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On Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcome of the Twenty-Third Special session of the general Assembly (2000)

For preparation of regional review and appraisals in the context of the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2010

Part One: Overview of achievements and challenges in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment

Women in the economy

Economic activity among women has grown strongly in recent decades. Thirty years ago, less than half of Norwegian women were economically active. From the beginning of the 1970s economic activity among women increased significantly while it remained relatively stable among men. To-day women are almost as economically active as men and Norway, together with the other Nordic countries, tops the statistics compared with other western countries.

Although Norwegian women take part in working life to almost the same extent as men, they work shorter hours and they do not work in the same occupations, industries or sectors as men. Nor do they have an equal position in the job hierarchy. According to comparable international studies, Norway has one of the most gender-segregated labour markets in the industrialised world.

The demand for equal pay for women and men has long been on the political agenda, and the pay gap between women and men is and has been the subject of numerous studies. Extensive international research shows similar patterns throughout the western economy. One general finding is that, despite the fact that women have increasingly pursued an education and gained a solid foothold in working life, women still earn less than men. For as long as we have had a modern monetary economy and women and men have been in paid employment, women's work has been priced lower than that of men.

Available sources show a dramatic reduction in average pay differences between women and men until the mid-1980s, followed by a long period of stagnation. In 1959, monthly pay for women in full-time employment was around 66 per cent of men's monthly pay, and in the mid-1980s women's pay had increased to slightly more than 80 per cent of men's pay. In the 2000s there is once again a tendency for women to catch up, although at a more moderate pace than before.

Income statistics show that women's income from employment is currently equivalent to approximately 65 per cent of men's income from employment. Adjusted for working hours, women's pay is equivalent to approximately 85 per cent of men's pay. It is usual to express this in the formula women's pay as a percentage of men's pay.

Gender in development co-operation and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Women's rights and gender equality are among the most important priorities of the Government's international development policy. In 2008 the Government presented the white paper *On Equal Terms:*

Women's Rights and Gender Equality in International Development Policy. The purpose of this document is to focus on the overall picture in a political perspective. The Government invited the Parliament to engage in a broad debate on the overriding, long-term political guidelines for promoting women's rights and gender equality through Norway's international development policy. The purpose is to focus attention on and enhance understanding of women's rights both as aims in themselves and as necessary prerequisites for achieving other development policy objectives.

The White Paper provides an umbrella framework for work in progress and the Action Plans for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security (launched 2006) and Women's rights and gender equality in development cooperation 2007-2009, as well as the International Plan of Action for combating female genital mutilation (adopted 2003) and Plan of Action to combat human trafficking (2006-2009).

The Action Plan on Women's rights and gender equality in development cooperation 2007-2009 sets out four priority areas of action: political and economic empowerment; sexual and reproductive rights; violence against women. It commits to visibly mainstreaming a gender perspective in other sectors of cooperation with an emphasis on other priority areas for Norwegian development policy. Tracking and monitoring of gender focused expenditure is a core tool for measuring progress.

At the halfway mark between 2000 and 2015, we must acknowledge that the UN Millennium Development Goals on poverty eradication will not be achieved unless women are put centre stage. In the statistics on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, women as a group lag far behind men. The situation is complex, and there is considerable variation between countries and regions.

Of the eight millennium development goals set by the UN in 2000, progress on MDGs 4 and 5 that is the maternal, neonatal and child goals, have been very uneven. Although many countries have made great strides over the past decade, for example over 85 per cent of current maternal deaths continue to occur in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia.

The Norwegian prime minister launched the Global Campaign for the health MDGs in New York in spring 2007 and the Norwegian Cabinet has contributed actively to fund research on maternal and global health.

The Government see women's participation and women's rights to be of paramount importance if we are to realise the vision for the world's future enshrined in the UN Millennium Declaration. If the world is to succeed in reaching the goals, we must target our efforts directly at women. We must help to ensure that women are empowered and enabled to take their rightful place in development processes on equal terms with men.

The Government will also in 2009 present a white paper on the main lines in Norwegian foreign policy with an integrated perspective on gender.

Recent developments in legislation and policy-making

Norway ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) without reservation in 1981. In 1999, the UN 54th General Assembly adopted an optional protocol to the CEDAW Convention, which was ratified by Norway on 5 March 2002.

The CEDAW Convention and Optional Protocol were incorporated into the Gender Equality Act in 2005. The Government Declaration (2005) of the current Government includes a pledge to incorporate the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the Human Rights Act. This will give the convention the same precedence as the other major conventions. An act on this incorporation into the Human Rights Act is now under preparation.

The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud is charged with monitoring that Norwegian law and administrative practice are in accordance with Norway's obligations pursuant to the Convention. It should be emphasized that this does not change the fact that it is the Government, not the Ombud, who has overall responsibility for monitoring implementation of conventions nationally and internationally and who has a duty to submit reports.

Gender balance in company boards

Today the boards in all 100 per cent state owned companies including both private and public limited companies, as well as public limited liability companies with private owners are obliged to have a certain representation of each gender amounting to approximately 40 per cent at the board. In December 2003 the Norwegian Parliament passed an amendment to the Public Limited Companies Act with reference to Ot.prp. nr. 97 (2002-2003) establishing a demand for gender balance in the companies' boards. The legislation was adopted by a large majority of the Parliament, only one party voted against.

No gender representation rules have been proposed for privately owned private limited liability companies. Most privately owned private limited liability companies in Norway are small family companies where the owners are physical persons who personally attend the board, and the requirements for gender representation in board were therefore not seen appropriate. In public limited companies, on the other hand, the shares are generally more widely spread, and the company's management has a less personal feature.

In the Government's proposal in Ot.prp. nr. 97 it was stated that the rules applying to privately owned public limited liability companies should not come into effect if the desired gender representation was achieved voluntarily by 1 July 2005. A survey carried out by Statistics Norway, showed that by 1 July 2005 13,1 per cent of these companies fulfilled all the demands laid down by the law. 16 per cent of the board members were women.

The rules applying to state-owned and inter-municipally owned companies entered into force on 1 January 2004, and the rules regarding privately owned public limited liability companies entered into force 1. January 2006. There was a normal transitional period of two years from 1 January 2006 for companies registered prior to that date. This means that the public limited companies had to comply with the rules before 1. January 2008. Companies that were not registered by 1 January 2006, had to comply with the requirements from the start.

Numbers from Statistics Norway shows that by February 2008, 39 per cent of the board representatives in public limited companies were women. 93 per cent of the 459 public limited companies fulfilled the requirements on representation of both sexes laid down in the Public Limited Companies Act.

This legislation will secure greater gender equality and will strengthen management in the business sector and boost the companies' competitive ability. The Government regards the legislation on women in boards as an important step towards equality between the sexes, a fairer society and a more even and thus a more democratic distribution of power. It is therefore also a question of democracy.

The legislation will secure women's influence in decision making processes of great importance for the economy in the society. The requirement for gender balance in company boards is based on the assumption that women have the same kind of qualifications relevant to business as men do. An important objective of the rules is to ensure that these qualifications are made use of in the boards. Some surveys indicate that diversity has a positive impact on the companies' bottom line. Recruiting more women to the boards will increase the diversity, and thereby influence the bottom line.

The next step is to apply the same legislation to companies owned by municipalities. These companies are important for the quality of the local services and the involvements of both sexes are highly relevant.

Part two: Progress in implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and the further initiatives and actions identified in the twenty-third special session of the general Assembly

Women and poverty

Norway is a country with a relatively minor poverty problem seen in an international perspective, even by comparison to industrialised countries alone. In 2008 the proportion of people earning incomes less than 50 per cent of median income (OECD scale) shows that this share in Norway amounts to 4 per cent. The reason behind this situation is the relatively small wage differences that prevail in Norway, combined with a well-developed welfare system and high rate of employment.

But poverty exists, and is discussed as a problem in Norway as well. The thesis of a feminisation of poverty has shown to be too general to be useful for the discussion of poverty in Norway today. Poverty is more widespread among single people living on their own than among single providers, mostly single mothers. The former group comprises a vast majority of men.

Families whose adult family members were born in a non-Western country are strongly over-represented among the poor. In the three-year period 2003-2005, approximately every fourth child under 18 years of age with non-western background was living in a household with persisting low income (OECD scale).

An *Action plan against poverty* was presented by the Government presented in 2007 together with the National Budget. In the National Budget for 2008 and 2009, the Government followed up the action plan with proposals to further boost efforts in this area, while at the same time continuing the measures initiated in 2007. The plan does not highlight gender.

The Government aims to eradicate poverty and reduce social and economic differences through universal welfare schemes, strong collective solutions and by providing individual with an opportunity to participate in employment. The action plan focuses on three sub-goals, that everyone be given an opportunity for employment, that children and young people shall be able to participate in society and develop themselves and to improve living conditions for the most disadvantaged

The plan will, among other things, finance the implementation of a qualification programme with pertaining qualification benefit for people with significantly impaired work capacity and earning ability and who have no or only very limited entitlement to subsistence benefits from the National Insurance scheme.

It is also proposed to strengthen adults' right to further education, to increase the allocation for measures for children and young people at risk, to establish more voluntary centres and a number of measures relating to the Government's escalation plan for the drugs and alcohol field. The Government emphasises the importance of good dialogue with voluntary organisations and representatives of disadvantaged and marginalised groups.

Statistics Norway prepares a report yearly concerning finances and living conditions for vulnerable groups, including families with children and children in low-income households. As part of the follow-up plan of action against poverty, one will further develop and improve the social indicators to give broader and better picture of the different sides of poverty and social exclusion.

Education and training of women

In Norway school attendance is compulsory from the age of 6 years, and a new regulation of 2009 gives children of the age of 1 year the right to attend a day care institution.

Boys and girls make different choices and the educational system is highly gender-segregated, especially in secondary schools and colleges.

In the field of education at university level, there are certain signs that gender segregation is declining. Firstly, the proportion of women students has increased, from 48 per cent in 1980 to more than 60 per cent in 2008. The choice of subjects has also changed. An increasing number of girls are studying law (50 per cent), economic and administrative subjects (50 per cent), medicine (60 per cent), and scientific and technical subjects.

No parallel trend exists towards an increased stream of male students into the traditionally female-dominated education. At the same time that more women have gone into higher education, the educational choices among men have changed little.

The distribution of boys and girls in occupational education programmes in secondary education follows a stronger traditional gender pattern with small signs for change. Building and industrial technology, electrical studies, engineering and industrial production are typical “boy subjects” with over 90 per cent boys. In programmes for nursing, social service and for design and craft there are only about 10 per cent boys. Boys and girls also choose along traditional gender lines when they apply to higher education at colleges. Men dominate in the fields of science and technology, women in educational sciences, healthcare and social studies.

Another characteristic of schools is that boys from elementary and secondary schools generally have lower academic scores compared to girls. Numbers show that boys on average lay half a grade below girls at the completion of elementary school. This difference between sexes was also considerable twenty years ago.

A change in educational choices made by individuals is necessary in order to improve the gender divided labour market. The challenges ahead will be to continue efforts to counteract gender-traditional choices of study in upper secondary education and also to pursue projects aimed at increasing girls’ interest in scientific subjects and technology.

In the spring of 2008, The Ministry of Education and Research laid out *Action Plan for Equality in Early Childhood Education and Primary Education (2008- 2010)*. The action-plan proposes a number of suggestions in order to improve the balance between genders, both in the educational choices that children and teenagers make, as well as the gender balance of employees within the sector. The objective is to change the traditional understanding concerning education and job choices, and this would be directed towards both genders whether they are pupils, students or jobseekers.

Women and health

There are gender differences in health which may affect quality of life and lifetime careers. Women and men’s lives have changed the last decades and also their health and illness. The life expectancy of men was 71 years in 1970 and 78,2 in 2007, and for women the corresponding figures increased from 77 to 82,7 during the same period. This is related to the reduced mortality from cardiovascular diseases over many years. Low infant mortality has also contributed to a favourable mortality development. Boys / men have a higher risk of death than girls / women right from the first year of life. However, absenteeism from work because of illness and the use of preventative and other health services is lower among boys/men than girls/women. There are also gender differences in cause of death that cannot be contributed solely to biological factors, but are connected to social situations and lifestyle where also cultural expectations of men and boys play a role.

Women have a more negative evaluation of their own health than men do. There are factual reasons for this discrepancy, but illness is also perceived and/or accepted in different ways by men and women. The attitude that admitting illness or weak health is contrary to the stereotypical male ideal is still prevalent. More men than women express that they are satisfied with their body, and fewer men report having such ailments as headache, backache, pain in the shoulders etc. At the same time, more men than women report that they experience a reduction in their quality of life or low quality of life because of illness.

In 2003 the government presented to the parliament a *Strategy for Women's health (2003-2013)*. Some goals are highlighted: to pay particular attention to diseases in which women and men are overrepresented, to strengthen care services for women during pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period and to ensure that higher priority is given to gender differences in diseases prevention.

Pursuant to this strategy the gender perspective must have priority in the health and social sector, in research, policy formulation, prevention and services. The reason for producing a special strategy for women's health is a desire to treat women in a more equitable manner than has previously been the case. Earlier reports did uncover a general lack of gender-specific knowledge and gender perspective in the health services. A gender perspective on medical treatment, prevention strategies and services will shed light on undesired inequality between women and men.

The Ministry of Health and Care Services has initiated a number of measures to follow up the Strategy for Women's Health. The central government maintained hospitals have been asked to focus on ensuring that the gender perspective is taken into account in the development of health services and that special challenges related to women's and men's health must be met with adequate knowledge and resources. The Ministry has urged the hospitals and the Research Council of Norway to focus on the gender perspective and on raising awareness of gender differences in clinical research and these issues have been incorporated into the Council's new programme plans.

In 2006 a National Resource Centre for Women's health was established at Rikshospitalet University Hospital (Now part of Oslo University Hospital HF). The Centre has special responsibility in the fields of research, competence building, providing advice and publication of knowledge about women's health.

In 2007 a report on *Health and the use of Health Services – Differences between Women and Men* was presented to the Parliament together with the national Budget. The report gives a comprehensive overview of facts on men's and women's health.

There is also a focus on the gender perspective in other relevant action and strategic plans, such as the *Strategic Plan for Prevention of HIV and Sexually Transmissible Diseases (2002)*, the *Action Plan for Prevention of Undesired Pregnancy and Abortion (2004-2008)*, the *Action Plan for physical activity (2005-2009)* and the *Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence (2004-2007)*. A *Strategic Plan to Combat Eating Disorders* has been implemented and will be revised in 2005 with a view to continuing it and incorporating new measures. The development of knowledge about and the treatment of eating disorders are one of the priority areas. Several of these plans were produced in cooperation between several ministries.

In 2009 the government presented a white paper on coherent care related to pregnancy, birth and maternity.

Violence against women

Violence that occurs within the confines of close relationships is a serious and often hidden social problem. Women are the primary victims of this type of violence, but men are also affected. Such violence may be either physical or psychological in nature.

A legislative amendment adopted on 6 January 2006 introduced provisions prescribing that an application for establishing a family and for a visa may be rejected if the applicant or his or her children from another marriage are likely to be subjected to abuse or gross exploitation. In this connection, provisions were also enacted regarding the right to check the reference person's conduct and character in cases regarding family establishment and visas. The purpose is to prevent the abuse or cynical exploitation of women from poorer countries who marry men living in Norway. The provisions regarding verification of the reference person's conduct and character have not yet come into force.

The Immigration Regulations contain a special provision that targets abused women and children. Pursuant to this provision, abused women and children who have been granted a residence permit on the basis of family reunification must be given a renewed residence permit on independent grounds if they are victims of abuse. The purpose of the provision is to ensure that the victim of abuse is not forced to remain in that situation in order to keep the permit to reside in Norway. In the Immigration act of 2008, the rule regarding renewed residence permit on independent grounds for abused family members, is made gender-neutral and is taken into the act as a statutory provision.

An action plan to combat violence in close relationships (2008-2011) was launched by the Government in 2007. Its proposed measures include efforts to strengthen knowledge and collaboration within the public support system, to highlight and prevent violence within close relationships, and to provide help, protection and advice to victims of such violence. The range of treatment services available to perpetrators of violence will also be strengthened.

In its policy platform of 2005 the Government emphasised that Crisis centre services of good quality should be available to everyone exposed to violence in close relationships, regardless of where in the country they live. From the early 1980ties the crisis centres for women and children that were organised by volunteer organisations have been funded by the state and in 1999 a constant government financial arrangement was established. The centre services have in recent years also been available to young people exposed to forced marriages and human trafficking.

A legal mandate is now under preparation and will be presented for the Parliament in 2009. A legal mandate will ensure that all municipalities offer crisis-centre services directly to their residents or offer such services through a cooperative partner. Anchoring the requirement in law will also contribute to improved service quality.

The Government's *Plan of Action to Combat Human Trafficking (2006–2009)* sets out measures to intensify efforts to empower women and reduce their vulnerability to recruitment to and abuse in the slave-trade of our times. Most of the victims are women and children, both girls and boys, who are trafficked across borders for sexual exploitation through prostitution, for forced labour or for the illegal organ trade.

The review of progress on combating genital mutilation and forced marriages are described in the critical area of the girl child.

Women and armed conflict

In 2000, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, according to which women are to participate on equal terms in decision-making processes related to conflict resolution, peace and security. Girls and women are to be protected against the increased brutality and sexual violence and abuse that occur in many situations of armed conflict. The resolution is not legally binding, but it provides important political guidelines.

On 8 March 2006 the Government launched *Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security*. The action plan provides guidelines for safeguarding the rights of girls and women in war and conflict situations, increasing the participation of both women and men, and mainstreaming the gender perspective in Norway's conflict-prevention and peace building efforts. The plan provides guidelines for Norway's high-profile engagement in a number of conflict areas worldwide.

Women and the economy

In Norway, women are almost as economically active as men, although there are still certain differences between the sexes. In 2008, 77,1 per cent of men and 70,7 per cent of women at the age of 15 – 74 years were economically active in Norway. The employment rate is also high among both mothers and fathers, i.e. married and cohabiting parents with children aged 0-15. Eight out of ten

mothers and nine out of ten fathers are employed. On the home front, however, mothers do significantly more of the housework than fathers do. Every day, mothers spend 2.5 more hours on housework than fathers. Furthermore, most single carers are women.

The labour market is divided by gender along both a horizontal and a vertical axis. Horizontal segregation of the labour market means that women and men are concentrated in different occupations, industries and sectors. The gender differences largely correspond to the division between the public and private sectors. Women account for approximately 70 per cent of employees in the public sector, while there are most men in the private sector (63 per cent).

There are also clear differences between women and men in terms of their career choices. Vertical segregation means that women and men are segregated in terms of their position in the job hierarchy, even within the same occupation or profession. There are far more men than women in management positions. Only one in three managers is a woman.

There are also differences between women and men in terms of working hours. One typical characteristic of women's adaptation to the labour market is that they work part-time to a far greater extent than men. In 2008 as many as 41,8 per cent of employed women worked part-time, compared with 13,1 per cent of men. This proportion of part-time workers is regarded as being high in comparison with many other countries.

Equal pay

In June 2006 the Norwegian Cabinet appointed a Commission to provide an overview over differences between women's and men's pay and consider measures to reduce pay differences. The Commission submitted its report to the Government in March 2008.

The Commission's mandate was to describe the current situation, provide an analysis of the reasons for the wage gap, provide an overview over legislation and international agreements relating to this area, consider the consequences of the collective wage agreements (in the past ten years) from a gender equality perspective, and provide an analysis of the consequences of equal pay for public budgets, the operation of the labour market and employment. The Commission was to consider measures that could help to reduce pay differences between women and men. The mandate also emphasised that the Commission should play a proactive role and arrange common meeting places for discussion and communication, disseminate knowledge and influence public opinion. The pay gap was defined as differences in hourly pay, and the pay gap was to be considered in the context of gender equality policy.

It is important to differentiate between *pay* and *income*. Income is a broader concept than pay. A person's total *income* consists of income from employment (paid employment and self-employment), capital gains, and transfers such as housing benefit, child benefit, unemployment benefit, etc. On the other hand, *pay* consists only of remuneration from an employer for work that has been done. Pay and income from employment are calculated as an average for all economically active women and men in the entire economy.

There are significant differences both between women's and men's *income from employment*, which has not been adjusted for working hours, and between women's and men's *pay*, which has been adjusted for agreed working hours. Income statistics show that women's income from employment is currently equivalent to approximately 65 per cent of men's income from employment. Adjusted for working hours, women's pay is equivalent to approximately 85 per cent of men's pay. It is usual to express this in the formula *women's pay as a percentage of men's pay*.

In accordance with the mandate of the Equal Pay Commission, the focus in the report was on differences in women's and men's pay, adjusted for working hours, expressed as monthly or hourly pay.

It used to be thought that one important explanation of the pay gap was that women had a shorter education and shorter potential work experience than men. However, this is no longer a dominant explanation. The report shows that women have largely caught up with men in terms of their investment in personal resources. However, the average gap in hourly pay for all employed women and men has been extremely stable since the mid-1980s. Analyses of the significance of education and position in the job hierarchy show that the pay gap is greatest in groups with higher education and in leading positions. In general, the pay gap between women and men is greater in high-wage groups than in unskilled and low-wage groups. Analyses of the significance of age and life cycle show that the pay gap cannot be explained as a generational effect. The pay gap also increases with age for younger generations in working life. The increasing similarity between women and men in terms of personal resources thereby weakens the assumption that personal resources can explain most of the pay gap between the sexes.

The analyses show that the most important reason for the pay gap between women and men is that women and men work in different sectors, enterprises, occupations and positions. Women are dominant in the public sector, especially in the education and health sectors. Men work to a greater extent in the private sector and in technical occupations. Pay differences between women and men are greater in the private sector than in the public sector. At the same time, pay levels, especially for groups with college education, are higher in the private sector than in the public sector. The many women with a high level of education in the state sector, health enterprises, schools and municipalities therefore have a lower pay level than groups with the same level of education in the private sector.

The proportion of the pay gap that can be “explained” with the help of various factors and background variables varies in step with the number of variables that are included in the analyses. If we compare women’s and men’s pay in the same enterprise, in the same position and with the same personal resources, we find that pay differences are insignificant or non-existent.

Pay differences between women and men are also common at the international level. Statistics from EU countries show fairly significant differences between member states, and the average pay gap is around 15 per cent. In other words, the pay gap in Norway is the same as the average pay gap for the entire EU area. One important reason why Norway scores midway in these statistics is the high level of economic activity among Norwegian women. As a result of the growth of the welfare state, many of the tasks performed by women have been incorporated into the formal economy through the establishment of public care institutions. Paradoxically, therefore, it is the high level of economic activity that has led to the gender segregation and the relatively large pay gap between the sexes. This is because (on average) it is women with lower earning potential and qualifications than those who are already employed who enter the labour market when the women’s employment rate rises.

Women and the media

The media plays an influential role in creating images of both women and men. In terms of representation, male dominance is particularly marked in leading positions in the media. The number of women editors and commentators has increased in recent years, but the low proportions of women are nevertheless a problem from a gender equality perspective. In 2008 25 per cent of the members of the Norwegian Editors’ Association were women. Of those who held the title Editor-in-Chief, 21 per cent were women. Gender balances among journalists are better with 42 per cent women.

National surveys show that there are systematic differences in the media’s use of women and men as sources. One survey showed that in one week in 2004 three quarters of the people reported on and photographed in two of Norway’s largest newspapers were men, while only approximately one quarter were women.

In recent years, there has been growing interest in issues relating to gender equality in the film sector. This is especially due to a survey *Tallenes tale* (The Figures Speak for Themselves) concerning the representation of women in key positions in the film sector. The survey was carried out at the initiative of the sector itself and showed gender disparities in leading roles and the distribution of funding. Men

held 80 per cent of the positions as directors, script-writers and producers. The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs submitted a white paper (Veiviseren) to the Parliament in winter 2007. One of the themes dealt with was gender equality in the film sector, and the paper presented set a goal of at least 40 per cent women in key positions in the film sector by 2010.

In 2005 Norway participated in a European project funded by the Community Framework Strategy on gender equality (2001-2005). The title and issue of the project was *Sports, media and stereotypes – women and men in sports and media*. The project was promoted and coordinated by the centre for Gender Equality in Iceland. The purpose of the project was to contribute to the knowledge of representation of women and men in the sports media in Europe and to promote change in the stereotypes presented of both genders in this field and in general to increase gender awareness.

A study explored similarities and variations in representations of women and men in sports, and a picture of the sports culture in each country was drawn up. Facts and information was also part of the project. An expert advisory group was established assisting the development of multimedia material. The target groups were sport reporters as well as sports instructors and coaches.

The study shows clear distinctions in how men and women in sports are portrayed by the media. Firstly; there are fewer stories about women than men. A large proportion of the reports deal with team sports, where men tend to be highly visible. Secondly; there is a strong tendency to idolise the leading men in sport, focusing on them as social celebrities as well as sportsmen. Thirdly, sports news neither reinforces nor combats stereotypes. There is a tendency – especially regarding the presentation of sportswomen – to support traditional stereotypes. Fourthly; there are relatively very few female sports reporters.

Women and the environment

Ministry of the Environment participates in the OECD Survey on Household Behaviour and Environmental Policy. The survey studies household behaviour in relation to environmental measures. One of the variables that will be evaluated is gender inequality. The results of the survey will be presented by OECD spring 2009.

The girl child

Combating genital mutilation

Control of women's sexuality takes many forms, and has existed at some time or another in most societies. Genital mutilation is an extreme form of control. It is often motivated by the belief that no man will marry a non-circumcised woman, and the reward for being circumcised is often that the woman in question enjoys respect and is more likely to get married. The practice is also believed to promote legitimate forms of sexual behaviour and reproduction and to prevent illegitimate sexual behaviour.

The practice conflicts with fundamental human rights and with the United Nations conventions on the rights of women and of children. Article 24 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child establishes that children have a right to the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health.

Female genital mutilation is prohibited and punishable by law in Norway. In the proposal for a new General Civil Penal Code (Penal Code) it is proposed that the provisions in the Act on Female genital mutilation shall be transferred to the new Penal Code. The proposal includes specific provisions on gender mutilation and aggravated gender mutilation. It is also proposed that the limitation period for female genital mutilation will run from the date of the injured party's 18th birthday.

On 5 February 2008, the Government presented the new *Action Plan against Female Genital Mutilation*. Seven ministers have agreed to cooperate on the following main objectives: Effective

enforcement of legislation, competence-building and knowledge transfers, prevention and public education, accessible health services, extra efforts during holidays, intensified international efforts.

The plan calls for intensified efforts to combat female genital mutilation and for the integration of these efforts into ongoing cooperation in the health and education sectors. The issue will be included in Norway's political dialogues at country level where relevant.

The plan of action underlines that female genital mutilation is a grave violation of these rights and it has serious health-related and social consequences for the girls affected. These violations must be combated through long-term, goal-oriented efforts that focus on prevention and opinion changing. Cooperation between affected groups and expert communities are to be strengthened. Prevention of female genital mutilation is a long-term target. In the meantime, the plan underlines that girls and women who have been subjected to genital mutilation must be given relevant and efficacious treatment.

Female genital mutilation is practised by certain ethnic groups, primarily in Africa but also in some Asian countries. Many of the people who have come to Norway from areas where FGM is widespread disapprove of the practice. Nonetheless, persons with backgrounds from countries which practise FGM are bound to attract attention, although this may be experienced as stigmatisation. Adult women who have been subjected to genital mutilation themselves, and who are now working to prevent new violations, may find this attention unpleasant. However, the Government deems it important to stress that genital mutilation is regarded an extremely serious violation of girls and that a strong focus is absolutely essential. This Action Plan places the responsibility for efforts to combat female genital mutilation even more clearly with the national, regional and local authorities. The Government calls for close cooperation between the authorities and the affected groups. A national advisory group will therefore be set up as part of this cooperation. This Action Plan is the result of the joint efforts of seven ministries.

The directive "Guidelines on gender-related persecution" was adopted in 2008. The main purpose of these guidelines is to provide an integrated and systematic review of the factors of refugee assessment and processing of asylum cases where gender-related issues may have significance, and to ensure that consideration is paid to these issues in dealing with such cases. The guidelines will also help to bring about uniform practice. The guidelines apply to both women and men. The guidelines also concern issues that may be relevant in relation to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-sexual persons. The guidelines focus on issues specific to matters involving gender-related claims. They must however be viewed in relation to the general rules, including Norway's international commitments.

Forced marriage

Forcing a boy or girl to marry violates fundamental human rights and is a significant barrier to gender equality. The right to choose one's spouse is set out in international agreements and in Norwegian law. In Norway, forced marriage is a type of violence that occurs in certain minority groups.

Combating forced marriage necessitates a broad-based approach, and good results are particularly contingent on the success of a policy of equality and social inclusion. There is a need for measures that directly address the problem of forced marriage, as well as a broad focus on strategies and measures to strengthen social inclusion. At the same time, it is important to establish clearly that forced marriage is a criminal offence in Norway, and that legislation prohibiting forced marriage will be enforced effectively.

An amendment to the Immigration Act of 6 January 2006 lays down that a residence permit may be denied if the reference person, after being asked, does not consent to the applicant being granted a permit, or if it is likely that a marriage has been entered into against the will of one of the parties. The purpose of this is to prevent a marriage that has been entered into against the will of one of the parties from providing grounds for a residence permit. For the same reason, a main rule was adopted that a person who has been married abroad to a person who is resident in Norway may not be granted a work

permit, or a residence permit before the spouse has returned to Norway and been interviewed by the immigration authorities. This provision is especially intended to prevent someone from being coerced into marriage against their will during a holiday or other visit abroad. The provision concerning the interview has not yet entered into force, but is intended to do so before the summer of 2009.

On 29 June 2007, the Government presented a new four-year *action plan against forced marriage*. It contains 40 new and continued measures, involving eight different ministries. The overarching goal of this action plan is to combat forced marriage, by preventing its occurrence and helping those who are victims of such abuse. This requires a broad-based approach, in which the fundamental aim is to build up a well-functioning policy of equality and social inclusion. The authorities have a main responsibility for combating forced marriage, and strengthening public-sector support for this work is an overarching objective. Close coordination of the efforts of schools, the child welfare service, the family counselling service, health and social services, the police, the immigration authorities, foreign service missions and the other public sector and voluntary services is a basic prerequisite for successfully combating forced marriage.

The action plan contains a broad range of initiatives to combat forced marriage which are designed both to prevent the occurrence of forced marriage and to protect the victims of such abuse. Measures in the new action plan include the establishment of “minority advisers” in secondary schools (age 16 – 19) with a high percentage of students with a minority background. Thirty advisers are employed by the directorate of integration and diversity. It also includes the establishment of 6 integration advisers who will assist relevant Norwegian embassies. Participants in the obligatory Norwegian language programme will be made aware of the negative nature of forced marriage; the teaching will be based on human-rights and gender-equality perspectives. More accommodation will also be made available for young people both under and over the age of 18 who are forced to break off relations with their families for a period because of forced marriage or the threat of forced marriage, special housing arrangements will be established for boys and couples. Immigrant groups also have a pivotal role to play in efforts to combat forced marriage, and more funding will be channelled to voluntary organisations working in this field.

An advisory Board between Pakistan and Norway on matters relating to marriage, family and children arising out of migration between the two states, was established in 2006. The board meets every year and one main goal is to work against forced marriage and other harmful family practices.

Part Three

Institutional Development

National machinery

In the late 1970s, the national machinery for gender equality and the advancement of women was established and equality legislation entered into force.

The Ministry of Children and Equality by the Department of Family and Equality, heads the National Machinery of Gender Equality. The Department has from 18 October 2007 the responsibility for all anti-discrimination laws and grounds. That is in addition to the Gender Equality Act of 1979; the Anti-Discrimination Ombud Act amended in 2006; parts of the Working Environment Act; the Anti-Discrimination Act of 2006; and the Discrimination and Accessibility Act of 2009.

The Gender Equality Act was amended in 2005. The reason for the amendments was to ensure the satisfactory implementation of Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions), the purpose of which was to strengthen gender equality. The legislative amendments were also made in order to ensure the harmonisation of the Gender Equality Act and the Working Environment Act and the Anti-Discrimination Act.

The Working Environment Act (1977) Section on Equal Treatment prohibits discrimination on the basis of political views, membership of trade unions, sexual orientation, disability and age. The Act applies for working life. The section on Equal Treatment was amended and strengthened in 2004.

The Act on prohibition of discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, or belief (the Anti-Discrimination Act) came into force 1 January 2006. The purpose of the Act is to promote gender equality, ensure equal opportunities and rights and prevent discrimination based on ethnicity, national origin, descent, skin colour, language, religion or believe. The Act shall apply in all areas of society except for family life and personal relationships.

The Act relating to a prohibition against discrimination on the basis of disability (the Discrimination and Accessibility Act) came into force 1 January of 2009. The Act covers two parts, a discrimination part and an accessibility part. The Act applies in all areas of society, including working life.

The Ministry of Children and Equality is now chairing a high level committee involving all ministries. The mandate of the committee is to monitor and supervise the process of gender budgeting and policies on gender equality in general.

The enforcement system was reorganised in 2006. The system, which consists of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal, largely functions as it did before the reorganisation. The most important difference is that the system is also responsible for preventing differential treatment in areas other than gender, namely ethnicity, religion and belief and, in the area of working life, political views, trade union membership, sexual preference, impaired ability and age.

The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud

The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud plays a leading role in promoting gender equality and combating discrimination based on sex, ethnicity, reduced functional ability, language, religion, sexual orientation or age. The Ombud deals with matters related to gender equality and discrimination, and in these matters is independent of, but administratively subordinate to, the Ministry of Children and Equality.

The Equality and Anti-discrimination Tribunal

The Equality and Anti-discrimination Tribunal deals with appeals against the Gender Equality Ombud's decisions. The Tribunal may decide that a particular action is in contravention of the Act. It may then order the action in question to be halted or corrected, or decide on some other action that is necessary to ensure that the discrimination, harassment, instruction or reprisal ceases and to prevent it from being repeated. The Tribunal may set a time limit for compliance with the order. The Tribunal may decide to impose a coercive fine in order to ensure compliance in cases where the time limit for complying with the order has been exceeded.

Regional centres for equality and diversity

The Government has facilitated the establishment of three pilot centres for equality and diversity. The centres cover the counties of Finnmark, Nordland, Troms and Trøndelag (where they are subordinate to the KUN Centre for Gender Equality), Hedmark and Oppland (where they are subordinate to the Northern Feminist University) and Øst-Agder and Vest-Agder (where they are subordinate to the University of Agder). The centres provide guidelines and play a leading role in the work for gender equality. They also provide expertise on practical measures in their respective regions.

Gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting

Mainstreaming the gender equality perspective

Since the late 1980s, Norway has implemented action programs to support the incorporation of gender equality as an integral element of all Government policy areas. Norway follows the recommendation of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in 1995 in Beijing, that the gender equality perspective should be mainstreamed in all areas and sectors and should not be treated as a separate issue. At the government level this means that each ministry is responsible for matters relating to gender equality in its own area of responsibility.

The main tool for gender mainstreaming is the Gender Equality Act, §1a Duty to promote gender equality. The act includes a reporting and activity obligation, which is enforced by the Ombud. The Ombud wishes to place greater emphasis on ensuring activity at enterprise level, but believes there is a need for resources for both monitoring and guidance. This obligation is applicable for public and private sector, NGOs, and employee and employers organizations.

The reason for integrating the gender equality perspective in the government budget is to ensure that policies promote gender equality. The aim is to consider the effects of the various political decisions on the situation of women and men, girls and boys. This requirement will prevent apparently gender-neutral policies and administrative decisions from upholding or reinforcing gender stereotypes.

In 2005 the Government decided to intensify these efforts by setting out guidelines for every ministry to carry out a gender equality assessment of their own specialised budget areas. This is laid down in the Main Budget Circular from the Ministry of Finance. Every new round of the formulation of the budget starts with a circular letter from the Ministry of Finance in which it is set out that all ministries are to conduct gender sensitive analysis of their budgets. This implies that each ministry decides which policy sectors they see fit to be subjected to such gender sensitive analysis. The ministries therefore integrate this perspective in their budget propositions wherever appropriate.

Political commitments

The Government has submitted the report *Equality 2009? Objectives, strategy and measures for ensuring gender equality*. In the report the Minister on Equality and Family policies Ms Anniken Huitfeldt gives the following statement on her ambitions and politics on gender equality:

“I am committed to the work for equality. In this context the term “equality” was formerly used to refer mainly to gender equality, but today it encompasses equal rights and opportunities for many more groups. Working for equality involves combating discrimination on grounds of age, gender, religion, functional ability, sexual orientation or other personal attributes. In the present report the focus is on equality between the sexes; still further work is needed

in this area if we are to achieve true gender equality. Where there is inequality both sexes lose out, and in contrast to our earlier efforts we are now targeting men as well as women. The report sets out the Ministry's objectives and strategies for promoting gender equality, and the challenges that must be addressed. It points out areas where more efforts are needed and gives specific examples of the Government's work for gender equality. This Government has high ambitions with regard to gender equality, and has maintained a high profile in this area. As the report shows, all the ministries are contributing in their own sectors of responsibility, and the information given here is by no means exhaustive.

I am pleased to be able to present this report. The Government will continue its efforts to promote a more equitable society where there is no discrimination. Equality does not occur by itself. It requires specific measures.”

Overriding objectives for Governments policies on gender equality are:

- Equal opportunities, rights and obligations in every sector of society
- Freedom from sex-related violence
- Equitable distribution of power, influence and care work
- Financial independence for both sexes
- Equal opportunities in the labour market
- Equal responsibility for childcare and work in the home
- Equal access to education and the development of talents and ambitions

Part Four: Remaining challenges and actions to address them Information on areas requiring future actions

Gender roles – the goal of equal parenting

One of the major goals of Norwegian gender equality policy has been for women to be able to take part in the workplace and leadership on an equal footing with men, and for men to be able to take responsibility for care-giving tasks and other work in the home on an equal footing with women. The policies have been enacted through various changes in existing laws since the 1970's. There is a clear intention that fathers should take on part of the responsibility for the care of children. Actual parenting practice by men and women has also gone through essential changes in the last decades. In a typical family today, both parents work outside the home and they share care-giving tasks to a greater extent than before.

Norway has several arrangements to help parents combine economic activity with child care. They include subsidised day care institutions and day care facilities for schoolchildren, the right to paid leave when children are ill, cash support and paid parental leave. In principle, these arrangements are gender-neutral and can be used by both parents.

However, absence from the labour market in connection with child care is very unequally divided between father and mother. Mothers still take most of the parental leave, they work part-time far more often than fathers do, and 96 per cent of cash support recipients are women.

At the same time, the greatest change among men in recent years has been in relation to their role as father. The father's quota of parental leave has contributed to more active fathers and started a revolution in men's use of parental leave. The Parental Benefit Scheme and the father's quota of parental leave was introduced in 1993. From 1 July 2009 10 weeks are reserved for fathers. The introduction of the father's quota has led to a steep increase in the number of fathers who have taken leave to be with their children. The quota is utilised by around 90 per cent of all fathers. Today the father's quota is a norm and most fathers take leave corresponding to the quota. Basing fathers' paternity benefit on their own earned income entitlement has been an important part of this reform. The fact that men are taking responsibility for and establishing a close relationship with infants is an extremely important change in the father-child relationship and may have an impact on the way men view care, closeness and relationships.

There are however, still statutory limitations on fathers' possibilities for taking parental leave. It is estimated that 8-10,000 fathers are not entitled to the father's quota because this right is dependent on the mother's employment status before the child is born. The father is also dependent on the mother returning to work or education in order to be able to take parental leave. He does not have an individual right to parental leave, but is entitled to such right on the basis of the mother's employment situation and choices.

In spite of these developments we still have "two-track parenthood" – one track for mothers and one for fathers. The challenging question is, why do mothers and fathers divide child care so unequally between themselves? Both finance and attitudes play a part. Traditional ideas of what it means to be a good mother and a good father still appear to influence parents' decision-making processes. The fact that the father often has a higher income than the mother also plays a role. If the family as a whole loses money if the father stays at home with the children, it is difficult to make choices on an equal footing.

The workplace has served to hinder progress towards equality between women and men. According to recent research there has been greater progress towards equality in the home than in the workplace. This is a conclusion reached by comparing a survey with a similar survey in 1988. One problem is the difficulty for the father to negotiate with his employer on parental leave. Fathers who wish to take

more leave than their earmarked quota may be suspected of not giving sufficiently high priority to their job.

The picture of modern women and men leads us to the question of the role of provider. The norm for who is to provide for the family is changing radically today, from a norm where the man is the sole provider to the two-provider family. At the ideological level, this change has made relatively strong progress. Stories about young women and young men show a common picture. Both women and men consider a career to be an important part of their lives, they have ideals relating to gender equality and two-provider families. However, the effect varies in practice and in reality the possibilities for realising the ideal have not been equally great. In fact, the man is still the main provider but he is no longer the sole provider. Women have increased their financial independence, but the woman is still the most important carer in the family and still does most of the unpaid work.

Gender roles and equal parenting are among the priority areas of the Government's gender equality policies. In 2008 the Government presented a White Paper Document to the Parliament on *Men, male roles and gender equality*. An important purpose of the white paper was to gather factual materials and data on men and male roles, but also to show that gender equality is about both men and women.

Gender equality has long been synonymous with women and their struggle for economic independence, equal pay, and equal power. It has also been a key principle in eliminating oppression and violence. However, the white paper states that men spend less time together with their own children, are more prone to accidents, are over-represented in crime statistics, and drop out more often from upper secondary education. The material shows clearly that there are great social differences between groups of men, and that there is good reason to use the term "the extreme gender" when referring to men. Men make up both the upper echelons and the lower strata of society. These examples indicate that men would have much to gain from true gender equality. At the same time, men still sit in the majority of positions of power in society and they still make more money than women.

The government acknowledges that gender equality can only be achieved when men and women work together towards the same goals and agree that both masculinity and femininity have aspects where changes and new adjustments are required. Gender equality between the sexes is about changing attitudes in men and women as well as securing formal rights and duties at an individual and group level.

The white paper on *Men, Male Roles and Gender Equality* will be debated in the Parliament in the spring 2009.

Gender segregation and pay gap in the labour market

As shown in Part two the labour market in Norway is divided by gender and the pay gap between women and men follows this division. This means, among other things, that the problem of equal pay becomes a question of the wage level in women's occupations, for both women and men. The problem of equal pay is not only a question of individual pay differences based on individual gender, but is rather linked to the highly gender-segregated labour market and the price of labour in the occupations and sectors that are dominated by women. The pay level is generally lower in occupations where the proportion of women is high. In general, women receive less return on their education and experience than men do. This is especially due to the fact that many women work in the public sector, which has lower wage levels and a more compact pay structure than the private sector.

The reasons why men and women choose to work in different occupations and sectors are complex, associated both with the individual employee's preferences, norms, role in the family and financial needs (supply side) and with labour market factors, such as the way employers organise working hours (demand side). The extent of part-time work is the result of mutual adjustment between these various factors.

The fact that women do most of the work in the home is an important factor in understanding number of hours in economic activity. Economic theory has shown that in the short term it may be rational for a person to reduce his/her economic activity if his/her partner earns more (per hour) outside the home. Since we know that men, on average, have higher hourly pay than women, this may explain why so many women choose part-time jobs. Women themselves also say that consideration for the family is the reason why they have not given priority to a career..

Many studies of appointments and promotions at enterprise level have been carried out in order to discover the extent to which an employee's gender affects his or her career opportunities. Most studies conclude that there does not appear to be any direct discrimination against women in the appointment and promotion process. The hypothesis of a "glass ceiling" only receives limited support in more recent Norwegian studies. Instead, researchers have observed that many people believe there is a glass ceiling for women, and this belief may be self-fulfilling.

There is much to indicate that the current low level of pay in women's professions also helps to maintain segregation. It is likely to be unattractive for men to make an untraditional choice of career, such as pre-school teacher, unless they have a financial incentive for doing so. We are therefore talking about mutually dependent processes, where the gender-segregated labour market both maintains and is maintained by pay differences between women and men.

Together, these explanations give a complex picture of the reasons for the gender-segregated labour market. The consequences of this segregation may be a stiff, inflexible labour market where society does not utilise human resources well, but also a working life where people can realise different desires and life projects.

Wage formation and cooperation on income policy

The collective bargaining system in Norway is a highly complicated process involving many different actors, levels and forms of settlement. Throughout the post-war period, wage formation in Norway has been characterised by a large degree of coordination between the social partners (employers' and employees' organisations) and the authorities. This model is based on the parties' recognition that a well-functioning wage formation system helps to maintain a low unemployment rate and a high level of economic activity. The main social partners play a crucial role in implementing the collective wage agreements, and many mechanisms and institutions support the coordination of wage formation.

Equal pay for women and men is today a central topic for all the main employees' organisations in Norway. However, the fact that all employees' organisations bring up the issue of equal pay in negotiations does not mean that there is full agreement between them on what the most important problems in connection with equal pay are. The disagreements between them will also be based on the fact that the various trade unions represent groups with different educational levels and different occupational and sectoral ties. The organisational landscape reflects this complexity. In the 1990s, disagreement on equal pay primarily had to do with the extent to which pay differences between women and men were a low-wage problem, or whether they were primarily linked to pay differences between male-dominated and female-dominated occupations (requiring an equally long education).

The equal Pay Commission analysed whether female-dominated or male-dominated groups have achieved the best results in wage settlements in the past decade. The wage level being systematically lower in bargaining areas where the proportion of women is highest does not mean that female-dominated areas have done worse in wage settlements than male-dominated areas in the past decade. Analyses show that as a percentage, wage growth has been approximately the same for female-dominated and male-dominated bargaining areas in the period 1997-2005. In the period 2001-2005, there was even a positive correlation between the proportion of women in a bargaining area and wage growth.

In other words there is no systematic biased of wage growth to the benefit of male-dominated bargaining areas. But the collective bargaining model has not managed to change the overall relative wage differences between women and men.

Enforcement by law

A review of appeal cases relating to equal pay shows that the Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud receives many cases relating to discrimination in working life, but that relatively few are dealt with by the Gender Equality and Anti-discrimination Tribunal and even fewer appeals are upheld. Since the Gender Equality Act was amended and reinforced with respect to matters such as equal pay in 2002, the Tribunal has dealt with a total of 17 cases concerning equal pay.

In practice, appeals are very seldom upheld in cases where questions are raised concerning the evaluation of work across occupational or professional borders. One reason why it is difficult to win an appeal is that consideration for market value can be taken into account, which opens the way for differentiated pay. In addition to this comes the requirement for appeals to be brought by individuals. The fact that employees are not entitled to information about their colleagues' pay also makes it difficult or impossible for them to compare their own pay with that of others. All in all, this may have led to individuals being unwilling to lodge an appeal, since it may entail a severe strain and there are few prospects of winning. In addition to this, the scope of the law is limited to the same enterprise, while the labour market is highly segregated by gender. The main pay differences reflect the gender-segregated labour market and therefore fall outside the scope of the Act.

The Equal Pay Commission Report considers the relationship between the Gender Equality Act and the Anti-Discrimination Ombud Act on the one hand and the Labour Court of Norway on the other. It is not permitted to enter into collective wage agreements that contravene the Gender Equality Act or other legislation. However, only the Labour Court is competent to test whether any of the provisions in a collective agreement are in contravention of legislation. The main rule is that only the parties to a collective wage agreement can bring this type of case before the Labour Court. The competence of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal in legal disputes concerning collective wage agreements is therefore limited. The Tribunal has the right to give an opinion on such cases, but its opinion is not legally binding. The rulings of the Tribunal pursuant to the Gender Equality Act apply only to individual appeals, and the Tribunal may not hand down rulings that affect collective wage agreements as such.

Children, care responsibilities and pay

Recent studies show that a relatively large part of the pay gap is ascribable to pay differences between women and men with and without children. Women's pay is lower for each child, and the more children a woman has, the greater the loss of pay. For men, the opposite tendency applies. Men with children have higher hourly pay than men without children. One study finds that 40 per cent of the difference in hourly pay between women and men in the private sector can be ascribed to children. Children have less impact on wage differences in the public sector, where 20 per cent of the pay gap is ascribable to children. Research also shows that the pay gap between women with and without children is reduced in the course of a lifetime. In this context, mothers and fathers are defined as married and cohabiting parents with children aged 0-15.

Why do children and care responsibilities have a negative impact on women's pay? Some researchers believe that children have a negative impact on pay due to mothers' long absence from work and the reduction in personal capital that results from such absence. Most mothers take their full quota of parental leave and are absent from work for one year for each child. In this period, mothers lose valuable work experience and training, which means that they become less valuable to the employer compared with a person who has been on the job throughout the entire period.

Researchers also point to other mechanisms that affect mothers' loss of pay. Some studies show that mothers have different jobs and different employers than other women. Perhaps this is because mothers stress the importance of factors other than pay when choosing a job. During the phase when

they have small children, a predictable working day with no compulsory overtime and a possibility for working part-time may be at least as important as pay. Mothers do considerably more of the housework than fathers do. We can therefore assume that it has been more important for mothers than for fathers to seek jobs that can be combined with family life.

This discussion on challenges relating to gender roles, equal parenting and gender segregation shows that these issues are closely interlinked. Change and development in one area depends on change and development in other areas.