



## LOCAL ACTION PLAN: Breaking norms and gender stereotypes

*City of Umeå developed a local plan for breaking norms and gender stereotypes by promoting a change through best practice.*

### Problems to be addressed

Research shows that gender segregation on the labour market cannot be explained by biological differences between the sexes or by individual preferences. It is a consequence of both gender discrimination and the segregating structure of the labour market that have resulted in gender stereotype patterns that limit both women's and men's options and opportunities.

The LAP of Umeå addresses the issue of gender segregation in the labour market. A gender segregated labour market means that women and men, to a great extent, work in different sectors, have different professions and different positions. Men generally have jobs which are better paid and a higher status than women. Men are also overrepresented in most professions, and having influential positions such as CEO, manager or executive director.

### Aims and Objectives

The key aims of the plan are to break norms and gender stereotypes by promoting change through the exchange of best practices. The aims chosen are based on discussions among the local partners and on significant research into gender equality in the labour market.

The overall objective is a gender equal labour market where both women and men have equal access to all jobs and positions, including the entrepreneurial world.

### Timeliness of the proposal

The first action is a project called Norm which, according to plans, will start in November 2010. Remaining actions are evenly spread out between 2010 and 2014.

### Actions Proposed

The aim of the actions is to work towards changing the core issue of gender segregation, i.e. the norms and structures in the labour market that favours men. The following actions proposed deal with different aspects of the problem. (They are still work-in-progress.)

#### **Project: Norm Storm**

Breaking norms and gender stereotype patterns in the labour market.

#### **Campaign: Gender boundaries**

Breaking gender stereotype patterns in education and the labour market by raising awareness about the problem and encouraging women and men, girls and boys to dare to break the norm.

#### **Analysis: Gender equal growth?**

Gender analysis of the regional plans for development and economic growth.

#### **Campaign: The invisible female entrepreneur**

Changing attitudes and breaking prejudice towards female entrepreneurs

#### **Campaign: Mutual responsibility**

Promoting gender equal parental leave and encouraging men to take their share of responsibility for the family and the household

### **Campaign: Men for gender equality**

Creating a network where men in leading positions, who work for gender equality, can exchange experiences and inspire others.

### **Project: Recruit gender equal**

Creating a folder with strategic advice on how enterprises and employers can recruit in a gender equal manner. Promoting and demonstrating good examples.

### **Follow-up to action plan**

Create a database/website where the action plan is presented along with contact information of all local partners and information about good and bad experiences and outcomes of the activities. On the website, there should also be an evaluation of the results of the actions.

### **Stakeholders involved**

The solutions have been based on experiences from our local partners:

- The Umeå municipality
- The Västerbotten County administrative board
- The Västerbotten Region
- The Ambassadors for women's entrepreneurship
- The Leia accelerator (for gender equal enterprises)
- Swedish Business (Interest organization)
- The Employment office
- The Västerbotten Chamber of Commerce
- The Sami association in Umeå
- The Almi Business partner (advice and coaching)
- The University of Umeå

### **Next steps**

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### **How has transnational work contributed to the ideas for local action plan?**

TNW has played an important role in giving us a chance to exchange ideas and learn from each other. For instance, the “one stop shop” and the study visit at TNW2 in Santiago di Compostela inspired us to see our own work from another perspective and demonstrated new innovative ways of using incubators.

Contact:

#### **Helene Brewer**

Senior officer gender equality  
Utvecklingsavdelningen/Department of Development  
Umeå kommun, Sweden  
Email: [helene.brewer@umea.se](mailto:helene.brewer@umea.se)



