Executive summary

The Swedish National Action Plan 2000 gives a good overview of the different kind of measures that have been developed over the years to combat unemployment and support retraining and reintegration of the individual into the labour market. The so-called work line is manifest. Sweden is now experiencing a situation of labour shortage and unemployment at the same time. An increasing differentiation according to education, social class and region is developing. Gender is integrated into all these dimensions.

As a reply to the recommendation by the Council to take actions to reduce the gender segregation in the labour market different measures are discussed. Education, training and labour market policies, as well as a new time-use study are presented as specific actions, together with a council on equal opportunities in the transport-and IT-sectors. Most of these measures have been used before for this objective. I propose a closer connection between the active measures stated in the Equal Opportunities Act and the employment policies in the National Action Plan.

It is important to take into consideration both the quantitative and the qualitative dimensions when analysing labour market performance and gender relations. The strain on certain groups of women has increased very much during the last years. And as the decisions on restructuring of the public sector has been decentralised to the local municipalities the regional differentiation in employment conditions and work organisations has increased.

Taken together this means that such factors as segregation by sector and occupation are still important to study, health issues are increasingly necessary to take into consideration as well as the regional dimension. One might say that in the Swedish case it is more important than ever to study work organisations together with the content of work, and the outcomes in the form of health problems, together with the economic and social differentiation. Actions need to be taken in relations to health and stress situations in the work places.


This report is divided into different sections. The first discusses the actions taken by the Swedish government in relation to the recommendations by the Council based on the basis of last year’s plan. The second section gives an overview of gender gaps and gender differences in the Swedish labour market. Remarks are made where there is a need for further actions to be taken. This is followed by an assessment and evaluation of the Swedish National Action Plan from a gender perspective, with the objective to see how deep the goal of mainstreaming has entered into the plan and its policies. Also the priority given to equality on an overall level is assessed. The report concludes with a discussion of priority areas for future action and two examples of best practice are given.
Introduction

I think it is important to recognise that the NAP is a document, which summarises actions taken in many different policy areas. The employment guidelines cover policies and actions directed towards the macro, micro and individual level and are of a very diverse character. It is not yet an instrument for coherent actions connecting the different policy areas and levels. In some areas the guidelines have stressed and pushed forward certain issues, for example the decrease of taxes on lower- and middle-income earners. In other areas, the NAP sums up policies which have been developed during many years, for example equal opportunities policies, where the corner stones like child care, separate taxation, and parental leave have been developed during decades.

As is stated in the report by Rubery et al (1999) the result of the incorporation of the new guideline on mainstreaming in 1999 is that all member states have to mainstream a gender perspective into the whole NAP, into all four pillars. To put the gender issues in the fourth pillar and leave the other three untouched is no longer acceptable. On the other hand, the two-track strategy means that it is still important to develop the equal opportunities policies as such. I will specifically touch upon the three first pillars, as I see them as the areas that need to be further developed.

If a change in the gendered structure of the labour market is ever to occur, it has to be through active measures implemented on the organisational level and at different workplaces. One question is, of course, what role the NAPs can have in relation to this task. The importance of raising the awareness about the gendered structure of society at large and the relations between macro policies and their implications for processes on the micro level must not be underestimated.

A further general comment is that as a result of the decentralisation and de-regulation processes during the last two decades, the implementation of different decisions has been transferred to the regional and local levels. Regional differentiation in employment, unemployment, and provision of services has increased. One result of this is that the gender segregation also has a regional form and that actions and manifestations differ between regions.

1. ACTIONS PLANNED AND TAKEN IN RELATION TO THE COUNCIL’S RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council provided Sweden with two recommendations concerning the fulfilment of the employment policies. The first recommendation was to reduce the tax burden on earned incomes, the second concerned actions to reduce the gender segregation in the labour market.
1.1. Decreasing income taxes

In the Budget Bill for 2000 the government proposed that the tax be lowered for low-and medium-wage earners. This has been done by means of a special compensation of the individual contributions for financing social insurance benefits. The compensations take the form of a tax reduction for individuals. In addition, the level for national income tax has been raised so that fewer wage earners now pay national tax.

The result of these changes is a lowering of the marginal income tax levels for people with low incomes. Hopefully this would lead to an increase in the supply of labour. In the bill, the gender aspect is commented as followed: “In this respect the reform is specifically important for part-time workers and women.”

This is of course true, that a large share of women work part-time and have their incomes set in relation to the number of hours worked. It is also true that they have a higher proportion of low-income earners. But besides these obvious facts, the real issue is whether women can or will increase their labour participation and take more low-paid jobs. Rather, they would probably prefer a wage increase and/or working hours reductions without pay cuts. From a mainstreaming perspective the issue of tax cuts needs to be elaborated more deeply. It has to do with the interdependence between women and the state. The welfare state has a dual role, both as provider of services and as women’s most important employer. One risk is that women will continue to be low-wage earners while at the same time facing difficulties in obtaining good, affordable public services like child-care. A second issue has to do with the composition of the income distribution. One question is how exclusive the differentiation and inequality is going to be. In the report regarding wages for women and men in 1997, women’s wages as a percentage of men’s wages were 83 percent. Taking into account education, age and occupation, this relation was 93 percent in 1996 and 1997 (Arbetslivsinstitutet, SCB 1998). The report on welfare state restructuring for the 1990s shows that single mothers who are low-income earners constitute one of the groups who have suffered most during the 1990s (SOU 2000:3). Another question is of course how the tax cuts will improve economic and social situation for single parents in relation to other economic or socio-political actions.

1.2. The segregated labour market

The second recommendation concerns the segregated labour market where Sweden is asked to “Examine, in the context of a gender mainstreaming approach, ways to reduce the current levels of occupational and sectorial segregation in the labour market.” (Commission Recommendation for Council Recommendations on the implementation of Members States’ Employment Policies for the year 2000). The Swedish plan recognises the problem with a segregated labour market, where women have a narrower labour market than men and a higher proportion of temporary and part-time jobs.
The plan focuses on the educational system and the need to make all subjects in the educational system and all occupations attractive to both women and men. The government will appoint a commission to review the different programmes offered in the upper secondary schools from these aspects. The Adult Education Initiative (Kunskapslyftet) is mentioned as well as measures within the field of higher education and research. Also the labour market policy measures are discussed here and specifically the so-called Break-money for different types of equal opportunities projects. The investigation by the National Auditing Board (RRV) in 1997, (to which I have referred in earlier reports), is also mentioned, where results show that women and men get different types of education and training and that the traditional gender-segregated patterns are reshaped or even strengthened by these measures. From 1998 The Labour Market Board decided to prioritise certain areas, like mainstreaming, gender perspective on guidance, a special programme for women and technology, and a programme for increasing the number of male teachers in the compulsory school. Since 1996 the Labour Market Board produces statistics on participation in different programmes, divided by gender. It is also noted that Statistics Sweden will do a new time-budget study, where the final report shall be delivered to the government by June 30th, 2002. The last one was made in 1990-91. The information technology sector is discussed as well as the need for a more gender-balanced perspective on education, training and employment in this sector. Otherwise this sector will become another male-dominated sector. The government has set up a special council for transportation-and IT-issues. Finally, the issue of diversity is mentioned and the need to elaborate on this concept from a gender perspective.

In summary, as a reply to the recommendation by the Council, education and labour market policies, statistics and a new time-use study are presented as specific actions, together with a council on equal opportunities in the transport-and IT-sectors. Many measures of this type have been used for a long time, and have been of support for the single individual. The Labour Market Board and its regional and local agencies have for many years been working with gender-related issues and equal opportunities. The issue does not concern a lack of knowledge and experiences of different projects and programmes. What is lacking is a noticeable change in the segregated structure of the labour market and of the workplaces. In section 5.1. I propose a closer connection between the active measures stated in the Equal Opportunities Act and the employment policies in the National Action Plan.

2. IDENTIFYING THE GENDER EQUALITY DEFICIT AND THE NEED FOR ACTION

Here the objective is to give an assessment of both the key dimensions to gender inequality and the main trends in employment and gender equality indicators.

The assessment shall give evidence of women and men’s employment in respect to both quality and quantity. Preconditions for women’s employment and gender equality have to
be considered, like childcare and decision making. The Swedish performances in gender equity based on the sizes of different gender-gaps are going to be considered.

In the expert evaluation from last year concerning benchmarking gender labour market performance and gender equality we selected nine performance indicators - grouped into four areas. The first group included indicators of employment, the second unemployment, the third wages and incomes and the fourth difference in time use. In all areas the gender gaps were measured. I will use the same division when identifying gender gaps in the labour market.

One characteristic feature of the Swedish labour market, which I will try to address, is the stability of the gender segregation. Women’s positions in the labour market have not been more negatively affected then men’s in the recession in the 1990s. On the contrary, women have continued to stabilise their positions, while the negative effects of the cyclical and structural downturn in especially manufacturing and construction hit male workers to a larger extent. As I showed in the report on benchmarking the labour market performance 1992-1997 the employment reductions in the public sector and in the welfare segments have been severe and of course hit many women (Gonäs 1999). Specifically younger women have had large difficulties in entering the labour market. The seniority regulations in the law of Employment Security have given women with longer employment periods the right to tenure while the younger employees with shorter employment periods had to leave. And if they had a temporary contract, they did not get a renewed contract, but had to leave when the first ended (See Gonäs, Spånt 1997). As a result of this deliberate strategy of reducing employment in the sector, the age structure became more concentrated to the middle aged groups. At the same time the need for health and care has increased, not least as a result of the demographic changes in the population and an increasing proportion of the population in the retiring ages. But also as a result of changed regulations concerning day care for every child, that lead to increasing number of children in day care, while the staff have been cut back. One result of these contradictory developments between the increased demand for care on one hand and of the reduced staffing and reorganising of the services on the other is increased health problems and stress symptoms among the employees.

To conclude this introductory remark it is important to take into consideration both the quantitative and the qualitative dimensions when analysing labour market performance and gender relations. The strain on certain groups of women has increased, not least as a result of the demographic changes in the population and an increasing proportion of the population in the retiring ages. But as the decisions on restructuring of the public sector has been decentralised to the local municipalities the regional differentiation in employment conditions and work organisations has increased.

Taken together this means that such factors as segregation by sector and occupation are still important to study, health issues are increasingly necessary to take into consideration as well as the regional dimension. One might say that in the Swedish case it is more important than ever to study work organisations together with the content of work, and the outcomes in the form of health problems, together with the economic and social differentiation.
1. **Indicators of employment**
The female/male relative employment ratios have changed since the last report. As I mentioned in the 1999 report the female/ male employment rate ratio in FTE was 0,842 for 1997. For 1998 the corresponding ratio was 0,79 (Employment in Europe 1999). Using the ELSF for 1998 the employment rate ratio was 0,938, without controlling for the proportion of full and part time. Looking at the age group 25-49 we find that women and men with higher educational level have the same employment level, not considering full-time equivalents (EFS 1998). That is also the fact for the age group 50 to 59, while in the youngest age group 15-24 young women with higher education are employed to a larger extent than men. The largest gender gap 0,83 is found in age group 25-49 for women and men with less than upper secondary education.

**Temporary work.**
Concerning temporary workers, 15 percent of all employed women had a temporary work, in 1998, while the male proportion was 10,6 percent (EFS 1998). Temporary work has increased for both women and men during the recession of the 1990s, and the reason for having a temporary work was mostly that people did not get a permanent one. If this proportion is continuing to increase during the present boom is period is not for sure.

**Working time and hours worked**
Concerning part time and full time work, Swedish women still have a very high proportion in part time work. It has been slightly decreasing from 42 percent of all employed women in 1994 to 39 percent in 1998. In a comparative European perspective the proportion of part time working women is high but the proportion is decreasing in Sweden, contrary to the tendencies in many other EU-countries. The proportion of involuntary part-time is as high in Sweden as in many other EU-countries.

It is also interesting to study the total number of hours worked and how these are distributed over different sectors. Figure 1 in the appendix, shows the development for women and again there are both questions of stability and of change. Stability can be seen in the overall structure, change in for example the proportion of female hours worked in manufacturing and in the financial sector. The overall picture however, is of stability of the structural composition. The same can be drawn from figure 2, that illustrates the number of hours worked for men, divided by economic sector. But the increase of male hours worked in the financial sector is very strong during the period 1989 to 1999. This gives of course just a visual picture of the segregation, but it is clear that the patterns have not changed profoundly during the recession and following boom years of the late 1990s.

**Women with small children**
Figure 3 illustrates stability in another way. It shows the number of women with children under 7 years divided by labour force status from 1976 to 1999. The absolute number of women in work have been the same during almost 25 years. The variations have been in other categories like the number of employed women, absent, unemployed or out of the
labour force. In all these categories there have been substantial changes that have to be analysed. In the age group 35 – 44, the number of women in work doubled three times during the same period as well as the number of employed women.

2. Unemployment
Concerning the unemployed, figure 4 shows the so-called unemployment status for unemployment women and men 1989 to 1999. There seems to be a difference between women and men in the degree to which they where hit by redundancies during the crisis. Men where harder hit by cutbacks and closures than women (figure 5). The cutbacks in the female dominated public sectors came later, where not of the same magnitude as in manufacturing and construction. Termination of a fixed term contract is a growing reason behind the contemporary unemployment. We find an increase for both women and men, and again slightly stronger for men than for women. As I showed in my last report men’s unemployment levels are higher than women’s and this holds trues still. One reason for concern might be that the unemployment level for men are decreasing faster than the level for women.

3. Salaries and wages
The average monthly wage for women in 1997 was 83 percent of that of men (SCB 1997). The relations between women and men’s wages did not change to any larger extent between 1992 and 1997. In 1998 the gender wage gap was 0,82 (SCB 1998). In the public sector where most women work the average monthly wage in 1998 was 90 percent of the wage level in the private sector. The wage dispersion (the relation between the 90th percentile and the 10th) in 1998 was 1,7 in the public sector and 2,1 in the private sector. One reason might be the increase in individual wage setting, away from collective agreements in this field.

The average monthly wage is lower for part-time workers than for full time workers in every economic sector (SCB 1998). The largest differences are between white – collar workers in private sector.

4. Labour market policies
In 1991 the labour market policy embraced 2,0 percent of the labour force, and together with the unemployed this accounted for 4,7 percent of the labour force. As a mean for 1997, 4,2 percent were in labour market policy measures and 8 percent in unemployment adding up to 12,2 percent in total unemployment (LFS 1991-1997, LO-data). During the mid-1999 the number of participants in labour market policy measures was cut back and by April 2000 the volume was between 60 and 65 percent of the level in January 1999. Women and men have during the recession, participated in labour market policy measures in proportion to their part of total unemployment and this is still the case (RRV 1997, AMV 2000). The gender differences have been in type of education and training, length and costs where women have attended the shorter and less costly courses.

5. Social and economic change
During the recession and the following recovery the restructuring of the economy has also included a change in the educational composition of the labour force. A higher
proportion of the labour force is now having a higher education. The increase for the total labour force was from 23 percent to 29 percent between 1990 and 1999 (LFS 1999). For men the change went from 19 percent to 26 percent and for women from 23 to 31 percent. Almost one third of the female labour force in Sweden have a higher education today, a university degree of some kind. This means that women have kept their advantage in educational attainment, and the challenge is to see if this has in any way led to changes in the segregation patterns and in the socio-economic gender gap.

Need for action
The segregation in the labour market has to be tackle in a serious way. One suggestion is to make the active measures in the Equal opportunities act more demanding (see section 5.1). The Equal Opportunities Ombudsman, JämO, needs more resources to follow up what is happening on work place level, or why so little is happening.

Another area for action is the health-related issues, stress and overburden. This has become very prevalent during the second half of the 1990s.

The increasing differentiation according to education, social class and region has to be analysed further. In all these dimensions gender is an important ingredient.

3. ASSESSING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING

3.1. Monitoring and evaluation

As in earlier years, a fundamental critique of the Swedish NAP is that it still lacks a goal-oriented discussion of how the employment policies can be used to reach equality between women and men. The comprehensive employment strategy and its goal stipulate 80 percent for the year 2004, as a target for the employment rate and for the unemployment rate the Swedish government some years ago formulated a goal of 4 percent by the year 2000. The targeted unemployment level will be reached during this year and the employment rate is increasing fast. The differences between the foreign and the Swedish-born population are still very large in both of these areas. As can be seen by the gender-divided statistics in the NAP, the female employment rate is roughly five percent lower than the male level in each age group. In the discussion under pillar I, the need to break up the gender segregation is mentioned, as well as measures to prevent discrimination and prejudice in the labour market.

Yet to say that the Swedish NAP have a clear definition and articulation of the concept of gender equality is not true. The discussion on gender equality is concentrated to pillar IV, with some comments on the need for further action under the other pillars, which I will comment on in more detail later on in this report.

As the quantitative employment indicators measured in head counts are favourable for women, it seems as if the need for specific employment action for women is regarded as
unnecessary. But the issue of qualitative difference and the fact that there is an important gender difference in statistical and actual employment rate are important to discuss. The actual employment rate is the rate of women being at work during a certain time period. As the parental leave regulations give parents the right to absence from work during twelve months a large part of the female labour force is counted as employed but absent from work. The actual employment rate is lower for women than for men. One result of the opportunity to keep the job during the parental leave period is the low unemployment in relation to re-entries to the labour market due to the family situation (see pillar IV).

Many local authorities and regional council administrations use mainstreaming as a tool for increasing equality between women and men in their activities. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities has developed an instrument for this, the 3R-method (see Åseskog 1998 and example 1 in best practice). Also other types of instruments are being used for active work with mainstreaming on the organisational level in different public administrations. Benchmarking as a tool for increasing gender equality is not discussed to any larger extent, neither is it mentioned in the NAP as a tool in this respect.

The statistical analysis by gender has for many years been highly satisfactory, based on the work done by Statistics Sweden. The booklet “On women and men” is published each year and distributed widely. Statistics Sweden has a lot of useful data accessible on their web-site. In the appendix to the NAP most of the statistics given are divided by gender, including all the four pillars.

There is today a very solid ground in Sweden for monitoring and evaluating different actions from a gender perspective. As already mentioned, a lot of statistical data can be delivered divided by gender. Also the awareness of gender differences and a kind of consensus on the goal of equality between women and men do exist (EU barometer 1999). One reason why there still seems to be difficulties in integrating gender into the main or core political areas is the traditional genderisation of the political life. Economics, wages and industrial relations have always been the male areas. Women have to a large extent participated in the formation of important parts of the welfare state policies and institutions. The need to integrate these parts has become very obvious during the last decade, and the large cutbacks in the public sector. A straight evaluation of what these changes have meant from a gender perspective has so far not been done. It is particularly important in relation to the common European budget policy, which in Sweden, among other things, is formulated as a budget target of a surplus of 2 percent of the GDP.

On pillar I, the evaluations in relation to the last few years NAP could have used more of the gender-divided statistics that the Labour Market Board can provide. Evaluations on pillar II initiatives for 1999 suffer from the same shortcoming, not least in relation to the regional growth initiatives. The governments’ own evaluation notes that the representation of women and their interest group in forming these agreements has been very weak as well as the representation of the population with foreign background (Ds 2000:7). The evaluation in connection to pillar III concerning actions taken to encourage adaptability of businesses and their employees, states that Swedish labour legislation is
largely dispositive and often supplemented by collective agreements. Through collective agreements working time arrangements vary very much and it would have been interesting to see how these arrangements are formulated and how they function in relation to the female and the male labour force, respectively.

Reflection on the summary table
As can be seen by summary table most of the measures which are mentioned have been monitored for gender impact and aim to close gender gaps. Most of the labour market policy measures, not least those for young people aim to increase employment possibilities irrespective of gender. They are mostly monitored for gender impacts as the Labour Market Board now is requested to give gender divided statistics. It is not always that case though that all figures given are divided by gender or that the reports published by the Board has a gender perspective.

Regarding tax and benefit systems suggestions of reductions of income taxes for low and medium income earners has already been commented under section 1. A special commission is going to review of the total effect for families of different kinds of financial support. Different types of support are going to analysed like child benefit, maintenance support and housing benefits for families with children. Also changes in fees for pre-school children and care for school children, taxes and other factors which effect families incomes are going to be analyses. Marginal effects particularly affecting women, low income earners, parents of small children and single parents are going to be analysed as they constitute obstacles to a stronger anchorage on the labour market.

The so-called “max-taxa” is a roof put on the fees on public childcare, proposed by the government to be introduced on 1 January 2002. The idea is to reduce marginal effects, which are said to more often hit women than men, specially single parents and low income earners. Also children to job-seeking parents will be entitled to day care from 1 January 2000 which will improve the possibilities for unemployed parents to look for a job.

One way of operationalise the concept “transitional labour markets” is now been done by the Swedish labour market policy through the activity guarantee. This guarantee aims to break the circle between unemployment and different measures and shall give the unemployed people a full-time activity until they find employment or education/training. It is based on individual action plans drawn up in consultation between the unemployed person and the job centre. It will include traditional labour market training, education, rehabilitation, practical work experience and employment with the help of recruitment subsidies. The Adult education initiative, which is one example of the best - practice in the appendix, has been evaluated from a gender perspective and is one of the largest adult education efforts so far being done in Sweden. Priority will be given to efforts that help to break up the gender related course choices in adult education and efforts are made to increase the recruitment of men with low level of education.
3.2. Initiatives to promote gender equality

**Measures to increase gender equality**

Developments in the IT-sector make it necessary to monitor the employment conditions for women. A report by the newly appointed IT-council shows that there are very few women working with IT (SOU 2000:31). The share of women in IT companies noted on the stock exchange is only 20 percent. Looking at the higher positions the proportion of women is 6 percent. One reason for this is the traditional way of recruiting staff, another is the gender based educational choices, which still also very traditional. The proportion of women finishing a higher technical education in electronics and computer science has decreased between 1989/90 and 1998/99. The council shall in June 2000 give suggestions of how to act for solving the gender differentiation in the IT-sector.

A large proportion of the different measures under pillar I concerns education, adult education, training and labour market policies. Actions are also suggested for monitoring the gender balances in educational choices for women and men. Also positions in the university system are discussed and the need to get a better gender balance on the higher positions among university employees.

It is also important to stress that the regional differences in employment opportunities for both women and men are increasing and the unemployment situation still is very severe in certain regions in the northern and north-west parts of Sweden. At the same time the regional counties and the local municipal authorities are well prepared and have developed tools for adopting a mainstreaming approach. So on these levels there are instrument being used (se best practice appendix). How the results of these approaches are used for changing the situation is not clear from the NAP and here we need further information.

Also the change in parental leave, a further month directed either to the father or the mother, is a step towards closing the gender gap in the use of the parental leave days. The new “max-taxa” can also function in this way as it will make it more “economically” possible for low income earning women to stay in the labour market as they have children. It will promote an increased level of living standard among families with children.

**Measures not likely to increase gender differences**

The traditional educational measures seem not to change the gender balances either in the educational system as such or in the labour market. The restructuring of the labour market during the 1990’s gave different patterns for women and men as I mention in section 2. Women were to a lesser extent hit by open unemployment than, even though they lost employment to a large extent. One result of the restructuring in public sector in the last years is the stress and work-related ill-health which now can be seen through increased sickness and long term absence form the job. The increase is specifically strong among middle aged women in public sector work. This is now being studied in different ways and hopefully solutions are being found.
Risk of increasing gender gaps
Measures to increase mobility on the labour market are mentioned in the plan. As the regional employment differences are growing, the age distribution between the stagnating and the expanding regions increases. Women in the younger ages have a higher mobility. But in the child and family rearing ages the patterns change. Women take the jobs that are in commuting distance and often follow the choices of their husband when it comes to moving to a new place. This pattern limits the employment possibilities for women and has to be taken into consideration when mobility-promoting policies are discussed.

3.3. Coherence and consistency in the mainstreaming approach
The change in the parental leave and the development of child care provisions and fees are directed towards making it easier for both women and men to combine family and work. One can say that it is a development of the combination model and of the wage earner-parenthood status for both women and men.

There are very few actions taken which from the beginning have an objective of changing the gender balances. Besides the policies under the fourth pillar, few specific actions have been taken to eliminate gender gaps as such. The IT sector is in a way illustrative. It is easy to see the traditional pattern appear in this new and fast developing sector and it is very difficult to invent new tools for change. The knowledge base on how the situation is has been very well developed, and the provision of statistics for illustrating and analysing gender differences and gaps is good. The educational choices among boys and girls change slowly and their actions which have been taken to improve the gender balance. Concerning choice of occupation and gender divisions in the hierarchical dimension changes goes in different directions. There are de-segregation and re-segregation at the same time as the gender composition of certain jobs rarely change. Policies for breaking up gender segregation have to be adopted on the organisational level and on plant floor level. This means that the tools and actions to be taken have to be formed in the local situation and by local actors. The mainstreaming approach and the development of instruments has to be followed by local action plans.

3.4. Mechanisms for implementing gender mainstreaming
In municipalities, regional counties and governmental agencies methods for implementing mainstreaming have been developed (Åseskog 1998). Guidelines for mainstreaming have been published and methods adopted for ensuring mainstreaming. Special advice on mainstreaming is being given centrally by the Equal opportunities secretariat at the Ministry, on the Council for the Local Municipalities and on all the Regional Councils and their Equal Opportunities Advisers.
4. ASSESSING THE PRIORITY ACCORDED TO EQUALITY

There is a large awareness of the gender issue on the political level in Sweden. The possibilities for describing gender gaps and gender relations are good. In the NAP this can be illustrated by the statistics produced by Statistics Sweden and the Labour Market Board.

Also the different parts in the Swedish combination model for family and work is coherent and connected. One can say that the Swedish NAP gives a good example of the official equal opportunities policy seen from a quantitative dimension. The employment gaps are not alarming and also not the unemployment differences. But the qualitative gender differences in working life and living conditions and the consequences of the cutbacks in the public sector due to the economic policy performed are not discussed. These changes have hit women to a very large extent. The assessment made in the Welfare report (SOU 2000: 3) shows that the welfare model in it foundations have been stable, but that the certain groups have suffered more than others when it comes for example to relative income changes. Lone mothers and large families with many children are those that have had the largest relative income losses. Looking at working conditions and specifically the psychological and social conditions, there have been large changes. Women have much more of stress and psychologically pressed situation in their jobs than men. The situation is worse for women in the end of the decade than what it was in the beginning. Equality in the qualitative dimension is not as well tackled as in the quantitative, and to the qualitative dimension I also would like to put the segregation issue, not only in relation to gender but also to ethnicity. Including also regional equality, the employment situation has become more regionally differentiated during this last decade.

To conclude differentiation according to social class, ethnic background and region seems to increase and gender is interwoven in all these dimensions. When making a mainstreaming analysis is seems important to take also these other dimensions into consideration.

5. PRIORITY AREAS FOR FUTURE ACTION AND IDENTIFICATION OF BEST PRACTICE

5.1. Connect the Equal Opportunities Act with the Employment Policies

The Swedish NAP does not provide any coherent analysis of what kind of tools to use for effective action/measures against the continuing gender segregation. I would like to suggest an integration of the existing rules in the Equal Opportunities Act on active measures with the employment policies. The Act requires that all employers, whether in the public or private sector, actively promote equality in working life (SFS 1991:433). All employers with a minimum of ten employees are required to prepare an annual equal opportunities plan. The plan shall contain a survey of the measures required in order to
ensure that the working conditions are suitable for both women and men. The employer shall also facilitate the combination of gainful employment and parenthood with respect to both female and male employees, promote an equal distribution of women and men in different types of work and categories of employees through training, skill development and other measures. Also recruitment is mentioned in the act, and the employer shall ensure that both women and men apply for vacant positions. Considering pay, an employer shall as part of the active measures annually review the existence of pay differentials between men and women in various types of work and for different categories of employees.

In a survey by Statistics Sweden the results show that only 24 percent of all employers with more than nine employees had a valid equal opportunities plan (SCB2000). The plan shall contain, among other things, a survey of how to promote an equal distribution between women and men in various types of work and within different categories of employees. This tool is broadly neglected in the private sector, only 20 percent of the employers had such a plan, as compared to 70 percent of the public employers. Among governmental agencies and local authorities, 80 percent had a valid plan (SCB 2000). To develop this instrument as a tool for change in the composition of the labour force at the workplace level in both private and public organisations is a very important task for the future. Also, to incorporate the Equal Opportunities Act and its active measures as a part of the employment policies would be one way to attack the problem of segregation in the labour market as requested by the European Council in its recommendation for the NAP 2000. This could be connected to the law of Co-Determination to negotiate collective agreements on gender composition in the workplaces. To obtain any effects by mainstreaming, it has to be integrated into the core mechanisms and processes on the labour market.
Best Practice

1. "Kunskapslyftet” the adult education programme.
This adult education programme is a five year programme which started in July 1997 (Skolverket 1998-05-29). The venture has four perspectives; renewal of the labour market and education policy, more equal distribution and increasing growth. The target group is primarily adult unemployed who fully or partially lack 3-year upper secondary education. Also other low educated groups can come into consideration. During the autumn 1997 the total adult education organised education equivalent to 147,500 full time seats. Of these seats 80,000 were in the adult education programme on upper secondary education level. The number of pupils who are taking part in the education programme during the autumn of 1997 were many more. And when counting pupils taking part in education on different levels the number of participants summed up to 233,000 pupils. But here it must be taken into consideration that many pupils have been taking courses on different levels at the same time, and they have for that reason been counted more than once.

The proportion of women and men differ between the courses. In general the proportion of women was 67 percent. The largest proportion of men was in the technology courses, 61 percent and the lowest in medicine, health and care, 10 percent. Besides the technology courses, women dominated in all other courses, also in courses in science and mathematics. The proportion of participants under 30 years of age is 47 percent in the programme. The highest proportion of younger participants 57 percent, immigrants 31 percent and men 40 percent were in the larger cities. In the rural communities the proportion of young, immigrants and men were lower. The lowest proportion of men taking part in this programme was in the industry dominated communities.

Of all the pupils taking part in the upper secondary education courses, 34 percent financed their education with either a special education grant offered to the pupils in this special adult education programme (UBS), or by special adult education grant for unemployed (SVUXA) or other adult education grant (SVUX). Of these grants the first is possible to get for a person who is unemployed or has a low level education and is replaced at the workplace by a long term unemployed person. The applicant has to be between 25 and 55 years old. Of the pupils 24 percent use the ordinary education grant system and men to a larger extent than women.

The activity before the start of the education programme for the single individual varies with age. The largest proportion of unemployed were in the age group 25-29 and they also had the highest proportion who were taking part in different labour market policy measures prior to the adult education. The proportion of unemployed or in labour market policy activities before the programme started decreased in the higher age groups. Of those in the upper secondary education courses, 25 percent were unemployed before the courses started, 20 percent took part in labour market policy measures and the rest, 55 percent were not registered by the labour market board. The proportions did not differ between women and men to any larger extent. It seems as if men had a higher proportion
of unemployed and a lower proportion of participants in labour market policy measures than women.

It is too early to estimate the results of the programme, but one third of the participants take a few short courses and leave the studies after that, another third study on part time and the last third are doing full time studies. From week number 34 to week number 50 in the autumn of 1997 between 700,000 or 900,000 participants per week took part in a course. An individual could take part in two or three courses parallel during a week, but anyhow these figures gives an idea of the magnitude of this programme. As the participants not is counted as part of the labour force they have largely contributed to both the decrease of the unemployment and the employment levels during 1997. What will happen when they leave the education programme is not possible to envisage, but most probably it will lead to a stabilisation of the unemployment level on the present level. The follow-up of the long term results of the programme is to be decided about.

2. **3R for Mainstreaming on local level**

**Shortened summary**

The 3R method is based on a systematisation of Swedish experiences of work with gender equality. 3R stands for Representation, Resources and Realia.

The idea is to make a systematic review of men’s and women’s representation in different places and positions within a committee or boards’s field of operation. Hopefully the distribution and utilisation of resources, would trigger discussions about why the products the municipality produces are as they are, who gets what, and under what conditions.

The tests that have been carried out by local councils and boards have shown that the method work. It have lead to rethinking of gender equality in the committees and boards spheres of operation, including the writing of gender equality objectives into their normal guidelines. Some have also decided to include gender equality into their budgets, to collect new and continuous information in the form of statistics of different kind of customer surveys, and to actively monitor the impact of different measures.

References:


## Summary table. Evaluation of the Swedish National Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>List of Measures in 2000 NAP</th>
<th>(i)</th>
<th>(ii)</th>
<th>(iii)</th>
<th>(iv)</th>
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<th>(vi)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment promotion (job creation etc)</td>
<td>Labour market policies, prioritisation of long-term unemployed by the employment services, municipal programmes for young people 18-20 years old, aged 20-24 full-time activating and development measures. Activity guarantee for all over 20 years of age.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tax and benefit system (incentives for participation etc)</td>
<td>Reduction of taxes for low and medium income earners. Review poverty traps, stimulate participation of older in the labour force.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measures for the employed</td>
<td>“Max-taxa” which is a roof on the fees on public child care, to increase the possibilities for parents to stay in the labour market while having small children</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measures for the unemployed</td>
<td>Employment subsidy and activity guarantee for persons over 20 years old, Adult Education Initiative</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measures for the inactive and returners</td>
<td>Day care and parental leave, Review of the financial support to families</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Regional growth agreements,</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>Enhanced employment security for employees working remotely from home on full-time basis, review on staffing companies, Agreement between the social partners on halving the part-time unemployment in the health and care sectors until Nov 2000. A special committee is appointed by the government to study and suggest actions against the increased stress and ill-health at work places, specifically in female dominated areas like health, care, education and police.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender mainstreaming</td>
<td>Labour Market Board’s mainstreaming policy Local Municipalities 3 R-method. At regional level most counties have developed methods to be able to report statistics and data by gender. Methods are now being developed to ensure the mainstreaming approach. Follow-up of the way mainstreaming approach has been heeded in authorities’ budget letters and annual reports is now being done by the Swedish National Audit Office (RRV).</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desegregation</td>
<td>Break project, IT-council on opportunities</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>Pay</td>
<td>Equal Opportunities Ombudsman’s project “Lönelots” (Wage pilot) support and stimulate methods for gender neutral work evaluation, and individual qualification assessment, with manuals and texts for advice and directions to organisations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental leave</td>
<td>Government suggestion of extension of the parental leave with one further month, total 13 month as a special fathers or mothers month</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Care (children, elderly, other)</td>
<td>“Max-taxa” e.g. roof on the fees paid for day care</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other family friendly measures</td>
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(i) gender impact taken into account in the design  
(ii) aimed at improving the process of gender mainstreaming  
(iii) monitored for gender impact  
(iv) aimed at closing gender gaps  
(v) aimed at improving the reconciliation of work and family life  
(vi) aimed at allowing women and men to return to the labour market