

# Women's Rights

By: Johanna Friman, Intern 2019

During my life I have been very privileged because no one has ever told me that I can't do anything because I'm a girl. Something I am forever grateful for. During my experiences when working in the townships in South Africa, working with different social entrepreneurs in India and East Africa and being at the UN. I have recognized a large gender gap our society.

Women rights were first discussed at the UN conference in Mexico 1975 and it was really interesting that no women attended the conference. At the UN conference 1985 in Nairobi, the word gender was not mentioned once because it was too controversial. The most well known conference where women rights were identified and discussed was in Beijing 1995. It was the first time a conference was recorded. In Beijing they identified a "Platform for Action" that included twelve critical areas of concern to reach women's right. Next year we will celebrate 25 years of the Beijing Conference and we have still not reach the goals.<sup>1</sup>

During my time at the United Nations I have heard several times that gender equality is the closest thing to magic for achieving the SDGs. Therefore, I can't understand why the governments do not take this issue more seriously. Reaching 50/50 shouldn't be an objective, it must be obvious. Women should be leaders in all different levels of the society, as the men should be as well.<sup>2</sup> Gender equality is not a competition with men, it's a fight for equal rights.

On my flight over here I read an article about how one third of everyone who works at the United Nations have felt sexual harassment during the last two years.<sup>3</sup> One of my first meetings at the UN was about eliminate sexual harassment. The United Nations have now released a code of conduct with the aim to prevent Sexual Harassment. The Code of Conduct it's not legal but will be used as house rules.<sup>4</sup>

The Global Gender Gap Index was first introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2006 as a framework for capturing the magnitude of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress over time. 2018 year's edition of the report benchmarks 149 countries on their progress towards gender parity on a scale from 0 (disparity) to 1 (parity) across four thematic dimensions - the subindex Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment,

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<sup>1</sup>Women's Major Group Side Event: *Gender Equality and the SDGs (A training with focus on Beijing +25)* 2019-07-10 10:00 am- 01.00p

<sup>2</sup> UN Women, *Facts and Figures: Leadership and political participation*, Page updated June 2019, [www.unwomen.org](http://www.unwomen.org) 2019-07-20

<sup>3</sup>Swedish UN association newspaper, *Världshorisont, A better world. number 1 2019*, AnnaLena Karlsson <https://fn.se>

<sup>4</sup> Mission of Kenya: Group of Friends to eliminate Sexual Harassment, side event meeting 2019-07-03

Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment. Some of the 2018 report's key findings include.<sup>5</sup>

- Globally, the average distance to parity is at 68%, which is a marginal improvement over the last years. In other words, there is still a 32% average gender gap that remains to be closed.
- The largest gender disparity is on Political Empowerment, which today maintains a gap of 77.1%.
- The second largest is the the Economic Participation and Opportunity at 41.0%.
- However, both Educational Attainment and Health and Survival are significantly lower at 4.4% and 4.6% respectively.
- Across the 149 countries it's only 17 that currently have women as heads of states, also only 18% of ministers are women and 24% of parliamentarians globally are women.
- Based on a collaboration with LinkedIn, they found out that only 22% of AI professionals globally are female, compared to 78% who are male.
- The most gender-equal country to date is Iceland. It has closed over 85% of it all gender gap.
- Projecting current trends into the future, the overall global gap will close in 108 years.<sup>6</sup>

## MY CONTRIBUTION FOR THE SOLUTIONS: WOMEN'S RIGHTS HANDBOOK

### **Why?**

I don't want to wait 108 years until we have an equal society. It must start with the people if we want to change laws. I have hope in people and I believe many people are eager to fight for women's right if they know what they should do. When we grew up we create our values and ideas of the world. A lot of things are decided without us knowing. Why do I think of an entrepreneur automatically as a man when I hear the word? Yes, because that's what society teaches us. Today's media, movies and books give us an angled picture of our society. A picture we must change if we want an equal society. If we change our mindset, everything else like the laws, wage gap, gender distributions in families and more will change. Therefore I will be releasing this Women's Rights Handbook to help people contribute to a more equal society.

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<sup>5</sup> World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2018*. Chapter: Key Findings viii, Copyright 2018 [www.weforum.org](http://www.weforum.org) 2019-07-24

<sup>6</sup> Ibid: The Global Gender Gap Report 2018

### **What?**

The book appearance will be small so you always can bring it with you. Every page will be its own chapter and give a specific person tips and challenges.

### **Who?**

This book will hopefully have a chapter for everyone in the future. It will be one for you as a child and one when you are an old lady/ man, and every stage in between. It will have specific chapters for you who works with people for example if you are a police, doctor, nurse, teacher, child caretaker etc. It will be specific chapters if you are a man or a woman because everyone have different roles in this transformation. I have recognized that women often discriminate ourselves in the way we talk without realising it. My goal is that everyone will find a chapter they find themselves in.

### **How?**

I won't do this by myself, I will take help from experts in different areas and the civil society. My first book will be towards Sweden because that's what I know the best and have the most contacts.

### **Where?**

In the long term, I can see this book over the whole world in all different languages.

### **When?**

The first book in Swedish will be released in the beginning of spring 2020.

Lastly, I hope we all will experience that day when no girl or woman will be told that she can't, because she is a girl.

## **Bibliography**

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