EGGE – EC’s Expert Group on Gender and Employment

A Gender Perspective
Anna-Maija Lehto

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Executive summary


Women’s position in the Finnish labour market is quite good compared to other European countries, especially if measured by different gender gaps. The employment gap is small, even when measured in full-time equivalents. The same applies to part-time work. In contrast, unemployment among women is quite high in Finland by European standards and the share of temporary employment is nearly the worst in EU.

In Finland, women’s employment rate had risen to 64.3% in 2000. The corresponding figure for men was 69.4%. The gender gap in employment has remained steady during the last few years, being now 5.1 percentage points. According to the figures, the Finnish female employment rate is clearly above the Lisbon employment target for women. Using the measure of full-time equivalent employment, the figure for women’s employment rate in Finland is also very close to meeting the 60% target. The FTE figure (part time job considered as half of one full-time job) for Finnish women was 59% in 2000. The difference between these two measures is quite small because part-time employment is rather rare in Finland.

Summing up on the basis of the information available from the different sources, gender equality in working life is quite sustainable in Finland. It has a solid footing because of equality in education, good children’s day care facilities and the long traditions of women’s labour force participation and equal commitment to work at least as far as working hours are concerned. Women have also improved their position in working life and are acting more and more in middle management positions, being superiors and influencing other peoples’ working conditions.

On the other hand, there are still big problems in equality matters. These concern both the labour market position and conditions at work and reconciliation of work and family life. Women’s position in the labour market has deteriorated during the 1990s. Since 1996, the female unemployment rate has been higher than the male one. Employment opportunities have not increased in the public sector, especially in the municipal health care field, in spite of the obvious need for care personnel. This has meant growing unemployment in women’s typical occupations, such as nursing. Women have been forced to accept work with bad terms of employment, like fixed-term contracts, for example, which has affected their lives: increasing job insecurity has caused falls in the numbers starting a family and in the birth rate.

One of the biggest equality deficits in Finland is the gender pay gap. This is a persistent problem despite the fact that women’s educational level has risen above men’s, women have as much work experience as men and statistics on working hours show that women, too, work long hours. Efforts to even out the gap have not been successful enough and many new trends in
pay systems, like performance-based rewards or local agreements, have acted against these endeavours.

European statistics show that gender segregation in occupations and industries is among the highest in Finland, too. This is a clear consequence of the well-developed welfare services. Strong horizontal occupational segregation is, in principle, something that should be avoided. Even division of labour has a good influence on the working climate, according to some studies. However, gender segregation should not be accepted as a reason for other problems, like wage differentials. There must be other means of solving these equality deficits, e.g. work evaluation and equal pay processes.

In the 1998 National Action Plan only selected statistics were available to monitor gender equality. An equality barometer was introduced in 1998 as a new tool for monitoring the development of equality. In 1999, a conscious effort was made to develop statistics and new indicators to follow gender equality. In 2000, a research project was launched, that will serve as a basis for constructing a systematic framework for monitoring gender pay differentials at regular intervals.

The 2001 NAP is more concrete than the 2000 NAP, introducing measures on different fields. This is mostly progressive, but at the same time some more principal discussions have been lost. There is now quantitatively more text about equal opportunities, the pillar IV is more comprehensive than in the 2000 NAP. The idea of mainstreaming is also little more represented in the other three pillars. However, this is mostly because the 2000 NAP was quite modest in this respect.

Two worries are the most prominent in the employability Pillar. One is to raise the incentive to take low-paid work. This means both cutting the taxation rate for these jobs and lowering unemployment security. The other main worry seems to be the employment bottlenecks and expected lack of labour in some areas. These worries have been represented in an extremely gender neutral way.

*Tax and benefit policies* are, still, an important part of the Finnish NAP. The Council recommendations emphasise this and the question of taxation has been dealt with in many Pillars and guidelines. The overall tax rate is expected to drop further and the Finnish NAP introduces numerous ways to encourage entrepreneurship by lowering the tax burden on it. From women’s point of view, the tax reductions also mean some contradictions. Women’s employment is much dependent on the public financing of welfare services, which need a higher tax rate.

The measures presented in the first Pillar concerning lifelong learning, information society and ageing labour force are gender-blind, superficial, too detailed and without any concern to the local situation in the Finnish labour market.

The last two NAPs have largely concentrated on reducing occupational and sectoral segregation according to the last two years’ recommendations from the Council. Considering the whole area of equality deficits in the Finnish labour market, the question of desegregation has become too dominant. This
is why the following list of future priorities is based on ideas of the most neglected policy areas.

1. Women’s employment should be improved especially in the public sector.

2. Another important area would be to intensify the efforts in the gender wage gap problem.

3. The quality of jobs should be included as a criterion in job creation policies.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<td>2000 Examine, in the context of a gender mainstreaming approach, ways of reducing the current levels of occupational and sectoral segregation in the labour market</td>
<td>Targets to reduce segregation applied to each Employment and Economic Development Centre. Strategic project on the equal labour market 2000-2003 to address influences on choice of occupation; new 3-year cooperation between employers and schools to influence boys’ and girls’ choice of occupation</td>
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| 2001 Finland should monitor and assess, in the context of a gender mainstreaming approach, the current levels of occupational and sectoral segregation in the labour market | - The project called *Equality on the labour* market has been started:  
- to encourage boys and girls to choose subjects and courses which are not typical of their gender,  
- to influence the workplace culture supporting the minority gender,  
- to develop indicators for monitoring labour policy measures whether they alleviate segregation,  
- to develop the content and methods of teaching in technical and technological sectors. |

The Council recommendations pay attention to very few aspects of the labour market. This can easily mean that national action plans also concentrate on only these aspects. The occupational segregation is an example of this. It has become the most important equality question in the action plan, neglecting other aspects.
1. The employment context, the employment targets and the gender equality deficit.

In Finland, women’s employment rate had risen to 64.3% in 2000. The corresponding figure for men was 69.4%. The gender gap in employment has remained steady during the last few years, being now 5.1 percentage points. According to the figures, the Finnish female employment rate is clearly above the Lisbon employment target for women. Using the measure of full-time equivalent employment, the figure for women’s employment rate in Finland is also very close to meeting the 60% target. The FTE figure (part time job considered as half of one full-time job) for Finnish women was 59% in 2000. The difference between these two measures is quite small because part-time employment is quite rare in Finland.

The Finnish employment rates have been greatly affected by the economic recession at the beginning of the 1990s. Before the recession, the female employment rate was 71%, and the male one 76.7%. (See Appendix table 1.) The employment rates were at their lowest in 1994, at 58.8% for women and 61.1% for men. The rates were mostly affected by high unemployment. A closer examination of the male and female unemployment rates shows that the recession and the unemployment first affected the men. Their employment rate also rose faster than women’s after the recession. Since 1996, women’s unemployment rate has been higher than men’s.

Looking at the age structure, the female employment rate has risen especially in the older age groups of 50 to 64-year-olds. Unemployment rates have also decreased most in these groups (Appendix table 2). Elderly women’s employment and labour force participation rates have been quite high longer in Finland and in the Nordic Countries than in other countries in Europe. This is due to our longer tradition of women working outside the home. At the moment, employment rates among the over 50-year-olds are at about the same level as before the recession. With younger age groups than this, employment and labour force participation rates have fallen even from the pre-recession levels. Most of the difference comes from increased proportions of those participating in education or doing domestic work. As a matter of fact, women’s activity rates in Finland began to drop as far back as in the 1980s, mainly because of their participation in education.

The educational level of women has risen very rapidly, faster than men’s. (Figure 1 in Appendix.) This also means that most of the potential for raising the female employment rate has already been used. According to Eurostat statistics (Labour force survey results 1999, pp.46-47), the proportion of women with tertiary level education (36.6%) in the population aged 25 to 59 is the highest in Finland compared to other European countries. This leading position applies to all age groups, with the exception of women in 50-59 year age group who share it with Sweden (26% with tertiary level education). Even examined in terms of the overall proportion of those with any kind of post-basic level education Finland is among the leaders in Europe, and this applies especially to women.
There are big regional differences in employment in Finland. The employment rates of both women and men are clearly lower in the northern and eastern parts than in the southern parts of the country. This means that the biggest employment reserves can be found in the east and north. On the other hand, the educational level of the population, which has an influence on employability, is higher in the south. In 2000, women’s employment rate in Finland was the lowest in Kainuu, at 51%, which was over 20 percentage points lower than the rate in Uusimaa (Helsinki included), at 73%.

The employment rates of women according to the number of children have fluctuated together with the economical situation, but the peak was reached as far back as in the 1980s. (See Appendix table 3.) At the moment, the employment rate among women with children aged under 18 is 73.2% and that among women with children under school age (7 years) is 61.9%. The figures are from 2000 (4th quarter) when women’s overall employment rate was 63.9%.

Finland is a country where the Lisbon employment target for women has already been reached. Men’s employment rate (69.4%) is also approaching the target of 70%. Has equality on the labour market also been reached? This can be answered from different perspectives. On the whole, the question of equality in working life is very complicated and can only be answered with information from many different sources: statistics, survey data, local research findings, etc.

Summing up on the basis of the information available from the different sources, gender equality in working life is quite sustainable in Finland. It has a solid footing because of equality in education, good children’s day care facilities and the long traditions of women’s labour force participation and equal commitment to work at least as far as working hours are concerned. Women have also improved their position in working life and are acting more and more in middle management positions, being superiors and influencing other peoples’ working conditions.

On the other hand, there are still big problems in equality matters. These concern both the labour market position and conditions at work and reconciliation of work and family life. Women’s position in the labour market has deteriorated during the 1990s. Since 1996, the female unemployment rate has been higher than the male one. Employment opportunities have not increased in the public sector, especially in the municipal health care field, in spite of the obvious need for care personnel. This has meant growing unemployment in women’s typical occupations, such as nursing. Women have been forced to accept work with bad terms of employment, like fixed-term contracts, for example, which has affected their lives: increasing job insecurity has caused falls in the numbers starting a family and in the birth rate.

One of the biggest equality deficits in Finland is the gender pay gap. This is a persistent problem despite the fact that women’s educational level has risen above men’s, women have as much work experience as men and statistics on working hours show that women, too, work long hours. Efforts to even out the gap have not been successful enough and many new trends in pay systems, like performance-based rewards or local agreements, have acted against these endeavours.
Employment opportunities for women in the labour market

The overall numbers of employed have gone up for both men and women during the Luxembourg process. Since 1997, the women’s number has gone up by 81,000 and the men’s by 86,000. Correspondingly, the number of unemployed women has fallen by 23,000. With men the decrease has been bigger at 38,000. (See Appendix table 4.) The numbers of unemployed are still very high for both men and women. According to official statistics, there are 131,000 female unemployed and 122,000 male unemployed. Additionally, there are still 111,000 so-called disguised unemployed, comprising 37,000 discouraged jobseekers and 73,000 others. These are the main groups forming the difference between official statistics and registered unemployment.

Long-term unemployment is not a special female problem in Finland, unlike in the EU in general (rate for men was 2.7 and for women 2.6 in 2000 in Finland). Women are more likely to participate in different active labour policy measures. Still, the sustainable labour demand is directed more to the male than the female labour force, which keeps the female unemployment rate at a high level.

The quality of employment opportunities is also different according to gender. Part-time employment, which is not a typical feature of the Finnish labour market, has increased during the last few years. The number of female part-timers has risen from 157,000 (1997) to 188,000 (2000). The corresponding increase with men has only been from 80,000 to 98,000. Part-time employment rates are now 17% for women and 8% for men. In Finland, a very high proportion of the part-time employment is involuntary. This is mainly because part-time work is not needed for family and child care reasons. Finnish parents have a statutory right to full time care for their children aged under 7.

One of the most serious equality deficits is the high proportion of female fixed-term employment. The problem has even generated numerous research projects (e.g. Sutela 1999, Sutela-Vänskä-Notkola 2001) and policy discussions but no notable decrease has ensued. Even now, 20% of female employees and 13% of male employees in Finland only have fixed-term contracts. This phenomenon has become significant during the 1990s. It is more typical for women to have fixed-term contracts in highly skilled jobs and in all age groups than for men among whom temporary employment is concentrated to jobs requiring low skills and to young age groups.

Preconditions for gender equality in the labour market

The infrastructure offering care support is quite well developed in Finland. This concerns especially the day care of children under school age. Everybody has a statutory right to public children’s day care. On the other hand, insufficient care facilities for elderly people and for young school age children are increasing the difficulty of reconciling work and family life.

However, insufficient care services have never been a hindrance to Finnish women’s participation in work outside the home. Women’s labour force participation began to increase already in the 1960s and 1970s when welfare
services like children’s day care were only just being developed. Recent studies and public discourse have shown a worrying increase of problems in reconciling work and family life. The pace of work has accelerated and different flexibilisation processes and increasing demands for productivity have made the situation worse especially for women who shoulder most of the responsibility for the home and who still work full-time, and even overtime.

The well-developed day care system was achieved through political decisions. Women have had quite an extensive role in the Finnish parliament and governments. Women’s share of the members of parliament is 38.3% at the moment. Their share of municipal councils is very similar. Thus, the preconditions for women’s employability have been taken care of. On the other hand, political pressure has not been strong enough to increase the employment opportunities for women in the public sector.

**The relative employment position of women compared to other European states**

Women’s position in the Finnish labour market is quite good compared to other European countries, especially if measured by different gender gaps. The employment gap is small, even when measured in full-time equivalents. The same applies to part-time work. In contrast, unemployment among women is quite high in Finland by European standards and the share of temporary employment is nearly the worst in EU.

As far as qualitative aspects are concerned, many preconditions for employability are fulfilled well in Finland: women’s educational level is one of the best, and at tertiary level the best, lack of day care facilities is not an obstacle for employment. European surveys on working conditions (1996, 2000) show that Finnish women are strongly integrated into the development of working life. They are familiar with the new information technology and use computers in their work more than Finnish men or other women in Europe do. Finnish employees have the highest proportion of female superiors. Women in Finland have the best chances for receiving training paid for by the employer and they themselves feel they have the best opportunities for learning new things in their work. On the other hand, time pressure at work also seems to be the highest among Finnish working women.

European statistics show that gender segregation in occupations and industries is among the highest in Finland, too. This is a clear consequence of the well-developed welfare services. Strong horizontal occupational segregation is, in principle, something that should be avoided. Even division of labour has a good influence on the working climate, according to some studies. However, gender segregation should not be accepted as a reason for other problems, like wage differentials. There must be other means of solving these equality deficits, e.g. work evaluation and equal pay processes.

**Key groups of women where action is required**

Women who are unemployed, belong to older age groups and do not have much education are probably the worst off in the Finnish labour market. Employment authorities have also paid a lot of attention to these groups, although not especially to women, but women have been most likely to attend the different activities designed for the unemployed. Nonetheless, if there is
insufficient demand for labour such activities cannot help in the long run. Different regions and parts of the country are not equal here, either.

Another key group for action is elderly women who are still employed but find it difficult to cope with ever increasing demands. There are several action programmes in Finland which try to find ways of keeping people in working life up to retirement age (65). Elderly women who are still in employment have a special position in Finland because they have longer work experience than women of the same age elsewhere have. Women have only one year shorter lifelong work experience than men in Finland and have mostly acquired it by working full-time. Additionally, women have borne the main responsibility for the family and for the domestic work. All this means that in many occupations women find it really difficult to continue working right up to retirement. Special action is required to maintain their well being and health. However, the trends in many female occupations, such as care work, are heading to the opposite direction at the moment. Staff cuts and cost savings are making the work even harder than before.

Younger generations, particularly young women with academic education, are also vulnerable with regard to getting a stable position in the labour market. An ever-increasing proportion of them only have fixed-term employment contracts. Employers prefer fixed-term contracts with young women in order to avoid maternity expenses. Fixed-term contracts are also part of the new flexibilisation policies of employers.

A further target group for special action are women in low pay occupations. Analyses of gender pay differentials have shown that women’s wages are about 20 per cent lower than men’s at all educational levels regardless of both long work experience and long working hours. Female oriented occupations have traditionally dragged behind typical male occupations in pay. The only way to reduce this gap would be the adoption of a policy of equal pay and work evaluation processes.

Employment trends, wage and income and women’s labour market behaviour

Finnish equality policies are operating under a context into which the economic recession of the 1990s left its marks. The recession deepened gender differentials in employment. Particularly the public sector and the financial difficulties of municipalities have hampered women’s position. Unemployment in care occupations has increased, thousands of educated nurses have moved abroad to get a job. Fixed-term employment has increased and successive fixed-term employment contracts have become a standard practice, particularly in the municipal sector.

Women’s labour force participation rates have dropped since the 1980s. The reasons for this are both increasing participation in long lasting education and slightly increased rate of starting up a family due to improved maternity allowances. The recession also temporarily strengthened these trends.

One of the good things about the recession was that pay differentials did not increase at that time. Wages did not rise much for anyone and different additional pay rewards like performance-based bonuses were used much. Centralised agreements also helped women retain their pay level in relation to men’s level.
Areas of new job growth or areas of significant job decline

The change in the occupational structure among women has meant a big decrease in manufacturing work. The amount of office work, too, has decreased as also has cleaning work. Over the last two decades or so, the growth areas in women’s employment have included health and social care work and teaching. For men, manufacturing work has also contracted. Commercial, office and technical work have all increased somewhat from the 1970s. Construction work has fluctuated strongly.

In entrepreneurial activity, agricultural work has decreased for both men and women, especially during the 1990s. Women’s office work was hit by the recession and the technological change. Particularly banking and insurance were fields where the number of women’s jobs were even halved in the 1990s.

In the last few years, employment forecasts have relied on the IT sector and its expansion. However, the latest developments have shown that even this sector can be vulnerable. This has put most of the endeavours directed toward increasing women’s share in the technical occupations in the hope of reducing the gender segregation of occupations under a new light.

A researcher from the Finnish Ministry of Labour has recently published a new forecast of future labour demand (Tiainen 2001). It shows that the most essential need for labour in the near future is in care work, almost 200,000 employees by 2015. This is both because of the increased need of care (aging population) and because of retiring population (about 130,000).

The need for action on equal opportunities

In many respects the initial gender equality deficit has been quite small in the Finnish labour market. Only the gender pay gap has been obviously unfair considering women’s and men’s equal education and work experience. The 1990s and the recession widened the deficit somewhat and this trend has not yet changed. Especially the financial problems in the public sector, as well as economic policy decisions have been harmful to women’s employment and the quality of work.

There is a need for a stabilising economic policy to give more support to the welfare services. In order to reduce the pay gap, centralised agreements would be needed and work value evaluation processes should be implemented in a broad comparison of female and male oriented occupations (e.g. nursing and engineering).

The ageing population and especially working and unemployed elderly women need special support that takes into account their long participation in the Finnish working life.

The establishment of institutional mechanisms for mainstreaming

A mainstreaming methodology project was launched in Finland in 1998, in which the aim was to formulate models that would allow gender equality to be integrated into the drafting of Government proposals, and into budget and information work. In autumn 2000 this project published web sites where different ministries and institutions introduce their projects and methods for gender mainstreaming.

The final report on the Government’s equality programme was published in March 1999, dealing with over 100 projects at various ministries. The Government was also adopting the practice whereby new legislation is always accompanied by an assessment of its effects on gender equality. This idea was realised for the first time in 2000 when the new Employment Contract Act was assessed for its gender impact. This was a pilot project and the published version of it can be used as a model for evaluating other legislative bills (Vaikuttaako sukupuoli?/Does gender count? 2000). Accordingly, gender mainstreaming has been understood by policymakers to be a permanent part of the policy formation, implementation and evaluation process.

The Gender Barometer also comes under the mechanisms of mainstreaming. The Barometer was produced for the first time in 1998. It charts people’s subjective views about equality in practice, and changes in it. Statistics Finland has now produced the Barometer jointly with the Council for Equality (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health) twice, in 1998 and 2001.

In the 1999 National Action Plan the mainstreaming approach was implemented jointly by the civil servants in charge of the work on the various Guidelines and a special officer responsible for mainstreaming throughout the Plan. In her evaluation on the mainstreaming process in 1999, Ilmakunnas (2000) concludes that the division of work between the officer responsible for mainstreaming and the rest of the working group needed clarification. She emphasised the idea that mainstreaming should be an integral approach in administrative work, not a special issue on which only few have expertise.

In drawing up the National Action Plan for 2000, the work was no longer appointed a special officer solely responsible for the mainstreaming approach. There were sub-groups for discussing each Pillar separately. A representative of the equality unit of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health was actively involved in the case of Pillar IV. For the first time, the social partners were present throughout the whole process of drawing up the Finnish NAP.

The National Action Plan for 2001 was carried out in almost the same way as the preceding NAP. Each Pillar was prepared by a special group formed from different ministries. The Ministry of Labour also had its own group, and this year a person with equality expertise took part in it. A larger board consisting of social partners dealt with the whole manuscript. From the gen-
der viewpoint, the preparation work was perhaps a bit too organised and too hierarchical. Nobody has taken a real overall responsibility for the paper. This comes obvious from the fact that very detailed things are put together with larger ones. No principal or theoretical discussion has been presented. This concerns both the whole employment policy and, especially, gender mainstreaming.

The development of gender evaluation or monitoring of policies and setting of gender targets

In the 1998 National Action Plan only selected statistics were available to monitor gender equality. In 1999, a conscious effort was made to develop statistics and new indicators to monitor gender equality.

There are not any clear targets set for equality in the Finnish NAPs. The women’s employment target set in Lisbon has already been reached, and the same also applies to childcare services. Other equality deficits, such as the pay gap and gender segregation have been dealt with in the action plans using very rough measures.

Attention to gender issues in first three pillars and the equality measures included in pillar 4

In 1998, the gender mainstreaming approach was not on the agenda. Nine measures were introduced in connection with Pillar IV. Discussion on gender-related issues was quite extensive. In 1999, the gender mainstreaming approach was introduced. At the overall level the gender mainstreaming was rather weak but it was visible both when the implementation of the 1998 measures and the new initiatives in 1999 were discussed for Pillars I-III. Six measures were introduced in connection with Pillar IV.

In 2000, the gender aspect was explicit when implementation of the 1999 measures was introduced but almost invisible when new initiatives were discussed. There were 22 appendix tables, and in about half of them figures were presented by gender. In the implementation part of the NAP report, 53 measures were mentioned for Pillars I-III. In five cases the gender aspect was explicit. Seven measures were described for Pillar IV. In the second part of the NAP report, new policy initiatives, 47 measures were described for Pillars I-III, but gender was explicitly mentioned in only one of them. Three measures were described for Pillar IV.

In the NAP 2001, there was a clear improvement in the number of measures in Pillar IV compared to the previous year. Eight measures can be counted as directed to it in 2001, most them (5) making suggestions for reducing the occupational gender segregation. In respect of the other Pillars (I-III) it is impossible to find any remarks of gender effects, when looking at the new measures in 2001.
### Table

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<td><strong>Institutional mechanisms</strong></td>
<td>-no gender mainstreaming</td>
<td>a special officer to respond of mainstreaming</td>
<td>-no specialist -the NAP chaired by a women</td>
<td>-too many groups -over-organised</td>
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<td><strong>Gender evaluation</strong></td>
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<td>Number of measures: 9</td>
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### 3. **Response to the horizontal objectives**

**A.** Finnish women behave in the labour market in about the same way as Finnish men. Compared to the men, the women’s labour force participation, and employment and unemployment rates are at almost the same levels. Women also work full-time nearly as much, they have as much work experience and their educational level is above men’s in all population groups of working age.

Maybe these facts have made policymakers believe that Finland already has a relatively good balance in gender equality in the labour market. National Action Plans for employment pay less attention to gender equality than they would do if equality deficits were more obvious. There are gender-related problems in the Finnish labour market but their nature can be very different from countries in which full-time equivalent employment rates are markedly lower than in Finland.

**B.** The part of the NAP in which lifelong learning is discussed states that the average educational level of women of working age is higher than that of men (p.3). Yet, very little attention is paid to the gender differentials later in Pillar I and in answers to Council recommendation 1, “lifelong learning for older people“. Employee participation in personnel training 1995-1999 is presented in an appendix table (8), but the figures are not given by gender, even though these certainly would have been available from Statistics Finland. According to a new Adult Education Survey, women and men participated about evenly in training paid for by employers in 2000. In the age group of 18 to 64, women’s participation rate was 58% and men’s 54%. Of those women who had participated in training, 31% had attended courses on information technology. The corresponding figure for men was 35%. According to these figures, there seem to be few equality deficits in lifelong learning.
C. Women have some influence in the organs of social partners. At least trade unions have made many initiatives for equality in the last few years, mostly supported by the Government’s equality programme in 1999. E.g. the Project on equality in the workplace, which includes 12 workplaces in different sectors, has been set up together with social partners. In pay policies, too, unions have been actively demanding the inclusion of special equality items for women in collective pay agreements and promoting job evaluation systems which could equalise pay in female and male jobs. However, these endeavours are presented quite weakly in the National Action Plan.

D. Considering long term objectives and mainstreaming, one could say that the Government’s equality programme issued in 1999 has been very influential. Many of the tools used in the gender impact assessment are follow-ups from this programme. The mainstreaming project with ministries, the Gender Barometer, statistical improvements, the gender impact assessment of the Employment Contract Act, etc., may all at least have helped to increase the awareness of equality matters. One aspect included in the NAP for 2001 is regional plans for employment. In some of them, gender equality is emphasised even more than in the actual NAP.

E. The indicators and statistics presented in the 2001 NAP mostly describe both genders. This applies to the indicators of employment and unemployment, different labour market measures and to employed persons by sector according to level of segregation. Only the tables about in-house training and regional unemployment show, for some unknown reason, figures without gender distribution. On the other hand, the texts in the Pillars and the presented measures are very seldom written from the gender perspective.

4. Gender mainstreaming, monitoring and evaluation

4.1. Gender mainstreaming, including monitoring, evaluation and gender targets

The Pillar of “Improving employability” takes the most extensive part of the Finnish NAP. It contains 12 pages, “Developing entrepreneurship”, 5 pages, and “Adaptability” and “Equal opportunities”, both only 2 pages. The first Pillar is particularly extensive this year as the new horizontal guidelines are applied for the first time at the beginning of the NAP. Especially the objectives of lifelong learning, partnership and the regional dimension have been dealt with in the Pillar of employability. The horizontal objective of full employment has been mostly discussed in the context of the ageing labour force, those in employment and those in unemployment. These guidelines have made the representation of measures very detailed and unprincipled.

In none of these objectives is gender mainstreaming well represented. Behind this could be satisfaction with women’s employment behaviour with high participation rates. In Finland, the Lisbon target for female employment has already been reached. The employment rate for women is 64%. The Lisbon target (60%) is not even mentioned in the NAP. The same applies to the main preconditions to employment, like children’s daycare. Every child has the right to public childcare in Finland. Perhaps this is considered so obvious that no mention of it is deemed necessary.
In Finland the gender gaps in employment (-5.1) and unemployment (1.5) are rather small. Even full-time equivalent employment rates for men and women are very near each other. However, the level of unemployment is considerably high, at 9.1% for men and 10.6% for women. The NAP does not pay any attention to the fact that women’s unemployment rate has been above men’s since 1996. One might have imagined that this fact would have had some influence on the plans for employability measures. In practice, women attend more than men different measures targeted at the unemployed, such as retraining. This has happened without any plans for it.

Long-term unemployment is a matter where the NAP mentions the different situations of men and women. It says that the inflow of women into long-term unemployment is much lower than that of men (p.13). As a clarification it refers to the large volume of fixed-term and temporary employment in the female-dominated sectors. This has helped to reduce the duration of unemployment. At the same time it has increased the incidence of repeated unemployment spells among women. This is a good remark, but it remains unclear whether fixed-term employment is regarded as a positive or negative solution to women’s unemployment.

If women’s and men’s unemployment had been considered separately, the ideas of job generation and gender-specific preconditions to employment would have attracted more attention. Now, most of the measures applied in 2000 and suggested for 2001 are gender neutral without any analysis of the present situation.

Two worries are the most prominent in the employability Pillar. One is to raise the incentive to take low-paid work. This means both cutting the taxation rate for these jobs and lowering unemployment security. The other main worry seems to be the employment bottlenecks and expected lack of labour in some areas. These worries have been represented in an extremely gender neutral way.

The biggest occupational group in women’s unemployment has been, for some years now, the health care sector. Yet, this kind of information is not available in the NAP. At the same time, research and public discourse have shown that there is a clear need for labour in the health care sector. This demand will grow even stronger in the next 10 years when the baby-boom generation will retire. This aspect of women’s unemployment is not analysed at all in the NAP, or there is only a promise for 2001 to study “the labour shortage resulting from the retirement of the baby-boom generation”.

Another female group that is neglected is female immigrants. The appendix tables show that unemployment rates are higher for women than men among foreign nationals (table 11. women 26%, men 22%), but this is not mentioned in the text. The employment rates are also lower among female (40%) than male (61%) foreign nationals. These figures also show that Finnish citizens and foreign nationals differ quite considerably in respect of women’s labour force participation. (The figures are from the Labour Force Survey,
which seems to put unemployment rates lower than the estimations of the Ministry of Labour do. The Ministry’s estimate of the unemployment rate is 35% for all foreign nationals. Foreign population makes up about 1.8 percent of the total population of Finland.

There are no special policies for the inactive population. Persons who are not attending education or retired, and who are of working age, are very few in Finland. They belong to the group “performing domestic work” which totals fewer than 100,000 persons (see appendix table 4.). For the employment policy this means that there is no need to use tax and benefit or skills development policies especially for these people in order to activate them.

*Tax and benefit policies* are, still, an important part of the Finnish NAP. The Council recommendations emphasise this and the question of taxation has been dealt with in many Pillars and guidelines. The overall tax rate is expected to drop further and the Finnish NAP introduces numerous ways to encourage entrepreneurship by lowering the tax burden on it. From women’s point of view, the tax reductions also mean some contradictions. Women’s employment is much dependent on the public financing of welfare services, which need a higher tax rate.

For employability, the tax and benefit policies are important from women’s point of view in respect of the family. Are couples taxed separately or not? In Finland this has not been a problem for a long time now because couples are taxed separately. There is still one “family” problem that usually affects women and this is that a person cannot get the basic unemployment benefit if her/his spouse is employed and receives earnings above a specified level.

The new NAP focuses a lot attention on projects which will continue for several years. They aim to secure balanced economic development by preventing labour supply bottlenecks and promoting structural reform in the labour market. One of these new areas of focus is the emphasis on the ageing labour force, especially on measures aimed toward helping ageing workers stay on at work. This is a good emphasis also from the gender perspective. The only problem is that the principle of gender neutrality is too dominating.

Ageing labour force should be seen divided into different groups according to work experience. In Finland, women in the elderly age groups have a different work history than women in e.g. other European countries do. They have worked longer, almost as long as men. They have also had full-time jobs and still borne the main responsibility for the family and domestic work. Efforts to keep women and men in work until the retiring age should take these national aspects into account. For example, part-time retirement could be emphasised more as an option.

The Council recommendations focus on elderly people’s employability in the context of lifelong learning. The Finnish NAP has taken this for granted without analysing the real local situation. Lifelong learning cannot be seen as the main problem for the Finnish ageing population. Much depends, of course, on what kind of employment structure is supported. If new jobs are only supported in the new sectors of economy, elderly unemployed women and men are certain to need re-educating. On the other hand, those in employment and in older age groups are participating to an exceptional extent in in-house training, especially on information technology.
All in all, the measures presented in the first Pillar concerning lifelong learning, information society and ageing labour force are gender-blind, superficial, too detailed and without any concern to the local situation in the Finnish labour market.

4.3. Entrepreneurship

This pillar has been given much attention and the horizontal objectives have been dealt with. However, gender equality is only a marginal aspect here. The measures in 2000 include e.g. reduction of “the social security contributions of entrepreneurs in labour-intensive sectors” and special loans for women entrepreneurs. For 2001, only “opening public service production to competition” could be interpreted as a female oriented measure.

In principle, promoting self-employment should be seen as an essential part of the measures aimed toward increasing the total employment rate. Yet, the action plan could also consider slightly more the possible negative aspects of taking the risk of running a small business. Especially those who are unemployed, do not have much education, are elderly and cannot work very long hours anymore, may find it too difficult to start in business alone, even if they could get some financial support. This problem is much the same for men and women, but there are also some gender-specific features here that could be analysed. Certainly the working hours dilemma, as well as reconciliation of work and family life, are more a concern for women. All statistics and research show that the working hours of the self-employed tend to be much longer than those of paid employees.

Starting up an own business needs a lot of knowledge, even special talents. For a person who has perhaps been unemployed for a long time this is often too hard and he or she has to eventually give up the business.

New technology and information-intensive companies are the focus of promotion of entrepreneurship. This is in line with the special emphasis the information society receives in the whole of the NAP and in Finland in general. The truth is that Finland has been very advanced in introducing new information technology and even producing it. It has also been possible to show that economic growth, good employment and information-intensive businesses are interlinked, particularly in certain special growth centres of the country. However, in the light of the recent backlashes in the area of information technology (lay-offs, etc.), the investments and support described in the NAP for 2001 seem to be quite exaggerated. For example, the technological research programme contains 50 research projects aiming toward an increase in the number of information-intensive companies.

From the feminist point of view, these measures are not helping women’s employment much. Women’s proportion of IT professionals has decreased during the 1990s, even though women use information technology proportionally more than men in all jobs. The question is the same as in the problem of alleviating occupational segregation: should women be forced to start training for technical occupations only in order to get support for their employment from the state?
4.4. Adaptability

Partnership has been very much emphasised in this Pillar. This is promising, because labour organisations have paid a lot of attention to equality matters during the past few years. However, in the NAP and in the listed measures for 2001 none of the objectives has equality as a manifested goal.

Gender mainstreaming might perhaps have its best chances in this Pillar. At least in Finland where women’s employment rate and its preconditions are in a good shape, the main focus could be in the qualitative aspects of employment when thinking about gender equality.

High rate of fixed-term employment among women is a particularly typical Finnish employment feature. The NAP seems to put too much trust in the amended Employment Contract Act. According to the gender impact assessment made on this Act, the improvements will not be sufficient (Vaiuttaako sukupuoli?/Does gender count? 2000). Fixed-term work contracts will continue to be used extensively in the future, too. Employers prefer fixed-term contracts with young women in order to avoid maternity expenses. Temporary contracts are also part of the new flexibilisation policies of employers. The amended Employment Contract Act forbids employers from drawing up successive short-term contracts, which has been very typical, particularly in the municipal sectors of health and social care. However there are no good tools for addressing this legal constraint.

The NAP states that Finland has devoted particular attention to the development of work organisations and to improving the adaptability of workplace communities. This may be true; at least some comparative studies show that development measures in work organisations are quite advanced in Finland when compared to other countries in Europe. (The European Survey on Working Conditions 1995, 2000). There are big action and research programmes which will continue: The National Workplace Development Programme, the National Productivity Programme as well as the Well-Being at Work Programme are the main ones directed toward finding better ways of organising work. They have been implemented in co-operation between ministries and labour market and entrepreneurial organisations. The emphasis of the projects is on SMEs. The programmes strive to improve the productivity of work, the quality of working life, wellbeing at work and the labour market status of ageing workers. Additionally, funding for research and actions of the ESF and the Equal programmes could be seen as relating to comparable development pursuits. Most of the programmes clearly have equal opportunities as an emphasis. It is hard to detect this emphasis on equality where these programmes are mentioned in the Finnish NAP.

In practice, very few of the research projects under these programmes have an emphasis on equality matters. One ESF project has dealt with work and family reconciliation and another, under the Workplace Development Programme, with equality at places of work. There should be more interest in gender equality considering, for example, the fact that time pressure at work seems to be the highest among Finnish working women. Reasons for the experienced time pressure should be studied at many levels: establishment level, in different occupations and sectors, in the whole society. Studies made on this matter have shown that women, in particular, suffer from stress
and time pressure because of insufficient human resources at workplaces. (Lehto 1999b.) This concerns especially health and social services work. These female dominated occupations should receive special scrutiny in respect of adaptability.

*Working hours* and their increased flexibility has not received special attention in the Finnish NAP. There has been discussion about too long working hours in some occupations, like in the new IT professions. Some research projects are also working on this theme at the moment. It has not been discussed as a gender subject. Yet, overtime working is an increasing problem and shows that flexibility in working hours should be considered more carefully. Flexibility is found to be a good thing but too much flexibility in terms of productivity can be harmful even to effectiveness. This should also be viewed more as an obviously gender-related matter.

5. **Gender equality**

5.1. **Gender equality measures**

According to the Council recommendations attention in the 4th Pillar is concentrated on *occupational and sectoral segregation*. This topic has been discussed in every NAP, but it has received the most extensive weight in the latest, 2001 NAP. The project *Equality in the labour market* will use several methods to reduce gender segregation.

The 2001 NAP describes the project as co-operation between ministries and labour market organisations. It studies the negative effects from segregation on the functioning of the labour market and labour supply and, consequently, on economic growth as a whole. The project will continue until 2003. The aim is to influence, for example, boys’ and girls’ choices of subjects and courses that are not typical of their gender at various stages of their education. A further aim is to influence the workplace cultures in the male and female dominated sectors so as to support the minority. Active labour policy measures, like training and administration, will be the means employed to reduce segregation. Developing indicators will be one of the measures. Special attention will be given to the contents and methods of teaching in the technical sectors so as to take into account the characteristics and learning styles of women.

The question of occupational segregation is more complicated than the NAP gives us to understand. A closer analysis would have shown that high gender segregation is quite an unavoidable consequence of high employment in the welfare services sector. All the Nordic Countries, which have large public health and social services sectors with female occupations dominating, have high scores in the segregation index. In addition, the segregation index is also a bit misleading because it hides developments in opposite directions. A dissertation and analysis of the Finnish labour market has found that the development of gender segregation was different between genders during 1970-1990 (Kolehmainen 1999). The male dominance of the occupational structure diminished when women crossed boundaries and worked more often in male dominated occupations. At the same time, the growth in women’s labour market participation concentrated on the female dominated
occupations. The change in the segregation went in opposite directions in women’s and men’s labour markets.

One of the main disadvantages in using the theme of segregation is that segregation has been seen as an explanation to other problems in women’s and men’s work. The gender pay gap, women’s lower position in the labour market, part-time work, temporary work, even the higher strain experienced by women, have been explained by high level of segregation. It functions as an excuse not to do anything direct to these problems. It is also quite dis-motivating for a woman in a typical female job, e.g. in nursing, if the only suggested solution to low pay is change of occupation. It would be more important to support women’s and men’s, and boys’ and girls’ own orientations and freedom to make occupational choices.

Gender segregation should not be regarded as almost the only equality deficit as the case now is in the Finnish NAP. It is also problematic if the concept of segregation is used in very different contexts as vertical and horizontal segregation. Vertical segregation, which usually means women’s difficulties to climb the hierarchical ladders, is quite a different matter from occupational segregation. It is a matter that should be discussed at workplaces and so-called equality plans and equality reports, which are required by law (The Equality Act) in all organisations with over 30 employees. The Finnish NAPs could have emphasised more this regulation and searched ways of making its monitoring more effective.

As an answer to guideline 18, the Finnish NAP pays attention to the gender pay gap. All NAPs since 1998 have contained some comments about this subject. The NAP for 2001 refers to a project, a monitoring framework, which has been created for the systematic monitoring and analysing of gender pay gaps. The project will conclude in spring 2001. In earlier NAPs, there are mentions of wage systems based on evaluations of the demands imposed by individual jobs and these were introduced in some sectors during the 1990s.

These are all good initiatives. Additionally, there should be more emphasis on collective incomes agreements which have proven to be good for gender equality. The 2001 NAP has taken into account the incomes agreement for 2001-2002 which includes an equality item designed to raise the pay in female-dominated and low-pay sectors. This trend should be strengthened together with centralised evaluations of the demands imposed by jobs, e.g. in terms of level of education. Female dominated sectors could gain in this way in relation to the male dominated ones which are now better paid. Job assessment systems, which are only applied in some sectors, will not gain good results.

While on the subject of pay differentials, the influences of the new trends in the labour market should be better predicted. These include new performance pay systems, local pay agreements and the tendency to pay only according to the work results, not the acquired education or work experience. These will lead to difficulties among women, in particular: it is more difficult in female dominated occupations, like care and office work, to show the quantitative results of work. In many cases in production organisations the typically female office work is left outside the performance pay system.
The question of gender pay differentials is especially important in Finland where all the preconditions for pay equality have been fulfilled. Finnish women are more highly educated than Finnish men, they have nearly as long work experience as men and they work mostly full-time and as long hours as men do.

The third aspect which has been included in all the Finnish NAPs since 1998 is the aspect of reconciling work and family life. Problems in this reconciliation have aroused a lot of discussion recently. There is increasing concern for families, their wellbeing, and quite often parents have been accused of too strict a commitment to the working life at the expense of their children. Certainly, the demands of working life, like overtime working, have increased and parents find it more difficult to cope with them.

The question of reconciling work and family life is so complicated that it is hard to find any clear policies, not to even speak about measures, to influence it. At workplaces, it is now mostly a question of awakening awareness of how to support parents with small children in combining the different demands of work and family. The amended Employment Contract Act emphasises the fathers’ rights to use family allowances, parental leave and the right to stay at home with a sick child. New measures for 2001 in the NAP include a tripartite study of the potential for securing a separate one-month parental leave for fathers, and of whether maternity and parental leave could be taken as part-time leave. The study will also cover possible ways of redistributing the costs incurred by employers from parental leave.

The infrastructure offering care support is quite advanced in Finland. Everybody has a statutory right to public daycare for their children under school age. On the other hand, insufficient care facilities for elderly people and for young school age children are increasing the difficulty of reconciling work and family life.

The fact that domestic work is still very unevenly distributed in families is more of an attitude-related question. Different studies, e.g., The Gender Barometer, carried out in 1998 and 2001 and the Quality of Work Life Surveys (1990 and 1997) have shown that most of the family care duties still rest on the women’s shoulders. (Melkas 1998, Sutela 1999.) Only minor improvements can be seen in this respect in the 1990s. Merely the young, well-educated men nowadays take more responsibility in this respect than before. The study referred to in the NAP will not be a sufficient measure to address this attitude matter. More research work would be needed to find ways of producing real change.

6. Future prospects, future priorities and examples of good practices

Despite the fact that the labour force participation rate is almost as high among Finnish women as among Finnish men, gender equality in the labour market is still a target that has not yet been achieved. The priority areas already expressed in the earlier Finnish Action Plans can be listed as follows: reducing horizontal and vertical gender segregation and gender pay differentials, improving the position of female entrepreneurs and of those in atypical employment relationships.
The last two NAPs have largely concentrated on reducing occupational and sectoral segregation according to the last two years’ recommendations from the Council. Considering the whole area of equality deficits in the Finnish labour market, the question of desegregation has become too dominant. This is why the following list of future priorities is based on my own ideas of the most neglected policy areas.

1. Women’s employment should be improved especially in the public sector. There are several reasons for this. Jobs in the public sector have some common features. These jobs include e.g. health care jobs (nursing, cleaning), children’s care, old age care, teaching, social care, etc. All these jobs and their work organisations are suffering from shortage of human resources. Time pressure, stress, insecurity and difficulties in reconciling work and family life have become the worst aspects of the whole employment situation. Additionally, the forecasts of labour demand show that these sectors, in particular, will have the biggest outflow from the labour market in the next 10-15 years because of the large numbers of retiring employees.

The Finnish NAPs have not heeded these developments up to now. Accordingly, they have made no reference to the occupational structure of the unemployed. Among women, the biggest group of unemployed job seekers is those who have some health care qualifications (Työnvälityksen vuositilastot vuonna/Annual labour exchange statistics 2000). In the coming NAPs these structural and background factors should be researched more carefully in order to avoid the present superficial emphasis on sectors of the New Economy only, such as information technology.

2. Another important area would be to intensify the efforts in the gender wage gap problem. A monitoring project is not enough in this matter. There should be more measures agreed by social partners to strengthen the evaluation of the demands imposed by jobs and occupations. These should cover several occupations, both male and female dominated ones. Attained education and work experience should be brought back as criteria in the new pay systems.

3. The quality of jobs should be included as a criterion in job creation policies. The amended Employment Contract Act is not sufficient to prevent the practice of using fixed-term employment relationships for women to avoid maternity expenses. The emphasis on the quality of jobs is also important in the sense that the division to good and bad jobs should be avoided. All jobs should have some development opportunities and reasonable pay. This way it would also be possible to avoid employment bottlenecks. At the moment, the most common reasons why open vacancies cannot be filled are low pay and bad working conditions. This also applies to entrepreneurship. Conditions in self-employment can easily become too difficult, especially for women who bear higher burden of family responsibilities.

The Gender Impact Assessment made of the Employment Contract Act could be mentioned as an example of good practice. The Government has adopted the practice whereby new legislation is always accompanied by an assessment of its effect on gender equality. In 2000, the Employment Contract Act was assessed for its gender impact. This assessment was a pilot project which can be used as a model in evaluating other legislative bills for
their gender impact. Having had the opportunity to participate in this assessment work, I got the impression of effective co-operation between people with different expertise. When legal experts, social scientists, economists and equality experts work together within the framework of a gender impact assessment, it brings to light many new aspects of legislation that could be used to reinforce gender equality. This kind of assessment would be even more effective if it were included already in the preparatory stage of legislation.
References:


## Appendix 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employability pillar</th>
<th>Date of measure</th>
<th>Reason for relevance to gender equality</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title of measures (discontinued in brackets)</td>
<td>New for 2001</td>
<td>2000 measure now implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employability pillar</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Measures for unemployed</td>
<td>- Prevention of long-term unemployment: to offer unemployed young people a new start before 6 months of unemployment, and people over 25 before 12 months - public employment policy: increase the activity of job-seekers, improve skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measures for inactive/returners</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tax and benefit policies</td>
<td>Taxation of earned income will be reduced in 2001 by over FIM 6.7 billion (0.8% of GDP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Active ageing</td>
<td>- National Programme for Ageing Workers: improving the skills and knowledge, ageing people in employment and as job-seekers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lifelong learning</td>
<td>- Several measures: lifelong learning and information society, action programmes - Economic Development Centres: forecasts of skill demands - Immigrants</td>
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</table>
| Job matching/bottlenecks | - Jobs in the IT sector  
- Study of labour shortage resulting from the retirement of the baby-boom generation | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
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<tr>
<td>Discrimination/social exclusion</td>
<td>- Active labour policy for disabled and immigrants</td>
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<td><strong>Entrepreneurship pillar</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Business start up</td>
<td>- Loan programmes with lower interest rate for women entrepreneurs and small loans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge society</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Regional and local action</td>
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</table>
| Tax reforms for employment and training | - Social security contribution for entrepreneurs on labour-intensive sectors was reduced by 0.40 percentage points  
- Credit for domestic work has been written into permanent legislation | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
<p>| <strong>Adaptability pillar</strong> | | | | | |
| Working time | None | | | | |</p>
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<td>Flexibility and</td>
<td>The Finnish National Workplace Development Programme will be continued: promotion of</td>
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<td>security</td>
<td>forms of work organisation which support learning, improvements in work communities</td>
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<td>with a view of ageing workers and equality</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- The new Employment Contracts Act</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>Lifelong learning</td>
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<td>Equal opportunities</td>
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<td>pillar</td>
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<td>Gender mainstreaming</td>
<td>- The gender impact assessment of the Employment Contracts Act</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- The Gender Barometer, the 2nd survey will be published in 2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment and</td>
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<td>unemployment gaps</td>
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<td>Desegregation/</td>
<td>- The project called <em>Equality on the labour market</em> has been started:</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>positive action</td>
<td>- to encourage boys and girls to choose subjects and courses which are not typical of</td>
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<td>their gender,</td>
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<td>- to influence the workplace culture supporting the minority gender,</td>
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<td>- to develop indicators for monitoring labour policy measures whether they alleviate</td>
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<td>segregation,</td>
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<td>- to develop the content and methods of teaching in technical and technological sectors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pay</td>
<td>A monitoring framework has been created for the systematic monitoring and analysis of gender pay gaps. The project will be completed in spring 2001.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leave arrangements</td>
<td>- Data on people’s use of care leave will be collected in connection with Statistics Finland’s Labour Force Survey.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- A study will cover possible ways of redistributing the costs incurred by employers from parental leave.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family friendly policies</td>
<td>- Father will be encouraged to use parental leave more than hitherto. The options for taking paternity leave will be made more flexible. A tripartite study of the potential for securing a separate one-month parental leave for fathers, and of whether maternity and parental leave could be taken as part-time leave.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
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<tr>
<td>Care provision</td>
<td>None</td>
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Appendix 2

Women’s employment by the age of children, Finland

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Activity rate</th>
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<th>Employment rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>63.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No children under 18 years</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With children under 18 years</td>
<td>85.2</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With children under 7 years</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The 4th quarter of each year, The Finnish Labour Force Survey

1. Employed by sex and level of education


[Bar chart showing employment levels by sex and level of education in 1990 and 2000]