



Project “More Women in European Politics – More Women in 2014”

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Base Line Study

Partner 12

LIBERAL WOMEN IN SWEDEN

Sweden

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Base Line Study on the Situation on Women in Politics

Summary

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Introduction

One of the objectives of the LUDEN project is that all participating countries will develop a "benchmark" report providing a picture of women's representation in politics. The study will be the starting point for the campaign plan and the activities that will be implemented in each participating country.

The study should include the following elements:

- An overview on the development of women's participation in politics.
 - Data on women in politics at EU, national and regional / local level.
 - Description of the policies pursued in order to increase women's political presence.
 - Overview of implemented initiatives / activities carried out to achieve gender equality in politics.
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Swedish gender equality policy

The last time the Swedish gender policy was established was in the Government Bill 2005/06: 155 on Gender equality policy. Gender mainstreaming will continue to be the government's main strategy to achieve the gender equality objectives, along with specific measures to stimulate, develop and accelerate the process of change.

The main objective of gender equality policy is that women and men must have the same power to shape society and their own lives.

The following interim objectives indicate the direction of the Government's policy in the area:

- 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 as regards education and paid work which give economic independence throughout life.
- 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.
- Men's violence against women must stop. Women and men, girls and boys, must have the same right to, and possibility of physical integrity.

Power is a key concept of gender equality, even if all goals are equally important to achieve an equal society. For this project, though, the objective of power and influence is crucial!

Quantitative and qualitative gender equality

Quantitative gender equality is the aim in all spheres of society. An equal distribution exists when sex ratio is within the range of 40% to 60%.

Qualitative equality means that both women's and men's knowledge, experiences and values are utilized and affect all spheres of society.

Why equal representation?

Why is the representation, divided between men and women among the elected representatives, of interest? The main reasons are:

- It's an issue of democracy and justice. The power shall reflect the population. Half of the population are women.

- It's a question of resources. It is important that all resources are utilized in the community.

- It's a quality issue. Decisionmaking gets a higher quality. Because women's men's lives on the average differs, it can be assumed that men and women may also have different experiences and preferences.

An equal representation of women and men is not a guarantee for that the *real* power is distributed evenly between the sexes, but it is a crucial prerequisite for the qualitative aspects of the exercise of power could be changed in an equal direction.

Women's suffrage in Sweden

The Swedish Constitution of 1974 stated that all public power in Sweden must emanate from the people. But the road to democracy has been long and universal suffrage was introduced as late as 1921. On 24th of May, 1919, it was decided to introduce an equal and universal suffrage for women, regarding elections to the Government's second chamber in the plenary. In 1921 the first elections to the second chamber took place, in which women participated. This was later than in Denmark, Norway and Finland!

EU

Sweden joined the EU in 1995. The road to membership started on 1 July 1991, when the Swedish Government submitted an application for membership of the European Community. 1994 Sweden held a referendum on EU membership. The result was a yes, and on 1 January 1995, Sweden joined the EU. The voting has increased since 1995 for both men and women and in 2009 men and women voted roughly to the same extent. Sweden currently has 20 members of the EU Parliament, 9 women and 11 men.

The gender distribution among the nominees for the European Parliament has remained relatively fixed while the proportion of women elected has increased in the last two elections (2004 and 2009) and are now over 50%.

The Swedish EU commissioner is a woman, Cecilia Malmström, responsible for the Home Affairs portfolio with the focus on two main policy areas: migration and security.

The national level

The report Gender, Power and statistics (SOU 2007:108) found that the gender balance in senior positions vary in a systematic way between social levels, occupations, and heads of various fields of activities. In general, noticeable positions are affected by the policy of gender balance, while the reverse is true for positions without public scrutiny to which the recruitment is done through informal procedures and where the notability is limited. The national or central level seems to provide better conditions for even more gender balance compared to regional and local levels. There are also differences between areas such as politics on one hand and industry on the other. Government principals usually provides greater opportunities for quantitative equality than municipal or private principals. There are also differences between urban areas on one hand and small towns and rural areas on the other. Further investigation found differences between different types of positions. Executives officers are usually men as well as chairpersons (eg in municipal councils). Women in leading positions are often included as members of boards.

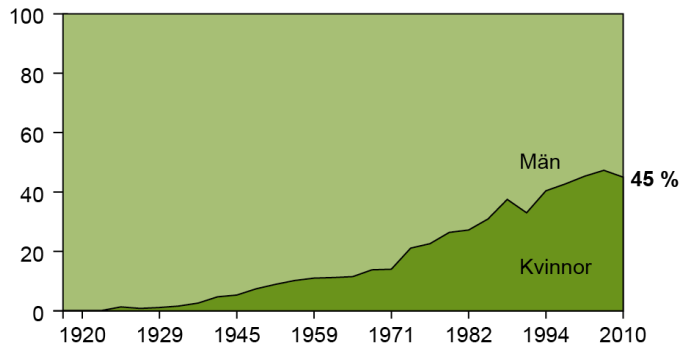
The Government

Of the government's 24 ministers 13 are women (54%) in 2013. Sweden has never had a female prime minister. Among the state secretaries, however, the proportion of women is 38%.

In the dealing of the major issues, the Government can choose to appoint a commission or a committee. In 2011, the proportion of female presidents were 32%, while the proportion of female secretaries was 56%.

The Swedish parliament

The distribution according to gender



Källa: Kammarkansliet, Sveriges riksdag

The Swedish Parliament has an equal composition. The figure above shows graphically the extent of the political power of women and men since 1921. The question why no changes take place now that women have half the power can be answered by comparing the "power areas" for women and men in almost 100 years!

When it comes to age distribution, the proportion of both men and women in the low and high ages is small. This reflects another problem: the difficulty of attracting young people to engage in politics. The same applies to people over 64. You can possibly expect increased participation in politics among elderly people when the current middle aged politicians get older!

A known problem is that the proportion of politicians who are born outside Sweden is significantly lower than the proportion of Swedish-born. In the parliament, 10% of the elected women and 13% of the elected men are foreign born.

When it comes to *the Parliaments committees* it is clear that some committees are predominantly female and some male. The distribution has become more equal over the years. Today five committees have a male dominance (more than 60 %); finance, defense, culture, constitution and taxation. No committee has a female dominance! 9 out of 15 parliamentary committees have a male president.

The local and regional level

There are 290 *municipalities* and 20 *counties/regions* in Sweden. Municipalities and counties are governed by politicians directly elected by the citizens. This means that citizens have great opportunities to influence and control how the municipalities carry out their mission. Politicians in counties and regions are also known as trustees. Most politicians at the local level are leisure politicians and perform their duties outside their normal work.

Municipalities are governed by directly elected political bodies, called the City Councils. Moreover, there are political missions in the municipalities executive boards and in the various boards and committees. In 2011, the proportion of women in the municipal councils and the municipal executive boards is generally lower than that of men. Women are less represented in general, but the difference increases with heavier assignments. In 2011, the proportion of women chairpersons were about 33 %. The proportion of women among chairpersons in the municipal executive boards is even smaller than the proportion of women as chairperson in general. In 2011, the proportion of women mayors was around 29 %.

The share of women and men among the elected representatives in municipalities after position and level 2003-2011. Percent

	2003		2007		2011	
	F	M	F	M	F	M
Position						
Chairperson	30	70	31	69	33	67
Vice chairperson	35	65	38	62	41	59
Members	42	58	42	48	43	57
Substitutes	42	58	43	57	44	56
Level						
Council executive board	36	64	39	61	41	59
Municipal council	42	58	42	58	43	57
Other boards	43	57	44	56	44	56

The County Councils or the Regional Council are appointed by the council and leads as well as coordinates all work within the county or the region. It is also responsible for the council's or region's economy. *The gender balance in the County Councils* are similar to that in the municipalities, but the proportion of women is slightly higher, 48% of women and 52% for men. The gender balance in different positions was nearly equal in 2011. But given that over 80 % of the employees in the County Councils office are women, the number of women politicians could be higher than 48 %!

The share of women in the county councils 2011. Percent

	F	M
Position		
Chairperson	48	52
Vice chairperson	47	53
Other board members	50	50
Substitutes	49	51

Women and men are found in different areas. Typically, the "female" councils in the municipalities 2011 were health and social care, children and youth, while men are found in the areas of culture / leisure / tourism and technology / environment / traffic / property. The same division can be found in the counties/regions.

Other factors besides gender that can be observed among the elected representatives are *age, marital status, children and foreign origin*. Women are better represented among younger than among older politicians. But even here, there are more men than women. Among those under 30, the proportion of women is 45%. Regarding marital status it can be noted that the proportion of married men is higher than the proportion of married women (65% vs. 57%). The proportion of women and men with children among the elected officials are approximately equal.

People of foreign origin and foreign-born persons are underrepresented among elected representatives in local government in 2007. Approximately 8 % of the elected representatives in the municipalities are born abroad, while the corresponding proportion in the population is 15 %. The percentage of foreign-born women in Parliament and the County Council is slightly higher than that of men. In the local government, the proportion of foreign-born men is slightly higher than the proportion of foreign-born women.

Of the elected representatives in the municipal executive boards, 6 % are foreign-born. Even in the case of foreign-born there are differences in representation after the weight of the assignment. This becomes more apparent if you study the groups representation by position, only 4 percent of the member of boards are foreign-born persons, this is an increase since 2007 of one percentage point.

Gender segregation in society

The Swedish professor Yvonne Hirdman developed the theory of the Gender System and presented it 1980 in the official report "The power inquiry". The gender system consists of two principles; the principles of segregating the sexes and the principle of male superiority, also called horizontal and vertical gender segregation.

The *horizontal segregation* in politics means that women and men are represented in different policy areas. Women are relatively well represented in the cultural and social committees, while women are significantly under-

represented in finance, transport, industry, defense and tax committees. Women are relatively well represented in the so-called "soft" activities, such as health care, education, culture and leisure, while women are significantly under-represented in the "hard" technical committees. Some researchers connect "soft" policies to "weak" values, and argues that the horizontal division of labor is about the marginalization where women are squeezed out to boards that have less power. One can of course question whether the "soft" areas actually have less power as the majority of municipal activities lies within the soft sector.

Among all elected representatives in local government in 2011, the proportion of women are 43 % and men 57 %. Women are over-represented in the committees in charge of care and social issues (57 % women), while men are over-represented in the committees in charge of technical issues (70 %). In the committees responsible for children, youth and education, there is an equal gender distribution. Men are slightly over-represented in committees responsible for culture and recreation issues. Compared to 2007, the patterns are the same and only small changes can be noted.

If the gender balance is studied in different age groups, some differences can be noted which could result in changed horizontal gender patterns over time. Young women are found to a greater extent than older women in specialist committees responsible for technology issues. There is also a higher proportion of younger men than older men in charge of committees responsible for care and social issues. These age patterns may show that existing gender patterns may change over time.

The situation is the same in the county councils. Women are over-represented in the committees responsible for health care and social issues and men are slightly over-represented in committees responsible for the engineering, environment and traffic .

Several researchers have pointed out a *vertical division* of labor between the sexes, which means that the leading positions are reserved for men. Previous analyses of the elected representatives in local government have shown that this type of pattern implies that women are underrepresented in bodys of high status and in positions of high status. Also other underrepresented groups, such as foreign-born and younger people, have proven to be underrepresented higher up in the power hierarchy.

Among the representatives of the city council women are 43 %, which is the same as the proportion of women among all elected officials. If you see to the county councils executive boards, the proportion of women is lower, 41 %. The

under-representation is even more prominent when studying the positions of high status. Only one of the three chair positions are held by women in local government. Even the vice-chairs the gender distribution is uneven. There is, however, a higher proportion of women in heavier authorities and higher positions in 2011 than in 2007 and 2003. Compared to 2007, the proportion of women in the municipal executive boards increased from 39 to 41 percent. When it comes to top chairmanships held by women the corresponding increase is 2 percentage-units.

The share of women in total is larger among elected county council representatives than within municipalities, 48 compared to 42 %. The gender distribution in the County Council is also more even than in the city councils. Also regarding chairpersons the gender balance in the county councils are more even. It is thus found that women not only are represented to a greater extent in the counties than in the municipalities, but also the gender patterns in the counties are less visible. Compared with 2007, the proportion of women on chairmanship positions increased significantly, from 41 to 48 %.

Other factors affecting the gender distribution

Women are less represented among both the nominated and the elected. However, one can see that the nominated women are more likely to be elected than nominated men as they are increasingly positioned at eligible positions. The fact that women have a higher probability of being elected, does not mean that women have a higher probability for achieving more heavy assignments. The heavy positions go to a larger extent to men, the heavier the assignment, the more distorted gender distribution. However, there are no results that indicate that women with heavy assignments are disadvantaged in the allocation of heavier positions in the next election.

Other factors that affect women's opportunities are; place on the list, the number of acquired personal votes and turnover.

List placement and first name

In the last election in 2010, the number of nominees were just over 52000. Among these, just under 13,000 got a place in the municipal councils (SCB 2011). A large number of candidates were thus listed on the ballots, but who's names were at the top of the ballots? How was the ranking of the candidates carried through by the political parties? From the results it can be noticed that women in total were better represented among the candidates than among the nominees at both municipal elections in 2006 and 2010. This is applicable both totally and for all political parties. This is indicating that the parties are working

to improve the gender balance among their elected representatives by taking into account the candidates' gender when candidates are ranked on the ballot papers.

A group of persons is said to be gender balanced when the underrepresented sex's share is at least 40 percent of the total. One can observe that almost all parties have an equal distribution among both its nominees and its candidates on eligible positions on the lists!

Analyses of the first names on the ballot-papers give a slightly different picture than the results reported above regarding the group eligible for voting. The proportion of women among the candidates listed as the first name was in the 2010 election 32 % overall, which is 10 percentage-units lower than the proportion of women among the nominees overall. The people who are listed at the top of the ballot are the parties top names, those that are mainly highlighted. One could consider them as the parties prime candidates to the highest positions. The highest positions within the municipalities are the chairpersons of the Municipalities executive Boards. In 2011, the proportion of women in this position was 29 %, which was an increase of two percentage-units since 2007 (Statistics Sweden 2012). The proportion of women is thus less than that of men among the top names and in the highest positions.

Personal votes

One conclusion to be drawn is that the parties' ranking of their candidates largely determines which candidates will be elected. Despite voters' ability to vote for persons, it was at the 2010 election to the Municipal City Council, only 19 % who were elected by personal votes and only about 2 % that were elected *only* because of personal votes. The parties' influence is obvious when studying gender distribution over time. Efforts to place women as candidates on the ballots appear to have contributed to an improved balance in the council. But the gender distribution is still unequal among elected. Could it be because the turnover among politicians?

Turnover and drop-outs

The proportion of re-nominated and re-elected is higher for men compared with women. The proportions are quite stable over time. One way of studying the turnover among the nominees in a longer perspective, is to study those who were elected in 2010 elections to the municipal councils and follow them back in time. Of those elected in 2010, it is a higher proportion of men than of women who have been elected also in previous elections.

During the last two terms of office, it was 16 to 17 % of the members of the local councils who choose to leave their assignments before they were supposed to leave. It is young people, especially young women who drop out of their

duties during their term. During the last two terms of office, 41 % of the elected women aged 18-29 years chose to resign. The corresponding figure for men in the same age group is 36 %. Studies of the group who choose to drop out of their missions show that dropout most predominantly occurs among young women. There is a higher proportion of elected women who resign their position in relation to men - 18 % versus 16 %. The proportion of politicians that drop out of their missions is at its highest among young women. Among the elected politicians in the 18-29 age group, over 38 % quit their assignments; 41 % of the women and 36 % of the men. The tendency to drop out of their missions is lowest among those aged 50-64 years, about 12 %. There is a larger proportion of unmarried persons who resign than among married. The difference can be seen among both women and men. Looking at education, one can not notice much difference, but if you study the dropout rate by income, it is shown that the drop-out rate decreases with higher income.

About 28 % of the elected have indicated that family relationships played a role in their drop-out. There is a greater proportion of women than men that consider family circumstances as the reason, 33 % versus 22 %.

You can also see that there is more common for elected politicians with children to drop-out compared to those without children. This is irrespective of whether they had children before their period or if they had children during their term. Women with children drop out more often than men with children. This gender difference is a little bit larger for the group who had children during the mandate period compared with those who had children under 6 years at the beginning of the term of office.

Gender equality in authorities and the economy

Public authorities and government-owned companies

The gender distribution among heads of public authorities has improved over the years as the awareness of gender equality has increased. In 2012, the proportion of women among the heads appointed by the government is 45%.

When it comes to government- owned companies the gender distribution corresponds to that in politics; men hold a larger share of the leading positions than women.

In business, the situation of gender distribution in leadership positions is worse. This also applies to state-owned companies and in business activities in municipal offices. The gender distribution among board members is relatively balanced, but is much worse when it comes to the position as chairpersons. The

worst is the situation among Swedish listed companies where the share of female chairpersons is around 4 %. Quotas are a constant topics for discussion, but so far it has stayed as a threat!

Joint-stock companies

The vertical gender segregation has a full impact on companies in Sweden. In the year of 2012 women constitutes only 4 % of the chairmen of the boards, 4 % of the general managers and 23 % of the board members.

According to the Allbright Report of 2013 the situation is as following:

- ♣ 1 of 3 companies do not have one woman in the management
- ♣ 2 out of 3 women have a staff function
- ♣ Women promotes women: Six of the ten most gender-equal companies have a woman as president
- ♣ The most common general manager is a man, named Johan, is 51 years old and holds an MBA from Stockholm School of Economics
- ♣ Half of all listed companies' management team members were born in the 60's
- ♣ Nine out of ten professional board-members are men
- ♣ Health care industry continues to be the best at protecting women's skills

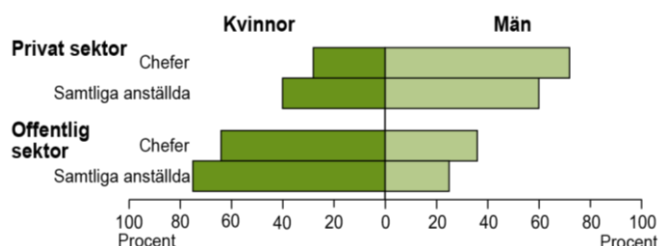
The report make the following conclusion: “Swedish companies are still controlled by a homogeneous group of men. It is a distorted distribution of society's collective expertise especially given that women have been in the majority in universities since the early 90s.

The Swedish labor market

When it comes to leadership in the labor market in general, the same problem of gender un-equality is found. The picture below shows the percentage of male and female managers in relation to the proportion of employees in the private and public sectors.

Chefer och samtliga anställda inom privat och offentlig sektor 2011

Könsfördelning (%)



Källa: Lönestrukturstatistik, Medlingsinstitutet och SCB

Med **chef** avses här:

Person med administrativt ledningsarbete samt politiskt arbete inom privat och offentlig sektor. Arbetet innebär bland annat att fatta beslut, planera, styra och samordna.

(Standard för svensk yrkesklassificering, SSYK)

The unions

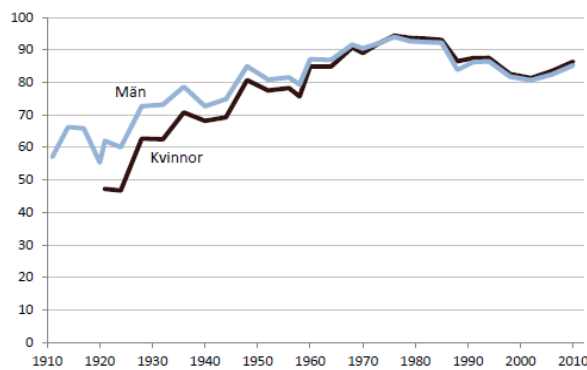
Also the unions are characterized by vertical gender segregation to a certain degree. In the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) the differences are the highest. This should however be viewed in light of that LO covers many typical male areas. In the Swedish Central Organization of Salaries Employees (TCO), the proportion of women in leading positions is higher than that among the men. Note that the majority of members in TCO are women!

Participation in elections

The men constituted the majority of voters until the 1960 elections. For the first time more women than men voted in that election. These conditions have existed for all the subsequent elections to parliament. It should be mentioned that the voter turnout in 1960 was still lower among women than among men, 85 % versus 87 %. That women still constituted a majority of the voters was because there were more women than men in the general population and among voters.

Since the late - 1960s, women and men have voted in about the same degree. From 1990's, women's participation in elections, is only about one percentage unit higher than men's. On the whole, therefore voting in general elections is an equal form of political participation.

Participation in elections for women and men 1910- 2010. Percent



Källa: SCB:s valstatistik
Kommentar: Statistiken är totalräknad fram till och med 1960 års val. Därefter baseras skattningarna på urvalsundersökningar och har därmed en viss osäkerhet. I undersökningarna 1973 – 1985 ingår inte personer 75 år och äldre i urvalet.

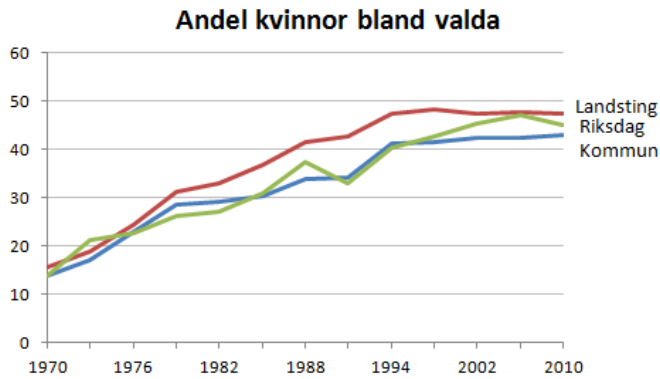
Initiatives for gender balance in politics, experiences

In Sweden, different ways to achieve the goal of equal power and influence is constantly discussed, especially the issue of quotas. Other initiatives and activities, such as list placement, alternating lists (every second name is a woman's), mentoring, educational programs and various types of internal rules are tested and examined with the aim to reach a gender balance. It is difficult to single out individual decisions or rules that have been crucial to reach the relatively high proportion of women compared to other countries, at least at the national level.

The proportion of women elected is higher in areas with quotas, although the differences are small. Generally, women are favored by the parties specific formal rules regarding women's representation, women's associations' support for increased representation of women and the voters demands for an equal distribution between the sexes.

When it comes to the nomination process, you must also take into account whether the principle of a woman at every second place on the list has a real impact. This so-called implementation issue is partly explained by the fact that the central party organization makes the decisions regarding different measures, while the nomination process is usually handled by the local party organization.

The chart below shows the percentage of women elected to counties (red), parliament (green) and municipalities (blue) during the years of 1970-2010. Large increases occurred in primarily the 1970s, after that the proportions have increased in a slower rate.



A change that occurred in the 1994 election was that the proportion of women elected to the city councils for the first time was larger than the proportion who were elected among men. This has been the case since then for both counties and municipalities and since 1998 for parliament. This means that the probability to be elected is greater among nominated women than among nominated men. It is not the actual process where members are screened out among the nominees that lead to the underrepresentation of women. Instead, it depends on that the gender distribution is more even among those who are eligible candidates on the ballots than for those further down. Thus, it is the political parties themselves that mainly have the influence over who is elected. Besides that it's problematic that women do not reach the highest positions to the same extent as men, it has consequences further down the lists. Although a party has been alternating men and women on the ballot, the proportion of women who actually are elected will be lower, as long as it is common that a man stands at the top of the ballot. If the party is given one mandate, 100 % men will be elected. If the party is given two seats there will be 50% of each gender. If the party gets three seats there will be again 66.67% of men, and so on.

The percentage of women can never be higher than the proportion of men as long as a man is at the top.

Gender quotas are controversial. Proponents of affirmative actions emphasize the importance of different experiences that come from different characteristics of the representatives. Opponents tend instead to emphasize that what matters is the representatives' expertise. It has been found that it was mainly the "mediocre" men hit by quotas. In municipalities where there were the greatest changes due every two women raised the average skills of men. It is not

impossible that men without quotas had certain advantages which enabled them to get seats despite lack of skills!

Concluding words

Equality in society, both quantitative and qualitative, is influenced by a variety of interacting factors. To achieve sustainable results, the work must be conducted on a broad front to change norms and structures in society. This applies both at the individual and societal level. It is therefore difficult, almost an impossible task for specific actions to attain a lasting change. Gender equality is achieved with the help of a committed, long-term and scheduled work at all levels of society.

When reading this base line study, it seems that the gender equality situation considering representation is quite good in Sweden! There are more female ministers than male in the government, 45 % of the members of parliament are women and nearly all gender proportions in counties and municipalities are within the scope of 40 % – 60 %. But even if the differences in some cases are quite small, they all add up and totally result in a “power gap” that has an influence in the society as a whole!

There are still conditions in the Swedish society where there is a severe lack of gender equality and a need to focus upon. These are the gender segregation in the society. Horizontally, as you find women and men mainly in different circumstances when it comes to interests, education and work. Vertically, especially in business where there still is a “glass-ceiling” for women who want to make a career!