

**Working group on men's issues in**  

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**GENDER EQUALITY POLICY**

Interim report

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Working group on Men's Issues in Gender Equality Policy, Interim report

## Abstract

■ The working group on Men's Issues in Equality Policy appointed by Paavo Arhinmäki, the Minister for Gender Equality, began its task in January 2013. The working group consists of representatives of men's organisations, boy action groups, Seta LGBTI Rights in Finland, the Council for Gender Equality TANE and four Ministries. The working groups' term of office ends on 15 October 2014.

When the working group was set up, its tasks were to identify new gender equality issues relating to men and define older issues more closely, expedite measures concerning men under the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality, develop interaction between ministry officials and men's organisations, and organise a seminar on men and gender equality.

The working group set the following objectives for its work: to ensure that men and women experience gender equality as a shared issue and gender equality policy as a shared policy, to promote political procedures to resolve problems experienced by men, and to create a space for male diversity.

The working group met a total of seven times during its 2013 spring term and four times during its 2013 autumn term. The working group's interim report was published in February 2014. The interim report, which was compiled in preparation for the final report, sums up what the working group has done so far, and takes a stance on on-going processes, such as the procedures listed in the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality that apply to men. The primary purpose of the interim report is to extend the group's work into a discussion with key interest groups. The members of the working group have not committed to single proposals. The proposals listed are mere suggestions and ways of initiating discussion on topics, not officially submitted proposals for action.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The working group on Men's Issues in Gender Equality Policy (hereinafter the working group) appointed by Paavo Arhinmäki, the minister responsible gender equality, started its work in January 2013. The working group consists of representatives of men's organisations, boy action groups, Seta LGBTI Rights in Finland, the Council for Gender Equality TANE, and four ministries:

Kari Välimäki (chair)  
 Tomi Timperi, (Central Association for Men's Organizations in Finland)  
 Juuso Erno, (Central Association for Men's Organizations in Finland)  
 Bert Bjarland, Profeministimiehet  
 Arto Jokinen, Suomen Miestutkimuksen Seura  
 Sara Sundell, Seta LGBTI Rights in Finland  
 Sami Seppilä, Boys' House project  
 Tapio Bergholm, TANE, the Council for Gender Equality  
 Hillevi Lönn, Ministry of Employment and the Economy  
 Eeva Kaunismaa, Ministry of Education and Culture  
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 Maini Kosonen, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health  
 Taneli Puumalainen, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health  
 Riitta Martikainen, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health  
 Outi Kemppainen, Ministry of Justice  
 Hanna Onwen-Huma, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (secretary)  
 Teemu Tallberg, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Secretary, until 31 December 2013)

At the time the working group was appointed it was assigned the following tasks:

- identification of new gender equality issues that apply to men, and further specification of already observed issues
- speeding up actions listed in the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality that are related to men
- development of interaction between ministries and men's organizations
- organizing a seminar on the topic of men and gender equality

The working group's objectives based on the work they have completed are:

1. men and women experience equality as a shared issue and gender equality policy as a shared policy
2. political actions that promote equality as a tool for resolving problems experienced by men
3. creating a space for men's diversity

The working group met a total of seven times during its 2013 spring term and four times during its 2013 autumn term. The working group's interim report was published in February 2014. The interim report, which was compiled in preparation for the final report, sums up what the working group has done so far, and takes a stance on on-going processes, such as the actions listed in the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality that apply to men. The primary purpose of the interim report is to extend the group's work into a discussion with key

interest groups. The members of the working group have not committed to single proposals. The proposals listed are mere suggestions and ways of initiating discussion on topics, not officially submitted proposals for action.

The working groups' term of office ends on 15 October 2014. The final report will aim to list recommendations for actions which can be used when drawing up the next government programme. The final report aims to be limited to concrete proposals for actions.

## 2 EQUALITY AND STAGES OF MALE POLICY

(Summary of Arto Jokinen's article "Miehet osana tasa-arvokeskustelua ja –politiikkaa" (Men as part of the gender equality discussion and policy) in the book *Mieskysymyksiä* [TUP, 2012]).

The men's movement and the women's movement are not symmetrical phenomena. The women's movement has a history spanning more than one hundred years in Finland, tens of associations and hundreds of thousands of members. The history of the men's movement in Finland is some twenty years long, and there are fewer than ten organizations. The size and history of, as well as the political demand for, men's and women's associations differ from one another. Male issues, men's policy or the position of men in gender equality policy do not as yet seem to interest many men enough for them to take part. As a positive note, this share is growing.

### 2.1 MEN AS PART OF GENDER EQUALITY DISCUSSION AND POLICY

The so-called second wave of feminism, which followed the early centuries of the women's movement, came to Finland's shores in 1965 in the form of gender role discussion. Its influences came for the most part from Sweden. Yhdistys 9 association was established in 1966 to maintain debate on gender roles, study the matter systematically and impact on the development of gender equality and family policy in Finland. Yhdistys 9 was an equality movement, not a women's movement, and one-third of its members were men.

Yhdistys 9 worked to promote gender reforms and to break down gender roles for both sexes. At that time, it was noted that the role of women had transformed into a dual one: in addition to the family, women now had to deal with the pressures of professional life. The role of men had remained unchanged. Men had to carry the primary responsibility for the family's financial wellbeing, and they were expected to be active in every other sphere of life except the home and the bringing up of the family's children. This meant that men were for a great part excluded from the closeness afforded by family life. The change in the status of women would also mark a change in the status of men. The association distinguished itself from the women's movement by highlighting the position of men and fathers.

Yhdistys 9 drew attention to matters such as how men encountered more occupational accidents and deaths, mental illnesses and traffic accidents; men were more likely to commit suicide, as well as perpetrate property-related and violent crimes; their life expectancy was shorter; they suffered from alcoholism more often. In addition to this, the position of fathers in custody disputes was weaker than that of mothers. These problems are still current in the 2010s, when discussing gender equality based problems that apply to men. At that time, violence acted out by men against women, the sex trade and power held by men were not yet topics of discussion, which may have made it easier for men to participate in the association's activities.

In 1966, the association also established a committee for the improvement of women's

position, which is characteristic of modern gender equality policy. Initially, the Western idea of gender equality was based on equality between all citizens in the name of democracy. In practice, in many countries this meant the rights and obligations of “genderless” men. Later on, equality became a resource for women. Men have participated little in this discussion, and the male issue has not been a central one.

## A new framework for men’s issues

In the early 1970s, gender role activists came to the conclusion that the issue would be best promoted from within central government and political parties. Yhdistys 9 was disbanded, and gender equality policy stabilised into one area of politics among others. This saw the beginning of so-called state feminism, which means the endorsement of equality between the sexes and the position of women in different arenas of the state, with the help of the state and by the state.

In 1972, a permanent gender equality body was established in central government and named TANE, the Council for Gender Equality. As early as in 1973, TANE proposed that the right to parental leave to care for a sick child be extended to also apply to fathers and submitted a proposal for paternity leave. At the time, the proposal was a radical one, and for many the idea of a man caring for small children was incomprehensible. Bolstering fatherhood and paternity has endured as the key equality theme related to men in gender equality policy. The number of days off earmarked for fathers has been added to as time has gone by, and men have also taken the time off. On the other hand, it has proved difficult to get men to utilise parental leave intended for both parents. Mothers still shoulder the main responsibility for childcare, and the expenses that arise from having children have been distributed unevenly between female and male-dominated fields.

The 1970s marked the arrival of different influences of international feminism to Finland. Along-side state feminism, feminist consciousness-raising groups popped up in Finland, as did the idea of emphasizing the distinct specialness of women, which meant emphasizing differences between the sexes. Men and women are different, but as such just as valuable. Another strand was also linked to emphasizing the difference between the two sexes, where womanhood was raised to a more valuable status than manhood. This was at odds with gender equality policy, which strived to achieve the same rights for women as for men, for example in the workplace and in politics. This was based on the idea that there was an abstract norm for an individual and a citizen that men and women could be reverted to. However, it was soon noted that this norm was quite masculine. Gender equality ultimately implied making women more like men, because they were compared to the male norm.

A few men’s groups were established alongside women’s groups. Helsinki-based Adam was a study circle and group (1975–1982) that organised camps, discussion events and group meetings. The group held discussions on topics such as how the man’s role had usurped part of the male personality, such as sensitivity and the ability to speak about one’s emotions and anti-patriarchal ways in which to be a man. In the setting of the group, men searched for new ways in which to be a man, and this had a strong link to the women’s movement.

At the end of the 1970s, some books that dealt with men were published that could be called literature on male issues. Juha Numminen’s book *Minä, keski-ikäinen mies*, gave a voice to middle-aged men who related their opinions on topics such as women, men, sex and gender equality through different themes. Matti J. Kuronen’s book *Suojelkaa Suomen miestä* is a defence against feminists, female women’s advocates and gender equality development.

In November 1983, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health organized the “Miehen mallit ja mahdollisuudet” seminar on the models and opportunities men had; this garnered much interest. The following year, TANE appointed its own working group to consider men’s stud-

ies. Interest in men grew, and 1986 saw the birth of what can be called discussion on men's issues, which differed from other gender equality and women's advocacy discussion. It was also further inspired by books such as *Miehen kuvat* by Seppo Helminen and Merja Hurri and *Miehen mittainen mies* by Martti Lindqvist, which were published in the mid-1980s.

The big problem as regards men is their shorter life expectancy, likelihood to encounter accidents and morbidity, but also their fractional use of healthcare services. In 1986, the Mies 2000 project, which was a new type of healthcare education trial, was carried out. During the project health was examined holistically from lifestyle to life management without interfering with an individual person's health habits. Cultural or social factors were seen as the key reasons for health problems experienced by men. The purpose of the projects was to help men survive and support them in transitioning to a healthier lifestyle by expanding discussion on the subject to social debate. According to its final review, the Mies 2000 project was not entirely successful. The programme was criticized as a study on misery, in which men were only brought up via problems.

TANE's research division had engaged repeatedly in discussion on women's and men's studies, and it had been noted that gender equality discussion was dialogue between women and men. In 1988, TANE established the first Men's division for this very reason. The division handles gender equality questions related to boys and men and prepares them for the committee. At the same time, it functions as a meeting place and cooperation forum for people whose way of thinking about the status of men and women and equality differs from the norm. The Men's division is very likely to be the body having operated for the longest period of time in central government ever, which focuses on issues related to boys and men and highlights these.

Discussion on men's issues died down at the end of the decade. They were brought to the fore again in the mid-1990s. In 1992-1993, at the Men's division's proposal, together with the Finnish literature association *Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura's* folk poems archive, TANE organised a collection of men's biographies. At this time, influences of international men's studies had reached Finland, and within a few years, several research books on men and boys came out. The new feature of these works was discussing the male gender as a product of social and cultural structures. This gave new impetus to discussion of male issues.

The discussion diversified from defending men to dealing with different male lifestyles and masculinity. Various comments and male issues books brought forth the concept that men are not a uniform class of patriarchal rulers, who are potential wife beaters and rapists, as men felt women claimed. Many men felt that the gender equality discussion discriminated against men. They were predetermined as the guilty party, and no one really wanted to hear them.

## The awakening of the men's movement

In addition to discussion on men's issues and studies, the 1990s marked the birth of the Finnish men's movement. Antti-Veikko Perheentupa established personal growth groups intended for men only, in which men used each other as mirrors to search for materials for personal mental growth. The idea was that issues related to social wellbeing are similar for men and women, but due to sociocultural and biological factors related to gender, people also need gender-specific communities. Men need personal growth groups in which they are supported by other men. Men who participated in these groups found the activities of the groups so important that together with Perheentupa, they established Miessakit Association in 1995. The association's key objective was to build a national social support network for men. Miessakit Association's development can be described as a success story. Today, the association's activities, which started out as peer group meetings, include a multitude of crisis and social services intended for men, and the association employs 13 men.

An alternative solution was found in Tampere. No association was established there, but in autumn 1997 the Tampere Men's Days were held for the first time. In its first years, the event drew many visitors and the media reported on it in a colourful fashion, for example claiming that feminists and male activists had come to heads at the event, or that one year, men's studies researchers organized a seminar as a countermove, so people would not attend the Tampere Men's Days. The organizers of these events were for the most part puzzled about the journalists' intent to build discord where there was none. The Tampere Men's Days have henceforth been organized annually with the exception of one skipped year. Themes have included male seclusion in a society controlled by men, sexuality, a man's joy, fatherhood, men's resources and a happy man.

During the second half of the decade, the Profeministimiehet (pro-feminist men) also began to meet in Helsinki. Pro-feminism refers to active support and solidarity by men for the efforts of feminists, but according to their line of thought, men cannot call themselves feminists. This understanding is of Anglo-American-origin, whereas in the Nordic countries no obstacles are generally seen for men calling themselves feminists. The Profeministimiehet association has organized events such as silent demonstrations against violence against women at the hands of men. The demonstrations are silent, because according to pro-feminists men are already too vocal in society, and thus men should show their support for women, but allow them to speak for themselves, while men should also learn to listen to women.

Whereas debate on the subject of women or official gender equality discussion are dominated by silence or consensus, discussion on male issues is quite turbulent, which in part is due to the new forums for citizens that the Internet has provided. In 1997, TANE's men's division opened the MAN mailing list. It was the first online forum for discussing male issues and gender equality. Discussion on the list was lively, but in the 2000s the mailing list was already an outdated channel of communication. It was replaced by discussion forums, of which the most popular one was the forum maintained by Miessakit Association. Both communication channels have been extremely popular, but their stumbling block has been the common fringe phenomena of online discussion: personal attacks and the use of profane, provocative language. Both the list and the forum were shut down, but the discussion continues elsewhere on the Internet.

The great volume of discussion was a sign of the establishment of new men's groups, which happened in 2009. In December 2008, the men having targeted the sharpest criticism at gender equality policy in Finland gathered under the umbrella of the Miesten tasa-arvo association. According to Miesten tasa-arvo, gender equality is not only a matter of women's issues, and in many matters men are in a weaker position than women. Equality must also apply to men in accordance with human and basic rights.

In March 2009, Vihreä miesliike ry [the Green Men's Movement] was established. The political association's policy programme states that during the 20th century the world changed in such a way that now men, too, need equality. Instead of improving the position of women, gender equality should be promoted. The Green Men's Movement's policy programme mentions men and women, but the movement's proclamation made on 13 March and many comments by the association's representatives state that the movement seeks equality for *individuals*.

In addition to the Green Party, the Left Alliance also initiated action in the area of male issues, as the party established a men's policy working group. With regard to matters related to men and equality, the working group has taken a stance on such issues as reform of the family leave system and highlighted violence targeted at men. The Finns Party established the Perusäijät men's organization in 2012. The Green Men's Movement and Perusäijät are the only registered men's associations affiliated with a political party. On the other hand, all Finnish political parties have their own women's organizations. In 2010, a Men's Parliamen-



tary Network was established alongside the Women's Parliamentary Network.

Although most parties do not find that issues related to men and boys would require activity forms around them, at least not as yet, discussion on men's issues has become politicized. This became evident in 2010, during the drafting of the government's gender equality report. The report evaluated gender equality policy that has been implemented in Finland and drew up policies for the future. In parliamentary discussion on the report, men's and boys' issues were brought up in all group addresses and several addresses by members of parliament.

The issues promoted by men's organisations and bodies are for a great part the same, although with varying gravitas and framework. Key male issues include a shorter life expectancy than that of women and the related over representation of men in accidents, untimely deaths, illnesses and suicides; custody disputes and the position of noncustodial parents, conscription (compulsory military service); problems boys experience at school, violence against men and the growing share of men in gender equality politics. In 2011, as a result of the emergence of men's organisations, the Central Association for Men's Organizations in Finland was established. The central association comprises Miessakit Association, the Green Men's Movement, Miesten tasa-arvo, the Finnish Parent's League and Perusäijät. In June 2012, the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions SAK submitted a proposal to the minister responsible for gender equality that a committee be established to study men's position in society.

## Revolution of the male image

Men are often talked about in the singular form as the "Finnish man", which refers to the national image of masculine hegemony that formed in post wartime Finland. The characteristics of this image reach to all social classes and socioeconomic groups. It is now understood more clearly that there are a multitude of different types of Finnish men, and they should be talked about in the plural form.

The model for the "Finnish man" was already challenged in the 1960s by women's advocates. After this, it has been challenged in numerous ways. A new term coined in the 2000s was "metrosexual". This refers to a new type of heterosexual man, who mixes features characteristic of women and gay men into how he expresses his heteromascularity. The word "äijä" (c.f. dude) has been adopted as a counterbalance for metrosexuality and the northern synonym for macho, which encompasses the stereotypical traits of the Finnish man from brotherhood between men, to eating habits, sexist humour and the emphasizing of physicality. The growth of women's social and cultural importance will not take place without opposition. This is apparent from the return of a way of speaking and male images which seek a return of rights and qualifiers traditionally understood as manly as dominant social practices.

## 2.2 ACT ON EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

The Finnish Constitution and the Act on Equality between Women and Men contain provisions on gender equality. According to section 6 of the Constitution of Finland (731/1999) no one shall, without an acceptable reason, be treated differently from other persons on the ground of sex, or other reason that concerns his or her person. The same section states that equality of the sexes is promoted in societal activity and working life, especially in the determination of pay and the other terms of employment, as provided in more detail by an Act.

The purpose of the Act on Equality between Women and Men is to prevent gender-based discrimination and promote equality between women and men, as well as to improve the standing of women especially in the workplace. The act prohibits discrimination of both

women and men on the basis of their gender. The act is also applied to sexual minorities. The act prohibits gender-based discrimination in nearly all walks of life and in all societal activity. However, the realisation of equality in working life and the employer's obligations are in a key position in the act.

The key obligations listed in the Act on Equality between Women and Men are:

- a ban on general discrimination
- officials must promote gender equality in all their activities
- municipal and state agencies and bodies must maintain quotas
- employers and educational institutions must promote gender equality via e.g. a gender equality plan
- discrimination is forbidden in the workplace, educational institutions, interest groups and in provision of services
- compensation for damages.

Finland's Act on Equality between Women and Men has a strong international background. Especially the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and some of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) general conventions had a great impact on drafting of the law. International agreements and conventions, legal practices, and EU directives have been the primary reasons for revising the act.

The obligation of officials to promote equality between men and women has been a part of the Act on Equality between Women and Men from the time it was initially enacted. The principle of mainstreaming was reinforced in the 2005 reform by adding an explicit reference to it in the act. Restrictions on and monitoring of marketing that violates equality have been considered ever since the Act on Equality between Women and Men was first enacted. The final decision has been that for the most part the business world itself regulates compliance with the good practices of marketing.

Three different parliamentary bodies under the administration of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, each of which have a clear field of activities of their own, have managed gender equality issues from the time of the ministry's reorganisation in 2001. The Ombudsman for Equality oversees compliance with the Act on Equality between Women and Men, and the Equality Unit prepares the government's equality policy. The Equality Board, an independent committee, also oversees compliance with gender equality legislation and resolves matters related to it.

Minna, the Centre for Gender Equality Information in Finland, serves the information needs of public administration, a broad selection of professionals from different sectors, companies and organisations affected by the Act on Equality between Women and Men's obligation to promote equality and to evaluate the gender impact on activities, as well as researchers and information providers in the field. The centre's purpose is to influence the production of general information in a way that ensures that information itemised according to gender meets international reporting obligations and is at the disposal of the authorities.

### 2.3 LEGISLATION AND MALE POLICY

Gender equality issues are not limited to the scope of the Act on Equality between Women and Men. Gender equality issues related to men are often linked to legislation other than the Act on Equality between Women and Men. For example, conscription has been left outside gender equality legislation as a procedure that is not perceived as discriminatory. Provisions on conscription can be found primarily in the Conscription Act. In the context of separation/divorce crises and custody disputes, for example, we must remember that the scope of application of the Act on Equality between Women and Men does not cover family relation-

ships or other private life relationships. Legislation and other norm regulations are not the only instrument for resolving gender equality problems related to men. Allocation of resources and information steering are of key importance in promoting the wellbeing of both men and women and the more even distribution of wellbeing.

### 3 MEN AND GENDER EQUALITY POLICY – NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

The government programme for Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen's first government (2003–2007) stated that there was a need for an evaluation of male issues in gender equality policy. The evaluation's results were published in the Government report on men and gender equality (2006), which stated the following:

“There are two central points of view in the relation between men and gender equality: equality requires men and men require equality. The objective of the general level strategy is to strengthen the consideration of men as part of gender equality policy as a whole. This can be realised by increasing the number of gender equality policy projects intended for men, by strengthening men's participation in gender equality discussion, by continuing work on the mainstreaming of the gender perspective, and at the same time emphasising the fact that this is a matter for men and women, and by institutionalising the special attention paid to men during this government term as part of the normal status of gender equality policy.”

The report also lists seven concrete procedure proposals. These are

- developing family leave legislation further to support the inclusion of fathers more than before
- improving the practices of prenatal and child healthcare clinics, and development of continuing education for the staff of child and prenatal health clinics that would allow them to better support the inclusion of fathers.
- an evaluation project to evaluate how well projects funded by RAY and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in the 2000s have taken the objective of decreasing health inequalities between population groups into account
- the establishment of a new temporary social sciences gender equality research position, the speciality of which would be men's studies and masculinity.
- compiling statistical studies on men as victims and perpetrators of violence
- assessment of gender equality statistics compiled by the Statistics Finland as part of public servants' official duties from the perspective of both men and women.
- drafting an information campaign for the clients of prostitutes, which also includes information on the connection between prostitution and human trafficking

*The report on men and gender equality policy* also included an international survey of gender equality documents and their content with regard to men. The survey found that, all in all, the documents dealt with very few themes and situations in which the standing of men might be weaker than that of women and in which men might experience problems with gender equality. The weaker standing of women as opposed to men was dealt with, but the better position of

men when compared to women or their position of power were not highlighted.

The working group has also taken note of all recent international discussions, studies and reports that apply to men and gender equality. Newly published works include *The Involvement of Men in Gender Equality Initiatives in the European Union* (EIGE, 2012), and *The Role of Men in Gender Equality –European Strategies & Insights: Study on the Role of Men in Gender Equality* (European Commission, 2013).

*The Involvement of Men in Gender Equality Initiatives in the European Union* is related to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) database. The report has acted as the foundation for the portion of the database that applies to men and gender equality (<http://eige.europa.eu/content/rdc>). The objective of the report was to survey the organizations and associations through which men participate in gender equality efforts in Europe. The report and the database compiled on the basis of the report cover 27 EU countries and 276 organizations, of which 78 were non-governmental organizations. The key focus areas of organization activities were equality between the sexes (33%), preventing violence (16%), fatherhood (14%), health (10%), gay/lesbian/bi/trans issues (9%), and education and learning (9%). The most common modes of operation included individual guidance, group work, communication and building up knowledge, while there was much less in the way of research and political participation. The report found that in many countries and for many actors, gender equality was a new term, even more so when linked to men and masculinity. However, the importance of gender equality was evident in their activities, emphasized especially as an opportunity for better social relationships between men and in relation to women and girls. The report states that gender equality is not a topic of political discussion in all countries, and when it is, it is still considered a women's issue. According to the report, the interest men have in and the opposition they feel to gender equality can be influenced by bringing forth information on the positive impacts of gender equality activities also on the life of men; taking note of the diversity of men and acting on gender equality problems related to men. The support of women and the women's movement for men's efforts towards gender equality also has an impact on men's gender equality activism.

*The Role of Men in Gender Equality - European Strategies & Insights: Study on the Role of Men in Gender Equality* is a comprehensive report covering five themes in the EU-27 and EFTA states: 1) The central role of education and work in men's participation in gender equality efforts; 2) Inclusion of men in family activities and participation in childcare and household work; 3) Men's health; 4) Genderized violence; 5) Participation of men in gender equality policy. The main idea behind the study was that when examining the role of men in connection to efforts endorsing gender equality, areas in which men were at a disadvantage, as well as those areas in which they were in a privileged position, should be taken into account. The study analysed gender equality activities that were related to men and male activism; distinguishing between "balanced approaches", in which the deconstruction of the privileges enjoyed by men were connected to resolution of male problems and recognition of male diversity and "unbalanced approaches" in which the privileges enjoyed by men and male diversity are not taken into account at all. Partly based on good practices discovered over the course of the study, the report lists 33 proposals for specific the EU level and national level actions. The *30 Forslag – En politik for drenge og mænds ligestilling* (Tænketanken VM - Viden om Mænd, 2011) report by a Danish think tanks lists 30 similar proposals for procedures in six areas: 1) wellbeing and lifestyle, 2) labour market and parental leave, 3) boys and education, 4) paternity, family forms and care, 5) exclusion, and 6) violence and crimes.

The working group has contacted bodies in Sweden, and it is closely monitoring the Swedish government's evaluation process *Utredningen om män och jämställdhet* (Kommitédirektiv 2012:97). The purpose of the evaluation (2013–14) is to a) describe and analyse male and gender equality issues (lifestyle changes by men, attitudes towards gender equality); b) col-

lect information on actors in the field of the men's movement (officials, organizations, groups, etc.); c) create a knowledge base for development of equality policies (overview of research studies that concern the lives and attitudes of men, especially with regard to parenthood, housework and childcare); and d) share information that has been produced and increase discussion on the subject area. The tasks assigned to the Swedish evaluation do not include a) violence against women by men, b) equality in working life and c) proposals for procedures. The evaluation work is headed by Sven Dahl. In spring 2014, the Finnish working group will continue to cooperate with the evaluation group's secretariat (Claes Sonnerby and Niclas Järnklo, Statens Offentliga Utredningar). ([www.manochjamstalldhet.se](http://www.manochjamstalldhet.se))

## 4 THE WORKING GROUP'S INTERIM REPORT: PROPOSALS

The variety of themes in the working group's scope of activities is large. During its 2013 spring term, the working group heard 15 expert introductions, the themes of which included early childhood education, education and training, boys and growing up to be a man, working life, fatherhood, exclusion, violence, discrimination by officials, gender equality policy and legislation as well as men's studies. Additionally, discussion themes included health, social welfare and healthcare services, the male image, unemployment, homelessness and other social problems, as well as separations/divorces and conscription. Table 1 lists the proposals the working group has heard and the name of the person(s) having made the proposal.

Table 1. Introductions given to the working group on male issues in gender equality policy during the 2013 spring term.

Gender equality policy	Tarja Heinilä-Hannikainen (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health/Gender Equality Unit)
Act on Equality between Women and Men and reform of the law	Johanna Hautakorpi (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health/Gender Equality Unit)
Men's studies and masculinity	Arto Jokinen & Teemu Tallberg (Suomen Miestutkimuksen Seura)
Everyday life of boys and growth	Sami Seppilä (Boys' House project)
Gender sensitive early childhood education	Sara Sundell (SETA)
Boys' views of school and studies	Ritva Jakku-Sihvonen (Finnish National Board of Education)
Promoting equality between the sexes	Eeva Kaunistmaa (Ministry of Education and Culture) in education
Real life examples of suspected discrimination of men	Pirkko Mäkinen (Ombudsman for Gender Equality)
Seclusion, multigenerational issues and gender	Reija Paananen (National Institute for Health and Welfare, THL)
Men as victims and perpetrators of violence based on record and questionnaire data	Petri Danielsson (National Research Institute of Legal Policy OPTULA)
Fatherhood as a gender equality policy issue	Arto Jokinen (Suomen Miestutkimuksen Seura)
Fathers in working life project	Katja Varjos (project) & Peter Peitsalo (Miessakit Association)
Men and working life	Tapio Berg-holm (TANE)

In accordance with its assignment, the working group examined gender equality issues from the point of view of men, but it emphasises that the diversity of gender must be taken into account in endorsement of gender equality.

#### 4.1 SOCIAL AND HEALTHCARE SERVICES

The life expectancy of men is markedly shorter than that of women. Many other indicators also point at significant differences in the health and wellbeing of men and women. Elimination of health inequalities will necessitate services that focus on certain health risks and morbidity. Attention must be focused on the scope and accessibility of these services, especially with regard to population groups with the poorest state of health. Healthcare services intended for men must only be adopted on the basis of research results on their effectiveness. It is probable that instead of providing services intended for all men, services should be targeted at more specific groups of men who have the greatest need for services and who would benefit from them.

The labour force in the social welfare and healthcare sector is female-dominated and its culture is defined by women. This can lead to situations where men's point of view is not taken into account sufficiently in the promotion of health and wellbeing and treatment of illnesses, which in turn leads to a poor coverage of services and an increase in health inequality. More male employees should be attracted to the social welfare and healthcare sector, which could bring new meanings to the work, especially with regard to male clients. Even more importantly, the male-specific expertise of both female and male workers should be increased, i.e. the staff should have more knowledge and understanding of and ability to draw on men's life cycles, life situations and experiences and meanings associated with men in all their activities, from planning to customer service.

Professionals at child healthcare clinics, in early childhood education and schools must be given more information than before on how to connect with and support fathers and boys. Special training is needed especially to deconstruct stereotypes that apply to men and to mainstream good practices. Child healthcare clinics could start from something as basic as ensuring that there is a chair for both parents in the examination room. The child's father must be brought up in discussions, even when the father is not present at a meeting. The father should also be made more visible in forms and information collection. Child healthcare clinics should have more father-specific expertise, and they should provide peer support for fathers expecting their first child. From the perspective of wellbeing, it is especially important to feel that someone is listening. The ongoing reform of the Paternity Act would make it easier than before to challenge claims of paternity, and those fathers who cohabit with the mother without being married could already acknowledge their paternity at the prenatal clinic during pregnancy. This would help ensure that fathers are present at the prenatal and child healthcare clinic at an earlier stage than previously. The new Paternity Act would make determining paternity easier, as the mother would no longer be able to unilaterally prevent it. If act law is passed, it would in certain situations allow a man who believes he is the father of a child the right to challenge the husband's presumed paternity in a court of law.

The shorter life expectancy of men can be explained in part by the different habits and lifestyles of men and women. It is estimated that about a half of the difference in life expectancy between the sexes is due to deaths related to alcohol and smoking. The overall consumption of alcohol has fallen slightly from 2007. Men consume approximately two-thirds of all alcohol. Men account for four times as many alcohol related deaths as women. Both chronic problems as well as acute negative effects, such as accidents and homicides, show a difference to the detriment of men. As a factor of health inequality, smoking is just about on par with alcohol as a cause of death. Smoking has decreased among working-aged men already for many decades, but even so, in 2012, 21 per cent of men and 14 per cent of women smoked daily. In 2011, 10 per cent of men and 6 per cent of women who were of retirement age (65–84-year olds) smoked daily. Drug abuse is related to the life expectancy and wellbeing of men, as it affects their state of health and their likelihood to be involved in vio-

lence and leads to their exclusion. The positive and permissive views of our culture and practices with regard to the use of alcohol and smoking must be altered, for example by restricting the use of associative advertising in the marketing of alcohol. Additionally, the models for being a man that Finnish society offers should be analysed. Especially schools and youth organizations could take up this challenge in their activities.

Proposals:

- The social welfare and healthcare sector should aim to educate and recruit more men than today.
- Assessment of gender impacts must be systematic in the planning, realisation and monitoring of social and health care services at all levels.
- The social and health care service system must be developed on the basis of research results to support a broader use of services by men: data must be utilised systematically so that those population groups that are at the greatest risk of falling ill due to their living conditions or state of health are recognised as early as possible.
- The government must reinforce mainstreaming of the gender perspective and better consideration of the male perspective in the social welfare and health care sector as well as in the education of these fields.
- Further and supplementary training on how to connect with and support fathers and boys should be organized for professionals in prenatal and child healthcare clinics and in the social welfare field. Prenatal and child healthcare clinics should allocate resources to organising peer groups for fathers.
- The basic education for the social welfare and healthcare field should include modules that deal with fatherhood and paternity.
- The use of associative advertising in the marketing of alcohol should be more stringently restricted.

#### 4.2 FATHERHOOD, PARENTAL LEAVE AND SEPARATION/DIVORCE CRISES

A father's presence in his child's life is important for both the father and the child. The care provided by mothers and fathers can be very different.

The pursuit for a more equal use of parental leave between women and men has at times demonstrated that leave specifically earmarked for men plays a key role for achieving this goal: for the most part, men will take leave that is reserved specifically for them, often even when the mother is home, which means that the father never independently assumes full responsibility for childcare. Setting of quotas for the use of family leave is difficult, as this would lead to inequality for single parents and noncustodial parents, as well as sexual and gender minorities. Other challenges related to equality include the complex nature of the family leave system, the livelihood of families with children and the position of women in the labour market and their more restricted opportunities for career progress in comparison to men due to long periods on leave.

The government's structural package contains a reform that will see child home care allowance equally divided between fathers and mothers. This reform will promote equality between the sexes. From here, Finland should transition in stages to the 6+6+6 model for parental leave. This would mean extending parental leave to last a period of 18 months and dividing leave into three phases, each lasting six months (6+6+6). Each parent takes one 6-month period of leave, and the third period could be shared by both. The periods of leave could be used up until the time the child turns 3. An allowance amounting to 80 per cent of

their previous income would be paid to parents during their leave.

In cases of separation or divorce, the division of parental benefits and decision-making that applies to children require special attention. The Ombudsman for Equality has received complaints from men, in particular regarding the practices of child healthcare clinics, day care centres and schools. This should be taken into account when developing and sharing good practices. Household-specific notifications, child benefits paid to one parent and the small-size rental apartments offered to divorced fathers are an indication of how the system does not have the flexibility to take into account joint custody arrangements. Manifestations of inequality that apply to fathers are also apparent outside of custody and divorce situations. In order to receive a maternity package, it is not enough that the father of the child to be born is Finnish. If the mother has not lived in Finland for a mandatory period of six months, the couple will not be granted a maternity package.

When revising and implementing legislation that applies to guardianship and visitation rights, special attention should be paid to compliance with agreements and court decisions concerning guardianship and visitation rights, and it is important to present methods for intervening in so-called estrangement. Estrangement refers to situations in which the parent living with a child damages the relationship between the child and his/her noncustodial parent and prevents meetings between them.

Proposals:

- Parental leave should be divided between the parents in stages, with an objective of transitioning to the 6+6+6 model. Child home care allowance should be divided evenly between both parents.
- The amount of family leave earmarked for fathers should be increased, and the possibility for paid paternity leave must be looked into.
- The activities of the authorities must be developed, and shortcomings that apply to the division of parental benefits and decision-making that applies to children in cases of separation or divorce must be corrected.
- The position of noncustodial parents should be improved through such measures as a review of how parental leave is divided and by assessing the effectiveness of joint custody arrangements as they have been implemented in Sweden
- When revising and implementing legislation that applies to guardianship and visitation rights, special attention should be paid to compliance with agreements and court decisions concerning guardianship and visitation rights.

#### 4.3 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

The educational system maintains gender and heteronormative roles and behaviours starting from early childhood education. Stereotypical gender norms can inhibit a child's and young person's ability to grow and develop into citizens who are equal and believe in equality. Early childhood education should allow each child to be who they want to be and express themselves and their sexuality in their own unique way.

Endorsing gender equality in everyday school life needs to be supported by legislation and training. Important steps have been taken to include the gender perspective and male issues in the educational system. These included extending functional gender equality planning to early childhood education and basic education, inclusion of equality training in further education (also supplementary education) provided for teachers and staff involved in early childhood education, as well as inclusion of gender equality in the Early Childhood Education Act, which is at present under revision.



Ensuring a broad general education for all is in the interests of both the individual and society. The general level of education in Finland has improved steadily as time has passed. However, starting in the late 1980s, the share of men with no education after primary school has grown distinctly larger than the share of women; the reason for this is unclear. When examined by education level, vocational schools are the only educational institutions that turn out more male than female graduates. A clear majority of upper secondary school graduates and of those who complete degree programmes at universities of applied sciences and universities are women.

In order to deconstruct the segregation in education and working life as well as to expand the boundaries of what it is to be a man, we must work on attitudes in early childhood education, schools and other educational institutions and working life. The role of teachers, student counsellors and career guidance counsellors is important, and so are educational materials. Researchers have noted that there is an over-representation of men and boys, as well as masculine fantasy characters, in the educational materials for all school subjects at all class levels. The culture built by educational materials as well as the male, human and family images in these materials should be diversified. They must also highlight the diversity of sexual orientation and gender. The media and marketing also have a huge significance on images associated with different professions.

Different measurements and assessments have found differences in the learning outcomes of boys and girls. According to the most recent PISA results (PISA 2012), the difference in how well boys and girls in Finland do in mathematics is very small. There also are gender differences in literacy and writing skills. The differences in learning outcomes between girls and boys in Finland are becoming more distinctly regional than previously. The differences between the sexes have increased exponentially in all content areas in Eastern Finland (24–26 points compared to results from 2009) and in Northern Finland (11–20 points). In other areas, the differences in learning outcomes between girls and boys have not grown as significantly, but the outcomes have shown a steady deterioration for both boys and girls.

Boys already read less than girls and have a more negative attitude towards reading in elementary school. Being accustomed to reading and writing is fundamental with regard to independent study and lifelong learning as well as social inclusion. Based on experiences gained through past campaigns, new activities need to be developed and organised to encourage boys to read. In 2012–2015, the University of Oulu Faculty of Humanities and Faculty of Education are carrying out a joint three-year programme funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture called Lukuinto.

Not everyone gets it right the first time when selecting a field and a place of education. Young people should be offered the possibility of changing their field of study if the first choice turns out not to be right for them. It is a waste from the perspective of both society and the individual to try and study in a field that does not genuinely interest you. This also increases the risk of dropping out. The apprenticeship training system must be developed to offer a realistic alternative for learning a profession. However, we must avoid turning the apprenticeship system into a factor that undermines the labour market position of men later in life, similarly to the lack of degrees in case of men who are enticed to take up jobs in fast-growing sectors before they finish their studies. People must be able to combine work and studies flexibly. Experience in the labour market gained during one's studies is valuable when a young person seeks work after graduation. Graduation time objectives that are too strict may be an obstacle for finding and developing unique talents. However, at the same time, we must take into account the fact that graduation time objective can function as a security net for students: resources for teaching and support for studies must be at a level required by the objectives.

Emergence of gender equality issues related to men and boys has proved that scientific

research and data on the topic is lacking in Finland. Men's studies has not become institutionalized as part of academic life and the resources for this field of study are very meagre. At the same time, information related to boys and men is needed, for example to determine why the majority of those who fare poorly in school or drop out are boys, how to prevent male exclusion, what the position of men is in social services, specifically with regard to divorces, custody disputes and realization of the child's visitation rights, as well as in the study of themes such as men and health or men and violence. A study on violence experienced by men (Heiskanen and Ruuskanen 2010) and its prevalence was published in 2010. Now there is a demand for a further study on this subject to enable intervention in the problem. On the whole, the relationship between men and gender equality or gender-based problems encountered by men is an area that has not been researched. Discussions in this subject area are usually solely based on personal experiences, without the background provided by generalising, systematic research data. Political decisions cannot be made without relevant data on the subject.

In 2014, the Ministry of Education and Culture will realise a survey on the national state of gender study, which is listed in the Government's Action Plan on Gender Equality, and the ministry will monitor the development of the situation. It is important that, at the same time, we survey the state of men's studies separately. We should take action to bolster this field of research and consider the establishment of a research programme dedicated to the study of men and boys.

#### Proposals:

- Learning outcomes of basic skills (literacy and math skills) must be assessed more systematically.
- All educational levels must have working towards a decline in the learning and education inequalities between the sexes as a common target.
- The obligation to draw up a gender equality plan, which is listed in the Act on Equality between Women and Men, must also apply to early childhood education and basic education. Similarly, gender equality must be recorded in the Early Childhood Act, which is currently under revision. Content related to gender equality and gender sensitivity must be included in the early childhood education plans and core curricula.
- Basic and further education for teachers and professionals in early childhood education must emphasise the importance of continuing and reinforcing work to increase content related to gender sensitivity and to dismantle gender-based preconceptions.
- Information on the diversity of sexual orientation and gender and diversity of family forms must be included in curricula.
- Flexible basic education and inclusive teaching methods should be supported.
- In addition to information content, expertise provided to schools should include expertise on skills related to encountering, interacting and group formation. For example, youth instructors or special needs assistants should be placed in schools and classrooms with teachers, following the Jopo model.
- Boys must be encouraged to pursue educational and career alternatives from a broader selection.
- The mandatory age for attending school must be raised as part of actions to assist boys' transition into working life.
- Finding the right field of study must be supported especially by developing gen-

der-specific student guidance and ensuring more flexibility when changing one's field of studies and in graduation time objectives.

- The apprenticeship system must be developed into a realistic alternative to other forms of learning a profession.
- The state of men's studies must also be surveyed as part Ministry of Education and Culture's survey of the national state gender equality research and monitoring which are outlined in the Government's Action Plan on Gender Equality.

#### 4.4 WORKING LIFE AND EXCLUSION

The labour market has been divided into women's and men's fields and professions. Changes in the division of labour are very slow to materialise. This has however happened to some extent; mostly as women have gained an education in professions that have previously been dominated by men, such as doctors and lawyers. In some cases, rather than becoming more balanced, the gender distribution in a profession changes little by little from male-dominated to female-dominated.

The genderization of professions and the labour market have many consequences that lead into inequality. In addition to male and female-dominated fields and professions, segregation is evident in the greater share of men in top management positions. As the labour market is segregated, and women still take the majority of family leave, the costs of family leave are distributed somewhat unevenly between fields and employers, although these differences are balanced between different fields. In fields that are clearly dominated by one sex, the minority sex may end up in a special position, as a subjected of harassment or assigned to "gender appropriate tasks". As some professions are male-dominated, this explains in part the over-representation of men as victims of occupational accidents: in 1996-2011 the number of occupational fatalities reported for women remained annually at a few cases, whereas men's occupational fatalities have declined from over 50 a year to under 30. The same type of male polarization is evident in working life as is in society in general: men are over-represented in top management, as well as in the unemployed and the disabled.

Women have been more enthusiastic about acquiring an education or entering a profession that has typically been male-dominated. Men have been less likely to pursue a field that is traditionally female-dominated. There are undoubtedly many different reasons for this including attitudes and wages: male-dominated fields are on average more valued and the salaries in male professions are higher. As the content of professions and jobs changes, the perception the general public has of them can fall behind of reality. It would be a good idea to provide more up-to-date and diverse information on the requirements for professions and encourage men to pursue a broad scope of different fields. In 2014, the Ministry of Education and Culture is in the process of appointing a rapporteur to establish the prerequisites for facilitating under-represented groups in gaining entrance to institutions of higher education within the framework of the Constitution, the Non-discrimination Act and the Act on Equality between Women and Men.

Segregation means underuse of expertise and a wage and pension gap between men and women. The low wages paid in women's fields have often been deemed the reason for men not wanting to pursue careers in these fields. The meaningfulness of the work content and the possibility of men developing the job descriptions and increasing the appreciation of the field in question together with women should also be highlighted. For example, clients in the healthcare field would like to see more male nurses. Family policy is a strong factor that maintains the traditional distribution of work between men and women.

Men should have better opportunities to take responsibility for childcare and housework, and children would be more likely to have a close relationship with their father. In addition

to the above, dismantling of segregation is for a large part also a collective agreement issue. Agreements must include conditions that encourage men to take parental leave. The government is in the process of evaluating the expenses incurred by the employers of men and women due to family leave. On the basis of this information, the government can seek to distribute the costs of parenthood more evenly between employers in different fields. A much greater number of actions must be directed at the dismantling of segregation, both in terms of general and vocational education and labour policy measures.

As the structures of working life are changing drastically, work that was traditionally carried out by men will see a decline, and men will be more at risk of becoming unemployed than women. In this situation, it is necessary from the perspective of both society and individual men to challenge stereotypical choices of profession and broaden the scope of professions available to men. Experience has shown that a change of field and profession that crosses gender boundaries can be successful also for adults. Gender is a guiding force in career selection, especially for boys, and vocational education and training are highly segregated. The student's selection of subjects in comprehensive school has an impact on career choices. The reasons for these selections should be looked into: why does segregation already begin in school?

In December 2013, men accounted for 54 per cent of the unemployed, and 61 per cent of young people (under the age of 25) were unemployed. Women utilised TE Office services more than men in all age groups (52.5 percent women), and the percentage of those taking part in activation measures was higher for women than for men (women 30.4%, men 23%). Women account for the majority of the unemployed who take part in independent studies while on unemployment benefits. Men only accounted for 36 per cent of students. On the other hand, labour market training was male-dominated. Of those starting in labour market training, nearly 57 per cent are men. Of young job seekers who participate in labour market training, 65 per cent are men. An analysis of skills and suitable occupations is carried out for men more often than for women (men 73%). The same applies to activation plans (share of men 63%).

The target professions of labour market training participants are distinctly divided according to gender. The target professions of men participating in labour market training include: agriculture and forestry, transportation and communications (up to 91%, construction and mining (87%) and fields of industry. Men were a clear minority in labour market training in the following fields: healthcare and social welfare (13%), business (33%), administration and office work, IT (44%) and the service sector (41%). Of these fields, healthcare and social welfare as well as the service sector are likely to employ more men in the future than "traditional men's fields", as these are the fields the structural change has impacted the most. It is advisable to increasingly guide men towards female-dominated fields of study. Independent study while receiving unemployment benefits should be a service that men are offered more actively.

Approximately two-thirds of those who are clients of the information, guidance and advisory services offered by the employment and economic development administration are women. The service is to an great extent based on one-on-one discussions. This is apparently not an approach that men find attractive, especially as the work is often based on reflection on one's own life and habits. It would be a good idea to consider whether services that are somewhat more action-oriented, e.g. training and trials, could better respond to men's service needs and if so, whether this should be considered when planning service paths.

Combining work and family life must be developed with more father and family-oriented solutions. Those structures of the workplace and professional culture that prevent men from fully participating in family life and especially in the use of family leave must be dismantled. Family leave earmarked for fathers makes it easier for men to take time off for family

leave and are a good solution for a more even distribution of family responsibility.

Exclusion is a problem especially for young men. In 2010, 51,000 young people were considered to be in the scope of exclusion (5% of the age group). Men accounted for 64 per cent and women for 36 per cent of this group. The share of people who speak a foreign language as their mother tongue was also significant. Of the 15-29 age group, 33% of men who spoke a foreign language as their mother tongue were affected by exclusion, whereas 13 percent of men aged 15- 29 from the core population who had only completed a basic education were considered to be affected by exclusion. The corresponding figures for women were 26% (foreign language speakers) and 8 per cent (core population). The core group for excluded young people, i.e. those outside the labour market, comprised 32,500 individuals. Men accounted for 62 per cent. However, the excluded are not the same persons from one year to the next: over the course of 5 years, 60 per cent of young people affected by exclusion transitioned to working life, whereas the remaining 40 per cent could still be classified as excluded. Approximately one half of the parents of excluded young people were outside the labour market or unemployed.

When considering solutions to exclusion, the cross-generational and gendered nature of this phenomenon should be taken into account. A study by the National Institute for Health and Welfare monitored all persons born in 1987 (approx. 60,000 persons) from pregnancy to their 21st birthday, on the basis of all registry data available. The study demonstrated that the problems experienced by boys and girls were different, and that the problems experienced by their parents affected girls and boys differently. Social, financial and mental problems experienced by parents had a clearer effect on boys than on girls. Of the boys born in 1987, over one-fifth did not have any education after comprehensive school, and approximately 14 per cent had been sentenced for a crime. There is a distinct connection between education and the problems that are the object of the study. However, it is difficult to determine the trend. Those who do not have an education following comprehensive school accumulate problems: over one half of the boys with the lowest standard of education had been involved in criminal activity, and approximately 45 per cent received social assistance. (Paananen et al. 2012.)

It has also been noted in the scope of youth outreach work that the paths to exclusion for young men and women differ from one another, as do the paths for escaping exclusion. Men tend to have financial problems early on, and men have far more payment default entries in their credit ratings in all age groups than women. In 2008, over 8 per cent of men aged 25-50 had payment default entries (approximately 5% of women).

Prevention of exclusion should focus on pre-emptive work and early support. It would be a good idea to develop low threshold services for young people throughout Finland within the framework of social youth work (i.e. work that incorporates both social work and youth work). We should provide multidisciplinary low threshold services specifically for young people who are at risk of becoming excluded. While these services would be easy to approach, the activities would be goal-oriented. Buddies for Kids, a volunteer operation run by the Single Parent Association, is a good model for answering the needs of boys whose fathers are absent. Adult men act as buddies for children of single mothers, who have no contact with their father or other men.

Many young people become socially excluded at an early age. A potential way forward could be for sports associations to receive funding from society to carry out local work with youths. The funding could be directed at socioeconomically least privileged areas and its key area of focus would be prevention of exclusion and participation and inclusion in society. For example, Icehearts and Järvenpään Kehäkarhut have worked together with social welfare services. The aim of this work has been to give young people the opportunity to attach themselves to society through sports.

Expertise outside of schools (e.g. specialist youth workers and family social workers) should be brought more into schools, so that exclusion could be prevented together. The one year increase in the compulsory education age is a welcome reform, which can support especially boys in having a grip of their studies and pre-empt exclusion. A particular focus for work that aims to prevent the exclusion of young men must be on those who have dropped out of their studies, those who have discontinued their military service and those who have a drug addiction. Outreach youth work and development of the youth guarantee are important tools for preventing the risk of exclusion and stopping young people from falling between the cracks.

Proposals:

- The obstacles for the use of family leave arising from our culture and attitudes must be dismantled, especially with regard to men and male-dominated fields, and paid paternity leave should be endorsed in collective agreements.
- Actions that will see men gaining an interest in jobs within fields that have traditionally been considered female professions and their employment in these fields must be supported.
- Work to prevent men's exclusion must be supported and developed.
- Labour force services and the participation of both men and women in these services must be analysed from the gender perspective, and services must be developed to correspond with the needs of men and women, not in a gender-blind manner.
- A model must be developed for multidisciplinary, school-centric work to prevent exclusion.

#### 4.5 MALE IMAGE, DIVERSITY AND VIOLENCE

In today's Finland, men have distinctly more diverse opportunities to realise themselves. Thanks to the ideas of equality that have been prevailing in our society for an extended period, the diverse image of men is more commonplace, the younger the generation in question.

Gender can be seen as a resource which makes certain things a possibility. Gender can also restrict the actions of individuals in two ways or, sometimes, in even more intricate ways. The way in which gender guides or forces people differs for men and women, but also for people who have lived at different points in history, who are from different societies and cultures, and who are different as individuals. The restrictions brought about by gender are fluctuating and can be altered. The history of feminism and the women's movement has in many ways been about the expansion of women's living space and the disassembly of gender with regard to its restrictive and obligatory aspects.

Stereotypical gender roles can also restrict men's freedom and their ability to be a man. Gender steers men from the outside with signs, rituals, ways of speaking, norms, behaviours, practices and social institutions, but also from the inside as internalized ways of thinking, notions and emotions. When we want to expand the boundaries of being a man and diversify the male image, we must strive to influence all of these.

Many political and social actions can be looked at from the view point of how they expand or limit the state of being man. Instead of adopting special measures to change the male image, changes and reforms that are directed at such things as parenthood, intimate relationships, working life and military service might be more important. For example, realisation of the 6+6+6 model for parental leave is an important step in supporting fatherhood and promoting gender equality, but also for diversifying men's life experience and maleness.

The perspective of diversity has not been distinctly highlighted in discussion on men.

The key theme of the discussion focuses on the relationship between men and women, but the differences between men have not been considered. For example, the differences between men in life expectancy that are dependent on other background factors are two times greater than those between the sexes.

With regard to mainstreaming the gender perspective and gender equality actions that apply to men, the fact that men are not a single uniform group should always be taken into account. In addition to differences such as age or ethnicity, there is also inequality amongst men that is based on gender. The diversity of gender and sexuality is a theme that cuts across all male issues.

State security and national defence are based on legitimized machineries of violence. Conscription (compulsory military service for men), which has been a fundamental part of Finland's national defence, has been criticized for reasons related to national defence, finances and gender equality. The current Conscription Act sets men and women on an unequal footing. The basic bonds that hold out nation together, the basic rights and obligations held by citizens, should not be divided unequally. We need to investigate what the present Conscription Act signifies from the perspective of equality and how inequality related to compulsory military service can be eliminated.

Circumcision of boys is an irreversible and painful procedure that can cause serious complications. Circumcisions should not be permitted for other than medical reasons before the male child can give his knowledgeable consent to the procedure. A precondition for this is that the boy has reached such an age and level of development that he is able to understand the necessary information provided to him related to the procedure.

Police statistics show that 78–89 per cent of perpetrators of violent crimes, depending on their level of severity, are men. However, violence is not just a men's problem. Male-specific violence requires male-specific measures, which must cover everything from pre-emptive measures, intervention and after care. The Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters' Jussi project and the Miessakit Association's Lyömätön linja programme have been examples of efforts by men, which require support and expansion. The expertise on genderized violence gathered during a programme by the National Institute for Health and Welfare that aims to see a decline in violence against women should be utilised in work against violence targeted at men.

If men experience serious domestic violence, the service system must offer them help similarly as to women who experience the same sort of violence. Putting an end to a cycle of violence requires swift intervention regardless of sex. In Finland, the service system for victims of violence, e.g. shelters, are open to men and women. It is important to encourage men to report violence and to seek help when becoming a victim of violence - also in those cases when the perpetrator is a stranger. In turn, those who work with victims of violence should be taught to recognize and handle the problems of men who have been subjected to violence.

The wrongful and silent acceptance of violence should be torn down. A permissive attitude towards violence that targets men is deep within our culture, and the fact that this is the case especially with regard to and among young people is a cause for concern. We must intervene in violence against boys and carried out by boys. We must gain a grasp of violent conflict resolution models in order to eliminate them and build alternative action models. Especially violence experienced by men can be influenced through alcohol policy. Specific attention must also be given to the special issues related to violence, such as genderizing of hate crimes, intimate partner violence between men, as well as conflicts related to honour within the nuclear and extended family. As globalisation has spread, the skills that support tolerance, such as language skills and an understanding of multiculturalism, are even more central in matters of safety within society as well as in success in the workplace.

With regard to work against violence, it is important that ministries allocate sufficient re-

sources for the realisation of the programme to reduce violence against women, which was published in 2010 and will continue until 2015. Of the measures listed in the programme, many apply generally to intimate partner violence, and will benefit all victims of intimate partner violence regardless of their sex. Intimate partner violence or domestic violence that targets men must be taken into account in the programme to reduce violence against women.

A national support network for victims and perpetrators of violence must be developed in the long-term and genuinely sufficient resources must be allocated for provision of services. An aim to increase the number of shelter places has been recorded in the government programme and the Government Action Plan for Gender Equality, so it is time to act now that the halfway point of the government's term has been passed.

Early childhood education and schools are in a special position in diversification of the male image and eliminating violence by men. Curricula and educational materials should be examined critically with regard to the male image they build. The activities of schools with regard to and the materials distributed to schools on diversity should also cover diversity of men.

The effects of actions taken by officials are limited, and especially in matters concerning the male image, the role of other actors is significant. The media as well as the entertainment and gaming industries (including their advertising and marketing that targets children) will be challenged to take part in the tearing down male images characterized by violence, intolerance and competitiveness. Creating, highlighting and supporting alternative stories and role models are necessary in forums such as norm-critical media campaigns (see e.g. <http://www.machofabriken.se/> and <http://normit.fi>). It would also be important for persons in the public eye to clearly condemn violent resolution models and bring forth their own personal experiences.

In 2006, purchase of sex from victims of procuring and human trafficking was criminalized in Finland. The law has proved problematic, as it is often impossible for the police to find evidence of whether the client has known there was procuring activities or human trafficking involved. Complete criminalization of the purchasing of sex could allow more effective intervention in demand, which is the driving force for prostitution and human trafficking and could accelerate positive changes in attitudes.

#### Proposals:

- More education must be provided on non-violent conflict resolution models and men's work that applies to non-violent solution models must be supported and developed.
- Male circumcisions should no longer be performed for non-medical reasons.
- The possibilities of deconstructing the inequality between sexes related to conscription should be examined.
- The potential impact of gender on criminal sentences must be analysed.
- The media, entertainment and gaming industries will be challenged to take part in work to change and diversify the male image.
- A norm critical media campaign must be organized for the diversification of the male image.
- Purchasing of sex must be criminalized.

#### 4.6 A SHARED GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

The premise for the working group's proposals has been equality for all people. Gender equality must be further developed from this premise. As described in section 2.1, work that endorses gender equality has had a multitude of different focuses at different periods in



time. The focus points of gender equality policy have been determined by the specific challenges of each time period. Men and women have at all times experienced both shared and gender-specific problems.

The working Group emphasises that men must also feel that gender equality policy supports them. A successful gender equality policy supports inclusion of both men and women, and values both genders. When the current Act on Equality between Women and Men was drafted, especially the status of women in working life was highlighted. When the Act has been revised, other sections than those that apply to working life have been added. However, section 1, which defines the objective of the Act, does not reflect the expansion of the Act's scope of application to life outside of work.

Because the purpose of the Act on Equality between Women and Men is to endorse equality between the sexes, the section on the objectives of the Act should emphasised the fact that it applies equally to men and women, either by highlighting the most important gender equality policy issues that apply to men as it currently does, or the objectives list in Section 1 must be revised. The working group feels the latter of these options is a viable and justified one, because the general purpose of the Act should be clear in all situations.

By endorsing an amendment to the section on the objectives of the Act on Equality between Men and Women, we do not mean to change the fact that improving the status of women in working life is still a central objective in gender equality efforts. Narrowing the wage gap between men and women, as well as dismantling genderized segregation in working life and professions must remain key objectives in gender equality policy. For these reasons, the working group will not propose changes to the sections of the act that apply to working life. The changes we have proposed only aim to emphasise the fact that the Act on Equality between Women and Men applies to both sexes in the same way.

Proposals:

- Strengthening male-specific expertise and inclusion of men in gender equality bodies.
- Realization of a gender impact assessment will be monitored, and assessment expertise will be added to.
- The practical implementation of gender equality policy will include financial support provided to men's organizations.
- In international cooperation (UN, EU, Nordic cooperation, etc.), Finland's representatives must ensure that all issues related to gender equality take at all times different gender perspectives into account.
- Section 1 of the Act on Equality between Women and Men shall be revised as follows:

The purpose of this Act is to prevent gender-based discrimination and promote equality between women and men, ~~as well as to improve the standing of women especially in the workplace.~~

#### 4.7 THE WORKING GROUP'S VIEWS ON ONGOING PROCESSES

*The government report on equality between women and men (2011)* provides a framework for future gender equality policy until 2020. The objective of the report is to strengthen long-term and systematic promotion of equality between the sexes, and it emphasises commitment to implementation of gender equality policy at all levels. The themes selected for the report are based on the objectives concerning gender equality listed in government programmes and the government's action plans for gender equality at the end of the 1990s and in the 2000s. The

main themes are decision-making, education and research, combining work and family life, men and gender equality, violence against women, intimate partner violence and human trafficking and the position of gender equality officials and mainstreaming of the gender perspective. As regards men, the gender equality report states the following:

- more attention must be focused on men as actors in gender equality policy and as the object of actions
- mainstreaming of the gender perspective will require that planned actions are assessed with regard to the status of women and men
- some of the problems experienced by men will also require that they are assessed in the context of gender equality policy

The gender equality report's future policies that apply to men are as follows:

1. Mainstreaming also means that different perspectives related to the status of men are taken into account in the preparation of matters and in decision-making. Mainstreaming of the gender perspective will continue, and it will be reinforced
2. The father's role will continue to be strengthened with more effective measures.
3. The parenthood of men will be supported in cases of divorce.
4. The amount of expertise and specialist knowledge that applies to men and equality will be increased.
5. Models of manhood should be diversified and male inclusion in gender equality discussion should be reinforced

The working group's assigned tasks will include speeding up of procedures listed in the Government's Action Plan on Gender Equality that apply to men. *The Government's Action Plan on Gender Equality 2012-2015* (2012) includes 66 actions. Each action is overseen by an appointed ministry and person. The progress of these procedures will be monitored by the Action Plan on Gender Equality Monitoring Group. The working group has listed the most central procedures from the perspective of male issues (Table 2) and monitored their progress. For example, on the basis of the Monitoring Group's interim report, the working group has noted that the procedures that apply to men have progressed in the desired manner. The working group will review the progress of the actions contained in the action plan in its final report.

Table 2. Key measures in the Government's Action Plan on Gender Equality 2012-2015 that apply to men

Measure number	Content of measure
24	To increase the amount of leave days earmarked for fathers, provide more flexibility to how and when fathers use their family leave, and enable home childcare for longer, supported by the parental allowance.
25	A reform that will enforce the right of fathers to parental leave, as agreed to in the framework agreement between the government and labour organizations, will be enacted at the beginning of 2013.
26	When developing family leave, Efforts will be made to put single-parent, non-residential-parent, adoptive, multiple-birth, rainbow and foster families on an equal footing with other families.
47	The differing paths of young women and men to social exclusion and their needs for support will be taken into account in the project launched to implement the Social Guarantee and its measures.
48	Projects intended to narrow health differences between socioeconomic population groups and between men and women will be entered as a focus area for health promotion appropriations.

49	Dialogue between wellbeing and health experts, gender equality experts and men's' organisations will be promoted to give greater prominence to the male dimension in the promotion and monitoring of health and wellbeing and in social and health services.
50	Consideration of the gender perspective in producing statistics in the social welfare and health care sectors and in the accrual of databases will be enhanced specifically to improve our awareness of men's wellbeing problems and our understanding of them. This will be agreed upon in more detail with statistics compilers in the social welfare and health care statistics group.
63	Expertise on the status of men in gender equality policy and participation of men in the promotion of gender equality will be enhanced. + "the Government is continuing the implementation of the Action Plan to Reduce Violence against Women (2010–2015). [- -] These measures will also improve the status of boys and men suffering from intimate partner violence or domestic violence." page 32)

The materials currently provided to teachers on equality and equal status provide a good premise for a gender knowledgeable upbringing and education: <http://www.tasa-arvokasvatuksessa.fi/>.

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