



*DIVERSITY IN WORKING LIFE*

*WORKING REPORT 6*

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# **Diversity in Working Life in Sweden**

Ideas, Activities and Players



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*Gabriella Fägerlind och Eva Ekelöf*

*The report is translated from Swedish by Brian Turner, IMC, Stockholm, Sweden.*

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# Competence for diversity in working life

This is an initiative started by the Swedish Council for Work Life Research and the Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research (closed down at turn of the year 2000/2001, reorganized into the new agencies Vinnova), see page 72 for web sites, in conjunction with the Swedish National Labour Market Administration, the Swedish ESF Council, the National Integration Office, the Swedish Federation of County Councils, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities, the Swedish Employers' Confederation, and the Development Council for the Government sector. The aim is to stimulate and increase practical knowledge about diversity in working life in Sweden. This cooperation covers three activities:

- support for development projects and methods, seminars etc
- a web site for monitoring worldwide developments at [www.mangfald.org](http://www.mangfald.org)
- support for work reports *Diversity in working life*

The series of publications *Diversity in working life* are intended for all those who are interested in the opportunities and obstacles provided by diversity in working life. The term "diversity" is used to refer to dynamic use of the individual's competence and resources irrespective of background factors such as gender, ethnic affiliation, education, age, functional impairment. A strategy for diversity in working life should promote increased integration, better use of competence and greater focus on customers in both private and public sectors.

The reports present ideas, models and results from development projects and methods which have received support within the framework of this co-operation. The authors are researchers in working life, consultants and journalists. They are responsible for the contents of their respective reports.

Reports published so far in Swedish:

- *What does diversity mean in Swedish? Conference report and discussions between researchers.*  
Katarina Bjärvall
- *Looking from other perspectives – views of working life in Sweden reported by immigrant engineers.*  
Eva Löfgren and Gabriella Fägerlind.
- *Social Marginalisation of functionally impaired persons – discussion of issues concerning the term "discrimination".*  
Bo Hännestrand, Dimitris Michailakis, Märten Söder and Sanna Tielman.
- *Diversity, discrimination and stereotypes. Three research papers on diversity.*  
De los Rees, Höglund, Adu-Gyan, Ahmadi, Omanovic and Widell.
- *Diversity in Working Life in Sweden – ideas, activities and players.*  
Gabriella Fägerlind and Eva Ekelöf.

This report is issued by the Swedish ESF Council in conjunction with Vinnova, and the Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research and the National Integration Office.

# Introduction

This report brings together ideas and activities and describes what different players are doing in the area of diversity in working life in Sweden. The work on the report was initiated by the Council for Work Life Research (Ralf) in conjunction with the Swedish ESF Council and the National Integration Office as a part of their joint work on diversity. The report was initiated as a result of the need to have a discussion platform and background to the new Community Initiative, Equal, the overall goal of which is the promotion of working life permeated by diversity without either discrimination or gender inequality.

The winding up of Ralf at the turn of the year 2000/2001 has led to a lengthy delay in finalising the report. Our view, however, is that it would be regrettable if the report were to be stranded as a result of a major reorganisation of Swedish authorities financing R&D. Eva Ekelöf, a journalist specializing in working life has also assisted in the work. Responsibility for the final editing of the report lies with Gabriella Fägerlind, a consultant in diversity. The contribution by Kenneth Abrahamsson in the final chapter was concluded prior to the winding up of Ralf. The report is also available in Swedish.

Our starting point is that today there is not a clear and consistent definition of diversity in working life. We thus regard Equal as a unique opportunity to initiate a learning process focusing on diversity in working life. It is our hope that players and interested parties will take up the challenge of promoting a better working life and greater respect for the individual's knowledge and development opportunities. Words in themselves are not sufficient. They must be transformed into concrete actions, be innovative and produce learning networks. There is thus a major challenge in being innovative and taking advantage of the opportunities inherent in Equal.

Stockholm December 2000 and April 2001

*Kenneth Abrahamsson*

*Gabriella Fägerlind*

# Diversity in working life

Diversity in working life is a relatively new concept that began to emerge in Sweden in the middle of the 1990s. And since then developments have been explosive. We read and hear about diversity in the mass media almost daily. Both private and public sectors have started working on strategies and plans for diversity, and at both the national and European level. A number of political initiatives with an impact on diversity in working life are underway and at the same time new, more rigorous anti-discrimination legislation has been introduced in working life. A whole industry has grown up around diversity with numerous consultants and training programs and we are starting to witness a growing interest from the research world in studying the issues on diversity in working life.

In this report we would like to present a picture of diversity in working life in Sweden, by describing ongoing work in state authorities, municipalities and private companies, initiatives taken by the labour market partners, research and development, current legislation against discrimination and also various political initiatives.

## The term “diversity”

There is no universally accepted definition of diversity in working life. If we look at the Swedish Academy’s word list, we will find that diversity means “a number of units”. The English equivalent to the Swedish word “mångfald” means “differences”.

Diversity in the labour force often refers to differences as regards gender, age, ethnic/cultural background, class, functional impairments, sexual orientation, family relationships, education etc. Some of these are unchangeable (e.g. gender and ethnic affiliation) and others are changeable (e.g. age, education). When the term is analysed, “differences” are related to an existing norm. How Swedish organisations define diversity covers a whole spectrum from focusing on ethnic and cultural diversity to incorporating all the differences which make each and every one of us unique individuals.

How the term is defined and understood is determined by what the purpose is and what the underlying driving forces are.



Diversity is perceived by some as being a new word for integration or the assimilation of persons with a foreign background, whilst others impute to the term a new way of managing and utilising the potential and resources of all individuals making up the Swedish labour force.

Work on diversity could focus specifically on integration as well as welfare policy, where the interests of marginalised groups on the labour market, such as immigrants, the handicapped, the elderly, and those with low levels of education are protected. In the project on diversity run by the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications, “productive diversity” is defined as covering gender, ethnic background, class, age, functional impairment and sexual orientation, and its starting point is to combine social justice, productivity and growth. When focusing on diversity as a business strategy, diversity covers a mix of differences in background and competencies as important factors in work, quality and customer orientation.

- In similar ways, the driving forces for working on diversity can originate from a number of different areas:
- counteracting discrimination of different groups in working life, combating exclusion mechanisms and avoiding a divided society
- adapting activities to surrounding conditions, as well as customers requirements and profiles
- stimulating learning and the use of competence at the workplace
- contributing to solving the supply of competence within working life over the next decade

Diversity of the labour force is not only about the labour force having a special composition of differences measured in percentage terms. The long-term goal of diversity is to focus on competence so that features of no relevance to the work task do not constitute an obstacle to entry, participation, development or promotion at a workplace. In essence to “disregard” factors such as gender, age, ethnic affiliation etc. and focus on the competence that is really needed to carry out specific work. Preconceived mental attitudes, such as who is suitable for a particular job and stereotyped attitudes about the qualities and competence of different groups, should not steer and influence decisions about employment, promotion etc.

## **Diversity-oriented organisations**

Creating an organisation, which is open to differences and which focuses on competence, not only imposes demands on managers and co-workers, but also on an organisation's culture and internal systems and processes.

Diversity requires leadership, an organisational culture and climate which recognizes, respects and values the individual's uniqueness, as well as encouraging use to be made of the potential provided by individuals making up the overall labour force. Co-workers should not need to be cast in the same mould to be employed and gain promotion. In addition, organisations need to have internal systems and processes, such as recruitment, career progression, competence development, incentive systems etc. which work in accordance with these.

Viewed from both organisational and societal perspectives, diversity has an impact on individual, organisational and societal levels. In order to develop a diversity-oriented organisation or society, efforts are necessary at the individual level to change attitudes and increase knowledge, as well as at the organisation level by means of analysis and development of structures, systems and processes. In addition, the surrounding society must have policies, structures, institutional conditions and laws which promote diversity in working life.

## **Diversity and gender equality**

Even though the term "diversity" is relatively new in Sweden, we do have experience from similar work gained over 30 years from working on gender equality. Many of the issues concerning established norms, values, attitudes, systems and processes are the same. As are the opportunities for making better use of under-utilised human capital both in and outside workplaces as well as "new" customer groups.

Attitudes to the concept of diversity vary among those who are working with and involved in gender equality. Some consider it an advantage that work on gender equality and diversity be amalgamated, since in principle the goals to be achieved are the same and also because joint efforts produce greater strength, whilst others regard gender as a special case, to be distinguished from other differences and that amalgamating the work would slow down and perhaps even undermine what has already been achieved in gender equality. Those who are active in the field of gender equality raise

warning voices that a “fuzzy” concept of diversity covering “everything” may well be a politically correct shortcut, however, it might enable the redistribution of power to be avoided, which is the very core of the work on equality and gender equality in particular.

### *“Those of us over 50 are ready to stay and work hard”*

“Employers don’t think further than the end of their noses”, says Karin Lyddby, 54, who lost her job as a marketing secretary at a large export company after a re-organisation in 1999.

“I have applied for at least 30 jobs and have been to lots of interviews but have always come second. They have employed somebody else. Nobody told me directly, but it must be because of my age”, she says.

The jobs she has applied for have matched her qualifications, so it cannot have been due to her qualifications or experience. After a long working life without any interruptions except for maternity leave, she is no longer employable.

“I think it’s pure discrimination. In the final analysis, it’s the employer that decides and even though he can be 50 or 60 himself, he wants somebody who is in the middle of their career. But young people only stay for a few years, whilst those of us over 50 are ready to stay and work hard.”

“Everybody is needed on the labour market, both young and old. A 54-year-old today is not the same as a 54-year-old thirty or forty years ago.”

“I would like to and can work another eleven or twelve years and I really long to get a job. But if I don’t get one soon, I want to study IT, language and economics”, says Karin Lyddby.

# Diversity on the Swedish Labour Market

In February 2001, the rate of unemployment in Sweden was 4.2 percent and the proportion in labour market programs was 2.9 percent. Around 4.4 million were part of the labour force, labour force participation was almost 78 percent and the proportion of the population employed of working age was approximately 74 percent.

Sweden is one of the countries in Europe with the highest proportion of women in its work force. This can partly be explained by tax and national insurance systems that are based on the individual and by an extensive system of child care. 75 percent of women of working age participate in the labour force and 80 percent men. The rate of labour force participation is 77 percent for men and 72 percent for women. Women make up 48 percent of the Swedish labour force, but account for 43 percent of the total volume of work due largely to the fact that they tend to have part-time jobs. Sweden is also one of the countries with the most gender segregated labour market. It is almost true to say that there is one labour market for women and one for men. The labour market also has pronounced vertical gender segregation, and in general women to a larger extent than men have lower work positions. There are also disparities in salaries and gender employment differences.

Of the population of working age, nearly 1.2 million of those with a foreign background, approximately 700,000 were born abroad and approximately 450,000 have at least one parent born abroad. This corresponds to 22 percent of the working population. The majority of those born abroad have lived here for some time, 40 percent have lived here for more than 20 years, only 20 percent have lived here for less than five years. Half of the population born abroad lives in the large urban centres of Malmö, Göteborg and Stockholm.

In the first six months of 2000, open unemployment was approximately 12 percent of those born abroad, and employment was 60 percent. However, there are significant variations related to period of residence in Sweden and gender. A higher proportion work in temporary, part-time and unqualified jobs than those born in Sweden. The difference between those born in Sweden and those born abroad was greatest for those from Africa, Asia and Latin America, and least for those from a Nordic country

other than Sweden. Unemployment is three times higher for those who have been in Sweden for less than ten years compared to those who have been here at least 20 years. But even those who have lived in Sweden for more than 20 years have a higher rate of unemployment than native Swedes. Recent research shows that young people born in Sweden, with parents born abroad, run a greater risk of becoming unemployed than those with a completely Swedish background, even after making allowances for grades in Swedish, education level, place of residence and family background.

14 percent of the Swedish labour force is aged 55 or higher. The proportion of those employed in the Swedish population aged between 55 and 64 is high from a European perspective. 65 percent of Swedish men are employed compared with an average of 50 percent in the EU, and 60 percent women compared with slightly less than 30 percent in the EU. The large-scale redundancies in Sweden during the 1990s have had their greatest impact on the older part of the labour force. Half of long-term unemployed are aged 55 or higher, and there was a significantly larger proportion of persons aged between 60–64 who received their main income from early retirement pensions at the end of the 1990s compared with the beginning of the 80s. Unemployment of those aged between 55–59 is lower than for the labour force as a whole, but it is significantly higher for those aged between 60–64.

Almost one million of the working population have functional impairments of various kinds. 600 000 of these have a reduced capacity to work. This corresponds to 11 percent of the working population. Slightly more than 40 percent of the group of working age with functional impairment are between 50 and 64, those at the higher end of the age spectrum are over-represented in this group. 40 percent of those with functional impairments stated that they were physically disabled, 20 percent that they had allergies or hypersensitivity, 7 percent had hearing impairments and 5 percent stated that they had psychological impairments. 20 percent of functional impairments arise from occupational injuries.

In 1998, 56 percent of those with functional impairments and reduced working capacity were employed, unemployment in this group was almost twice as large as in the overall population. The majority of those with functional impairments work part-time, and relatively few of them hold supervisory/management positions or positions requiring specialist competence. As a group, those with functional impairments have a more uncertain position on the labour market compared with the rest of the population, and there is probably a high level of hidden unemployment amongst

those with functional impairments who are on early retirement. Of those with functional impairments outside the labour force in 1996, almost 70 percent of them were on early retirement.

## **The Swedish labour force in 2015**

If we take a look into the future, Statistics Sweden forecasts a large number of changes in the Swedish population and the labour force over the next 15 years.

The Swedish population will continue to grow significantly more slowly than before.

The population will become older, in 2015 more than one out of every fifth person will be aged 65 or more.

Also the population of working age will become older. The proportion aged 55 or higher will grow from today's level of 14.5 percent to 17.5 percent. The group aged 16–24 will grow by 1 percent from 10.5 to 11.6 percent and the group aged between 25–54 will shrink from 75 percent to 71 percent of the labour force.

The proportion of women in the labour force is not expected to increase noticeably, on other hand they are expected to account for a larger proportion of total hours worked.

There will be fewer persons employed supporting a growing proportion of elderly in the population. The labour force will continue to grow until 2008, but will then start declining. Around year 2015, the proportion of the population of working age population will decrease by 20 000 annually.

Only a modest increase of 103 000 persons in the labour force is expected over the period 1999–2015. Men with a Swedish background will decrease by 94 000, whilst women with a Swedish background will increase by 13 000, men with a foreign background by 126 000 and women with a foreign background will increase by 59 000.

By year 2015 persons with a foreign background are expected to account for 27 percent of the population of working age. The proportion they represent of the labour force will increase from 20 percent (1999) to between 23 and 26 percent in 2015, depending on labour force participation rates.

This is the background against which today's working life must be developed. This view of the future shows there will be increasing diversity in the labour force.

## *“A booming economy gives new status to marginalised groups”*

“The Swedish labour market cannot afford to discriminate any longer”, says Lois Wise in Swedish, though she is American and works at Indiana University. But she has lived in and carried out research in Sweden and during her stay here has seen and experienced the country through American eyes.

She occasionally returns on flying visits to discuss her research which covers among other things diversity. Her subject is politics and administration with a special focus on management issues, wage policy and work cultures.

When unemployment falls below 4 percent and the manpower shortage starts to become apparent, groups that were previously unattractive get a new status. Both those with a different ethnic background, the elderly and the functionally impaired are seen with new eyes. Employers become more interested in keeping those that are in their 50s or 60s and in helping the functionally impaired get a job. Lois Wise believes this is something the good times bring with them.

“The USA has had a manpower shortage for far longer than Sweden and this has meant, for example, that the proportion of women in the work force has risen steadily in the last decade. The shortage makes employers more tolerant and diversity becomes less of a problem.” What does she think about diversity in Sweden and the attempts that are being made to promote it? What is good and what is bad?

“Sweden does not have to make the same mistakes as we have made in the USA, but that is perhaps unavoidable”, she says. “We suffered setbacks when we used the quota system and state after state has voted against affirmative action. The USA is a big country and affirmative action worked in just a few cases.”

Groups that receive special treatment can be stigmatised in working life and have problems getting ordinary jobs. That is the experience from the USA.

“Our system is based on litigation, people go to court. You solve your problems through agreements and negotiations. I don’t think coercive legislation would work in Sweden. Having ombudsmen who identify problems and safeguard the interests of different groups is a better idea.”

“What does being Swedish mean today?” asks Lois Wise. You should teach this to chil-

dren in school, otherwise everybody will end up in a vacuum and nobody will know what being Swedish means. New arrivals definitely won’t. Another piece of advice is that you should use the humanities to illustrate and discuss important social issues.

Use literature, film, and art to discuss what being Swedish means. You can’t remain neutral on this question, but it seems to be a trend here”.

She thinks the state should go in with scholarships and organize competitions about books, plays, art, photography and films that deal with the theme of diversity in working life, who the new Swedes are and where we are all heading.

“I use literature when I am teaching diversity. It gets people to see things through other people’s eyes and to share other people’s conditions”.

As a new arrival in Sweden, Lois Wise discovered that there was a whole range of social rituals she had to conform to. Otherwise she would have ended up outside the group.

Coffee breaks are one such example. Going to the coffee break is important. It shows you belong to the group. There are also rules about what you can talk about during coffee breaks and what are taboo areas.

“Nor do we Americans understand the Swedish practice of first saying no and then after repeated entreaties saying yes when somebody, for example, is offering some cake. It can be important to teach newcomers about differences of this kind so they do not get excluded.”

Another difference compared with the USA is that in Sweden you do not have to categorise people.

“This means that in the USA we are a little more aware of the group we belong to”, says Lois Wise, whose family came from Italy and Sweden. “It’s not enough to say that they come from Italy because then the person asking will want to know from whereabouts in Italy, and if it was Naples, was it from the east or the west of the city.”

“They have to pigeonhole everybody and this can be both negative and positive. When I wanted to study the national origin of Government officials in Sweden, I found there was no record of whether these people had been born in Sweden or outside. This complicates research about social groups. But it is positive that people in Sweden are not so willing to categorise people.”

# The State as a model

The Government wants the state administration to be a model employer and set a standard for openness to new ideas and change, and adopt an active approach. The Government has in a number of bills emphasised the importance that employees in the public sector should reflect the composition of the working population, in terms of gender, age, ethnic affiliation, functional impairment as well as sexual orientation. This is a democratic issue and also sets norms for the rest of society. It is also important for the credibility of the state authorities and the public sector.

The Minister of Integration at the time, Ulrika Messing, in spring 1999 took the initiative in drawing up an action programme containing measures for promoting diversity. These action plans are the first step in the long-term process of promoting ethnic and cultural diversity amongst personnel in the Swedish Government Offices. The objective of the action plans is to increase awareness of the greater competence and quality that can be achieved through greater diversity. Recruitment should be planned in such a way that it helps increase diversity.

## *Government Office*

In February 2000 an action plan was presented and this would apply to the Swedish Government Offices. It comprises active measures to be implemented between 2000–2002. These will mean that recruitment to the Swedish Government Offices will be planned in such a way that it helps increase ethnic and cultural diversity. Each ministry is to appoint an official in its personnel function who is given special responsibility. Representatives of employer and personnel organisations have taken part in introduction seminars. They have also participated in seminars on the law against ethnic discrimination and about improving quality and competence through diversity and recruitment.

## *State authorities*

Since 1999 the Government requires the state authorities to report the measures they have taken and their plans to increase ethnic and cultural diversity amongst their employees. In addition, the authorities directly accountable to the Government should set up



action plans to promote ethnic diversity amongst their employees.

In the first report in March 1999, it became clear that almost 80 percent had not done anything and had no plans for doing anything either. Authorities were issued with new instructions and given a year to report back on their plans.

In March 2000, 249 authorities reported their action plans (96 percent of all authorities). A great deal has happened in a year. Half of them are now working actively with these issues. One out of every five authorities have set up action plans or a diversity policy. Some plans are well designed and structured, whilst others are simply a list of recruitment steps. Nearly 80 authorities have started or plan to develop action plans, and a further 60 authorities state that they are planning to take measures, but do not say they will develop action plans. Nearly 40 authorities, the overwhelming majority of them small, have informed the Government that they are unable to draw up an action plan due to reorganisation, closures or personnel shortages i.e. one out of every 10 authorities have either presented measures they have taken or commented on diversity issues in their reports. Almost half say that diversity is already one of their primary characteristics since many of their employees are of foreign origin. Some reveal the proportion of immigrants among their employees.

"We shall not be satisfied until we see the results", says Mikael Hagos who is working with the action plans at the Ministry of Culture. To avoid the risk of these plans becoming a mere paper exercise, we intend to follow them up and evaluate them. We want to know what they really mean in terms of action taken. We also want to emphasise the issue of diversity so that it becomes a quality feature of state administration. The crucial question is how to use diversity – women, the elderly, the functionally impaired, those with a different sexual orientation and immigrants – to create a dynamic organisation. An action plan must be reviewed and evaluated regularly.

Michael explains that management is responsible in this area and all directors of public authorities are without exception positive to diversity and aware of the need to promote it. The National Courts Administration wants to see more politically elected lay members with foreign backgrounds. The Swedish Armed Forces organise projects about ethnic diversity in defence. County employment boards and the National Labour Market Board are trying to recruit personnel via trainee programmes. Correctional care has been working with ethnic diversity since 1997.

The state in its national action plan on handicap policy is required to provide a good example from an accessibility perspective. State authorities should take an active responsibility for adapting their workplaces to employees with functional impairments. This involves making work, premises and information accessible to personnel with functional impairments.

### *New civic perspectives*

The Government decided in 1998 and 1999 on different measures whereby an integration perspective would permeate the design and implementation of general policy. For example, the instructions to authorities and the ordinance on the state authorities' responsibility for immigrants was changed. Currently the authorities should take into account ethnic and cultural diversity in society when organising and running their activities. In addition, the state authorities should in accordance with the ordinance work to counteract all forms of ethnic discrimination, both from an employer's perspective and in their activities towards citizens.

## *Special resources for the county administrative boards*

At the Stockholm County Administrative Board, Margareta Sandebo-Eriksson is personnel director and project manager of the diversity plan. The three largest county administrative boards in the country have been allocated special resources to promote integration.

The county administrative board is the extended arm of the state and has many contacts with citizens and companies. 400 people work at the Stockholm County Administrative Board. People with a foreign background are under-represented in relation to the overall composition of the county's population. The aim is that personnel should reflect the population as a whole.

"We want our employees to always have diversity in mind when they meet people of foreign origin at work", says Margareta Sandebo-Eriksson.

Work on the diversity plan is a large undertaking and consists of many different components. The first step comprised interviews with 300 employees about their backgrounds, their experiences of diversity and their language skills. EOQF – equal opportunities quality framework – has been used as a model for developing the organisation of work and work structures. Managers and recruiters have received competence training.

To increase awareness, the county administrative board has produced some material. In a tool box, you can choose a screwdriver or a hammer – different stories function as tools in a discussion about familiar things – such as similarities and differences or "what-if" exercises.

Employees have been provoked but have also had their interest aroused. The result has been a shift in attitudes and greater understanding. This is of great importance for those meeting people of foreign origin

in their work. A series of talks from experts have helped dispel people's preconceived notions.

– Now we have started the process. It is a learning process – we are learning a lot about how to deal with the issues. We have been through all our documents from the perspective of diversity and made adjustments where necessary.

This applies to recruitment guidelines, the introduction material, the system for delegation etc."

"The county administrative board wants to increase the number of employees with foreign backgrounds and has placed trainees in different units, people who have been long-term unemployed. It has not been as simple as we first thought.

In the legal department, which also issues taxi permits, we have a male trainee who received his legal training abroad. After a supplementary course, things have turned out well and he now has a temporary position. In the agricultural unit, there is a graduate from agricultural college and a veterinary surgeon. He works with different kinds of EU grants. Language difficulties have meant that he has needed extra help. An Iranian is working in the personnel department in a project about uncovering hidden obstacles for women wishing to pursue a career in the county administrative board. In the administrative department, there is an economist working on time reporting etc.

We will continue to take in trainees. Some of them stay with us, but we are not obliged to employ anyone. For some of them, I do not know how things will turn out, language creates difficulties. We have just employed a new IT manager. He comes from Pakistan. I do not know if we have been influenced at all, but it is good anyway" says Margareta Sandebo-Eriksson.

# Diversity in municipalities

Since the latter part of the 1990s, a number of municipalities have taken initiatives to increase diversity amongst their employees. Large urban municipalities have distinguished themselves, as well as municipalities such as Växjö, Umeå and Linköping and others.

The Government has encouraged Swedish municipalities to function as a model in diversity work. It has been emphasised that it is important that municipal activities should be perceived as living up to this ideal, but also that the service provided by municipalities should be adapted to the needs of citizens.

Municipalities in Sweden will be facing large personnel losses due to retirement in the current decade. The Association of Swedish Local Authorities estimates that 625 000 employees will need to be recruited up to the year 2010. 180 000 full-time workers will be needed for health and medical care and 217 000 for preschool, child care and school. This recruitment will take place in stiff competition with other industries and professions, which will also be losing manpower when those born in the 40s leave the labour market.

One out of every five persons are employed in municipalities, three-quarters of them work with health care, care of the elderly and schooling. Activities which are characterised by increasing diversity amongst users. In the current situation, women and the middle-aged are over-represented amongst municipal employees, whilst persons with foreign backgrounds and the young are under-represented.

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities emphasises that if the municipalities are to provide citizens with the best possible school, health and medical care, and infrastructure, it is important to understand their needs. This is the reason employees in municipalities must reflect society as a whole. Similarly, working groups based on diversity can provide better customer service and a more creative working climate. In addition, the Association of Swedish Local Authorities considers that it is important that decision-makers represent and understand groups and individuals from a quality perspective.

The challenges faced by the municipalities in terms of attracting and making use of diversity in Swedish society can in the view of the Association lead to better quality in the services provided to citizens and a more creative working climate with better development potential for municipal employees.

## **Diversity plans in municipalities**

The National Integration Office carried out during autumn 1999 a survey to determine the extent to which work on diversity has been systematised and extended. 267 of the country's 289 municipalities responded to the survey. Only 8 percent of the municipalities state that they have a diversity plan, whilst 21 percent state they are thinking of developing a plan. 71 percent have no action plan at all. 9 percent of the municipalities in the survey state that they have a personnel policy for employees with a foreign background, but no diversity plan. They consider that this is sufficient for working with ethnic diversity.

It is the municipalities in the sparsely populated areas, smaller municipalities, rural municipalities, industrial municipalities and also medium-size towns which show least interest in diversity plans. Greatest interest in diversity plans exists among the large urban municipalities, suburbs and larger towns. The majority of the population in Sweden live in municipalities which have or are on the point of developing diversity plans.

A clear majority of the municipalities with a plan or which are developing such a plan state that quality development or good PR are the main driving forces in their work. A quarter say that the new more stringent legislation on discrimination is the main driving force, 6 percent give pressure from public opinion and 4 percent "other reasons".

Municipalities which are not working with diversity say that the main reasons for this are due to a lack of resources or that it is not considered to be relevant. Low personnel turnover is mentioned as another reason. It is mainly small municipalities, such as those in sparsely populated areas and rural municipalities which do not think that diversity plans are relevant.

## **Prize for the Diversity Municipality of the Year**

In autumn 2000, a prize for the Best Diversity Municipality of the year was awarded for the first time in Sweden. This was commissioned by the Ministry of Culture and Ulrika Messing, the former Minister of Integration. The prize is awarded to the municipality in Sweden that has been most successful in promoting diversity. It is the municipalities themselves which send in their applications to participate in the competition. The Director-General of the National Integration Office, the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination and the Chairman of the Association of Swedish

Local Authorities and others were members of a working group that travelled around visiting a number of the most promising candidates. In the end three finalists were chosen. These were Malmö, Stockholm and Norrtälje.

The winner was Norrtälje, a smaller municipalities with a population of 5,000 and located about 70 km north of Stockholm. The reasons given for this choice were that Norrtälje had very methodically highlighted diversity and made it dynamic and successful, and that they had set a standard for others to follow and also that the project had received the full backing of the political leadership, administrative managers and trade-union organisations.

The prize was SEK 300 000 which was to be used for future diversity projects. In addition to Norrtälje, Malmö was awarded SEK 100 000 for exemplary diversity work in their personnel recruitment making it a model for other municipalities to emulate.

## City of Göteborg

“We believe that services for those living in Göteborg will become better if we promote diversity and integration in our own organisation. We also believe it will be more enjoyable, better, more creative and more effective if the composition of our personnel in the municipality is based on employees with a range of different backgrounds and experiences. This is the reason that we wish to work for greater diversity amongst our employees”. From the Social Democrats’ budget proposal in 2001 for the City of Göteborg.

In the City of Göteborg’s budget, its steering document, there are clear guidelines laid down for diversity work. All workplaces should strive to ensure that the composition of their employees is characterized by diversity and reflects the city’s population as a whole.

This work was initiated by the local municipal council in 1998, when a decision was made to invest in the personnel employed by the City of Göteborg. The City’s Administrative Office was given the task of taking measures to promote personnel development and competence. Part of this task was to take advantage of diversity. The incentive for starting the work was the pessimistic view of the future supply of personnel, as well as the fact that continuing to improve welfare presupposes that the competence of immigrants is taken advantage of in a different way in working life, and that better conditions are created for children and young people in the future.

Diversity is considered by the City of Göteborg to be a mixture of differences such as gender, age, ethnic/cultural background, religion, functional impairment and sexual orientation. It is emphasised that the term covers many qualities which are common to all people.

Responsibility for running the work on diversity is located in a number of bodies and companies. The Administrative Office of the City plays a supportive role in steering processes in its work on personnel competence development. The Administrative Office contributes support in terms of methods and strategies, seminars, working

material for development and recruitment processes and other measures in competence and personnel development, as well as projects in recruitment training for professions in short supply.

The local municipal council has decided to strengthen diversity work in the City of Göteborg. As the first step in this process, the municipal board is recruiting a manager for a central diversity function who will have the task of promoting as well as imparting knowledge and ideas on how the work can be developed.

Göteborg has surveyed the ethnic composition of its personnel, in terms of the proportion born abroad and their country of origin. They have also carried out surveys on where in the organisation persons born abroad are working (function and level) as well as their educational background. This is being done to provide a basis for stimulating future work. The survey showed that employees born abroad come mainly from other Nordic countries, and are mainly working within care of the elderly, child care and schools and that few are managers.

All bodies and companies immediately prior to 2001 were given the task by the local municipal council of drawing up action plans for diversity, which can be implemented parallel with gender equality plans. The plans are followed up annually as a part of the budget process.

“The City of Göteborg should be developed into a learning organisation where diversity is a self-evident asset”. From the Social Democrats’ budget proposal in 2001 for the City of Göteborg.

### *Fact box for the City of Göteborg*

Number inhabitants	462 309 (99–12–31)
Proportion with foreign background*	19%
Number permanently employed in municipalities	26 300
Proportion women	82 %
Proportion men	18 %

Proportion permanently employed with a foreign background \* 12 %

\* foreign citizens, and those with foreign citizenship earlier

# Workplaces setting good examples

In overall terms dissemination of work on diversity has so far been limited in Swedish working life. But there are a number of Swedish workplaces which have distinguished themselves in their work on diversity.

The Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications had a study carried out in 2000 where the aim was to draw up an inventory of methods and activities used in Swedish organisations in their work on diversity <sup>(1)</sup>. The study covered nine organisations representing private companies, state authorities and municipal activities. Two of the organisations had around 150 employees, the others had 1000 or more. Nine of the organisations were chosen since they had substantial ongoing work on diversity. The methods and activities presented correspond more to “best practice” rather than providing a general overall picture of diversity work in Swedish organisations.

## **Driving forces**

Among both private and public organisations in the study, the provision of future competence is a strong driving force for work on diversity: securing access to an expanded recruitment pool. Improved quality of service to customers and users in a multicultural society was also identified as a driving force, as well as the capacity to take advantage of the competence of existing personnel to achieve better results.

One company has explicitly focused on recruiting personnel with a foreign background in order to establish itself on foreign markets. Another's originated from societal involvement, which is a foundation stone for the company, but increased ethnic diversity amongst personnel has also meant that the company now finds it easier to reach more customer groups and provide better service to its customers. In interviews the state authorities stated that they had received a clear mission from the state that efforts should be made on behalf of ethnic minorities.

## **Theoretical and practical definitions**

Some organisations specify in their definition of diversity that it only applies to ethnic and cultural diversity. A number of organi-



sations define diversity as covering gender, ethnic background, age, sexual orientation, as well as persons with physical and mental functional impairments. Others also mention social background, religious belief and competence profile. In one case diversity was defined as “everything which makes an individual unique”.

But when looking more closely at the concrete work they carry out, it involves targeted measures mainly covering ethnic affiliation. In some cases also gender and age, and in one case competence profiles. The last mentioned refers to accepting a greater number of vocational categories in the organisation and that it should be possible to differentiate and change work tasks based on this. The driving force is a lack of manpower

## **Policies and action plans**

Some organisations have visions and/or policies for their work. Six of the organisations established annual action plans for diversity, either in the form of diversity plans or integration plans or as an integral part of their activity planning.

## **The goal of diversity work**

It is most common that organisations have different types of quality goals for their work on diversity. However, some organisations have quantitative goals. And other organisations have so far no goals at all.

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### ***Examples of long-term goals in one of the organisations (ethnic diversity):***

- We also aim to increase knowledge and awareness of cultural differences in the group by e.g. management training and seminars.
- We should communicate our view of both gender equality and cultural diversity in all external contacts, e.g. when the group advertises vacant positions and its corporate advertising.
- We should actively take part in shaping public opinion.

- In the long term, our personnel should have an ethnic and cultural mix which reflects the ethnic composition in the areas where we are active i.e. amongst our customers.

### ***Examples of quantitative goals for diversity work in various organisations:***

- The proportion of co-workers with an international background should increase from the current level of 5 to 7 percent by 2003.
- The proportion of managers with an international background should increase from the

current level of 2 to 4 percent by 2003.

- At least 10 co-workers with an international background should have participated in management development programs by 2003.
- By 2005, 17 percent of employees should have a different ethnic background (a local unit).
- Each summer until the turn of the year 2002/2003, we should arrange holiday schools for youth with at least 15 participants. Participating groups should have a multicultural and gender balanced composition.
- For new recruitments, at least 18 percent should be women to improve gender distribution in the organisation (local unit).
- Everyone should be able to combine work with family responsibilities, to achieve this the amount of overtime work should decrease by 10 percent.

### ***Examples of qualitative goals for diversity work in organisations:***

- The division for competence development should be able to provide help in evaluating foreign qualifications and working life experience gained abroad.
- The group should increase the proportion of co-workers with an international background in projects, studies etc.
- A survey of attitudes to gender equality and cultural diversity in the group should be carried out.
- Management development programme should contain modules on cultural diversity.
- Each manager is responsible for identifying candidates with an international background who can participate in the group's management development programmes.
- Figures on salaries and results of salary negotiations should be continuously analysed in order to avoid salary discrimination for co-workers with an international background. An overall analysis of the group should be carried out each year.
- Co-workers with a foreign background should be provided opportunities for participating in mentor programmes.
- An information pamphlet on the organisation's view of cultural diversity should always be included in invitations to tender from external suppliers.
- When reorganising or making personnel redundant, special attention should be given to co-workers with an international background so that cut downs are not biased.
- We should work towards bringing about a younger age profile of personnel.
- We should correlate the results from our major personnel surveys of the diversity climate.
- Resources should be made available so that all co-workers are able to acquire more knowledge about cultural diversity, through management programs and seminars.
- There should be no salary differences for equivalent work.
- The number of women in higher management positions should be increased.
- We should encourage a more even use of parental leave of absence between men and women, and this should not affect careers or salaries.
- Employees should follow our "code of practice" as regards the working environment.
- Diversity specialists should be trained.
- A basis for discussing ethics and diversity for all co-workers should be developed.
- We should critically examine all processes in the organisation from a diversity perspective in order to identify potential improvements.
- We should provide better service to our customer groups and better fulfil their needs with our resources.

## **Routines for follow-up**

Six of the nine organisations have routines for following up diversity work. Either by following up integration or diversity plans and evaluating these annually, or diversity work should be part of activity planning or the budget process and followed up in this way. Some organisations work for the attainment of EOQF (Equal Opportunity Quality Framework) in order to evaluate and ensure the quality of their diversity work.

## **Internal structures for diversity**

The organisations have established internal structures for diversity. One of them has a diversity manager (the only diversity manager in Sweden) as well as a central steering group and local networks. It should be noted that the chairmanship of the central steering group rotates amongst the management. In another organisation, there is a diversity council, consisting of the director of personnel, the companies' personnel managers and a representative of the co-workers, and also an informal network of co-workers with foreign backgrounds who actively run diversity work. One organisation has a working group, based on representatives from unions and employers. Two of the organisations are building up an internal structure, the first is training diversity specialists and the second will establish an internal diversity board to function as an internal resource for the whole of the organisation.

In all the large organisations there are persons working with diversity on a full or part-time basis. Management has welcomed diversity work in all organisations, but the extent of its involvement varies substantially. The trade union has been actively involved in (at least) three of the organisations.

## **Information and training**

Conferences and seminars are popular ways of disseminating information about diversity. Some organisations have distributed their policy on diversity to the personnel. All organisations have had some form of training for diversity, most of this has been for specific groups (such as managers, those involved with personnel issues, trade union representatives, diversity specialists), and one of them has trained all its personnel. In some organisations diversity has been introduced as a permanent feature of induction programmes for new employees, in management training for new managers etc.

## **The recruitment process**

We especially welcome persons with foreign backgrounds to apply – some organisations specifically state in their advertisements that they are looking for persons “with more diversified backgrounds”. On the other hand, it seldom happens that they review or expand or change the channels by which they recruit personnel. One organisation applies affirmative action in their trainee program. Another has devoted a whole day of training on diversity for its recruitment personnel. In general terms organisations have not yet developed an overall concept for systematically changing their recruitment process, but there is an awareness this is fundamental to diversity.

## **Supply of managers**

Most organisations do not take any special measures to recruit persons with foreign backgrounds by encouraging them to take part in further training or management development. The exception is one company where managers are responsible for identifying candidates with foreign backgrounds for participating in its management development programme. In some organisations women are encouraged to apply for management positions. Some organisations have initiated discussions on what their management profile is today and the supply of managers in the future. Some believe that an even distribution (gender, age, ethnic affiliation) will take place automatically as a result of available manpower. Others suspect that special measures may be needed. The mentor program for co-workers with a foreign background takes place in two of the organisations, at the central level in one and locally in another.

## **Working environment**

A psycho-social working environment was an area also identified as being important by a number of organisations where there is scope for improvement and change from a diversity perspective. In one organisation there have been discussions on working hours and that religious holidays other than those from the Christian faith should be taken into account. There were a few examples of changes in physical working environment, such as the use of PDAs with graphics and simple Swedish to support personnel, and also in one organisation discussions are being held on possibly modifying sizes of working clothes.

## **Gender equality and diversity**

One organisation interviewed had merged diversity and gender equality to develop a common structure for working with these issues. In other organisations the work was separated. In a number of organisations, discussions have been held on what areas could be integrated, and they believe that this is the probable course of future development.

## **External diversity**

One organisation maintained that they particularly liked to do business with suppliers whose owners had a foreign background. Another had a policy of always providing information about their views of cultural diversity when inviting tenders. In state and municipal organisations, this is included in their work of serving the whole of society, and many of them say that it is better service to citizens and increased understanding, which are the driving forces for their work on diversity. One organisation held targeted meetings for its customers in languages other than Swedish. But in overall terms few organisations made any special efforts to give special consideration to the ethnically diversified market that exists in Sweden.

## **Problems**

There are many obstacles and problems which organisations have to wrestle with: managers, who are not interested in bringing about change, prejudice and fear amongst personnel, bureaucratic structures and counterproductive measures for follow-up in the organisation as a whole, and also slow progress in bringing about change in the organisation.

## **Results**

Organisations see positive outcomes and results from their diversity work: an increasing proportion of persons with a foreign background amongst employees, increased awareness amongst personnel that diversity has a positive impact on activities, understanding that explicitly working on diversity can be one of the means for solving the future supply of competence, co-workers with a foreign background have obtained increasing influence, new markets have been reached in Sweden and internationally, the absence of “we-they” thinking in the organisation, and also full and part-time functions have been set up for working on diversity.

## *ABB Corporate Research – our mission is to create commercial success through technological innovation*

At ABB Corporate Research the number of inventions per year has increased by a factor of eight since 1993, from 73 in 1993 to 550 in 1999. Success originates from better management, new ways of working, new incentive systems, improved working climate and greater diversity.

Greater diversity refers to a diversified labour force in terms of nationality, age, gender, education, values and attitudes. Out of 360 employees, there are 21 nationalities covering people with backgrounds from compulsory school to acting professors. 60 percent of co-workers are under 35, the oldest is 71, and 23 percent are women. The unit explicitly wishes to have researchers covering the whole spectrum from artist to designers. The requirement is that they should be interested in technology and have a will to develop. Competent co-workers are required, ABB Corporate Research believe that they cannot afford a discriminatory view and forego vital competence.

Increase diversity also involves differentiation in terms of organisational forms, incentive systems and ways of working. It has a flat organisation and people are encouraged to work in networks and projects. Assembling project teams takes place on the basis of differences in competencies, education, culture, age and personality. It takes longer for a project team to “get to know each other” and work out their roles in the group, but the final result is better because of the differences.

Working climate and providing an attractive workplace are important for ABB Corporate Research. Leadership, co-working, co-operation and competence development are focused on to provide a good working climate. In order to create understanding and participation, all co-workers take part in strategy exercises twice a year. They analyse what has been carried out, the current situation and how it will evolve

in the future. Goals are set up for future work and decisions taken as to who will do what.

The company carries out annual surveys of the working climate in order to follow up and ensure it is good. Based on the survey, three aspects of the working climate are selected as a model of what functions best and an activity plan is formulated for how this should be preserved in the following year. Three of the worst aspects are also focused on and activities chosen for how they can be improved.

Apart from salaries, co-workers receive rewards for ideas that lead to improvements, inventions, patents and technical publications. Rewards can be in the form of money, free time, things, literature, recognition, participation in conferences etc. It is the responsibility of managers to use rewards in an appropriate way.

ABB Corporate Research is also running a project with “Personnel goals” which focuses on the strategic supply of competence, new co-workers, future leaders and salaries. They have also formulated a gender equality plan with respect to recruitment, psycho-social working environment, salaries, training, development opportunities, parental leave of absence and information.

Co-workers are the company's biggest investment and it is necessary to attract persons with appropriate skills. Areas which ABB Corporate Research focuses on to successfully recruit new co-workers are the company's image, working climate, competence profiles, the interview situations, references, introduction of new co-workers and also that work should correspond to expectations. The principle they apply is to recruit on the basis of strengths, not weaknesses as is often the case. The ABB Group has as the goal of becoming Sweden's most attractive employer by the year 2005.

# Initiatives by the labour market partners

## **National Council for Diversity**

The labour market partners in 1997 drew up “Guidelines for Diversity in Working Life” to support local work in helping to make workplaces open to ethnic diversity and free of discrimination. The Guidelines are addressed to companies, authorities and organisations. In addition, the organisations formed in 1998 a Council for Diversity. The focus of the Council’s work is to promote ethnic diversity in workplaces in Sweden. The Council has members from the National Agency for Government Employers, the Federation of Social Insurance Offices, the Association of Swedish Local Authorities, the Federation of Swedish County Councils, LO, SACO, SAF<sup>(3)</sup> and TCO. Chairmanship of the Council is circulated on a six monthly basis. A special steering group determines the orientation of the Council’s activities.

The task of the Council for Diversity is promoting the development of diversity in working life, and also covers ensuring an exchange of information and experience between participating organisations and other organisations which are working for diversity in working life. The Council can also monitor developments in other countries and where necessary take initiatives for the exchange of international experience, as well as arrange press conferences, study visits etc. Policy in the area is monitored and discussions have been held with a number of ministers and state secretaries.

In order to give prominence to and recognise good examples and models representing progressive thinking in diversity work, the Council has initiated a special award. So far three awards have been made. They have been given to Birka Energi and Volvo Trucks, and also to a network of enthusiasts in Östergötland from the Social Insurance Office, the County Council, the Municipality of Linköping, the County Employment Board and the County Administrative Board.

## LO

The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) consists of 18 trade unions, and organises workers in both the private and public sectors. In year 2000 a project called “Kraftsamling” (Mobilising Energy) was started for integration in working life and in trade union activities. The project will run over a five-year period. The person responsible in the LO management is the chairman, Wanja Lundby-Wedin. The aim of the project is that integration work carried out by LO should be strengthened, and a long-term and sustainable view taken. The goal of LO’s integration work is to break down social and ethnic segregation and also create conditions of equality, everyone should have the same rights, obligations and opportunities in working life, in trade union activities and in society as a whole. Class and gender are the basis for LO’s integration work and as a result all integration work is permeated by class and gender equality perspectives.

The project focuses on training, mobilisation and general education, and is intended to develop an integration perspective where active efforts against discrimination should permeate the whole organisation and its activities. Within the project, there is an integration project “Equal values and Equal rights”, in which all the trade unions are involved. LO will stimulate research efforts into anti-discrimination, integration and ethnic diversity in working life, and carry out studies and publish reports. Methods for LO’s statistics should be developed as well as improvements in national and regional statistics, so that gaps and injustices can be made visible and remedied. LO works with policy development and strategies for bringing about change in integration, ethnic diversity and against discrimination, both internally in the trade union movement as well as externally in working life, in society and also internationally. Methods should be developed so that integration issues and measures against discrimination are incorporated in collective agreements. In addition, LO wishes to develop forms for how the content of collective agreements can incorporate diversity issues in terms of management development, organisation development, development of recruiting processes etc.

LO is working on identifying discriminatory structures and mechanisms in working life and society in order to eliminate them. Work is also carried out against discrimination in individual cases affecting members, and in this context LO has the main responsibility. One goal is to increase the number of official representatives with a foreign background in order to develop a more representative democracy, and also to increase participation of



immigrants in trade union training programs. All training provided by trade unions will be scrutinised from an integration perspective in order to bring about in-depth change. LO wishes to increase knowledge of integration issues and how to combat discrimination at all levels in the organisation. A number of conferences, seminars, informational booklets and interdisciplinary trade union training programmes are being planned. Internally LO itself aims at being a model employer in terms of recruitment and personnel issues.

Amongst LO members the trade union for hotels and restaurants have developed an action programme for integration and diversity. Municipalities have been running for the last five years a project to increase the number of immigrant employees. The trade union representing metal workers has appointed a special official to monitor discrimination issues. The trade union representing property workers is running a project against ethnic and sexual harassment and a highly successful project with certification and training in Göteborg. A number of trade unions have carried out educational programs about the new legislation against discrimination.

## **TCO**

The Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO) has 18 member organisations organising salaried employees. In terms of diversity, TCO is mainly working on the political level, but also monitors preparatory legislative work as well as other political initiatives.

TCO has reviewed the conditions for salaried workers with an immigrant background in Sweden, and has had a project on human rights from an international perspective and for some time has had co-operation with immigrants active in trade union work. TCO also cooperates with the Working life Institute on diversity in cultural and media sectors.

More recently diversity work in TCO has primarily consisted of exchange of experience between trade unions, since conditions within these vary widely. Lectures as well as information about the legislation against ethnic discrimination have also been arranged. As examples of the Confederation's work, it can be mentioned that SIF (the Swedish Union of Clerical and Technical Employees in Industry) a larger union, has set up a mobile exhibition to be used at different workplaces. The Federation of Salaried Employees in the Hospital and Public Health Services has worked

on its own organisation and issues about representation. The National Union of Journalists has worked on developing diversity plans. The Swedish Actors' Equity Association, a relatively small organisation, has a division for international networks.

TCO plans in the future to carry out a survey on the use of the new anti-discriminatory legislation in its work, and run a number of regional seminars as well as actively participate in the Council for Diversity.

## **SACO**

The Swedish Graduates' Union (SACO) consists of 26 trade unions. SACO plays a coordinating and training role in diversity issues. It has started a diversity network for its member associations, where the focus is on acquiring and exchanging knowledge. Together with the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination, SACO and his member organisations will start to provide training on the new legislation against ethnic discrimination for its officials.

SACO's diversity work has so far mainly focused on ethnic issues. The starting points are the UN Convention on Equal Rights and that active work on diversity will lead to a new view of democracy and co-determination at workplaces.

The Swedish Medical Association is the most active member. The Association has determined for each county to what extent foreign doctors are able to get recognition for their medical qualifications in Sweden and they have cooperated with a number of different authorities to make this process easier. They have also worked actively together with the Federation of Swedish County Councils to recruit doctors from Poland, Spain and other countries.

The National Federation of Teachers have developed their cooperation with teacher training colleges in different places around the country and created in-service training for teachers who have recently moved to Sweden. The Swedish Association of Graduate Engineers has a mentor project, a pool of contacts and resource persons, to help prepare foreign engineers for work in Sweden. They are also surveying salary and management levels for engineers who have recently moved to Sweden. The mission of the Swedish Association of Graduate Engineers is that engineers should have work and a position which corresponds to their individual level of competence. The Swedish Society of Psychologists has played an advisory role in validating qualifications of psycho-

logists with foreign education and experience.

SACO also provides support for local projects, where local co-operation often takes place between County Employment Boards, the employment exchange, non-commercial organisations, SAF/Federation of Swedish Industry and others.

During 2000, SACO's student organisation started a project on diversity that will run until 2001. The perspective it takes is class, that class should not be a vital factor for studying in higher education. SACO Students wishes to encourage more persons from lower social classes to study in higher education. The focus on class also means that ethnic issues are focused on.

Through its work on diversity, SACO wishes to broaden the recruitment base to its associations, as well as working life as a whole. The goal is that all vocational groups should have a job corresponding to their competence. SACO also gives prominence to the needs of employees to increase their knowledge about personnel policy, recruitment, personnel strategies and management development in order to increase diversity in working life.

## **SAF**

The Swedish Employers' Confederation <sup>(4)</sup> (SAF) is an organisation representing the interests of companies. SAF has worked for a long time with issues concerning immigrants and integration and has provided advice and assistance to companies. At the end of the 1980s, a number of booklets were produced including the series of studies on "Immigrant issues in companies". SAF covers diversity and integration in working life and also multicultural entrepreneurship in its work on diversity. Disseminating good examples to member companies is an important part of its work, as is providing information about existing legislation and disseminating knowledge through seminars and reports. An important channel is the Internet based member service SAFARIUM. SAF can on request provide advice to companies on how to work with diversity internally and also general information on diversity. As regards the need for more extensive training e.g. concerning intercultural communications, SAF can provide referrals to consultants on the market. SAF considers that Swedish companies to an increasing extent are becoming more aware of the need for diversity in working life.

SAF has also appointed an expert to be responsible for policy on diversity issues. SAF has also formed a special group made up of representatives from its member Associations/Groups, which with-

in their organisations are contact persons for diversity and anti-discrimination. In the group there is an exchange of knowledge and information. SAF carried out during 1996–97 a substantial project concerning migration and multicultural entrepreneurship. During 2000, SAF is running a new larger project for “Diversity in working life”, which is partly directed to increasing opportunities for immigrants to get employment, and also to provide support to companies run by people with a foreign background. SAF is also running a training and vocational information project where diversity issues have been integrated. Within the framework of information SAF provides to schools, it has produced different working materials focusing on diversity and respect for differences.

There are a number of local cooperation projects around Sweden between SAF, trade unions and different authorities and these are linked to increasing diversity in working life. A number of the projects take as their starting point companies’ recruitment needs and difficulties in finding appropriate manpower, and the fact that there are unemployed immigrants who experience difficulties entering the Swedish labour market, even though in many cases they have both the competence and vocational experience. By means of co-operation between employers, trade union organisations and the authorities, as well as individually oriented ways of working, many long-term unemployed immigrants have been able to get jobs in private companies.

## **The Association of Swedish Local Authorities**

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities, which is the employer organisation for Swedish municipalities, has carried out a number of studies about integration and segregation in different municipal areas (labour market, housing, school, social services, democracy etc). During year 2000, a national series of conferences on diversity was held, the results were disseminated on a wide scale amongst municipalities throughout the country. The Association of Swedish Local Authorities has also played an active part in the process of selecting the Diversity Municipality of Year 2000.

The municipalities expect to have recruitment needs for 625 000 personnel during the first decade of 2000 and this will be a strong driving force for focusing on diversity in the Association of Swedish Local Authorities. Other driving forces are the increasing proportion of elderly born abroad, which will create a need

for bilingual personnel in care of the elderly, as will the fact that the provision of better services by municipalities should reflect the ethnic composition of the population. A number of projects are underway focusing on schools and persons with a foreign background, and these aim to recruit teachers and assistants and also establish language pre-schools. Large urban municipalities, with their particular integration and segregation situation have created networks for exchanging knowledge.

The Association of Swedish Local Authorities encourages its members to develop their own diversity plans. Municipalities in Sweden have, however, embraced the work of diversity to varying degrees. Some have made great progress whilst others have hardly started at all. For the municipalities, diversity issues are essentially about broadening the recruitment base in terms of ethnic affiliation and also attracting a young labour force.

The Association of Swedish Local Authorities will continue its work of encouraging municipalities to recognise the importance of diversity as an instrument for the supply of competence in the future. Conferences on diversity, local seminars about the anti-discrimination legislation etc will be arranged.

## **The Federation of Swedish County Councils**

The task of the Federation of Swedish County Councils is to function as the employer organisation representing the interests of its members, the regions and county councils in Sweden, as well as health care in Gotland. It focuses on diversity issues by disseminating knowledge to its members, through reports and conferences, as well as providing support to local projects. Examples of projects are the recruitment of foreign doctors and nurses, and helping and supporting them in the process of getting their qualifications recognised in Sweden. Projects are often carried out in co-operation between county councils, trade unions, the National Board of Health and Welfare, the County Employment Board and others. Around the country there are local networks for immigrant doctors and nurses.

Concrete work on diversity takes place in county councils, but their dissemination and focus is, however, very different. But generally there is a growing interest and focus on managing the supply of personnel in the future. Similar to the municipalities, the driving force for recruiting persons with a foreign background is both a scarcity of labour and the need for language and cultural knowledge other than Swedish.

## The National Agency for Government Employers

The National Agency for Government Employers is the employer organisation for state authorities in Sweden. The agency has monitored the support and service its members, the state authorities wish to receive on diversity issues. Its members do not wish to have a written centrally determined employer policy, but prefer instead to design their diversity policy on the basis of their own conditions. However, they do wish to have a forum to discuss issues, and to provide support for knowledge and information about good practice. Most authorities have responded to the Government's demand for diversity plans. However, the way diversity is implemented varies.

The National Agency for Government Employers will provide its members with seminars about anti-discrimination legislation, support networks, as well as take a proactive role in making members aware of the need for active measures when it comes to "broadening" recruitment. Their reasons for doing this is to be able to manage their need for competence when those born in the 40s leave the labour market. The National Agency for Government Employers will with the help of Statistics Sweden follow-up the composition of state employees: the proportions born in Sweden and abroad.

The Agency has an internal diversity plan. It focuses mainly on ethnic diversity. Work to promote gender equality is also underway. Internally, there have been seminars about attitudes, anti-discrimination legislation and good examples from state authorities working with diversity. The agency exchanges knowledge about diversity with agencies and authorities, both in Norway and Denmark.

Together with the trade union organisations, SACO-S, OFR and SEKO, the agency has formed the Development Council for the Government sector. The Development Council has, just concluded a three year project about diversity "A State Administration Reflecting Sweden". Within the framework of the project, the agency has worked to shape public opinion and disseminate knowledge, it has developed a "toolbox" for diversity work as well as provided financial support for development projects about diversity in five authorities <sup>(5)</sup>.

## Volvo Truck Corporation

Volvo Truck Corporation has Sweden's only diversity manager, a position which has been in existence for three years. The work is supported by the management, and in the local organisations both personnel and managers take part. The company's definition of diversity covers everyone, but in practice it focuses on measures and strategies, particularly as regards gender, ethnic affiliation and age. There is a clear vision and strategy underlying its diversity work which is communicated to all employees.

*"The aim of increasing diversity is above all to create a more profitable and efficient company with creative co-workers. In other words, we wish to take advantage of the competence that exists both within and outside the company, irrespective of background. Diversity work should be based on the values laid down in Volvo Trucks' business plan and integrated throughout the whole organisation."* From diversity policy of Volvo Truck Corporation in Göteborg.

The company has a central steering group for diversity (including gender equality) and local networks in the five divisions. Members of the steering group are the diversity manager, chairman of the local networks and trade union representatives. The chairmanship of the central steering group rotates amongst the management, the mandate period is for two years. The local networks plan and carry out local activities. The diversity manager takes part in local network meetings, and each local network has a person responsible for personnel, so that there is always a linkage between line work on diversity and the personnel function.

Information on diversity in the company's work on diversity has been disseminated at internal conferences and seminars and has also been incorporated in management courses and presented to all management groups. In management training pro-

grams for young managers, diversity is an established feature, whilst training in diversity for other co-workers occurs most frequently in pilot forms.

Volvo Trucks works to provide quality assurance in its recruitment process by acting in accordance with anti-discrimination legislation and diversity. In the introductory phase those responsible for recruitment have been trained and the company's advertisements have been designed to specifically reflect diversity issues.

Each division should set up local action plans. Action plans are followed up annually. It is the top managers in their respective divisions who are responsible for the plans, for follow up and ensuring that their subordinates achieve "targeted results". In addition, central goals have been set up for appointing a number of female managers, managers with immigrant backgrounds and also that there should be no salary differences due to background (gender, ethnic affiliation). These three goals have been broken down into local goals and diversity networks of the local organisation follow up the composition of the labour force annually. A personnel competence bank is also being set up and this will cover cultural competence, knowledge of languages, and mother tongues other than Swedish.

*"By putting the customer continuously in the centre and focusing on quality, products, profitability and co-workers, we use diversity as a tool for increasing profit."*

From diversity policy Volvo Truck Corporation in Göteborg.

### Fact box on Volvo Truck Corporation Göteborg

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Number employees	4 500
Proportion men	87%
Proportion women	13%
Proportion with foreign background	13%
Proportion female managers	9%

# National Integration Office

The National Integration Office is the central supervisory authority for integration issues and has overall responsibility for ensuring that integration policy goals and perspectives are implemented in different societal areas. The Office should:

- have overall responsibility. for making sure that recently arrived immigrants receive support for their integration into Swedish society
- work for equal rights and opportunities for all irrespective of ethnic and cultural background
- prevent and counteract xenophobia, racism and ethnic discrimination
- monitor and evaluate the development of society from the perspective of ethnic and cultural diversity.

The National Integration Office also allocates support to local development projects within the framework of its activities and follows up and reports on successful strategies. The office has recently been given the task of building up a national knowledge bank of work against racism, xenophobia and ethnic discrimination. The knowledge bank should contain information about methods, experiences, as well as knowledge from different levels and sectors of society, as well as from international experiences.

## **Introduction and training**

To help make the introduction of refugees in Sweden successful in terms of participation and being able to support themselves, the introduction must be planned in active co-operation between the individual and the responsible authorities and specifically focus on working life in the very beginning for those of working age.

In order to assess vocational education and experience from other countries there must be functioning systems of validation which can evaluate formal and informal qualifications and experience from other countries. The Office should follow this up and accelerate the development of systems that function.

In conjunction with other authorities, the Office should make it easier for people to supplement foreign qualifications so that they



can be used on the Swedish labour market, initiate measures for increasing knowledge of immigrant education levels and encourage those with low levels of education to further studies.

As regards higher education, the Office should together with other authorities develop knowledge and methods to make recruitment to higher education less ethnically biased and broaden the recruitment base for higher education.

It is also the role of the National Integration Office to monitor how people with relatively low levels of education are recruited to competence enhancing adult education programmes and encourage them to continue studying by working together with strategic alliances. The Office should also follow up and initiate measures for better study conditions for these groups.

## **Support for working life**

The National Integration Office develops and disseminates models for diversity work in workplaces through co-operation with employers, trade unions and other representative organisations.

The Office should analyse and compile a list of existing structural obstacles on the labour market and propose long term-measures for dealing with them. As regards the introduction of new arrivals, the National Integration Office should follow up results particularly from a working life perspective and together with the Labour Market Administration, it should evaluate activities from the perspective of integration.

The National Integration Office cooperates i.a. with the county administrative boards and the Association of Swedish Local Authorities in terms of measures to realise integration policy at the regional level e.g. in the work of the growth agreements and the European Social Funds.

The measures for diversity within health care and public administration are supported by the National Integration Office and these will be surveyed. The National Integration Office makes international comparisons of the labour market situation as it affects different groups in Europe.

## **Raising knowledge and skills**

The National Integration Office has been given the task, together with the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination, of implementing information and educational measures to increase knowledge of the mechanisms underlying ethnic discrimination as well

as about laws and rules. The measures are targeted to persons in key positions within authorities, trade organisations and industry.

The task has its origins in the perception that knowledge levels in society are generally low when it comes to issues concerning discrimination. There is a widespread lack of knowledge in both private and public sectors about what discrimination is, in what forms it may be expressed and what the underlying motives may be. Sifo (a national survey organisation) was commissioned in 2000 by the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination and the National Integration Office to carry out a study. This showed that only 54 percent of both employers and those responsible in companies in different industries reported that they were aware of what the legal consequences were for illegal discrimination. Out of 312 trade union chairmen and other trade union representatives, only 31 percent knew what was covered by the new act on ethnic discrimination.

## **The National Integration Office's Action Plan**

The National Integration Office has a very thorough diversity plan <sup>(6)</sup>. The plan starts by stating that it is management that has responsibility, both for diversity and provision of competence for fellow-workers. Fellow-workers must respect each other and see the value of each other's differences. In internal diversity work the composition of the staff is emphasised. Each year diversity should be mapped using questionnaire-based studies. There are 79 employees at the Office, 61 percent are women and a third were born outside Sweden. When recruiting and appointing trainees the Office should give priority to those groups that are under-represented. The plan emphasises the importance of meeting fora which give fellow-workers an opportunity to meet and work together e.g. via intranet.

Discrimination is not allowed and nor are unjustified salary disparities. Prior to each revision in the salary scale, salaries are assessed to show that there are no unjustified salary disparities.

Physical working conditions should suit everybody and there should be an atmosphere of respect and trust. There is a special room for prayer, meditation and reflection. The Office should help fellow-workers to combine parenthood and work. The plan is reviewed annually and evaluated in questionnaire-based studies by the personnel.

In its external diversity work, the Office has adopted a procurement policy that takes diversity into account. Unlawful discrimi-

nation precludes or annuls any agreement. The National Integration Office should encourage other Government authorities to take diversity into consideration in public procurement.

### *“There is no racism in my hospital”*

“My sons will be Iranians. They can never be Swedes anyway”. This is what Sakineh Kamareji who is a nurse coming from Iran 12 years ago said. Here in Sweden she has obtained an education, a job and a family.

In the hospital there is no racism. It is something that exists out in the community. That is something she has noticed. At times like that she can think: “Why am I here?”

Radiumhemmet treats cancer patients with radiation or cytotoxicity. They stay for short periods at different times. This is where Sakineh Kamareji works. She has been a nurse for five years. She came to Sweden with her husband 12 years ago. He completed an undergraduate course at the university but could not get a job afterwards. Now he is running a street-kitchen.

She is 32 years old and trained to be an auxiliary nurse first and then a ward nurse. She speaks Swedish with a slight accent. Her two boys are three and nine years old.

She is surprised that patients have not protested about being looked after by an

immigrant more often. It almost never happens. At the same time she feels that it is easy for immigrants to blame their failures on racism. It is indefensible”, she says. But in certain situations discrimination is blatant.

“Then I wonder why we put ourselves through this. Why can’t we live in a country where we are not foreigners and nobody questions our presence? I could put up with all the repression in Iran but my boys couldn’t. If they can’t live here, where can they go? It’s difficult for them to understand that they are foreigners although they were born and grew up here and feel more Swedish than I do.”

“The boys will be Iranian but they should also be a part of Sweden. They are learning Persian, but they have Swedish friends too. They celebrate Swedish Christmas and Persian Christmas as well.

They can never be completely Swedish. Their appearance is against them”, says Sakineh Kamareji.

# Research and development

## Ongoing research and research centres<sup>(7)</sup>

There are relatively few researchers in Sweden, who have studied diversity in working life from a broader perspective. On the other hand for some decades there has been ongoing research into working life in terms of gender, class, ethnic origins, age, functional impairment etc. Gender research has studied conditions in organisations as a function of gender, whilst most research into working life and ethnic origins, functional impairments and age, focuses mainly on marginalisation and difficulties of establishing a position on the labour market.

Some research centres and ongoing research into diversity in working life are presented below.

### *The research group “Management of differences”*

The research group “Management of differences” is a co-operation project between the Institution of Business Economics at the Stockholm School of Economics and Business Administration, Göteborg University, and the Centre for Work Sciences, Göteborg University. The background to the group’s work are the recurring problems in many workplaces in Sweden, where people with greater differences than those we are normally exposed to are customers/clients, suppliers and job applicants.

The research group plans over a five-year period (2000–2005) to carry out research on the following issues:

- How large organisations develop and try to implement strategies for handling diversity in a broad sense?
- How does recruitment and socialisation change when organisations develop from relatively homogeneous into relatively heterogeneous units?
- In what ways do management of work groups, learning, competence development, conflict resolution and performance change with a heterogeneous composition?
- Do small companies run by immigrant entrepreneurs manage their companies differently from Swedish entrepreneurs?
- Do younger entrepreneurs run their companies differently from older entrepreneurs?

- How do service companies (where products are developed through human communication) handle exchanges involving differences and between employees and customers?

### *The programme for “Work and culture”*

The programme for “Work and culture” is a co-operation project between the Working Life Institute in Norrköping and Tema Etnicitet at Linköping University. The programme takes as its starting point the rapid changes taking place on the labour market in Sweden, arising from new international conditions. By surveys and gaining a deeper understanding of culture-related changes, the programme aims at helping to increase the ability to manage development opportunities and problems. Activities are focused on three research areas:

- Work cultures. The growth of new post-industrial cultural patterns in working life.
- Work and ethnic relations. The increasing importance of ethnic relations in working life resulting from immigration and internationalisation of industry.
- Culture production and cultural work. The increasing importance of culture and media production in society.

### *SALTSA – a subprogram for work organisations.*

SALTSA is a co-operation program between the Working Life Institute, LO, TCO and SACO. The work organisation of the subprogram studies processes leading to segregation and exclusion from the labour market arising from gender, ethnic affiliation, different handicaps and age, and also the changes currently taking place in employees’ opportunities to exercise influence at work. Other research issues studied by the programme: How should management systems, work organisation, reward systems and systems for learning be arranged so that good working life is promoted when demands on employees increase? How should we develop a sustainable work system? What forces in the economy lie behind the trend towards the use of temporary forms of employment, and what are their consequences? Do trade unions develop their organisations and action plans in order to better measure up to the new conditions in working life?

### *Integration and diversity in working life*

The Adult education association, the Centre for Business and

Policy Studies, SNS, has in a number of studies focused on immigration and its consequences for immigrants themselves, industry and society at large. The research is carried out by independent researchers and coordinated by SNS. Currently there is an ongoing project “Integration and diversity in working life” which has two aims. The first is to increase knowledge of mechanisms and measures in public decision-making which influence integration and exclusion particularly in working life. The second aim is to examine the statement that “diversity is profitable “: what does it mean, what evidence is there, and under what conditions is the statement valid?

## Ongoing development projects

The former Council for Work Life Research <sup>(8)</sup>, the Swedish European Social Fund Council, the National Integration Office, the Development Council for the Government sector, the Swedish National Labour Market Board, the Association of Swedish Local Authorities, the Federation of Swedish County Councils, and SAF initiated in 1999 the cooperation project “*Competence for diversity in working life*”.

- “*Competence for diversity in working life*” finances development projects about diversity in working life during 2000 and 2001. Around twenty projects have been granted funds. The project has also financed the development of the web site at [www.mangfald.org](http://www.mangfald.org). This contains press releases, reference materials, project descriptions, research etc. In addition, it coordinates a network of practitioners, consultants and researchers interested in diversity in working life.
- A sample of projects which have received financing from “*Competence for diversity in working life*” are:
  - *Diversity in practice. Critical competence: revelation and action* by Daina Alm, Kairos Future. A study into the extent to which diversity and the ability to handle diversity is identified as a critical competence of the future in companies, and also the extent to which this insight is incorporated in concrete recruitment and HR strategies of companies <sup>(9)</sup>.
  - *Managing Diversity – Enabling peoples’ differences to become assets for companies/organisations*, Ingrid Anderzén, Social medicine, Uppsala University. The study aims to identify the consequences of diversity in workplaces in terms of the individ-

ual's psycho-social health and the working environment, attitudes and performance of an organisation's employees. In addition, tools for measuring and identifying areas for improvement are to be developed, connecting diversity with creativity, learning, feedback on co-workers' effectiveness and performance.

- *Diversity in Halland*, Rie Bolund and Monica Stensman, RiB Utbildning. The project aims at examining how local companies and public administration work from a diversity perspective, and also how managers in Halland can use differences between people as an asset and a competitive instrument. The intention is also to initiate a constructive dialogue concerning the consequences of increased diversity on companies and administrations in the county, internally and externally, and also develop locally adapted strategic models for diversity thinking, companies and administration.
- *Drawing up a diversity model based on the Swedish Quality Award; Diversity Dialogue Groups/Diversity circles; Drawing up diversity training for managers (Managing inclusion) and also certification of trainers*, Åsa Helg, Marthe Vakoufari, Sverige 2000. These three projects are feasibility studies which will investigate: the potential for incorporating diversity in the Swedish Quality Award, and on the basis of an American model draw up diversity training in study circles at Swedish workplaces, and also adapt an American training program on diversity to Swedish conditions.
- *Looking from other perspectives – views of working life in Sweden reported by engineers with foreign qualifications*, Eva Löfgren, Diversity Support, Gabriella Fägerlind, ImplementDiversity. 15 immigrant engineers who worked as engineers for at least five years in Sweden have taken part in detailed interviews on how they experience Swedish working life across a spectrum covering management, recruitment, working climate and co-operation and also the Swedish coffee break <sup>(9)</sup>.
- *The Social Insurance Office and diversity*, Elisabeth Nordin Nobuoka, Social Insurance Office in the County of Stockholm. The aim of the project is to increase awareness of diversity issues. The aim is that the Social Insurance Office should contribute to increasing diversity on the labour market by influencing selection of those who will re-enter the labour market. The goal is to increase knowledge about the use of categorised indicators and draw up a training program for a diversity training course which can subsequently be implemented at the Social

Insurance Office <sup>(10)</sup>.

- *A working life with gender equality*, Susanna Magnusson, the Swedish Dental Federation. Dentistry is the most multicultural academic profession in Sweden. Half of all those studying dentistry courses were born abroad. But what happens to immigrant dentists after they conclude their training? Do they get jobs and what sort of working life do they have?

## **WL 2000 – working life conference within the Framework of the 6 month EU Presidency.**

The Working life Institute, the Swedish Work Environment Authority, Prevent and the Swedish National Labour Market Board arranged at the beginning of 2001 a major conference on working life “Work Life 2000” within the framework of the Swedish presidency of the EU. The aim of Work Life 2000 was to make scientific findings available to decision-makers and create a forum for discussing and drawing conclusions about these results. As a prelude to the conference in 2000, around 65 workshops during the period 1997–2000 were arranged on research related to different areas within working life. Around 1000 researchers were involved. The former Council for Work Life Research <sup>(11)</sup> organised during year 2000 three European research workshops on diversity: Workplace Diversity: A Research Perspective on Policy and Practice <sup>(12)</sup>, Work force diversity in Europe – immigration and ageing as policy challenges and Discrimination and affirmative action on the labour market – legal perspectives.

In her opening address to the conference, the Director-General of the National Institute for Working Life, Inger Ohlsson, emphasised the strategic importance of diversity. Knowledge and innovation are critical forces in modern economies, and in this context diversity is a tremendously significant factor stated Ohlsson.

The Work Life 2000 Conference had four themes: labour market, work organisation, working environment and diversity in working life. The theme “Diversity in working life” covered a review of knowledge from the three workshops mentioned above, where the latest findings into research on diversity are described from an organisation perspective; diversity on the labour market as well as anti-discrimination legislation in European working life. A roundtable conference was also held with European politicians and leading experts.

During the conference on diversity, the Deputy Minister of



Industry, Mona Sahlin, underlined the fact that diversity involves respect, dignity and democracy, and that diversity on the European labour market and at individual workplaces will increase when the need for manpower increases as a result of the large numbers retiring from the labour force. A number of delegates pointed out that changes in attitudes and anti-discrimination legislation is required. Hans Ytterberg, the Swedish Ombudsman against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, emphasised the importance of changes in attitudes and that authorities and established institutions should clearly state their positions against prejudice and racist/homophobic views. The Employment Secretary of the UK, Margaret Hodge, pointed out that in the UK anti-discrimination legislation had existed for 25 years and despite this major problems still remain. She advocated instead practical research and good examples. Alan Walker from the University of Sheffield highlighted problems in Europe arising from an ageing population, discrimination on the basis of age, a trend which is becoming increasingly widespread and also the need for innovative strategies to keep older members of the labour force on the labour market.

In her concluding address, Mona Sahlin, who during Sweden's Presidency of the EU leads the Council for Employment and Social Policy, reiterated the importance of looking at working life issues from a holistic perspective which emphasises links between diversity, working environment, competence development etc. The starting point is a long-term sustainable working life, which Sahlin refers to as quality in work. Quality in work ultimately deals with successfully taking advantage of human resources in working life and is important not only for the individual, but also for growth, employment and achieving a sustainable and competitive economy. Sahlin wishes to further develop indicators concerning quality in work and encourage companies to take greater responsibility for quality in working life, which in the long-term will be beneficial for all parties.

*“The gaps are not getting bigger – but they are not getting smaller either”.*

“We haven’t seen many signs of a booming economy. Employers are not exactly shouting out for us visually handicapped people,” says Sune Olsson who has been blind since childhood. Every second visually handicapped person in Sweden is unemployed.

Sune Olsson is responsible for “Perspektiv” the magazine produced by the National Federation of the Blind. It comes out once a month with 11,000 copies in printed form, 5,000 cassette magazines and 600 in Braille.

“I am responsible for planning the content and for the writing. A colleague who is not visually handicapped is responsible for the layout, managing the pictures and print”, says Sune Olsson.

He can scan written texts into the computer which converts them into synthetic speech or Braille on a special display. He can likewise convert screen texts and e-mails into Braille or synthetic speech. Documents can be printed in Braille on a special printer. The technology is about 10

years old. He writes straight into the computer and does it confidently and perfectly after many years of experience.

“Using this technology, blind and sighted people can work together on the same job at the same workplace. I absolutely love my work as a journalist”, he says.

He trained as a journalist in the 1970s and thinks he could work in other publishing areas as well, but not in the daily press with its tight deadlines, he would prefer working in slower media. He has a visually handicapped colleague in local radio in Gotland.

There are aids for the visually handicapped, but the idea of employing a visually handicapped person never crosses the minds of employers. They lack imagination.

“I am not entirely convinced that working life will get better for those of us who are functionally impaired. The gaps are not getting bigger, but they are not getting smaller either”, says Sune Olsson.

# Legislation and ombudsmen against discrimination

A precondition for a diversity-oriented organisation is that it is non-discriminatory. Anti-discrimination legislation provides the foundation for work on diversity and stipulates the lowest level of ambition that an employer must have.

Swedish anti-discrimination labour legislation provides protection against discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation and functional impairment <sup>(13)</sup>. There are four ombudsmen, each with its own secretariat, who monitor compliance with the law. covers all types of employers and workplaces. The prohibition against discrimination covers the whole recruitment process and applies irrespective of whether an employment decision is made. In addition, it covers decisions concerning promotion, training for promotion, application of salary and employment conditions, management and distribution of work, and also termination, dismissal and temporary lay-offs. The burden of proof in the legislation is reversed since the employee or job applicant submits facts purporting to show that discrimination has occurred, the burden of proof is transferred to the employer who must demonstrate that the treatment has nothing to do with gender, ethnic affiliation, functional impairment or sexual orientation.

In the first instance, it is the trade union organisations who have the right to submit complaints concerning discrimination. If the trade union organisation does not take up a case, or if the person making the complaint is not a member of a trade union, the Ombudsman may act on the complainant's behalf. The Ombudsmen as a result receive complaints concerning discrimination from both trade union organisations and individuals. The Ombudsmen examine the complaints and try to persuade the parties involved to reach an agreement. Disputes that cannot be resolved through negotiation and which create a precedent can be taken up in the labour court, a court composed of labour market partners and which makes judgements on labour law disputes. The main sanction is damages.

The ombudsmen should also lead public opinion and independently take up conditions in working life that fall within their juris-

diction. The instruments available to the Ombudsmen in terms of inspection, public opinion, information and training are all important in enabling anti-discrimination legislation to have an impact on society.

## **The Equal Opportunities Ombudsman – against gender discrimination**

The Equal Opportunities Act and the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman have existed the longest. The Act came into force in 1980 and since then has been strengthened and extended several times. It consists primarily of two parts. One obliges all employers – both in public and private sectors – to actively promote equality between women and men at the workplace. This concerns the working environment, salaries, competence development, recruitment procedures and many other factors that determine whether women and men have in practice the same opportunities in working life. All employers with at least ten employees should also draw up an annual gender equality plan.

The other part of the law protects individuals against gender discrimination in working life. It applies to discrimination when an employer employs personnel, discrimination in conditions of employment and working conditions of those in employment, and also discrimination when employment is terminated.

The Act on Equal Opportunities has recently been strengthened. This applies to unjustified salary disparities between women and men and means that the employer is obliged to carry out an annual review and analysis of salaries and working conditions to determine if there are discrepancies between women and men with similar or equivalent work. A definition of the term equivalent is being appended to the Act. The results of the review are presented in an action plan for equal salaries. In the plan the employer should specify the measures that are required and when they can be implemented. Salary questions are common in discrimination cases and three quarters of the complainants are women.

## **Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination**

The new act against ethnic discrimination in working life, introduced on May 1 1999, states that an employer is obliged to take active measures to further ethnic diversity in working life. In addition the act covers both direct and indirect discrimination and

applies irrespective of whether an employer has discriminatory intentions or not. The employer is obliged to investigate and deal with allegations of ethnic harassment between employees and to work towards targets that actively promote diversity in working life.

The Office of the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination (DO) was instituted in 1986. The Ombudsman's task is through advice to provide assistance to persons who have been subjected to ethnic discrimination to safeguard their rights. According to the law, the Ombudsman should carry out an investigation and in the last resort take discrimination complaints to court. The Ombudsman should also monitor that employers are actively trying to create ethnic diversity in the workplace.

Outside the area of working life, the Ombudsman cannot initiate legal proceedings. Discrimination that occurs in areas other than working life comes under the criminal code and is referred to as unlawful discrimination. This is handled by the police and prosecutors.

The Ombudsman can take initiatives when complaints show there is a pattern in the cases reported or when information is received about important issues of principle. In this case the Ombudsman can arrange meetings with public authorities, companies and organisations in order to try to prevent discrimination and bring about change. The Ombudsman took such initiatives in 43 cases in 1999.

In the same year the Ombudsman received 184 complaints concerning working life. The majority concerned appointments, but others also concerned salary structures, ethnic harassment at the workplace and also not being promoted or selected for competence development.

As support for local diversity work on ethnic affiliation at workplaces, DO has produced a handbook of active measures.

It is the Anti-Discrimination Board which examines cases and determines fines for offences against the legislation concerning active measures. The size of the fine should be related to the circumstances of the individual case. The amount awarded may vary for different employers depending on their financial position and the need to apply pressure to bring about the necessary change. If an employer does not take action after a conditional fine has been imposed by the Board, the fine may be enforced. Legal measures to enforce a fine are taken by the DO at the City Court.

The Ombudsman can also receive complaints about ethnic discrimination on the housing market. There were 22 such cases in 1999. People are still being refused a place to live because of race,

skin colour, national or ethnic origin or religion. The Ombudsman can give advice and assistance free of charge but cannot initiate legal proceedings because when a crime has been committed, it comes under the criminal code. Other complaints are usually against restaurants, the legal system, the social services, banks, the health service and educational institutions.

## **Ombudsman against Discrimination of the Functionally Impaired**

The Act against discrimination of the functionally impaired came into force in 1999. It was the first time that a prohibition of this kind had been formulated in law. Compared with the new Act against ethnic discrimination, this does not require active measures to be taken but states that lack of support and failure to take adaptive measures at the workplace can be regarded as a form of discrimination. As many as 40 percent of employees who are functionally impaired do not receive the assistance nor adaptation measures they need

The Disability Ombudsman has been in existence since 1995. During 1999 the Ombudsman received 35 complaints where an individual or an organisation reported discrimination or ill-treatment at the workplace. The new Act was applied in 23 cases. Half the cases concerned salary discrimination, 6 cases of discrimination in connection with appointments, 3 cases of harassment by employers, and 1 case of harassment by fellow-workers.

But the Ombudsman should also monitor questions related to the rights and interests of the functionally impaired and receive complaints from all areas. The standard rules of the UN for ensuring that personnel with functional impairments enjoy the same rights and obligations as other citizens in society is a central starting point for the work of the HO.

Almost half of the cases reported have resulted in action being taken after an investigation by the Ombudsman. Half of a total of 151 complaints concerned accessibility.

The Ombudsman also provides free legal advice over the phone, by letter or via its web site. About a thousand requests for advice are registered each year.

## **HomO – Ombudsman against Discrimination on the grounds of Sexual Orientation**

The Ombudsman against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation (HomO) should ensure that the Act from 1999 prohibiting discrimination in working life on grounds of sexual orientation is complied with. The Ombudsman should also work to ensure that discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation does not occur in other areas of social life. The Office should also follow international developments in its area of responsibility, in the first instance those in the EU. The Office was instituted in 1999.

During the first year the Ombudsman received 30 complaints concerning discrimination. In addition, the Ombudsman took initiatives to examine five cases. Out of a total of 35 complaints, 15 have concerned working life and 20 societal life. HomO cannot take up the case of the last mentioned category, as it falls under the scope of anti-discrimination legislation, but they can provide advice, examine conditions and gather material, as well as hold discussions with the different parties involved.

As regards cases about working life, 5 complaints have concerned employees who have been harassed at the workplace, 4 concerned management decisions, 2 concerned discriminatory employment benefits, 1 case concerned refusal of employment and another case a person who was not allowed to continue to work.

On its own initiative, the Ombudsman decided to examine group life insurance agreements for state, municipal and county council employees. Protection in these insurance policies for surviving unmarried cohabitants applied only to employees who were living together with somebody of the opposite sex. According to Article 4 of the Act, a condition of this kind is direct discrimination. During the year the partners on the labour market have agreed to change the conditions so that they no longer discriminate against homosexuals.

## **EU Treaties and Directives**

Three Treaties and directives from the EU have a substantial influence on anti-discrimination legislation in Europe and Sweden.

The Treaty of Amsterdam from 1997 provides the EU with greater powers to take measures to combat discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, ethnic origin, religion and personal beliefs, functional impairments, age and sexual orientation.

Gender equality issues, for example, have been given a stronger position in EU co-operation as a result of the Treaty. The Treaty states that the EU should make decisions to increase gender equality on the labour market and ensure that the principle of equal payment for equal work is followed, and that affirmative action to correct gender bias is permitted. It is due to this Treaty that Swedish legislation on gender equality has been strengthened in terms of equal salaries for equal work.

In 2000 the EU Council of Ministers adopted a directive against discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnic origins (Directive on equal treatment between persons irrespective of race or ethnic origins). The directive covers all contexts where services are provided to the public as well as working life. Both physical and legal persons are covered. Existing Swedish legislation does not protect legal persons. Neither is it permitted in Sweden to use affirmative action to prevent or compensate for disadvantages arising from ethnic origins. The new directive on ethnic affiliation allows this. In addition, the directive also protects students, trainees and voluntary workers as well as makes ethnic harassment equivalent to discrimination.

In 2000, the EU Council of Ministers also adopted the directive on equal treatment in working life, which regulates discrimination in working life arising from religion and personal beliefs, functional impairments, age and sexual orientation. The directive covers both direct and indirect discrimination and harassment. It also covers access to employment and self-employment, vocational education and guidance, employment and working conditions, membership and benefits provided by trade unions, employer organisations and vocational organisations. The Directive will i.a. mean that Sweden must introduce legislation against discrimination on the grounds of age by the year 2006.

The directive on ethnic affiliation must be implemented in members' national legislation by July 2003 at the latest, and the Directive on Working Life by December 2003 at the latest, but there is an exemption for the next three years before members have to introduce national legislation against discrimination arising from functional impairments and age.

To monitor and assist member states in implementing the directives, the EU has developed an action program. The Action programme, which operates from January 2001 until December 2006, should stimulate the exchange of information between member states and provide information about experiences and problems in implementing the directives.



## *The role of politicians is crucial in modelling a new diversity*

– Europe has still to understand the different dynamics of diversity and the way it contributes to economic and social development, says Graham Shaw. He is Director of Centre for Diversity and Business, a network of experts and practitioners from across Europe, and is in Stockholm to lecture on how diversity lies at the heart of business and social development.

He says politicians play a special and crucial role because they create the atmosphere and legitimacy for others to take action. Politicians want to create and change legal frameworks, but they also need to move beyond these frameworks if we are to be able to understand the kind of diversity we are faced with in our society.

– Politicians have to be operating in their own sphere of influence in order to make changes and that goes for everyone, in a sense. People often say they can't do anything in their organisation because of this or that problem, usually the attitude of the senior management. It is difficult, but when we start to act we find out what our scope for action is and start to build something. Politicians have to take the same approach, says Graham Shaw.

In Sweden for a long time there has been an emphasis on equal opportunities in relation to women in particular and Sweden has made a tremendous step forward on issues of gender equality. What Sweden now faces is a different issue of diversity and what has come on the agenda is described as “the problems of integration of minorities and refugees”.

– You have debates on how to cope with being a multicultural society and about national identity. But what I see in Sweden is what I see in a lot of European countries, a lack of recognition about the breadth and depth of diversity in society and the workplace. A sort of almost historical amnesia about how to deal with this issue, says Graham Shaw.

– There are a lot of people working on issues of gender business and a lot of people working on issues of minorities. But there seems to be very little connection between the two. A more strategic view is needed, both economically and politically,

on what we are trying to do as European societies to benefit from and leverage the different kind of cultures and populations we have. We need to take a broader view on what the dynamics of diversity are.

Diversity is not a static thing. People are constantly negotiating their identity, constantly moving between their “demographic”, professional and cultural positions and aspirations.

Graham Shaw thinks we should no longer speak only of integration, but find new words that would mean being able to positively accept difference and have ways in which we can use the difference to benefit people. Governments have to start leading the process and modelling the behaviour that backs up such an approach.

Quotas and affirmative action are not a solution, according to Graham Shaw. Minorities want to be treated fairly – to know that decisions about recruitment, for example, are fair – and with dignity and respect. Affirmative action driven by representation quotas would not in itself be effective in Europe even if you could get agreement across the member states, which is unlikely. Representation quotas are important and a “barometer” of the organisation.

– When I see a management team made up of 25 white middle aged men in the same kind of suit all going to the same kind of university and belonging to the same kind of golf club I know there is an issue and the “oil light” goes on, says Graham Shaw. If you brought five women or minorities into that environment, the oil light would go off for a while. But it is likely the women or minorities will be gone within twelve months and the oil light would come back again. Because the culture and the environment has not changed. Counting numbers does not tell us what process is going on. In order to bring about real change you have to look beyond the oil light.

– You have to do the hard work convincing people to live diversity on a day to day operational basis and messages from politicians and business leaders should be about this.

# Political initiatives

Swedish policy has traditionally been sector oriented to policy in the labour market, working life, industry, social sector, education, gender equality <sup>(14)</sup>, integration <sup>(15)</sup> etc. As a result of the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications' project on diversity and the Community Initiative Equal (described in the next chapter), we can, however, see the emergence of a policy with new perspectives. A policy which transcends traditional divisions, and takes an overall approach.

In the programme document for Equal, the Government states that at the level of society, diversity in working life means that the total human capital of the country will be better used. Neglecting to take advantage of the reserve amongst underemployed groups on the labour market represents in the long-run a serious obstacle to economic growth and development in Sweden. In addition, it is pointed out that a diversity perspective where the focus is on making better use of human resources through labour market, working life and industrial policy represents to some extent a shift in focus. Earlier policy has concentrated on the individual and what the individual lacks in order to be competitive in working life. Now, however, structures as well as institutions, rules, routines and mental structures must be adapted for policy to function successfully.

## **National action plan for diversity in working life**

In 1999 the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications initiated a diversity project which will lead to a more extensive effort being put into work on diversity and an awareness that groups deviating from existing norms meet similar challenges in working life. The diversity project covers diversity concepts – gender, age, class, ethnic affiliation, functional impairment and sexual orientation. The aim of the project is, from the perspective of growth, to identify and describe how these aspects influence an individual's opportunities in working life, and also propose measures for problems/shortcomings and give prominence to opportunities. This work will also result in a national action programme for diversity.

The project aims to combine safeguarding basic human rights, social justice and stability with better use of human resources so as to encourage quality, productivity and growth.

The aim of the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications' diversity project is that all employers, private and public, should make sure that individual competence and opportunities for development are used, irrespective of gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation or functional impairment and make whatever adaptations are necessary at the workplace.

The project has carried out a demographic projection of the Swedish labour force until 2015 and this shows that the proportion of middle-aged men in the Swedish work force, who have traditionally formed its core, will decrease over the next 15 years and the proportion of older and younger people and women in working life will grow. The same applies to people with foreign backgrounds who will also constitute a greater proportion of the work force. In other words, diversity will become more extensive. The working population will decline and there will be a greater proportion of elderly persons in the population.

The size of the labour force is crucial for our future welfare, says MP, Marie Granlund, the project leader. But just as significant is the question of whether we are capable of using the work force that is currently available.

The proposals of the diversity project for a national action plan contain descriptions of the situation on the labour market in terms of gender, age, class, ethnic affiliation, functional impairment and sexual orientation and also a "directory of obstacles". It also describes the mechanisms behind discrimination and how diversity and profitability are linked. Finally there is a proposal for an action plan with a number of concrete measures <sup>(16)</sup>.

The Diversity project recommends that the various ombudsman institutions and the legislation on discrimination be merged together. The basic idea is that legislation and measures are not to protect particular groups, but are in fact a universal human principle. The project is also considering insisting on active measures which will benefit everybody, such as an obligation to prevent harassment and special procedures when recruiting.

The question of anti-discriminatory clauses in public procurement contracts is brought up on the grounds that public resources should not go to activities that violate basic human rights. Public procurement by the state is estimated at SEK 100 billion annually and by the public sector a further SEK 300 billion annually. It is also proposed that state grants to public authorities could be made conditional on increased diversity. Further demands should

be imposed on the diversity work of the state authorities. When determining their goals for the supply of competence, the authorities should take into account how they can better use and increase diversity among their employees. In their annual reports on the supply of competence, the authorities should state what active measures are being taken in the work of increasing diversity amongst their employees.

The National Swedish Board of Occupational Safety and Health needs to be more active in its inspection of adaptations to the working environment for the functionally impaired and the project proposes that the term “work handicap” and “diminished work capacity” be clarified and be given a more explicit meaning within labour market policy. The level of competence in employment exchanges needs to be raised and National Labour Market Board statistics, which are based on citizenship and not on country of birth, need to be changed. Statistics present reality as worse than it is. Special measures targeting a particular group should be changed to measures that target society as a whole.

It is proposed that the Swedish Business Development Agency gives priority to information and guidance measures for women, persons with a foreign background, those with functional impairment and older persons.

## **National action plan against racism, xenophobia, homophobia and discrimination**

The latest addition to the policy initiatives affecting work on diversity in working life is the Government’s report on a national action plan against racism, xenophobia, homophobia and discrimination <sup>(17)</sup>. The report covers a number of areas apart from working life, and focuses mainly on ethnic origins and sexual orientation, but gives prominence to discrimination concerning functional impairment and age.

The national action plan contains a number of challenges and initiatives, which both directly and indirectly have an impact on diversity in Swedish working life. However, a narrow definition of diversity is used compared to that in the “Diversity project” mentioned earlier. (Some of the proposals are also highlighted and proposed by the Diversity project):

- The Government will issue a supplementary directive to a commission to examine expanding protection against discrimination (N 2001:01) and to examine the opportunities for general legis-

lation against discrimination covering gender, ethnic affiliation, functional impairment, sexual orientation and age) and most of the situations and social areas in which discrimination occurs.

- The Government will also issue a supplementary directive to N 2001:01 to review tasks and responsibility areas for the discrimination ombudsmen, i.a. to determine if the ombudsmen should be given additional tasks outside working life. In addition, a supplementary directive will be issued to determine whether there should be a merger of some or all of the Ombudsman institutions.
- After official consultation on the report from the Commission on Public Procurement, the Government will work to ensure that existing opportunities for using the anti-discrimination provisions in public procurement are really being used. This will be done in order to use public procurement as an instrument for counteracting discrimination and promoting equal rights and opportunities.
- The Government intends to order a study to determine whether the opportunities for state support measures, such as grants and subsidies to companies and organisations, can be combined with the requirement of non-discrimination, and if so what requirements may be attached.
- The Government intends to discuss with the municipalities participating in the Large Urban Development Program how their experiences of such work against discrimination and on diversity can be systematically disseminated.
- The Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination and the National Integration Office have been given the task of implementing information and training measures for persons in key functions at authorities, trade organisations, and employers. The aim is to increase knowledge about the mechanisms underlying ethnic discrimination and existing rules in the area.
- The Government will commission the Swedish National Labour Market Administration to carry out a similar task to train personnel working at national employment exchanges and other personnel within the Swedish National Labour Market Administration. The national employment agency is a central player in the implementation of labour market policy and can work to counteract discrimination in working life, by not collaborating with any discriminatory practices from employers

and not themselves acting in a discriminatory way towards job applicants.

- The Government regards very positively anti-discrimination offices and is considering disseminating and developing local activities, the aim of which will be to counteract discrimination.
- The Swedish European Social Fund Council should disseminate information and support non-state authorities and organisations applying for funds from the EU's action programme against discrimination (which supplements the new recently adopted directive against discrimination).
- Projects within the Community Initiative, Equal, will during the period 2001–2006 be run to counteract discrimination and work for diversity in working life.
- The National Integration Office has been given a strategic role in society's measures to prevent and counteract racism, xenophobia and ethnic discrimination. The office will develop forms and methods for long-term work and also build up a national knowledge bank against racism, xenophobia and ethnic discrimination.

### *International situation at Ericsson – but few women engineers*

“Several of my colleagues have foreign backgrounds. I find it stimulating”, says Ingvar Larsson who is developing the mobile internet at Ericsson Radio Systems AB in Kista, Stockholm.

He works with programming and carries out pilot studies to test new ideas and see how they work. His department uses and tests new products before they are released on the market.

The workplace is international with almost 10, 000 employees. Many people with foreign backgrounds work here. The majority are engineers but there are also system analysts, mathematicians and others in key functions.

“In my department we have someone from Rumania who now lives in Canada and works at Ericsson there. He is over here on a two-year contract because his skills are needed here in Stockholm. We also have two colleagues from Germany. One of them got married here and the other is here on a contract.”

People are coming here from abroad all the time and stay for varying periods. For Ingvar Larsson and his team, it is an enjoyable and stimulating experience.

“We learn about other cultures and how people live in other countries. That's interesting”, he says.

Ericsson has employees all over the world and finds employees with foreign backgrounds very useful. They can establish contacts in their native countries, they speak the language and understand the culture.

Ingvar Larsson has worked overseas for Ericsson on two occasions, in Kuwait and Spain, where he studied a pilot plant in telecommunications.

There are, however, few women in his department which consists 80 percent of men.

“We get the occasional woman engineer sometimes. That's positive, it's good for the working atmosphere. As usual the secretaries are women.”

# Equal and Objective 3

## **Equal – new methods for combating discrimination and inequality on the labour market.**

The Swedish European Social Fund Council has been commissioned by the Government to develop proposals for the Swedish program in the Community Initiative, Equal <sup>(18)</sup>. The EU Commission has formulated the programme at the Community level and invited member states to submit national programs.

A starting point for the Swedish proposals for the programme is “to set up goals for working life, including entrepreneurship characterised by diversity. Such a working life takes advantage of people’s knowledge and skills irrespective of their gender, age, ethnic or cultural affiliation, possible functional impairment, social background and sexual orientation”. The new proposals in the programme build further on the experiences gained from the former Community Initiatives, Adapt and Employment, and “the existing situation concerning discrimination and differences in gender equality”. Given the background of the Commission’s recommendations within the framework of the employment strategy, the task represents a clear priority to “reduce gender differences and provide support for desegregation on the labour market”. This task also involves taking into account the main goals of Equal, by counteracting discrimination, exclusion and gender inequality on the labour market. The programme combines a determination to safeguard fundamental human rights and social justice with the ambition of promoting productivity and growth by utilising human resources. These are common areas of interest in both business and political arenas.

To achieve the goals of Equal, determined efforts must be made against all forms of discrimination and exclusion. But also required is increased knowledge on the part of employers and employees about the contribution that employees with different areas of competence, experience and backgrounds can make. Equal should function as a testing laboratory for the development and dissemination of new methods for implementing policy measures on the labour market and in working life that are aimed at combating all forms of discrimination and inequality. Equal should also take into account the integration of asylum seekers

into society and working life. Co-operation should take place between member countries.

Equal runs from 2001 to 2006. In Equal innovative methods should be developed which can impact on: policy and the development of ideas in appropriate political areas

- structures, institutions and values in society affecting people's participation in working life
- formal and informal processes, working methods and networks related to working life
- the strategies, productivity and growth of companies, public authorities and organisations
- conditions and circumstances of individuals and groups in working life.

Within this framework, Sweden should support innovative projects in its policies for the labour market and working life. Projects should target both the employed and the unemployed, as well as companies, organisations and public authorities, work systems and structures etc. They should primarily be based on the initiatives and ideas of the players and target groups/participants themselves. In other words, participation and empowerment are core elements.

## **Projects in partnership**

Projects in Equal should be organised as partnerships for development. These "broad" partnerships should include relevant interested parties with suitable areas of competence such as public authorities, companies and partners on the labour market. It is particularly important that small organisations and local and regional authorities also participate.

Partnerships for development should be based on geographical conditions and bring together players within a particular geographical area. Other forms of partnerships are also possible e.g. so-called sectoral partnerships. These may comprise an economic sector or particular groups who have been discriminated against.

Partnerships for development should have at least one co-operation partner in another member state, usually a partnership for development in Equal. Transnational co-operation could also cover similar projects outside the EU within the framework of the Phare, Tacis and Media programmes.

In Equal projects new models for co-operation between compa-



nies, public authorities. organisations and research will be developed. These in turn can lead to new roles and areas of responsibility for the players and changes in regulations, financing systems and structures.

Dissemination of experiences and their impact on systems and structures should play a central role in projects and partnerships for development.

Equal comprises three parts/phases:

Phase 1: The formation of partnerships for development and transnational co-operation.

Phase 2: Implementation of partnership's action plans.

Phase 3: Development of thematic networks, dissemination of successful solutions and impact on national policy.

## **Themes for Equal**

The following themes have been chosen for the Equal programme in Sweden. Equality between women and men should be a permanent feature in all themes, not just those themes within the fourth pillar. In the project applications, the expected or possible effects the projects can have on equality between men and women should be clarified. Partnerships for development and projects should operate within one or more of the thematic areas chosen.

### ***Pillar I Employability***

*To facilitate entry and re-entry to the labour market for those groups who have problems integrating or reintegrating into a labour market that must be open to all.*

The theme covers the following areas for development:

- 1a The transition from school to working life.
- 1b Company's social responsibility.
- 1c Alternative routes to employment.
- 1d New routes to the work force.

### ***Pillar II Entrepreneurship***

*To give everybody the opportunity to start a business by providing them with the necessary tools and to identify and exploit new opportunities for creating employment in urban and rural areas.*

The theme covers the following areas for development:

- II a Self-employment.
- II b New sources of regular work.

### ***Pillar III Adaptability***

*To promote lifelong learning and develop routines for combating exclusion at the workplace in order to stimulate recruitment and the retention of people on the labour market who have been discriminated against and treated unfairly.*

The theme covers the following areas for development:

- III a Diversity in working life.
- III b Compensatory guidance for employees.
- III c Guidance and career planning for lifelong learning.

### ***Pillar IV Equal opportunities for women and men***

*To reduce gender differences and segregation on the labour market.*

The theme covers the following areas for development:

- IV a Projects to broaden vocational options for women and men.
- IV b New sectors with new work structures and cultures – identification and analysis from the perspective of gender equality.
- IV c Projects for integrating gender equality perspectives in the labour market and in working life.

## **New Objective 3**

The new Swedish Objective 3 programme <sup>(19)</sup> encourages workplaces to develop into learning organisations, organisations that adapt to a changing world, develop their personnel and make them feel involved and which are open to diversity in their recruitment. The programme focuses on five areas of action which have important links between them.

- *Competence development for the employed.* The objective is that small companies with fewer than 50 employees develop the competence of their work force to the same extent as large companies, and also create 1,000 new jobs whilst keeping existing jobs.
- *Greater employability and entrepreneurship.* The situation of groups excluded from the labour market should be improved by helping them become self-supporting through training, job rotation and help over starting their own businesses. Half of the long-term unemployed should be in regular work or training. A minimum of 450 companies should be started.
- *Integration, diversity and gender equality.* The objective is to boost employment of foreign citizens, people with foreign backgrounds and those who are functionally impaired. Gender segre-

gation on the labour market should be reduced and women in employment promoted. 1,550 companies should be started.

- *Local development.* The objective is to help regional/local players develop ideas, plan and implement projects that could not be created in other areas of action. A minimum of 2000 projects should be developed.
- *Technical support.* This is to help the Objective 3 programme with resources for technical support measures required for implementing the programme.

The programme's five areas of action are supported by four comprehensive horizontal themes. The themes chosen are:

- equal opportunities for women and men
- the social and employment consequences of the information society
- sustainable development and new employment
- regional/local development.

The programme stimulates individual employees to become actively interested in the internal and external activities of the workplace and in their own competence development. The programme empowers the unemployed to take responsibility for their own situation and to play an active role in improving their own employability.

Essential tools for achieving the objectives are company analyses and action plans/agreements for organisational development and the development and provision of competence. As regards the unemployed, individual action plans specify the requirements and strategies for them to become self-supporting.

Annual plans are used in Sweden on a county basis. They are based on the programme supplement and are developed by the regional co-ordinator and the regional partnership. Decision-making occurs at the regional level and partnerships exercise great influence. There can be synergy effects from the intersection between the two former programmes Objectives 3 and 4. These have now been linked together to form one programme, the new Objective 3. To make maximum use of the development potential of the counties and to enlarge the group of project owners, a part of the programme also targets small regional/local players.

# Journey to the Land of Diversity

## – with Equal as the means of transport

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This report deals with the mosaic and complexity of policy on diversity and its implementation in practical activities. When we refer to diversity in working life, it is not just a question of diversity from an ethnic perspective, but also respect for what deviates from the norm and the dynamic forces arising from these differences. It is the unusual, which is not regarded as the Swedish norm. It 's about moving away from both rigid thinking expressed in terms of categories and stereotype patterns and also counteracting discrimination, xenophobia as well as open and hidden racism. But diversity as an idea for developing working life must also take its starting point in the concept of competence. Ultimately it involves creating conditions on the labour market and at the workplace and taking advantage of the individual's competence, developing it and using it to contribute to productivity, health and sustainable growth.

### Is the concept of “diversity ” useful?

The issue is whether it is possible to use the term “diversity” without ending up with a diluted, meaningless philosophy of diversity or being trapped in a general flora of abstract sociological terms. The answer depends naturally on what “*supremacy*” is given to the term “*diversity*” in policy, research and practical development. If diversity is regarded as an overall, integrating concept covering ideas and activities in the area of gender equality, integration domains, handicap policy, the 50+ movement, welfare policy aimed at creating gender equality (incorporating measures to reduce class differences), policy for counteracting harassment and discrimination arising from e.g. sexual orientation, then in all probability a number of significant difficulties will occur at least in the short term.

Today, legislation, social institutions, the diverse interests of

players and ways of working are similar to research and the work of bringing about change largely based on safeguarding and enhancing conditions of different groups, women and men, immigrants, those with functional impairment, the elderly etc. Making the transition from discrimination and exclusion, to diversity and social inclusion is a major step forward. From a broader perspective, different diversity strategies are also related to which welfare models are being developed in different countries. The issue of gender equality is dependent on the contract concluded between the state, organisations and the market.

Within the gender equality area more than 25 years of experience have been gained from trying to influence gender equality in working life and the family through legislation, institutions, targeted measures and education and training. Unfortunately the results have not been particularly positive, as shown not least by the Commission on the “Distribution of Economic power and economic resources between women and men” and other research. It is thus by no means certain that gender equality issues could be run more effectively if they were organized in terms of a general concept on diversity. On the other hand, if we look at ideas on diversity as an expression of a broader policy on equity, adapted to the challenges of the multicultural society, the term can probably be used at the general level. But the journey there is by no means uncontroversial.

There is no reason to choose the narrower perspective (diversity with an emphasis on integration and ethnic affiliation) in preference to the broader perspective (diversity as the mobilisation of dynamic forces arising from differences). During the implementation of Equal up to year 2006, ideas, discussions and confrontations between different perspectives and approaches are needed. There is also a need to support and stimulate ongoing initiatives, processes of change at the national, regional and local levels. The main reason for this is that “diversity” cannot only be regarded as a goal and a condition. It is very much a learning process, where minorities must be able to understand codes and requirements in new contexts and the dominant culture must learn about, be able to listen to and respect and utilise new knowledge. For this reason, long-term sustainable strategies where setbacks, conflicts and difficulties occur should be regarded as opportunities for learning and not barriers or reasons for giving up.

## Searching for the best diversity model

There is no reason to choose a “best” model or give preference to one definition over another. During the coming program period of *Equal*, there are good reasons for trying out a number of different approaches, models and strategies. An issue of principal importance is, however, whether the welfare policy model should also be subsumed under the “umbrella” of diversity. Looking at diversity as a guiding principle and a motto for *Equal* does not necessarily mean that all projects, partnerships and initiatives should be regarded as diversity strategies. On this point, however, further discussion is needed. Different strategies are probably directed to different groups. It is by no means self-evident that a diversity model emphasising the use of competence, quality, productivity and actively focusing on customers has a positive impact on the employment of those groups which are on the periphery of the labour market.

Neither is it self-evident that diversity work emphasising integration, rights and counteracting discrimination can be directly linked to highly productive work groups or companies. We must still deal with the fact that the state and municipalities will operate as “brokers” and “providers of support” in cases where the priorities of the market are too harsh. At the same time there are reasons to develop and support different models where companies take social responsibility and new social contracts are drawn up between the state and the market, similar to those that have been tested in Denmark. In overall terms, however, *Equal* should be regarded as a learning process and a network for promoting development towards a more diversified working life.

For instance, in comparison to the USA and England, Sweden has not accumulated sufficient experience of working with diversity in working life. Developing the Swedish model of diversity and designing ways of working that fit working life in Sweden is a *reciprocal learning processor emphasising respect, the use of competence and participation at different levels in society*. A major challenge for development partnerships and individual projects in *Equal* is to provide a more detailed analysis of how “diversity” can be implemented in reality.

Advocates of the thesis “diversity is profitable” often give prominence to different goals and functions for the individual, companies and society. Essentially there are two different approaches or complexes of motives. In the first perspective, the concept of diversity is used as a tool for counteracting discrimination. This starting point is also linked with ideas about social jus-

tice and individual rights in society and working life. In Swedish policy and praxis, the system of rights and legislation against discrimination is given a prominent role. In the second perspective, diversity is seen as a business strategy – *managing workplace diversity* – as a method for increasing productivity, quality and focusing on customers. In this respect there is a more marketing oriented view of the role of diversity in working life.

Whether “diversity is profitable” is a difficult issue to resolve. Undoubtedly, the question can be turned around and we can consider whether we can afford to abstain from diversity i.e. in the sense of continuing to exclude large groups from working life and society. Hitherto research has been confined to studying diversity models in companies. Most of the knowledge and information we have comes from anecdotal examples of experiences from larger companies, usually in the USA, which have developed their own diversity strategies.

## **Profitable diversity and the right mix?**

Also the issue of creativity and the creative power of homogeneous and heterogeneous groups has not been fully researched, as was evidenced during the workshop arranged by the Council for Work Life Research in June 2000 on *Workplace diversity – a research perspective on policy and practice* <sup>(20)</sup>. Similar results appeared in the review on workplace diversity given by Professor Lois Wise, Indianapolis, carried out on behalf of the Council for Work Life Research and the Institute for Future studies (see i.a. *Differences that count – ethnic discrimination and diversity in working life*, Ralf 1998).

It is fairly simple to define what are homogeneous and heterogeneous groups at a workplace if this is done in terms of background factors. The extent to which different groups are represented at a workplace is uninteresting if this is not related to attempts to strengthen individual competence profiles in relation to the requirements of the work and the competence of co-workers. There are thus no general answers on how heterogeneous or mixed groups should be at a workplace or company. It largely depends on the nature of the activity. Studies of the effects of different compositions of background factors such as age, gender, ethnic affiliation cannot be done without defining a production context.

The issue of whether there is an optimal mix, a mix that is excessive or insufficient thus becomes largely hypothetical. Given

this background, there are reasons to develop diversity models which show the best ways in which individual competence can be utilised without focusing on background factors, categories or rights. Experiences from such models – sometimes referred to as “interface management” – have been gained from studies of multi-cultural groups in multinational companies, where it is absolutely essential that individuals and groups from different cultures, ethnic backgrounds and with different values should be able to work effectively together.

The Community Initiative *Employment* was started on the premise of the need for special measures for vulnerable groups, especially women, immigrants, those with handicaps and young persons. Important experiences have been gained in different countries from projects about how work and participation can be promoted for different groups. In *Equal* the aim is to combine labour market and workplace perspectives. There is also a need to develop new more integrated models, where the emphasis is put on the individual's background and where the use of competence and conditions for change in the workplace are given prominence. The challenge facing *Equal* is to combine a labour market and working life perspective.

## **Individual or joint views – a challenge for Equal**

The issue on which we must take a position is whether different vulnerable groups on the labour market are more homogenous in terms of background and special factors than those differentiating them? This issue is by no means easy to answer. How should an unemployed immigrant facing discrimination due to e.g. age and skin colour be compared with a young man with multiple handicaps who has not yet worked or a single mother working part-time in retailing?

For many of those with handicaps, this involves gaining access to the labour market and adapting workplaces to competence requirements and technical and social needs. As regards immigrants, the problem is not always that competence is lacking, but rather that they may be “statistically” discriminated against by employers who have greater confidence in Swedish job applicants. Conditions facing the elderly are again different since there is a low demand for their services, their competence may have become obsolete and young job applicants with a modern education and computer skills appear to be more attractive.

At the societal level, diversity in working life creates opportuni-



ties for making better use of human capital. As mentioned in the program description of *Equal*, this means that failing to use the pool of underemployed groups on the labour market will eventually pose a serious obstacle to economic growth and development in Sweden.

Let us conclude this with a few “clips” from a conversation on the underground between two young persons with an immigrant background, who are on a journey – both socially and geographically. They are in their 20s – a male and a female chatting to each other.

*He says “I’m tired of Sweden – going to move to Paris– never really liked it here.” “I hardly said a word during my military service – no one listened to me – they thought I was a bit odd in some way ... some sort of crook – no, I can’t say I’ve ever really liked this country.”*

*She responds:*

*“Yes, I thought about studying at Komvux – you can’t spend your whole life sitting in front of a till – I want to get on – not get stuck.”*

*“By the way, did you know you can get a grant to study abroad – I think half of it you can keep – the rest is a loan.”*

*He answers before they get off the train “bloody hell, I don’t want to have to pay back a loan over the next 30 years.”*

*She continues...*

*“You know we’re almost the same age – I was also born in 1980, although I was born in January and you in May – so that makes me the oldest.”*

The journey to the land of diversity had started – different people make different life choices – they have different values and value things in different ways.

There are also those who are critical towards the ever-increasing use of the term “diversity” – this is how one consultant in diversity put it:

*“We’ve been cutting down our efforts in diversity. It has become so political. Yet another labour market policy measure. Now we’re working more indirectly with diversity issues.”*

Perhaps this is the goal – ideas about diversity are a tool for creating a good working environment, an effective and participatory work organisation and a labour market for everyone, diversity is not a goal in itself.

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[www.handikappombudsmannen.se](http://www.handikappombudsmannen.se)  
[www.homo.se](http://www.homo.se)  
[www.jamombud.se](http://www.jamombud.se)
- Other relevant sites**  
National Integration Office:  
[www.integrationsverket.se](http://www.integrationsverket.se)
- FAS, Council for Working Life and Social Research: [www.fas.forskning.se](http://www.fas.forskning.se)
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[www.vinnova.se](http://www.vinnova.se)
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- Statistics Sweden: [www.scb.se](http://www.scb.se)  
[www.mangfald.org](http://www.mangfald.org)

# Notes

1. See Ds 2000:69 *Alla lika olika – mångfald i arbetslivet, expertbilagor*. Can be downloaded from [www.naring.regeringen.se/mangfald/index.htm](http://www.naring.regeringen.se/mangfald/index.htm)
2. In Sweden it is forbidden to register the ethnic background of employees without their consent. Organisations in the study have estimated the proportion of personnel with a foreign background. They have used different methods: determining origin based on names, asking managers or employees about their origins, combining lists of personnel with Statistics Sweden to produce figures on numbers born abroad. One organisation thought making an estimate of the origins of its new recruitments was sufficient. In three organisations, the survey led to negative reactions. In one this was because the purpose of the survey was not made clear in communications with employees, in another the employees from totalitarian countries were deeply reluctant to be surveyed in Sweden as well.
3. Spring 2001, a new industry organisation was formed, Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, by SAF and the Swedish Federation of Industry, which were then wound up.
4. See note 3.
5. Experiences of diversity work in five authorities are described in the report *Mångfald i organisationer* (2000). It can be ordered from the Development Council for the Government sector.
6. The plan in its entirety can be downloaded from [www.integrationsverket.se/pdf/mangfaldsplan.pdf](http://www.integrationsverket.se/pdf/mangfaldsplan.pdf)
7. This description is far from complete. The new Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research is financing a number of research projects on international migration and ethnic relations, on age and older citizens and also on functional impairments and related fields. The description presented in this report highlights development projects and some research initiatives with a broader working life diversity orientation. For further information, contact the Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research, FAS [www.fas.forskning.se](http://www.fas.forskning.se)
8. The Council for Work Life Research was closed down at the turn of the year 2000–2001, the research oriented part remains at the Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research (FAS) and the parts focusing on development projects have been transferred to the Agency for Innovation systems, Vinnova.
9. The report can be downloaded from <http://www.mangfald.org/ uppsatser.htm>
10. Elisabeth Nordin Nobuoka (2001) *Mångfald och rehabilitering*, Social Insurance Office County of Stockholm, R&D Report No. 35
11. See note 8.
12. The articles from the workshops can be downloaded from [www.spea.indiana.edu/wisel/workplace\\_diversity.htm](http://www.spea.indiana.edu/wisel/workplace_diversity.htm)
13. Appendix 1 contains extracts from the Acts against discrimination.
14. As regards gender equality, this perspective should however, penetrate all policy areas, what is called (gender) mainstreaming. All Ministers in the Government have responsibility for gender equality within their respective policy areas.
15. Developments in the integration policy area will be presented in Spring 2002 in their entirety in a report to the Swedish Riksdag. This will describe the Government's work on increasing ethnic and cultural diversity in working life, with special reference to the public sector.
16. *Alla lika olika – mångfald i arbetslivet*, DS 2000:69 can be downloaded from [www.naring.regeringen.se/mangfald/index.htm](http://www.naring.regeringen.se/mangfald/index.htm)
17. Can be downloaded from [www.naring.regeringen.se/propositioner\\_mm/skrivelser/pdf/s200001\\_59.pdf](http://www.naring.regeringen.se/propositioner_mm/skrivelser/pdf/s200001_59.pdf)
19. Programmes and other information about Equal are available at <http://www.esf.se/>
19. Programmes and other information on Structural Funds Objective 3 are available from [www.esf.se](http://www.esf.se)
20. See note 12

# Appendix 1:

## The Anti-Discrimination Legislation

### Extract from the Act Concerning Equality between Men and Women (1991:433) with the latest amendments entering into force on 1st January 2001 (SFS 2000:773)

1 § The purpose of this Act is to promote equal rights for women and men with regard to work, employment conditions and other work-related conditions, as well as development opportunities at work (gender equality in working life). The Act aims in particular at improving conditions for women in working life.

2 § Employers and employees shall cooperate over active measures for achieving gender equality in working life. They shall in particular work to equalise and prevent differences in salaries and other employment conditions between women and men who are carrying out work which is regarded as the same or equivalent. They shall also promote equal opportunities for women and men concerning salaries.

#### **Active measures**

##### ***Goal-oriented work for gender equality***

3 § Within the framework of their activities, employers shall carry out goal-oriented work in order to actively promote gender equality in working life.

##### ***Working conditions***

4 § An employer shall carry out such measures which given due regard to the employer's resources and general circumstances may be required to ensure that working conditions are appropriate for both women and men.

5 § An employer shall make it easier for both women and men to combine employment with parenthood.

6 § An employer shall take measures to hinder and prevent any employee from being subjected to sexual harassment or harassment arising from the submission of a complaint concerning gender discrimination.

##### ***Recruitment etc***

7 § An employer shall by means of training, competence development and other appropriate measures promote an even distribution between women and men as regards different types of work and within different categories of employees.

8 § An employer shall work to ensure that both women and men apply for available positions with the employer.

9 § In the event that at a workplace there is not an even distribution between women and men with regard to a certain type of work, or within a certain category of employee, the employer when recruiting new employees shall make special efforts to get applicants from the under-represented sex to apply and try to ensure that there is an increase in the proportion of the under-represented sex.

## **Salary issues**

10 § In order to identify, take measures against and prevent unjustified differences in salary and other employment conditions between women and men, the employer shall each year survey and analyse:

- rules and praxis concerning salaries and other employment conditions applied by the employer, and
- salary differences between women and men who are carrying out work which is regarded as the same or equivalent.

The employer shall determine whether such salary differences are directly or indirectly related to gender. The assessment shall be made with particular regard to differences between:

- women and men who are carrying out work which is regarded as the same, and
- groups of employees who are carrying out work which is or is usually considered to be dominated by women, and groups of employees who are carrying out work which is regarded as being equivalent to such work, which is not or usually regarded as being dominated by women.

11 § An employer shall draw up each year an action plan for equal salaries between women and men and present therein the results of the analysis in accordance with 10 §. A report and an evaluation of how the planned measures were implemented shall be included in the following year's action plan.

12 § An employer shall provide the organisation which is representing its employees in collective agreements with the information needed for the organisation to be able to co-operate in surveying, analysing and drawing up an action plan for equal salaries between women and men.

## **Gender equality plan**

13 § An employer shall draw up each year an action plan for its work on gender equality.

## **Prohibition against gender discrimination**

### ***Direct discrimination***

15 § An employer may not unfairly treat a job applicant or an employee by treating her or him less favourably than the employer treats or would have treated a person with a different sex in a comparable situation, unless the employer shows that the less favourable treatment has no connection with gender.

The prohibition does not apply if the treatment

- is a part of an attempt to promote gender equality in working life and it does not involve the application of salary or other employment conditions for work which is regarded as the same or equivalent, or
- is justified with regard to idealistic or other special interests which clearly should not be subordinated to the interest in gender equality in working life.

### ***Indirect discrimination***

16 § An employer may not treat a job applicant or employee less favourably by using a rule, requirement or procedure that appears to be neutral, but which in practice is particularly unfavourable to persons of one sex. This does not apply if the purpose of the rule, requirement or procedure can be justified by objective factors which are not connected with a person's sex.

## **When the prohibitions apply**

17 § The prohibitions against gender discrimination apply when the employer

1. makes a decision concerning employment, decides to select a job applicant for an employment interview or takes other measures during the employment process,
2. makes a decision concerning promotion or selects an employee for training that will lead to promotion,
3. applies salary or other employment conditions to work which is regarded as the same or equivalent,
4. manages or distributes work, or
5. dismisses, terminates, lays off or takes other intrusive measures against an employee.

## **Information about qualifications**

21 § A job applicant, who has not been employed or an employee who has not been promoted or selected for training leading to promotion, has a right to request and receive written information from the employer about the nature and scope of the education, work experience and other comparable qualifications concerning the person of the opposite sex who received the job or training place.

## **Prohibition against harassment**

22 § An employer may not subject an employee to harassment due to the employee having rejected an employer's sexual approach or submitted a complaint against the employer for gender discrimination. The person who in place of the employer has the right to decide on an employee's work conditions shall as regards the application of the first paragraph be regarded as equivalent to the employer.

22a § An employer, who receives information that an employee considers herself or himself to have been subjected to sexual harassment by another employee, shall investigate the circumstances concerning the reported harassment, and where appropriate take measures that may reasonably be considered necessary to prevent sexual harassment in the future.

## **Extract from the Act (1999:130) on measures against ethnic discrimination in working life**

1 § The purpose of this Act in regard to work, employment conditions and other work-related conditions as well as development opportunities in the workplace is to promote equal rights and opportunities without regard to ethnic background (ethnic diversity in working life).

2 § Employers and employees shall cooperate in order to promote ethnic diversity in working life. They shall in particular work to counteract all forms of ethnic discrimination.

### **Definitions**

3 § In this Act the term ethnic background refers to the fact that a person belongs to a group of persons who have the same race, skin colour, national or ethnic origin or religious faith.

In this Act the term ethnic harassment means actions in working life that violate an employee's integrity and have a connection with the employee's ethnic background.

## **Active measures**

### ***Goal-oriented work***

4 § Within the framework of their activities, employers shall carry out goal-oriented work in order to actively promote ethnic diversity in working life.

### ***Working conditions***

5 § An employer shall carry out such measures, which, given due regard to the employer's resources and general circumstances, may be required to ensure that working conditions are suitable for employees without regard to their ethnic background.

6 § An employer shall take measures to hinder and prevent any employee from being subjected to ethnic harassment or retaliatory actions due to the submission of a complaint concerning ethnic discrimination.

### ***Recruitment***

7 § An employer shall work to ensure that persons of different ethnic backgrounds are given the opportunity to apply for available positions with the employer.

## **Prohibition against ethnic discrimination**

### ***Direct discrimination***

8 § An employer may not unfairly treat a job applicant or an employee by treating him or her less favourably than the employer treats or would have treated persons with a different ethnic background in a comparable situation, unless the employer shows that the less favourable treatment has no connection with ethnic background. The prohibition does not apply if the treatment is justified with regard to idealistic or other special interests which are clearly more important than the interest in preventing ethnic discrimination in working life.

### ***Indirect discrimination***

9 § An employer may not treat a job applicant or employee less favourably by using a rule, requirement or procedure that appears to be neutral, but which in practice is particularly unfavourable to persons of a particular ethnic background. This applies unless the purpose of the rule, requirement or procedure can be justified on rational grounds and the measure is appropriate and necessary for achieving its purpose.

## **When the prohibitions apply**

10 § The prohibitions against ethnic discrimination in §§ 8 and 9 apply when the employer

1. makes a decision concerning employment, decides to select a job applicant for an employment interview or takes other measures during the employment process,
2. makes a decision concerning promotion or selects an employee for training that will lead to promotion,
3. applies salary or other employment conditions,
4. manages or distributes work, or
5. dismisses, terminates, lays off or takes other intrusive measures against an employee.

### **Information about qualifications**

11 § A job applicant who has not been employed as well as an employee who has not been promoted or selected for training leading to promotion, has a right to request and receive written information from the employer about the education, work experience and other qualifications of the person who received the job or the training.

### **Prohibition against retaliatory actions**

12 § An employer may not subject an employee to retaliatory actions due to the employee's submission of a complaint against the employer on the grounds of ethnic discrimination.

### **The duty to investigate and take measures against harassment**

13 § An employer, who receives information that an employee considers herself or himself to have been subjected to ethnic harassment by another employee, shall investigate the circumstances concerning the reported harassment, and where appropriate take measures that can reasonably be considered necessary to prevent harassment in the future.

## **Extract from the Act (1999:132) on the prohibition against discrimination in working life against persons with functional impairments**

1 § The purpose of this Act is to counteract discrimination in working life against persons with functional impairments.

2 § The term functional impairment refers to permanent physical, mental or intellectual limitation related to a person's ability to function as a result of an injury or illness that existed at birth or has arisen thereafter or can be expected to arise.

### **Prohibition against discrimination**

#### ***Direct discrimination***

3 § An employer may not unfairly treat a job applicant or an employee with a functional impairment by treating him or her less favourably than the employer treats or would have treated persons without such functional impairment in a comparable situation, unless the employer shows that the less favourable treatment has no connection with the functional impairment. The prohibition does not apply if the treatment is justified with regard to idealistic or other special interests which clearly are more important than the interest in preventing discrimination in working life against persons with functional impairment.

#### ***Indirect discrimination***

4 § An employer may not treat a job applicant or employee with a functional impairment less favourably by using a rule, requirement or procedure that appears to be neutral, but which in practice is particularly unfavourable to persons with such functional impairments in comparison to those without such functional impairments. This applies unless the purpose of the rule, requirement or procedure can be justified on rational grounds and the measure is appropriate and necessary for achieving its purpose.



### **When the prohibitions apply**

5 § The prohibitions against discrimination in §§ 3 and 4 apply when the employer

1. makes a decision concerning employment, decides to select a job applicant for an employment interview or takes other measures during the employment process,
2. makes a decision concerning promotion or selects an employee for training that will lead to promotion,
3. applies salary or other employment conditions,
4. manages or distributes work, or
5. dismisses, terminates, lays off or takes other intrusive measures against an employee.

### **Support and adaptive measures**

6 § The prohibition in 3 § also applies when an employer employs, promotes or selects a person for training for promotion, and through support and adaptive measures, can create a situation for a person with a functional impairment which is similar to that for persons without such a functional impairment, and it is reasonable to require that the employer take such measures.

### **Information about qualifications**

7 § A job applicant who has not been employed or an employee who has not been promoted or selected for training leading to promotion, has a right to request and receive written information from the employer about the education, work experience and other qualifications of the person who received the job or the training.

### **Prohibition against retaliatory actions**

8 § An employer may not subject an employee to retaliatory actions due to the employee's submission of a complaint against the employer for discrimination under this Act.

### **The duty to investigate and take measures against harassment**

9 § An employer, who receives information that an employee considers herself or himself to have been subjected to harassment due to a functional impairment by another employee, shall investigate the circumstances concerning the reported harassment, and where appropriate take measures that can reasonably be considered necessary to prevent harassment in the future. Harassment on the grounds of functional impairment is considered to refer to such actions in working life which violate an employee's integrity and have a connection with the employee's functional impairment.

## **Extract from the Act (1999:133) on the prohibition against discrimination in working life due to sexual orientation**

1 § The purpose of this Act is to counteract discrimination in working life on the grounds of sexual orientation.

2 § Sexual orientation is considered to refer to homosexual, bisexual and heterosexual orientation.

## **Prohibition against discrimination**

### ***Direct discrimination***

3 § An employer may not unfairly treat a job applicant or an employee by treating him or her less favourably than the employer treats or would have treated persons with a different sexual orientation in a comparable situation, unless the employer shows that the less favourable treatment has no connection with the sexual orientation of the person who is unfairly treated. The prohibition does not apply if the treatment is justified with regard to idealistic or other special interests which clearly are more important than the interest in preventing discrimination in working life arising from sexual orientation.

### ***Indirect discrimination***

4 § An employer may not treat a job applicant or employee with a certain sexual orientation less favourably by using a rule, requirement or procedure that appears to be neutral, but which in practice is particularly unfavourable to persons with such a sexual orientation. This applies unless the purpose of the rule, requirement or procedure can be justified on rational grounds and the measure is appropriate and necessary for achieving its purpose.

## **When the prohibitions apply**

5 § The prohibitions against discrimination in §§ 3 and 4 apply when the employer

1. makes a decision concerning employment, decides to select a job applicant for an employment interview or takes other measures during the employment process,
2. makes a decision concerning promotion or selects an employee for training that will lead to promotion,
3. applies salary or other employment conditions,
4. manages or distributes work, or
5. dismisses, terminates, lays off or takes other intrusive measures against an employee.

## **Information about qualifications**

6 § A job applicant, who has not been employed or an employee who has not been promoted or chosen for training leading to promotion, has a right to request and receive written information from the employer about the education, work experience and other qualifications of the person who received the job or the training.

## **Prohibition against retaliatory actions**

7 § An employer may not subject an employee to retaliatory actions due to the employee's submission of a complaint against the employer for discrimination under this Act.

## **The duty to investigate and take measures against harassment**

8 § An employer, who receives information that an employee considers herself or himself to have been subjected to harassment due to sexual orientation by another employee, shall investigate the circumstances concerning the reported harassment, and where appropriate take measures that can reasonably be considered necessary to prevent harassment in the future. Harassment due to sexual orientation is considered to refer to such actions in working life which violate an employee's integrity and have a connection with the employee's sexual orientation.

# The series of publications

*DIVERSITY IN WORKING LIFE* are intended for all those who are interested in the opportunities and obstacles provided by diversity in working life. The term “diversity” is used to refer to dynamic use of the individual’s competence and resources irrespective of background factors such as gender, ethnic affiliation, education, age, functional impairment.

A strategy for diversity in working life should promote increased integration, better use of competence and greater focus on customers in both private and public sectors.

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