

COUNTRY REPORT BY FINLAND

**Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995)
and
the Outcome of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General
Assembly (2000)**

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

The Finnish Government recommitted itself to the implementation of the UN Platform for Action at the Twenty-Third United Nations General Assembly special session "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" in June 2000. This report gives an overview of the achievements and challenges faced in Finland and is a continuation to the report given in 2004 ten years after the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

The Convention and respective Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women are major resources for guidance and impact vis-a-vis the work on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Finland. Recently Finland submitted its sixth periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (later referred as the CEDAW 2007 report) which includes detailed reporting of the legislation, policies and programmes promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (covering the period October 2003-September 2007). We would also like to refer to the Government of Finland's responses to the list of issues and questions with regard to the consideration of the fifth and sixth periodic reports that has been submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW/C/FIN/Q/6/Add.1). Moreover, the Committee has considered the fifth and sixth periodic reports of Finland on 9 July 2008 and has submitted its concluding observations on 18 July 2008 (CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/6). The concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women are currently being processed in order to decide on concrete measures to be taken.

As a general analysis after the fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, the focus of interventions on promoting gender equality in 1995-2008 has been on gender mainstreaming, combining work and family life as well as elimination of violence against women. There are lessons learnt and successful policies involving boys and men in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, especially related to elimination of violence against women and promotion of responsible fatherhood.

The relationship between de jure and de facto gender equality, job segregation, fixed term and atypical employment relationship and the equality planning are still challenges. Multiple discrimination, position of women belonging to minority groups, violence against women, gendered poverty and men and gender equality need to be addressed in a more coherent way. The sparsely populated country and ageing population remain as challenges for the future and possibly have impacts on the status of women, especially related to availability of and access to services, growing economic dependency rate and women's burden as caretakers in the family. We are also facing new challenges such as the gendered impact of economic crisis and the pressure to reduce the amount of employees in the public sector.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Statistics Finland published the fourth Finnish Gender Barometer in 2008. The barometer uses evaluations, attitudes and men' and women's own experiences to study the realisation of gender equality and the power relations between genders in working life, at school and within the family. A key perspective in the Barometer is the examination of the change that has taken place during the past decade.

While the majority of wage and salary earners find that gender equality at work is realised well or fairly well, women still experience their gender as much more of a disadvantage at work than men do. This inequality is most visible in questions related to pay, recognition of professional skills and career advancement. Both women and men feel they can influence on decisions made within their family. However, the main responsibility for most domestic tasks continues to lie with the mother, and the majority of women still feel they shoulder too much responsibility for the work done at home. Both women and men reckon that fathers should be more involved than at present in the care and upbringing of their children. On the other hand, both women and men estimate that workplaces especially in the private sector may still regard the use of statutory family leaves as the right of women rather than men.

The Finnish Government Action Plans for Gender Equality

The promotion of gender equality has been visible in all Government Programmes since the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. The two successive Governments of Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen have stated strong support to gender equality and action plans to implement gender equality have been produced. The Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2003-2007 contained nearly one hundred measures, for example related to themes such as: women's leadership, equal pay, reconciling work and family life, violence towards women etc. A new perspective, namely "men and equality", was brought into the dialogue on equality policy. The majority of the measures of the Action Plan 2003-2007 were implemented, some of them also generating further measures. To improve mainstreaming, the working group on the Programme strived to interact with the Policy Programmes of the Government, but in this respect the results were poor.

The Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2008–2011 consists of thematic entities that implement the key gender equality priorities in the Government Programme. The action plan aims at promoting the realisation of gender mainstreaming, bridging gender pay gaps, promoting women's careers, alleviating segregation, increasing gender awareness in schools, improving reconciliation of work and family life, reducing violence against women, reinforcing resources for gender equality work, and drawing up a Government report on gender equality.

The Government Action Plans were drawn up in cooperation with all the ministries, but each ministry answers for the implementation of the action plan within its own sector. In each ministry there is a gender equality working group which has the mandate to enhance the implementation of the measures. From 2008 onwards, the ministry working groups have a special responsibility to actively mainstream gender equality aspect in the normal procedures of the ministry, e.g. law drafting, budgeting, creation of statistics and analyses, execution of projects etc. (see CEDAW 2007 report, 40-43)

Furthermore, since the implementation requires broad-based commitment of the Government, a joint working group of the Ministries has been established with a duty to secure and monitor the implementation. The work is coordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

When preparing the Government Plans, hearings of the non-governmental organisations were organised.

The Equality Act was revised in 2005 and 2009. The main purpose of the amendments of 2005 was to incorporate EU directives into Finnish legislation, to make gender equality planning more effective and successful, and to promote equal pay. The preparation of a gender equality plan each year in cooperation with the personnel became obligatory (with sanctions, if not implemented) for workplaces with more than 30 employees as well as for educational institutions. The revised Act brought with it new tools to eliminate pay differentials, such as a mandatory responsibility for employers to conduct a pay survey as part of the gender equality assessment. This involves examination of the pay systems used and the way they are applied. The purpose of the pay survey is to examine whether women and men are treated equally and whether they receive equal treatment when performing equally demanding work. The amendments of 2009 had to do with incorporating the EU directive prohibiting discrimination in the supply of goods and services into the Act.

Finland has ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol) in September 2006. Finland is also a member to UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and has signed its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Finland has also signed the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings in August 2006 and is currently defining the prerequisites for ratification.

Trafficking in human beings and aggravated trafficking in human beings were criminalized as offences in the Penal Code of Finland in August 2004. According to the Penal Code, a person convicted for trafficking in human beings shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a minimum of four months and a

maximum of six years and for aggravated trafficking in human beings to imprisonment for a minimum of two years and a maximum of ten years. The European Union Council Directive 2004/81/EC on residence permits issued to third-country nationals who are victims of trafficking and who cooperate with the competent authorities has been transposed into national legislation in July 2006 by amending the Aliens Act. An amendment to the Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers to set up a system of measures to help victims of human trafficking entered into force in the beginning of 2007. In addition to criminalising the purchase of sexual services from young persons, an Act criminalising the purchase of sexual services from victims of human trafficking or pandering entered into force in October 2006. The penal scale of the latter two imposes a fine or imprisonment for a maximum of six months.

A Revised National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Human Beings was adopted by the Government on 25 June 2008. It represents an update and further specification of the measures described in the first National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Human Beings adopted in 2005.

Mainstreaming of gender equality is a key objective of government's gender equality policy. It is applied, among the others, in the drafting of law and in state budget procedures. Promoting gender equality requires direct budget allocations. The Government Programme 2007-2011 states that more resources will be allocated to government agencies and women's organisations engaged in promoting gender issues. In 2007 the Parliament also approved an Act that regularises the largest women's organisations in Finland a yearly state subsidy

More details of the legislative reforms and jurisdiction are given in the Sixth Periodic Report of the Government of Finland on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2007).

Challenges ahead

In July 2008 the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women considered the fifth and sixth periodic reports of Finland. The Committee welcomed e.g. the high proportion of women in political decision-making as well as the reform of the Act on Equality between Women and Men in 2005 and the measures to combat trafficking in women and girls. Principal areas of concern were among others the inadequate measures to combat violence against women, the persistence of a gender-based wage gap and the situation of women belonging to minority groups.

The resources earmarked for gender equality or women's empowerment are mainly allocated through short-term project funding leading to various problems, such as lack of sustainability, coherence and uncertainties in the availability of services. The change in structures requires a change in attitudes of individuals. A longer-term strategy in gender-sensitization and practical tools for gender mainstreaming are required at all levels of state administration. The two latest Government Action Plans for Gender Equality have noticed these problems and measures have been introduced to solve them. Strong commitment to mainstreaming and the realisation of Gender Equality Information Services are some of the needed improvements in the Finnish gender equality policy.

Finland as an international actor

Finland has a long tradition of promoting gender equality in its foreign policy. The Government of Finland is committed to mainstreaming gender equality in all its activities and policies in this field. Special emphasis is given to the following thematic areas: Human rights of women and girls, promotion of sexual and reproductive rights, elimination of violence against women, education of women and girls, gender dimensions of globalisation and women's rights in conflict situations.

The importance of gender equality as one of the main goals of Finnish development cooperation is manifested in the constant and systematic way in which gender issues are highlighted in the various

Finnish development cooperation policy and strategy papers, namely in the Decision-in-Principle on development Policy of 2004 and the Decision-in-Principle on the Operationalisation of Development Policy Objectives in Finland's International Development Cooperation of 2001 as well as earlier papers.

The most recent Government Decision-in-Principle on Development Policy, adopted in 2007, states that the most important goal of development policy is to eradicate poverty in line with the Millennium Development Goals which were set up in 2000. A global partnership should be created involving public and private sectors in both developing and developed countries. Eradicating poverty is possible only if progress is made in developing countries is economically, socially and ecologically sustainable. The rights and status of women and girls are emphasised as a priority and cross-cutting issue in development policy as well as the promotion of gender and social equality and equal opportunities for participation. In Finnish human rights policy, women's rights are similarly regarded both as a priority area and a cross-cutting theme, as expressed in the Government Report on Human Rights Policy to Parliament (2004). The next Government report on Human Rights Policy for Parliament will be delivered in the autumn of 2009. The human rights of women continue to be a main priority area, with a specific focus on participation of women in democratic processes, sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as violence against women and girls.

Finland has been actively promoting gender issues in international fora, e.g. in the EU, in OECD and throughout the UN system, including specialized agencies, operational programmes and international financial institutions. At major UN conferences, Finland has systematically emphasized the importance of gender mainstreaming and highlighted the rights of women. Finland has actively promoted gender equality for example in the context of climate change and by systematically emphasising sexual and reproductive health and rights.

In multilateral cooperation, Finland has financially supported UNIFEM programmes targeting the prevention and elimination of violence against women. Finland's substantial support to UNFPA can be considered an important contribution towards the advancement of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

In 2008, Finland launched its programme on National Action Plan for implementing UN Resolution 1325, "Women, Peace and Security". Finland developed the 1325 national action plan as a joint effort between five different Ministries, the Office of the President, academia and civil society. This collaboration created a comprehensive and coherent plan with wider commitment to its implementation. The goals of the action plan are promoted at three levels: the national level, as a part of the Government Programme; at the international level, in Finland's active engagement in international organisations; and at the local level of host countries, where Finland can play a direct role in alleviating crises and conflicts and enhance gender awareness among local population.

Finland's national action plan is designed as a tool for implementing Resolution 1325 which can be used to promote the status and involvement of women, and the implementation of equality in the situations and tasks encountered in conflict prevention, peace building and crisis management. In order to ensure that the goals of the action plan are met, one or more ministries have been designated as the responsible actors in respect of each goal mentioned in the Action Plan. The goals are pursued, inter alia, in development co-operation, providing humanitarian assistance and technical training, through diplomacy and engaging in crisis management activities. In crisis management Finland is further developing training and research, and seeking new action models to better implement Resolution targets in missions. In recruitment of experts specific attention will be paid to the implementation of social and gender equality and tolerance. Equal numbers of men and women in missions, especially in gender sensitive tasks, will also provide better potential for promoting the implementation of human rights.

The Finnish Government approved the Finland's National Strategy for Civilian Crisis Management in August 2008. According to the strategy Finland promotes the principles of social and gender equality and tolerance in all component areas of civilian crisis management. Expertise in these issues will

continue to be included in civilian crisis management missions. The Ministry of the Interior mainstreams the organization and actions of Crisis Management Centre Finland (CMC Finland).

In the context of co-operation with neighbouring areas (Nordic Council of Ministers, Baltic States and Russian Federation), Finland has promoted gender equality and women's empowerment with the objective of increasing stability, welfare, equality and social stability in the region. Concrete examples of this include e.g. support to projects on preventing trafficking in women, violence against women and sexually transmitted diseases, and on promoting women's entrepreneurship and awareness of equal rights.

Part II: 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

Reporting under part II on the progress in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action deals mainly with legislative acts and specific programmes undertaken during the five-year reporting period 2004-2009. The progress reporting on implementation follows the twelve critical areas of concern. Issues related to gender mainstreaming and institutional development are dealt with under part III of the report. The sixth periodic CEDAW report (2007) gives further details in each reform and programmes. References to specific parts of CEDAW report are made under each critical area.

Elimination of multiple discrimination – safeguarding equality

Roma

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has appointed a working group that aims at drawing up a National Policy on Roma by 30 June 2009. The objective of the policy is equal treatment and inclusion of people belonging to the Romani minority in different spheres of life in Finland. The aim is to incorporate multiple discrimination, including the status of Romani women, into the policy. The National Policy on Roma concerns all the sectors of administration and will be prepared in cooperation with Romani people's own organisations. Kromana, an organisation representing Romani women is also taking part in the working group. A monitoring system will be created for the policy. The work is coordinated by the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs.

Persons with disabilities

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is currently preparing a National Policy on Disability that defines the disability policy measures for future years. The policy is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the 2006 Government Report on Disability Policy. The objective is to create a strong foundation for the human rights, non-discrimination, equality and inclusion of persons with disabilities. The aim is to incorporate the concept of multiple discrimination, including the status of women with disabilities, into the policy. The policy will be prepared in cooperation between the different administrative sectors and expert bodies. The National Policy on Disability should be completed in 2010. The work is coordinated by the National Council on Disability.

Immigrants

In 2009 the National Institute for Health and Welfare is launching a comprehensive research project on the health and wellbeing of immigrants. The research objective is to get basic information about the health status of immigrants, the issues affecting immigrants' health and wellbeing as well as the need for services among immigrants. The research project focuses on Russians, Somalis, Kurds and Kosovo Albanians residing in Helsinki, Vantaa, Tampere, Turku, and Vaasa. Regarding women, key issues include reproductive health, living conditions and habits among women as well as their need for services. Research results are expected in 2010.

The Non-Discrimination Act; The Ministry of Justice has appointed a working group that aims at revising the current Non-Discrimination Act.

During the past few years and especially after the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, particular attention has been paid to persons or groups subjected to multiple discrimination. Women and girls belonging to minorities (such as Sámi, Roma, or immigrant women) and women with disabilities often face multiple discrimination based on ethnic origin or health status, as well as gender.

The Act on Safeguarding Equality (21/2004) entered into force in 2004. The Act forbids discrimination based on age, ethnic or national origin, language, religion, conviction, opinion, status of health,

disability, sexual orientation and other personal reason. The special aim of the Act is to tackle multiple discrimination, which has also been a major concern for doubly marginalized women.

The Ombudsman for Minorities started as an authority on 1 September 2001, when the Act (660/2001) and the Decree (661/2001) on the Ombudsman for Minorities entered into force. It is the task of the Ombudsman for Minorities to promote good ethnic relations as well as the position and rights of foreigners and those belonging to ethnic minorities in Finnish society, to monitor the implementation of equality, to supervise compliance with the discrimination ban against those of ethnic origin as well as to make initiatives, to inform, report and carry out the tasks assigned to the Ombudsman for Minorities in the Aliens' Act (378/1991).

The task of the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) set up by the Government in 2001 is particularly to promote good ethnic relations as well as to prevent racism and ethnic discrimination.

Challenges to eliminating multiple discrimination

Some 10 per cent of the population is estimated to have an injury or disability causing a significant detriment. Among them, approximately 60 per cent are women. There are hardly any research results or statistics on discrimination faced by women with disabilities. Information about persons with disabilities is often gender-blind and the Finnish disability policy is gender-neutral.

The Finnish constitution provides a special status for both the Sámi and Roma minorities. The CEDAW 2003 report gives further information on the situation of minority women in Finland, including immigrant women.

A. Women and poverty¹

The relative poverty in Finland has almost doubled since 1995, and it has risen also in the past few years. The proportion of people living in poor households was 13.6 per cent in 2007 compared to 12.2 in 2004 and 7.2 in 1995. The rise of poverty has been strongest among single parent families where it has quadrupled from 1995 to 2007. Poverty in single parent families is gendered: nine in ten poor single parents are women.

The relative poverty of elderly people started to grow. It was 30.3 per cent among over 64-year-olds in 2007 compared to 12.5 per cent in 1995. Women's share of poor households among elderly one person households was 77 per cent in 2007. Poverty has also become more persistent during the past 20 years from having been 4.6 per cent of the population in 1998 to 8.4 per cent in 2006. A majority (57 %) of the persistently poor people were women; the one most significant group being elderly women in one person households: almost one third of them were poor on a persistent basis in 2006.

This development is due to a growing income gap. Relative poverty has become more common in families with children: the share of families with children under the poverty line was 5 per cent in 1995 but 13 per cent in 2007. As many of these families have more than three children, the poverty rate of children is higher, that is 14 per cent. Relative poverty is connected to gender also in families with two providers. The smaller income a two parent family has, the more often the main provider is a woman. This is the case in 40 per cent of poor two parent families, while only in 20 per cent of two parent families with middle level or high income the main provider is a woman.

In order to promote well-being and reduce poverty, the the focal points (10) of the Government Programme's welfare policy are:

- A rewarding and just social protection system,
- Comprehensive and effective social and health services,

¹ Regarding to poverty, The European Union Member States prepare national reports for the promotion of social inclusion in 2008-2010, in the context of the EU open method of coordination. The Finnish report was submitted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in September 2008 (http://www.stm.fi/c/document_library/get_file?folderId=39503&name=DLFE-7103.pdf)

- Social and health care services innovation project,
- Well-being of families,
- Sustainable pension policy,
- Sustainable substance abuse policy,
- Other social and health policy: social security of those living on grants, the farmers' holiday and stand-in scheme, and their well-being at work, the capabilities of nongovernmental organisations,
- Developing working life,
- Employment policy
- Improving gender equality.

Finland's key macro-economic measures are divided into three areas: (1) to ensure a sustainable pension system (2) to curb public spending and (3) to secure welfare services and increase public sector productivity.

In reducing poverty the main areas for action and monitoring are the social security reform, the restructuring of municipalities and services, the policy programme for health promotion, the policy programme for the well-being of children, youth and families, the policy programme for employment, entrepreneurship and working life, the gender equality programme and the service innovation project in social welfare and health care. The gender perspective is being mainstreamed across all law drafting, budget procedures and other major projects. It will also play a part in social and health care services and in efforts to reduce health inequalities. A report on gender equality will be issued to Parliament at the beginning of 2010.

B. Education and training of women

Achievements

All Finnish girls go to school and women are well-educated. Among 20-64-year-old women, 75.4 per cent are secondary-level graduates, as opposed to 71.5 per cent of men. Over 90 per cent of those aged 16 to 18, half of the 19-24-year olds and one quarter of those aged 25-29 were studying in some post-basic level education leading to a qualification.

Also the share of women among university-level graduates in Finland is higher than that of men. Regarding the adult education statistics, in 2000 more than one half of the population aged 18 to 64, or almost 1.8 million, participated in adult education, that is, education and training specifically intended and organised for adults. Almost three fifths of women took part in such education and training, while the proportion for men was slightly under one half. This difference in participation rates between men and women has remained the same for the last twenty years.

Although especially young women are highly educated in Finland, the educational fields are strongly divided into women's and men's fields. Over 80 per cent of those with a technical education were men in 2001, while 89 per cent of those with social or health care education were women. Also the education, service and art fields are female-dominated with a share of about 70 per cent.

The total reform of the legislation on education entered into force on 1 January 1999. In connection with the legislative reform, special attention was paid to ensuring educational equality and equal educational services. The legislation also included a provision on the right of the student to a safe study environment.

Challenges ahead

Finnish basic education is based on a gender-neutral way of thinking, which, in spite of its underlying equality, may in practice result in inequality in the education system. In the performance funding granted by the Ministry of Education to polytechnics, attention has been paid to the strong differentiation of the training in some fields to female and male dominated fields. Equality issues are also becoming more prominent in teacher training. Women are also a clear majority in preparatory

education of immigrants. Special attention should be directed to women emigrating from countries where literacy rates are low, particularly among women and girls.

C. Women and health

The new Government Programme (2007-2011) states that "In social and health services and in the work with a view to reduce the differences related to the health of women and men, the gender perspective will be focused on". The principle of mainstreaming will be taken into account in the policy programme for promoting health included in the Government Programme. During its term, the Government, partnership and family guidance will be promoted. At the initiative of the social policy ministerial committee, an action programme for reducing differences in health is being prepared at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health during 2007. The main focus will be on the reduction of socio-economic differences related to health, taking gender differences into account.

By European standards, the Finnish fertility has however remained relatively high. The life expectancy has slightly increased for both men and women and the difference between men and women has decreased slightly.

The demographic structure in Finland is at the moment favourable but it will change drastically in the next few years, since the population is ageing at a rapid pace. The share of population outside the labour force is growing and the population of working age will begin to decline as soon as from the year 2010.

Successful examples

Promoting the health of young people (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health). The regular follow-up of young people's health, health habits and healthy school environment since 1998 has been successful in providing precise data on youngsters' health and in inspiring further actions on community level. Several NGOs are or have been implementing projects on the prevention of genital mutilation of girls. The activities have included preventive campaigning at the community level, improving the health of women and girls, educating health care students and personnel.

NGOs receive funding for counselling and campaigning on the issues of sexual health, family planning and infertility. The Sexual Health Clinic of the Family Federation of Finland aims at promoting sexual health, improving sexual health services by offering services such as the Open House, which offers free of charge counselling and treatment for all under 18-year-old girls and under 20-year-old boys. Another project aims at improving men's welfare through counselling, creating more positive media atmosphere of masculinity and creating sexual education material and providing education for health and social care professionals. The Clinic has launched new services for women who have been sexually abused.

Challenges ahead

One of the future challenges is to improve the economic dependency ratio. An ageing population structure means added pressure on the sustainability of public economy, firstly as a factor increasing the pension and care costs. Secondly, if the decrease in the supply of labour cannot be compensated for by increasing the employment rate and productivity, the economic growth and the increase of tax revenues will slow down, which in turn will make it harder to finance social protection. A growing unemployment rate and increasing unemployment costs would mean that less resources are available for developing services.

Women's specific health needs relate to the access and availability of services for the treatment of osteoporosis and related bone diseases, breast cancer and mental health problems. Taking into consideration the ageing of the population, services for ageing women will be in great demand in the future.

Access to health care services

Access to health care services has improved due to several actions taken, however, challenges remain in providing equal access to health care services in remote areas and for people with special needs. The CEDAW 2007 report also gives details of the health care services provided to women belonging to minorities.

The availability of health care services in the municipal system has been improved through amended legislation, which came into force on 1 March 2005, with maximum time limits for access to non-emergency treatment. The regional functioning of services has been improved also by means of the municipal and service structure reform (the PARAS project). The framework act on the reform of the municipal and service structure that entered into force in February 2007 obliges municipalities to organise central social and health care services for the entire population. The starting point for the reform is the promotion of health and well-being and strengthening the population base through the organisation of services.

The Health 2015 public health programme remains an important strategy for health promotion in Finland. In addition the Government launched a Policy programme for Health Promotion in 2007. The objectives of the programme are e.g. reinforcing the structures of health promotion, achieving lifestyle changes that contribute to the prevention of public health problems, strengthening the basic services of social welfare and health care and the development of new work patterns for health promotion, promoting the health and functional ability of older people, and narrowing health inequalities.

A National Action Plan to Reduce Health Inequalities 2008–2011 outlines proposals for strategic policy definitions and the most important measures to reduce socioeconomic health inequalities in Finland. The main objectives of the programme are (1) to affect poverty, education, employment, working conditions and housing conditions through socio-political measures, (2) to promote a healthy lifestyle in general and among those in a weaker social position in particular and (3) to improve the availability and utilisation of social and health services.

Reporting on sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health issues

The UNGASS Country Progress Report of Finland from the period of 2006-2007 describes in detail the HIV/AIDS situation in Finland. The report can be downloaded from the following address:
http://www.ktl.fi/attachments/suomi/julkaisut/julkaisusarja_b/2008/2008b04.pdf

The report states that in a global comparison and even compared to its EU-peers, HIV/Aids prevention, treatment care and support has been successful in Finland. Similar to many EU-countries, Finland fulfils and even exceeds most of the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment goals, even on the indicator level.

However, despite the relatively favourable HIV/Aids-situation, sexually transmitted HIV-infections have clearly increased in Finland during recent years. The reporting brought forward relevant future risks and need for improvement especially concerning long-term prevention work. Second generation behavioral surveillance among adult population would need to be further developed.

D. Violence against women

Measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women

Ministries concerning the progress of the measures written down in the Programme for the A The Government Programme of the first Cabinet of Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen (2003-2007) made the commitment to make interfering with incidences of violence more effective. In accordance with the Government Programme, the Ministries drafted programmes for the reduction of violence. The reduction of close relationship violence was included in all of these programmes.

One of the problems faced in the prevention of close relationship and domestic violence has been the fact that the activities connected to it have been disparate and uncoordinated. So far, work for the reduction of violence has been done, first and foremost, resting on different initiatives and projects. The National Council for Crime Prevention set up a department for violence to improve the coordination, with representatives from all relevant Ministries as regards the reduction of violence. The Council for Crime Prevention is an organ of cooperation consisting of experts, which works under the Ministry of Justice, in charge of planning and implementing measures designed to prevent crime. A Ministerial group has been set up with the task of reducing close relationship and domestic violence more effectively. This group is composed of the Ministers of Justice, the Interior, Health and Social Services, Foreign Affairs and the Minister in charge of matters pertaining to equality. In addition to the Ministerial group, a network of public officials from these Ministries has been created for this purpose.

On 14 December 2006, the Government adopted a decision of principle for setting up a National Programme for the reduction of violence that will continue until the end of 2008.

The National Action Programme to Implement Equality of the Government (2004-2007) and the Goal and Action Programme of Social Affairs and Health care (2004-2007) focused attention to the reduction of violence against women. Within the Action Programme to Prevent Intimate Partner and Domestic Violence, launched by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health for 2004–2007, local approaches have been created and a contact person for intimate partner and domestic violence has been appointed in nearly every municipality/economic region. Recommendations on how to prevent intimate partner and domestic violence will be drawn up for the municipalities' aid. The realisation of the recommendations will be reviewed nationally during 2011.

Finnish shelter home services still have lackings. According to the recommendation of the EU, there should be one vacancy in a shelter home per 10 000 inhabitants.² Following the recommendations, Finland should have around 500 shelters instead of the existing 120. However, there are a lot of sparsely populated areas, and it is not reasonable to establish shelters in these areas: Eastern and Northern Finland as well as Northern Ostrobothnia are the regions with the least vacancies. The northernmost shelter home is situated in Rovaniemi, Lapland.

Each municipality or economic region has designated certain places as refuges for women and children threatened by violence. In cases of emergency, the 24 hours social services refer persons in need of shelter to the municipality's designated refuge. The type of the refuges varies across municipalities. In recent years there have been efforts to improve the organisation of emergency services. Nearly everywhere across the country, there is a social worker on call 24 hours and during weekends. Outpatient services specifically designed for battered women are not comprehensively available. NGOs play a significant role in organising such outpatient services. The services are mainly financed by municipalities. In case of NGO activities, Finland's Slot Machine Association provides financing.

A working group has been set up to elaborate on issues relating to domestic violence and the need to amend the Criminal Act in this respect. The working groups mandate ends on 31 May 2009.

Trafficking in human beings

Trafficking in human beings was identified as a priority during the Finnish EU Presidency 2006: Finland enforced actively the effective implementation of EU's Action Plan on Trafficking in Human Beings by organizing, for example, a seminar on the identification of child victims of human trafficking at the end of October 2006 in Helsinki. Trafficking was also one of the main priorities during the 2008 Finnish Presidency of OSCE.

Finland provides funding for action against trafficking in human beings as part of its neighbouring area and development cooperation. During the past years support has been channelled to projects in, inter alia, Cambodia, Kosovo and the Kaliningrad area.

² Recommendations of the EU -Expert Meeting on Violence Against Women. 8-10 November 1999, Jyväskylä, Finland.

E. Women and armed conflict: Action Plan 1325

Finland launched its National Action Plan for the implementation of 1325 in September 2008. The plan covers the years from 2008 through 2011 and encompasses the following areas: women's role and participation in conflict prevention, peace consolidation and peace building; gender-issues in crisis management and peacekeeping, including recruitment and training; as well as the protection of women and their human rights. The implementation of the action plan is systematically monitored by a follow-up group, lead by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The follow-up is coordinated with other measures related to mainstreaming the gender perspective.

The Ministry of Defence has developed a code of conduct for peace keeping missions and integrates gender issues in the training of peace keeping personnel. Training is given in social and cultural aspects of the mission area. The use of prostitutes is prohibited. The code of conduct is monitored and immediate action taken in case of violation.

F. Women and economy

Access to employment

Due to the unbalanced labour demand and supply, Finland suffers from structural unemployment affecting more than 170,000 persons. The case of 25-44-year-old women, the unemployment rate was slightly higher than that of men. The differences in the unemployment rates of women and men were small.

Wage gap

The differences in the salaries of women and men have remained about the same in the 2000s. Women continue to earn about 20 % less than men in all the employment sectors of the labour market. When considered on the basis of salaries on average, women's salaries only amount to 80% of men's. The gap varies somewhat depending on the branch. In the municipal sector, women's average earnings represented 84 % of men's average earnings, the corresponding figure for the State and private sector having been 82 and 81 %.

The Finnish labour market is strongly segregated according to gender, that is, divided into women's and men's branches and professions. This relates essentially to differences in the salaries of women and men. There have been efforts to alleviate the segregation by gender in education and professions by a number of different measures. The change is slow to take place. As a matter of fact, girls and women have made their way to several male branches, in particular those that require high education. Men have not been interested in traditional female-dominated education and jobs to the same extent. This is partly because of the low salaries on the women's branches and jobs.

According to studies, the level of education and work experience seem to have a bearing on the differences in salaries. In jobs requiring lower levels of education the differences in the salaries of women and men do not tend to be that significant whereas gender differences in the salaries of higher-education graduates are the biggest.

Both education and development of labour market practises are seen to play key roles in reducing occupational segregation by the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Equal Pay Programme. One of the goals of the Equal Pay Programme is to increase the proportion of the employees in such professions in which women and men are equally represented up to 20 percent of the entire work force.

Educational institutions are obliged to conduct annual equality plans. This obligation was included in the Act on Equality between Women and Men in the context of the amendment of the Act in 2005. It applies to upper secondary schools, vocational schools, universities, polytechnics and adult education centres. During 2009, Ministry of Education will evaluate the level of gender equality planning conducted by educational institutions. The Equal Pay Programme will launch an initiative to reduce educational and professional segregation in 2009. This initiative will create a network of equality

experts within educational sector and provide equality related professional training and online support material for gender equality planning.

University of Helsinki continues the coordination of an initiative that was launched in 2008 in relation to teacher training. This networking initiative is based on collaboration between the University of Tampere, University of Turku and University of Oulu. The initiative increases awareness of equality issues and gender sensitivity of students partaking in teacher training. The Equal Pay Programme organises a major national seminar concerning both vertical and horizontal segregation in fall 2009.

The Government has made determined efforts in trying to narrow down differences in the salaries paid to men and women by launching a tripartite Programme for equal pay for work of equal value in 2006. A high-level monitoring group monitors the progress of the Programme for Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value.

According to the Government Programme, the goal of the Government is to proceed to the clear narrowing down on the differences in the salaries of women and men during this legislative period. The Government commits itself to the Programme for Equal Pay, the package of measures of which will be carried out during the period. The Government has reserved the sum of 200 000 euros per year for the funding of the programme for the duration of the electoral period. The Government supported a pay settlement (2007–2010) in the municipal sector bound to promote the competitiveness of salaries in predominantly female sectors by an increased Government transfer to municipalities.

Gender Equality Planning and Pay Surveys 2008

The minimum requirements for gender equality planning at workplaces were specified in the context of the amendment of the Act on equality between Women and Men in 2005. As a part of gender equality planning employers have to carry out a specific pay survey and investigate reasons for any differences in pay. The Programme of Equal Pay launched a study to get information about the present situation in regard to equality planning and pay services at workplaces in Finland.

The study provides quantitative information on the prevalence and content of gender equality planning and measures following the process.

In 2007, the Ombudsman for Equality was contacted 120 times in relation to suspected discriminatory treatment in pay, from which altogether 47 cases were officially inspected. Whereas in 2008, the Ombudsman for Equality was contacted altogether 140 times, from which 40 cases were officially inspected.

Harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men

In the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2004–2007 the measures to improve combining work and family life focused on the improvement of the legislation on family leave schemes, and on equalisation of leave costs between female-dominated and male-dominated branches.

Legislation on family leave schemes was improved by extending the parents' right to partial home care leave (shorter working hours) to last until the end of the child's second year at school.

Also the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2008–2011 includes measures to improve combining work and family life. The Government will set up a tripartite working group to work out the possibilities to elaborate the family leave system. In that work gender equality is a central theme. Also the paternal leave period will be lengthened from three to five weeks in 2010.

In segregated labour market the uneven use of parental leave causes more costs for women's employers. The great majority of fathers take paternity leave. Encouraging fathers to take up more parental leave has for long been an important goal in the Government Action Plans for Gender Equality, due to the uneven use of parental leave between women and men. Legislative improvements are not enough to change the situation and thus a media campaign was organised by the Ministry of Social Affairs in co-operation with the central labour market organisations in 2007-2008.

Research on the consequences of family leaves has been funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. A study on men and parental leave indicates

that although fathers' involvement in childcare is widely understood as important, in practice the mother's primacy in childcare is not challenged. Gender ideology plays a significant role in the actualisation of leave rights in families. The likelihood of sharing parental leave is related to a high education level of both parents, as well as to the father's employment in the female-dominated public sector. Although many fathers report family economy as an obstacle for their take-up of leave, their choices are based more on assumptions than calculations.

Future challenges

Research findings suggest that the one of the main challenges of work – family reconciliation for family policy still lies in the unequal sharing of family leaves. They also indicate that individual non-transferable leave rights for fathers are needed to actualise father's childcare responsibility. The parental leave system should also be evaluated from the view point of different families: single parent households, same-sex couples, families with adopted children. The small entrepreneurs costs linked to family leaves need to be assessed.

Regulation of fixed-term employment to encourage family-building, and of working hours to support good work – family balance also entails new challenges to legislation.

Another challenge is to widen the perspective on work – family reconciliation to encompass intergenerational help and support to elderly parents and other near ones, as well as help given by employed grandparents in the care of grandchildren.

An important issue is how to improve in companies and other work organisations awareness of the usefulness of a good work – family balance to both employers and employees. Possibilities to develop family-friendliness at the workplace level are good: there are several good practices of flexible working arrangements and support schemes for family leave takers to adopt.

G. Women in power and decision-making

After the 2007 parliamentary elections, women represent 42 % of the MPs. First time in the Finnish history, there are 60 % women ministers in the government.

Achievements

The Government has stated that it will actively enhance the possibilities of women to build careers in working life, both in the private sector firms and in public sector.

The Government applies the gender quota provision of 40 % in the nomination of State committees, advisory boards and other corresponding bodies as well as municipal bodies with the exception of municipal councils.

Extending the numerical quota provision to cover State-owned companies was considered at the Committee stage, but a decision was made to establish a programme in which the Ministries increase the share of women among the members of the boards of directors of State-owned companies on a voluntary basis. This procedure was confirmed by the Government's National Action Programme to Implement Gender Equality 2003-2007, requiring State-owned companies or State associate companies to increase the number of women to 40 %. This goal has also been reached. Also in the companies where the government has not a large share, it will consider gender equality when nominating its candidates to the company boards.

Furthermore, the government continues the dialogue with the private sector about the means of how to enhance women's career possibilities in the privately owned companies. The latest of the cooperation seminars was arranged in May 2008. In the private sector, the new corporate government code published in 2008 states that there should be women and men in all company boards. Also the recent studies show that the diversity in the management positions is potentially a key factor for economical success. Still, the development of women's share in the company boards of the private firms is modest.

The statistics of gender and leadership is in the process of being developed, but unfortunately the latest data of all the leadership positions in the private sector is not available.

In 2008, a special working group was nominated by the Minister of Public Administration and Municipal Affairs to present the best practices and means to increase women's share in the leading positions in the state sector. In its report, the working group presents fourteen proposals for action to be implemented/mainstreamed in the practices of recruiting, training and supporting career building in the state sector.

Future challenges

The quota provision in the municipalities has increased the participation of women in preparatory decision-making bodies at the municipal level. In the local elections 2008, women's proportion of municipal councillors increased slightly, from 36.4 % to 36.7 %. However, women are still a clear minority among mayors and chairs of municipal executive boards. The structural reorganisation of Finnish municipalities may even weaken women's possibilities to reach these top positions. 79 % of municipal employees are women. Hence, the gendered effects of the reorganisation of Finnish municipalities should be monitored and evaluated. Equality planning within municipalities: personnel policies and gender impact assessment and gender budgeting initiatives should be strengthened. According to a study published in 2009, 66 % of experts called by parliamentary committees are men. Only a very small minority of those consulted had expertise in the field of gender equality. This is problematic from the point of view of gender mainstreaming in political decision-making.

H. Human rights of women

The Government Report on Human Rights Policy released in April 2004, for the first time, in addition to covering the international human rights environment, also focuses on human rights questions in Finland.

The report reiterates that human rights are a priority in the government's foreign and security policy. Finland's active international role in promoting human rights and its good record in the implementation of human rights obligations in Finland are interconnected.

In Finnish human rights policy, special emphasis is given to the rights of women, children, minorities, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. Nationally, the government is committed to e.g. counteracting human trafficking and violence against women, as referred to above. Internationally, the Government aims at improving the consistency of Finnish human rights policy and considering human rights as a cross-cutting issue in all foreign policy sectors.

I. Women and the media

The Council of Ethics in Advertising issues statements based on the International Code of Advertising Practice stating "advertisements should not condone any form of discrimination based upon sex and they should not undermine human dignity". However, the council may not issue sanctions.

The training toolkit "Screening Gender" is a co-production between five public service broadcasting organisations: NOS (Netherlands), NRK (Norway), SVT (Sweden), YLE (Finland) and ZDF (Germany). A sixth broadcaster, DR (Denmark), was part of the consortium during its first year of operation. The project was developed over three years (1997–2000) and was co-financed by the Commission of the European Communities.

The kit contains a variety of tools designed to provide insight into gender and gender portrayal on television. The materials can be used in a wide range of training contexts – for example, in courses on various aspects of programme-making (interviewing techniques, script and scenario writing, commentary, visual grammar, and so on); in seminars to raise awareness among decision-making groups such as managers, programme buyers, commissioning editors; in discussions with trainers themselves to help focus on training themes and priorities.

Finland is implementing a project “Information Society Skills for All” as part of the National Information Society Strategy. Special projects are supported to develop the information society skills of girls and women. Measures are being taken e.g. to increase the relative share of women in education in the information industry fields.

J. Women and the environment

The Land Use and Building Act came into force in 2000. Women have been actively involved in developing participative and interactive working methods as part of the land use. Experiences gained and lessons learned during the environmental impact assessments and enforcement of land use and building act could be used in other sectors as well.

K. The girl-child

The CEDAW 2007 report gives detailed information on issues related to girls under article 12 on health issues Child care issues are reported under article 11.

Part III: Institutional Development

National mechanisms to promote gender equality

An administrative reform of the national equality mechanisms supporting gender equality took place in 2001. Three entities were formed: Gender Equality Unit, Ombudsman for Equality and Council for Gender Equality. The reform divided the area into three entities: preparing legislation and Government's gender equality policy, supervision and monitoring of the Act on Equality and promotion of the implementation of gender equality.

Through the Beijing Platform for Action the Government has committed itself to a close co-operation with central institutions and non-governmental organizations when drafting the national implementation programme. In general, a tripartite system is used for preparation of legislation and policies. Since 1999, representatives of NYTKIS, the Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations, and the National Council of Women have been invited as permanent experts in the Council for Gender Equality. Women's organisations participate as expert members of working groups and are often involved in drafting laws through written statements or hearing mechanisms in preparatory phases.

The tasks of the Gender Equality Unit include drafting and developing the Government's gender equality policy in collaboration with other ministries, preparation of national legislation, tasks related to the European Union's equality legislation and policy, and tasks related to international affairs. The Unit coordinates gender mainstreaming in the state administration. Further details are given below.

The Ombudsman for Equality, in turn, is an independent supervisory authority in connection with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The tasks of the Ombudsman for Equality include supervision of the Act on Equality and especially the discrimination bans of the Act as well as the promotion of the Act. The Ombudsman for Equality handles issues that have emerged in the supervision of the Act on Equality and other related issues. In 2005 the Ombudsman was given the task of monitoring equality planning in workplaces and educational institutions. In 2007 and 2008 over 430 cases, which concerned monitoring the Equality Act, emerged. In addition, the Ombudsman got approximately 600 requests for advice and information on telephone.

The Council for Gender Equality is a parliamentary body regulated by a decree (389/2001) assigned to promote social equality between women and men. It, inter alia, monitors the implementation of equality in society, makes initiatives and proposals and issues statements to develop legislation and other measures affecting equality, supports collaboration between authorities and various organizations, promotes gender sensitive research, and utilization of results of such research.

The Council consists of maximum 13 members, selected according to the relative strength of the political parties, and permanent expert members by the Government for a term of the parliament. The main partners of the council are political decision-makers, women's research institutes, women's and men's organizations, labour market organizations (social partners) and other non-governmental organizations.

The council disseminates information on issues such as violence against women, active fatherhood and boys, girls and gender equality. The council has since 1998 annually awarded men, women or groups promoting gender equality. So far awardees have been active e.g. in reduction of men's violent behaviour, gender equality education in schools and promoting gender equality through art.

See also the Sixth Periodic Report of the Government of Finland on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2007), paras 10, 13, 156, 170–173.

For more information on roles of different stakeholders (especially NGOs) see the additional report concerning the 6th periodic report of Finland: Submission to the United Nation's Committee on the

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (June 2008; <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/CFWA.pdf>).

Human trafficking

Since 2006, victims of human trafficking are entitled to a fixed-term residence permit issued for six months to one year when there are well-founded reasons to believe that they are victims of human trafficking, they have broken the contacts with the criminals and are willing to help the authorities to solve the crime. The residence permit may be renewed if the requirements are still valid. Victims in a particularly vulnerable position are issued a fixed-term residence permit of permanent nature, and in their case, cooperation with the authorities is not required.

Before issuing the actual residence permit, authorities may provide victims with a reflection period, varying from 30 days up to six months. During this period the victims can recover from their experiences and decide whether they are willing to cooperate with the authorities.

A system providing services and support measures for victims of human trafficking was formalised in the beginning of 2007. This support system can encompass persons suspected or identified to be victims of human trafficking and can also include witnesses.

Activities that are provided to victims (or persons suspected to be victims) include the reception of customers and the necessary emergency help, arranging housing, social and health care services, advisory and legal services as well as support for integration or safe return. Ensuring the customers safety while within the scope of the support system has also been taken in consideration, and there are separate measures concerning special services required by minors.

Outreach work and maintenance of contact channels as well as part of the other support measures associated with the system are ensured by NGOs through project funding and operative financial assistance.

The services and support measures are ensured by the municipalities for those customers who have a municipality of residence. The Government can compensate a municipality for the costs of special services required because of victimization for a person resident in the municipality.

In June 2008, the Government appointed the Ombudsman for Minorities the National Rapporteur on action against human trafficking, acting as an independent authority. In addition to the steering group monitoring the implementation of the Revised National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Human Beings an outside, independent evaluation of systems combating human trafficking and how they work together will be commissioned in 2009 by the National Rapporteur.

Gender mainstreaming

The basis for gender mainstreaming is provided by the fundamental rights in the Constitution Act by the Act on Equality. Thus, the general obligation of the public authorities to promote gender equality has been integrated into legislation. Gender equality and mainstreaming is well represented in the current Government Programme. The Programme states that gender equality is a central value in the Finnish society and that the entire Government commits itself to promoting equality in all decision-making. The Government will ensure that the gender perspective will be mainstreamed in the law-drafting, the budgetary process and other important projects starting from their very first stages. The Ministries will organise training in order to promote the matter.

Details referring to gender mainstreaming and gender impact assessments are reported in the Government's CEDAW 2007 report under article 3 in the chapter 3. Mainstreaming gender equality into the Finnish State Administration.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Finance have made joint efforts to develop gender-conscious budgeting. The State Budget 2008 has been prepared in accordance with the new

instructions that take the gender perspective into account. The gender impact assessment is carried out in connection with the preparation of Government Bills and other projects. To support this work, the Gender Equality Unit has organized several trainings in the ministries and in the state administration as a whole.

Gender equality and mainstreaming is well represented in the government action plan for gender equality 2008-2011. The programme states that all government decisions and measures will be evaluated so as to discover their impact on men and women. Gender perspectives will be included in the implementation of Government policy programmes. Each ministry will take the gender perspective into account when drafting legislation, drawing up the draft budget and implementing projects. An operational working group on gender equality will be established in the ministries to ensure gender mainstreaming. The ministries will provide training for their personnel on gender mainstreaming. An information service for gender equality will be launched in 2009. It will pull together equality information and support the gender mainstreaming efforts.

The remaining challenges for gender mainstreaming in the area of capacity building include gender minorities (e.g. trans-gender and inter-gender people), who currently are protected against discrimination by the Act on Equality between Men and Women. The Act is not, however, clear in this respect and there is a need to clarify the position of gender minorities in the Finnish anti-discrimination legislation. Furthermore, capacity should be built and information shared on gender minorities among authorities and service providers like social and health care personnel.

Promoting gender equality in the line ministries

As part of the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2008-2011 each ministry has to establish a working group on gender equality (see chapter above). The equality working groups of the ministries will focus on implementation of the Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) into the key processes of the ministry: into legislation, preparation of the state budget, into the management of institutes and agencies etc. The present Government also requires that the GIA will be developed in the planning and implementation of projects and programmes. For example, the Ministry of Interior will integrate gender perspective into the preparation project of the Crises Management Center, the Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry sees the gender aspects in the new National Forest Programme, the Ministry of Transport and Communications evaluates the gender aspects in the reform of public transport legislation etc. One of the challenges is to develop the monitoring and training of this development so that the coordination and improvement would be possible.

The Gender Equality Unit in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has provided training on mainstreaming of gender equality for all ministries under a project co-funded from the EU Progress Programme.

The Ministry of the Interior has started the implementation of the National System on Monitoring of Discrimination. Multiple discrimination, especially relating to gender and age as cross-cutting grounds of discrimination, is included. A study on racist crimes has been carried out annually since 1997. Studies provide also gender-based information on the victims of different type of racist crimes. For the first time, a similar study on all hate crimes has been launched in 2008.

See also the Sixth Periodic Report of the Government of Finland on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2007).

Statistics

Statistics Finland's Women and Men in Finland 2007 pocket book of statistics has been published also in English. It contains statistics on the position of women and men and on equality between the genders in Finland. The statistics in the publication are mainly based on the data of Statistics Finland but other data sources have also been used. The publication is intended to draw an overall picture of the position of women and men in different areas of society in Finland.

Women's and gender studies

Women's and gender studies is an area of research that quickly expanded and diversified in the 1990s, and its establishment in Finnish universities was promoted by eight professorships financed by the Ministry of Education. When accepting the funding, the universities committed themselves to redeeming the professorships. However, only part of the universities have guaranteed the continuation of the posts and have financed a permanent professorship. In addition, the Academy of Finland funds the Minna Canth Professorship for a fixed period.

Units of women's studies have very different positions and organisational locations in the different universities. Most of the units are also fairly small, with a staff of one professorship and/or one or more university lecturers. Despite scarce resources the women's and gender studies units have systematically developed their teaching and research profiles and succeeded well in obtaining external funding. In the past five years several units have started their own master's programme in women's/gender studies. Also doctoral studies are now available in a number of universities. However, the majority of students still take women's studies as their minor subject.

The women's studies units face new challenges because of the structural and financial reorganisation of Finnish universities in the end of 2000s. Most of the units have been or will be absorbed into larger departments, and the competition for scarce resources inside the universities will become more intense. In spite of their excellent results, women's studies/gender studies programmes – which are generally small with one or two teaching posts – have lesser chances to compete for resources and for a strategic status in the universities. This also hampers planning and the long-term development of the subject.

In the 2000s Finnish gender studies units have systematically developed national cooperation in teaching and researcher training. Hilma – the University Network for Women's Studies has developed cooperation between eight universities in Finland. It offers a national platform for cooperation in multidisciplinary teaching through own lecturer, virtual courses and pedagogical training for teachers. It also informs current affairs in the field through its portal. Network cooperates both nationally and on the European level.

The Finnish Research School in Women's and Gender Studies is a national doctoral programme, which organises supervision and teaching for doctoral students. It has also a number of salaried positions for students writing their PhD thesis. Since 1996, when research school was first founded, over 50 graduate students have received instruction in women's studies. The research school has an established role in women's and gender studies' graduate programs at different Finnish universities. However, the funding for research school is always temporarily and long-term plans are difficult to make in the Finnish university system which is now constantly shifting. Furthermore, the lack of male candidates is a problematic issue for the research school that aims to critically study questions of gender and gender equality.

The Finnish Association for Women's Studies continues to be an important national platform for women's and gender studies units, scholars and students. The association publishes the Women Studies Magazine and arranges an annual women's studies conference. At present the Society has around 600 members.

Support to women's organizations

The participation in societal life through different NGOs is a significant form of participation in Finnish democracy. Finnish civil society is also characterized by an extensive and active group of women's organizations, which is quite unique with regard to its scope and variety even in Nordic comparison. For example the National Council of Women of Finland has been working to promote equality since 1911. The National Council has 62 member organizations with a total membership exceeding 500,000. NYTKIS, the Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations, has, as its members, the women's associations of all the political parties represented in Parliament, as well as three politically unaffiliated women's associations.

Non-governmental organizations are vital in providing services in Finland in many sectors, such as support services to victims of violence, promotion of environmental planning, health and social services. Many objectives and actions of the Beijing Platform for Action are undertaken by the organizations with the financial support of the Government, mostly with fixed-term project funding. Many organizations have raised concerns of continuity and sustainability of such a funding mechanism.

Year 2007 Finnish Parliament approved a law that regularises certain women's organisations in Finland a yearly state subsidy. An annual appropriation is provided in the State budget for the activities of two umbrella organisations, the above mentioned NYTKIS and the National Council of Women of Finland. By making State funding a system established by law, it is possible to ensure a more stable foundation for the organisations, so that they are able to plan their activities with a long-term perspective. This promotes the implementation of gender equality and women's possibilities of participating in the activities of society.

The current Government Programme as well as the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality (2008–2011) state that more resources will be allocated to government agencies and women's organisations engaged in promoting gender issues.

Part IV: Remaining challenges and actions to address them

The steering group monitoring the implementation of the Revised National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Human Beings will be required to use the results of this evaluation together with the National Rapporteur to draw up recommendations on action to develop legislation further and measures against human trafficking.

The second Government of Matti Vanhanen has compiled its key equality measures into the Action Plan for Gender Equality is 2008–2011. It has seven priority areas. Apart from these measures, line ministries are actively implementing gender equality policy measures as a part of their field of action.

Gender mainstreaming

All Government decisions and measures will be evaluated so as to discover their impact on men and women. Gender perspectives will be included in the implementation of Government policy programmes. Each ministry will take the gender perspective into account when drafting legislation, drawing up the draft budget and implementing projects. An operational working group on gender equality will be established in the ministries to ensure gender mainstreaming. The ministries will provide training for their personnel on gender mainstreaming. An information service for gender equality will be launched in 2009. It will pull together equality information and support the gender mainstreaming efforts.

Reducing gender pay differentials

The Government's goal is to clearly reduce the differences in pay between men and women during its term of office. Women earn around 80 per cent less than men for regular hours of work. The difference has remained approximately unchanged since the early 1990s. The Government continues to implement the Equal Pay Programme together with the social partners. The impact the new state pay system has on women's and men's pay will be examined.

Promoting women's careers

The Government aims at advancing women's careers and increasing the share of women in managerial positions both in the public and the private sectors. A working group set up by the Ministry of Finance will draw up measures to increase the share of women in the managerial positions in the central government. The Government aims at maintaining the share of women in the boards of fully state-owned enterprises at a minimum of 40 per cent and increasing the share of women in partly state-owned enterprises. The Government will continue its dialogue with the private sector for the advancement of women's careers. Statistics on women in managerial positions and on women's career development will be developed.

Increasing gender awareness in schools and reducing gender segregation

In Finland, education fields and professions are strongly gender segregated. The objective is to ensure that school learning materials do not maintain stereotypical conceptions about girls and boys, men and women. Gender-sensitive training will be increased in the education and continuing education of teachers and kindergarten teachers. The segregation of the labour market into women's and men's professions and sectors will be reduced for example by promoting employment and entrepreneurship.

Reconciling work and family life

In order to ensure that women enjoy genuine equality in the working life, parental leave periods must be more evenly distributed between mothers and fathers. If fathers took on more responsibility for taking care of their children, it would not only reinforce the labour market status of women but it would also strengthen men's sense of parenthood and equal position in the family. The goals are to

encourage fathers to use family leaves as well as to divide the costs for family leaves more evenly between female- and male-dominated branches. The Government will explore the possibilities to reform the parental leave system. Paternity leave will be extended by two weeks in 2010.

Reducing violence against women

Violence against women has not diminished much in Finland during the past decade. A cross-sectoral programme to reduce violence against women will be drawn up and the continuity of the related expertise will be ensured in the ministries in question. The coordination of and the resources for reducing violence against women will be reinforced.

Reinforcing gender equality work and a report on gender equality

The operational conditions and resources of equality authorities and women's organisations will be reviewed. During the electoral period, the Government will issue a report to Parliament on gender equality.

The Government Action Plan for Gender Equality has been compiled and will be implemented in cooperation with the ministries. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health coordinates the implementation. Organisations will be heard during the action plan, and a final report will be issued in autumn 2010. The action plan can be complemented later on.