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# Gender equality on the agenda

Planning for a secure and gender equal society

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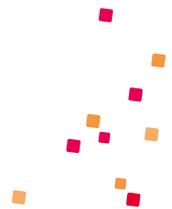
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Boverket 2011

# Gender equality on the agenda

Planning for a secure and gender equal society



# Information for readers



Gender equality is created where ordinary decisions are made, resources are allocated and norms are established. For this reason, the gender equality perspective must be a part of daily work within all operations, including community planning. In this publication, community planning means physical planning of communities.

The publication concerns how you can integrate a gender equality perspective in your operation, and is primarily aimed at persons working with community planning in leading positions, but others who work with community planning may also find the publication of benefit.

The background to the publication is a Government mandate to the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning and the County Administrative Boards aimed to strengthening security in urban and built-up environments from a gender equality perspective. The mandate is a part of *the Government's action plan for combating men's violence against women, honour-related violence and oppression in same-sex relationships* (Publication No 2007/2008:39).

Security from a gender equality perspective is an issue of democracy and human rights. Feeling secure is a prerequisite for being active and, for example, participating is association

activities, in entertainment or going jogging. Many built-up areas have environments that are designed in such a way as to make people feel insecure. This has consequences, particularly for women and girls, by limiting their opportunities to move about outdoors.

Planning from a gender equality perspective can lead to more urban and built-up environments becoming accessible for both women and men. By not just focusing on security, it is also possible to capture other aspects that are important for gender equality work in community planning.

With this publication, the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning wishes to inspire gender equality work in community planning. Please regard this publication as a starting point for your work on gender equality!

Hanna Tell is the main author of the texts, and a project group consisting of Kerstin Andersson as Project Manager, with Camilla Axelsson, Klara Falk, Jens Karlsson, and Frida Ryhag has participated and provided opinions. Birgitta Andersson of Jämkompan has also participated. A number of persons within the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning and the county administrative boards have also contributed with opinions to the publication.

Understand the concepts



Right from the start, we need to know that we are talking of the same thing when we use words such as gender equality, gender and security. Here follows a brief presentation of these concepts.

## Gender equality

*Gender equality* means that women and men are of equal value and have the same rights, obligations and opportunities. Gender equality is often mistaken for class equality, which causes confusion. *Class equality* is about the equal value of all people, and is based on the thesis that no person is worth more or less than anyone else, irrespective of ethnic background, functional disability or sex, for example. Gender equality is the concept reserved for issues concerning men and women.

The work with gender equality can be both *internal* and *external*. The internal work is about knowledge development and about analysing the own organisation and operation from a gender equality perspective. External work with gender equality is about working towards equal treatment of the persons affected by the operation, or about planning physical environments from a gender equality perspective. The internal and the external are linked. When we integrate

the gender equality perspective in our own operation, we prepare the ground for the external work towards those affected by the operation.

Gender equality has a *quantitative* side and a *qualitative* side. Working quantitatively is quite simply counting how many women and how many men. Qualitative gender equality work is about norms and values. Why are things the way they are, what are our perceptions of women and men, female and male, and what may be the consequences of this?

## Gender

When gender equality is discussed, the concept of gender crops up. Gender is an analytical concept used to mark social and cultural dimensions of the concept of sex. It is about assigning different characteristics to women and men based on the conceptions we have about what being a woman or man entails, in a certain society and at a certain point in time. The problem is that these concepts create power relationships that tend to make women as a group subordinate, while men historically have constituted the norm for humanity. This also affects community planning.

Gender affiliation is marked by what we do in lots of different ways: through clothes, colours, toys, activities, etc., and gender is of fundamental importance for our relationships with others. Regarding gender as something we create through what we do entails showing that there are opportunities for change, which is exactly what gender equality work is about.

When the concept of gender started to be used in Sweden, the concept of sex became the name for the biological categories of women and men. But today, some researchers also use the concept of sex with the same meaning as the concept of gender.

## Security

Security is one of the areas that has gained the most attention in terms of gender equality and community planning. Security is not very easy to define. People's personal experience of security is important for understanding what it is about. The feeling of insecurity varies between individuals and between groups of people. Sex is the most crucial factor when it comes to the perception of insecurity, but many times sex works in tandem with other conditions in the lives of women and men. The feeling of insecurity can also be affected by factors such as age, ethnicity, functional impairment, socio-economic prerequisites or where you live.



Start from the goals



A starting point for gender equality work is the national goal for gender equality policy. The goals for transport policy also highlight gender equality clearly.

### The gender equality goal

The goal assumes that we do not live in a gender equal society, but that we have goals that are possible to achieve and it is towards them that we should strive. If we study the goal and the subsidiary goals in more detail, we can see how all the subsidiary goals are relevant to community planning in different ways. For example, in the fourth subsidiary goal concerning men's violence against women, there is a direct link to the issue of security from a gender equality perspective. It is difficult to be active in the community if a feeling of insecurity means we do not go out at night.

The overall national goal for gender equality policy is to ensure women and men have the same opportunities to mould society and create their own lives.

Four subsidiary goals to the overall goal have been set.

1. Equal distribution of power and influence. Women and men shall have the same rights and opportunities to be active citizens and to mould the conditions for decision-making.
2. Financial equality. Women and men shall have the same opportunities and conditions in terms of education and paid work giving life-long financial independence.
3. Equal distribution of unpaid domestic and care work. Women and men shall take the same responsibility for domestic work and have the opportunities to give and receive care on equal terms.
4. Men's violence against women shall stop. Women and men, girls and boys shall have the same right and opportunity to bodily integrity.

You can find the gender equality policy goal on [www.regeringen.se](http://www.regeringen.se).

## Transport policy goals

Everyday life and patterns of movement of women and men differ to a certain extent. Being able to move between different target points, such as from home to work, to the shops, to school and back home again are fundamental for making everyday life work. The transport policy goals look to the travelling of both women and men.

The overall national goal for transport policy is to safeguard a supply of transport for citizens and business throughout the country that is effective from the point of view of national economics and sustainable in the long term.

Subsidiary to the overall goal there is a functional goal and a consideration goal. Gender equality is incorporated in the functional goal.

The functional goal is about creating accessibility to travel and transport. The design, function and use of the transport system shall contribute to giving everybody basic accessibility with good quality and usability, and contribute to the power of development throughout the country. At the same time, the transport system shall be gender equal, i.e. equitably fulfil women's and men's transport needs.

You can find the transport policy goals on [www.regeringen.se](http://www.regeringen.se).

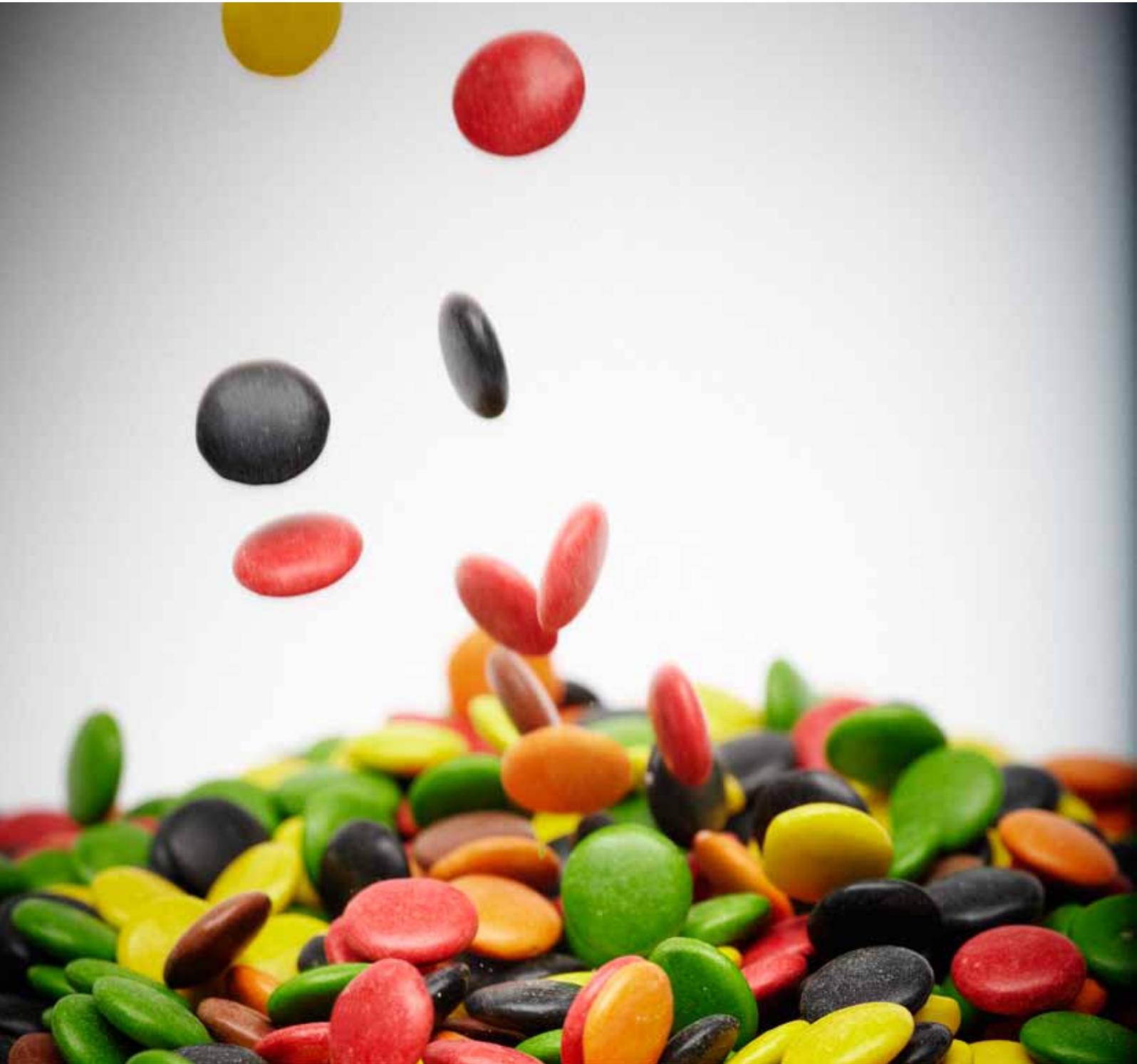
## The Planning and Building Act

The Planning and Building Act (2010:900) also provides support for working with gender equality. The portal paragraph states that the provisions aim to promote social development with equal and good social living conditions.

**Chapter 1, Section 1** of this Act includes provisions relating to the planning of land and water and to building. The provisions aim, while taking into account the liberty of individual persons, to promote social development with equal and good social living conditions and a good and long-term sustainable living environment for people in today's society and for future generations.



Start to integrate gender equality



There are different strategies for achieving gender equality. In Sweden, integration of gender equality is the main strategy. Gender equality integration means that gender equality shall permeate the entire operation, at all levels, including where decisions are made.

For community planning, this means that the gender equality perspective is included in all stages of the planning process. It is important that the gender equality perspective is included already during comprehensive planning, as this creates the prerequisites for the continued planning and for the execution stage.

### Seeing with new eyes

In practice, gender equality integration is often about looking at the own operation with new eyes, and this can be exciting, challenging and difficult. Within community planning, this means asking questions such as: How do we work? For whom are we building and in which way are we doing it? Will the decisions and plans have differing consequences for women and men, girls and boys? Who is doing the planning and who the building? Whose knowledge is legitimate, and what are the results of the decisions taken? Who has the opportunity to take

part? Asking these questions makes visible what we need to do, and it becomes possible to find new solutions that lead to gender equality.

### In Karlskoga, gender equality is allowed space

The community planning administration in Karlskoga Municipality is working on integrating gender equality in the community planning process. By mapping and describing the work process for the administration's work, it is clear where and how the gender equality perspective can be integrated into community planning. In this way, gender equality can become part of the daily operation.

Gender equality has now been part of the agenda of the administration for a couple of years. Some of the staff have participated in longer or shorter courses about gender equality. This means that several persons have knowledge about gender equality and gender. The Municipality also has a gender equality strategist, who acts as support.

Stina Kållberg, Public Relations Officer at the Community Planning Office in Karlskoga Municipality says:

"It is fun and stimulating to work with gender equality in actual work. It is also a key point to work with integrating gender equality in ongoing work, and not to run the gender equality issues on the side. The challenge is to break down theory into practice. The everyday life perspective is good in my view; this can be used to break down what you are doing. When you talk about gender equality and gender, it can sometimes be like waving a red rag. But you have to show that it is about creating a good society for all. And that is something that we are already working on. Working with gender equality is a way of testing whether we are actually doing this, too."

Take the lead



Working with gender equality is about changing and improving. Just as all other work of changing an operation, a prerequisite is deep-rooted support and clear leadership. When the management is taking a clear position on integrating gender equality in the operation, it becomes easier to bring the staff on board. Remember that the management has the responsibility for the issue, for gathering support and carrying out changes, and responsibility for allocating space and resources for the work. Remember to inform and engage the staff, ensure everybody feels they are part of the changes and feel that they have the opportunity to influence. Also, review and develop information paths and processes.

### Can raise resistance

Work with gender equality can raise resistance. The resistance can express itself in different ways; it can be both passive and active. Passive resistance for example can be exercised through silence, while active resistance can entail counter arguments and undermining the content of the gender equality measures. The opponents can easily portray gender equality as something that only impinges on the private sphere, and therefore does not have anything to do with the operation. But gender inequality is created and maintained both in the private and the public sphere.

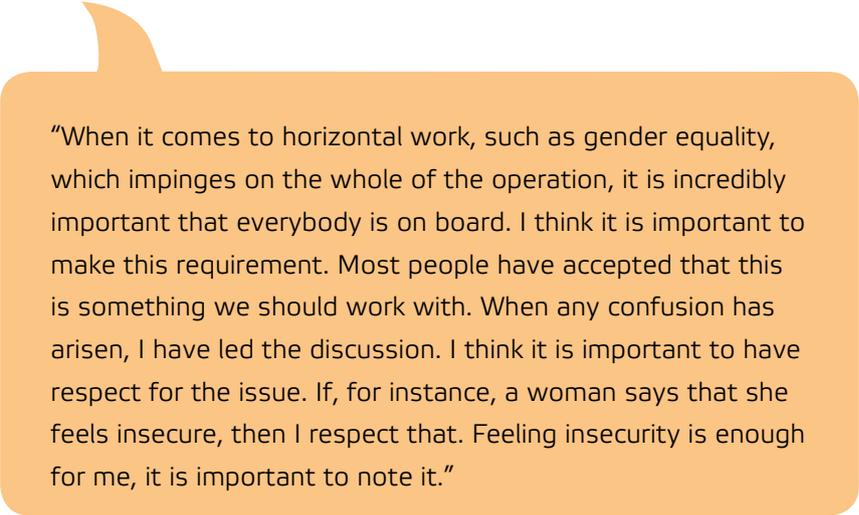
Changes can always entail uncertainty. When it comes to gender equality, it may be individual values that need to be reassessed. Emphasise how creative work with gender equality can be. It is about creating something new, something that may not have existed in the operation previously. It will develop and move community planning forward. For persons managing work with gender equality, it is a good idea to be prepared for resistance to arise, and to have a plan for how to counter it.

### In Östersund, everyone will come on board

The Community Planning Office in Östersund Municipality has received support from the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning and the County Administrative Boards towards work on a gender equal transport system. It is the continuation of a project they have been running together with the Swedish Transport Administration Central Region for a number of years. The Office has continued this project by itself, with a focus on pedestrian and bicycle paths. One reason is because these are environments where citizens move about a lot. The goal is that the Municipality's pedestrian and bicycle paths shall be attractive, appealing and be perceived as secure by both women and men. In order to achieve the goal, the Office is working on several fronts. One is to

increase knowledge about security and gender equality among those who work with planning pedestrian and bicycle paths, and another is to develop tools for integrating the gender equality perspective in the operation. Such a tool can consist of using templates that describe what should be considered in every planning, execution and management situation in order to integrate the gender equality perspective. In addition to these initiatives, they are also working on finding lighting solutions that can contribute to enhancing security in the urban environment.

Sven-Olof Gustafsson, Administration Manager of the Community Planning Office in Östersund Municipality from 1998 to 2010, says:



“When it comes to horizontal work, such as gender equality, which impinges on the whole of the operation, it is incredibly important that everybody is on board. I think it is important to make this requirement. Most people have accepted that this is something we should work with. When any confusion has arisen, I have led the discussion. I think it is important to have respect for the issue. If, for instance, a woman says that she feels insecure, then I respect that. Feeling insecurity is enough for me, it is important to note it.”



Increase knowledge



Gender equality is a subject that many have ideas and thoughts about. Everybody knowing what gender equality is and what it means in relation to community planning is a prerequisite for the gender equality work to lead to results. By investing in training for staff and elected representatives, knowledge is enhanced. At the same time, everybody gets a common knowledge basis to start from, instead of the work being based on personal conceptions of what gender equality is.

### Focus on qualitative aspects

It is a good idea if the training focuses on the qualitative aspects of gender equality, using the gender equality policy goals as the starting point. It is not enough to have an even distribution of men and women in the workplace. The norms and values that exist inside your operation must also be made visible and be questioned. In the practical planning work, this means challenging habits and attitudes. You should also consider the message your operation disseminates, for example in images and texts. Remember that knowledge is an important tool for challenging norms and discovering inequalities.

### Linköping has invested in training

The Environment and Community Planning Office in Linköping Municipality has received support from the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning and the county administrative boards for various initiatives relating to work with security from a gender equality perspective. Among these is support towards developing and presenting the method for security surveys that they are working on. The method has been tested in four urban districts. As the basis for the security work, the Office has also developed a check list with a manual showing how to fill it in. The check list is primarily intended for use in physical planning, and during new and rebuilding projects in the public outdoor environment in the Municipality. The Office has also received support for staff training in gender equality and security aspects in community planning, traffic planning and built environment planning.

Göran Andersson, Development Manager at the Environment and Community Planning Office in Linköping Municipality, says:

“Training in the subject is fundamental. This provides the knowledge to work on the issues and also makes us question how we ourselves can get better. Hopefully, everybody will know now about the gender equality policy goals. What is important is then to coordinate and to think the whole process through, from plan, to investment and operation.”

Consider everyday life



One of the aspects of enhancing knowledge is to see how the physical environment affects the everyday life of women, men, girls and boys. Everyday life is all the things we, human beings, do during all the hours of the day and night. We work, take children to pre-school, shop, move about between different places, etc. Think about how communications and transport routes, bus stops and so on are designed. How can we create prerequisites that facilitate getting to and from work, so that we can combine working life and our responsibility as carers in a good way? And how can we feel secure when we move about outdoors?

### Everyday life varies

In the planning process, it is important to recognise that the everyday lives of women, men, girls and boys vary to a certain extent. For example, women carry out more housework than men, while men in turn invest more time in paid work. This does not mean that the situation is the same for all women and all men, but on a general level there are differences that are important. But just because things are like that today does not mean that they will always be the same in a future, more gender equal society.

The fact that everyday life differs between women and men can also mean that they have different experiences of how things work. For instance, how easy or difficult it is to move between two locations. The experiences are also affected by factors such as age, ethnicity and functional impairment. You should therefore ensure you assign equal value to all experiences in community planning, and focus on those who are to benefit from the planning. In this way, you can influence people's opportunities to live gender equal lives.



## BoJämt highlighted everyday life

During two years (2006–2008), the Stockholm County Administrative Board in cooperation with Stockholm City and the Regional Planning Office ran the project BoJämt. The project involved a review of housing planning in the Stockholm region from a gender equality perspective.

Among other findings, BoJämt found that gender equality in physical planning is about women, men, girls and boys being able to live

functioning everyday lives. To do this, we must look beyond the housing and the housing area. A functioning everyday life is about being able to move between different target points. This finding led to the project not just focusing on housing planning, but also on planning at a comprehensive level.

Christian Dymén, Project Manager for BoJämt, says:

“It was important to develop a feeling that it is people who have to move about and dwell in the environments we plan, and that they consist of different types of persons. We share the public environments with each other, but perhaps we live completely different lives in them. It is important to highlight this already in the comprehensive planning, where the prerequisites for the future detailed planning is mapped out. Involve people in the planning, see that women and men with differing backgrounds have differing experiences, and try to include this. See the people as experts and the planner as a process leader.”



Choose a method



There are various methods and tools for gender equality integration, both for internal and external work. A common feature of them is that they help us to enhance knowledge, to chart and analyse the operation from critical perspectives. Remember that there is not a single method that suits everyone, as each situation is unique. Become inspired by others, but try to find methods and tools that suit your own operation. Dare to try, dare to take a step forward.

### Broaden the knowledge base

Among other things, gender equality in community planning is about broadening the knowledge base in each individual planning situation. This can be done by using gender-distributed statistics, by maintaining a dialogue with those affected by the planning, and by considering the planning from an everyday life perspective. The point is to think and to reason about how community planning affects the lives of women, men, girls and boys. How can planning be developed to include a gender equality perspective? Do the routines in the planning process need to be changed?

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On the website [www.jamstall.nu](http://www.jamstall.nu) you can find tips on methods for working with gender equality integration and other useful information.

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### Sollefteå is finding its own method

The Community Planning Office in Sollefteå Municipality has received support from the National Board of Housing, Building and

Planning and the County Administrative Boards to develop a methodology material for gender equality in physical planning. The idea is to develop a material that is specifically tailored to the own municipality. It is envisaged that the methodology material will contain background knowledge about gender equality and gender, and the importance of these in community planning. Examples are to be included that impinge on Sollefteå specifically, but also national examples. The material shall also include tools and concrete questions to think of for each factual area. During the development of the material, various activities and analyses have been carried out, among them analysis of plans, neighbourhood security survey and a citizen survey about the urban environment. Collaboration has also been studied from a gender perspective. Gunilla Rudehill, Municipal Architect at Sollefteå Municipality relates:

“Carrying out these activities was an excellent way of working. We rarely take the time to carry out surveys for example, and it is great that people also take the time to respond and write brief comments. The material that is being developed will be a good support in our work, but it is also important that we come more knowledgeable and better the whole time. The most important thing is the way of thinking, of broadening our way of thinking. And to keep our eyes open for new issues and to listen.”

Think long-term



In order to achieve change, you really need to integrate the gender equality perspective in the daily work. Remember that it is a process that takes time, and that well-organised and ongoing work therefore is needed. In the early stages, it is good if you have a clear idea of what needs to be done, at what level it should be done and in what format the work should be done. You should also consider the type of change you want to achieve.

### Show how experiences are taken into account

Running the work in project form can be a good start, or as an in-depth study of a certain area. But do remember that gender equality work requires a long-term view, and this can be difficult to achieve with individual initiatives. Make it clear from the beginning how the experiences for each individual initiative is to be taken into account. It is only when the gender equality perspective permeates the entire operation that more detailed changes of structures are possible, which is what the gender equality policy goal aims at.

### Umeå is working actively with gender equality

Umeå Municipality has been working actively with gender equality for more than 20 years by now. The work has been in the form of both gender equality integration and individual initiatives. Community planning is one of the areas the Municipality has worked with. This

has led to a gender perspective now being on the agenda for comprehensive plans, design issues and security aspects for example. One factor that has contributed to the success of the Municipality's long-term work on these issues is that a gender equality strategist has been employed by the Municipality for the last 15 years. Helene Brewer, Gender Equality Strategist at Umeå Municipality, says:

“Working in the long term with gender equality is about seeing it as an area of knowledge. Just like for all other areas of knowledge, subject competence is required. Working on the basis of this understanding is important. You need someone in the organisation who has gender competence, but this does not contradict the fact that everybody needs to carry the issue forward - you need both. The management also needs to make decisions that lead to consequences; that show that they are moving from words to actions. My role is to work with development issues and gender equality issues; I am a support function for politicians and managements. I try to make an input into the early stages of as many projects as possible, and then to work more as a sounding board.”

Take the step!



Working with gender equality in community planning is a process. To begin with, it is about gaining increased knowledge about gender equality. But also knowledge about how things are in society, for instance that women and men perceive security differently.

Do enlist the help of outsiders, but remember that the work must be carried out by yourselves if it is to have any long-term effect. Make sure you highlight how the work with gender equality makes a difference to your operation, and remember to recognise successes. For example, when you can show that attitudes are changing and other positive effects, it is clear that you are on the right way.

See the opportunities and think about the gains you can achieve by collaborating with others. For example, investigate if you can arrange training together with someone else in the same situation as you are. Perhaps you have similar situations to work with. Remember also to disseminate your experiences.

Gender equality within community planning is important, and hopefully you who read this publication will take part in and experience all the gains that follow from successful work with gender equality.



# Reading tips



## Literature

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## Websites

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[www.jamstall.nu](http://www.jamstall.nu).
- Nationella Sekretariatet för Genusforskning  
[www.genus.se](http://www.genus.se).



The booklet has been published as part of the Government mandate "Strengthening security in urban environments from a gender equality perspective". It is one of three independent booklets that together consider security from a gender equality perspective.



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