administrative area and in the municipality? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming (GM) is of importance? • In which way? When the process has started? • Can you give some examples of GM in the field of: political decisions (city council), administration and in the municipality. 2. Do you have some activities to promote men for balancing responsibility in the private sphere (f. e. homework; child care) and working in typical women professions (kindergarden; care work) 3. Do you make a difference between equal right policy for women and Gender Mainstreaming? Can you specify the differences with some examples? 4. Which kind of bodies for promoting gender equality and implementation Gender Mainstreaming do you have in the city of Helsinki? 5. Do you have the position of an ombuds woman for equality in the city? 6. Who is responsible for equality issues in the city (council, department of equality?) 7. How does the „Equality Committee works“, which tasks have the committee? 8. Do you have a kind of men movement in Helsinki or in Finland?

Institution/ Person	Guiding Questions
24. June/ 12.00 – 12:50 (Helsinki, Finland)	
<p><u>Association of Finish Local and Regional Authorities, Helsinki</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr Timo Kietäväinen, Deputy Managing Director - Mr Kari Prättälä, Director Legal Services - Ms Sinikka Mikola, Senior Advisor - Members of the Working group of the Municipal Gender Equality Issues in AFLRA 	<p>No Guiding Questions</p>

Institution/ Person	Guiding Questions
24. June/ ab 13:00 (Helsinki, Finland)	
<p><u>City of Helsinki</u></p> <p>- Ms Leena Taisto Social Worker (Mädchen), Youth Department "Tyttöjen talo" (Girls house)</p> <p>- Mr Pekka Metsola Social Worker (Jungs), Youth Department</p>	<p>Visit of a daycare facility for girls</p> <p>No Guiding Questions</p>