WOMEN LEADERS
EMPOWERING FUTURE GENERATIONS

AN ANTHOLOGY ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP, SOCIAL INNOVATION AND GENDER EQUALITY
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WOMEN LEADERS
– EMPOWERING FUTURE GENERATIONS

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The 2030 Agenda and Specific SDG Targets

SDG 4 Quality Education
4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

SDG 5 Gender Equality
5.1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
5.5: Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.
5.8: Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications.

SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth
8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.

SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities
10.2: By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.
10.3: Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.

SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities
11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
16.1: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.
After 200 years of parliamentarianism, women’s right to vote was finally approved by the Swedish Parliament in 1919. With a century of equal political rights in Sweden, women and girls are still overrepresented in the lowest income groups, carry out the majority of unpaid work, and face higher risks of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, and stigmatization.

We are far from reaching gender equal societies globally. It will not be enough to address the Sustainable Development Goal on Gender Equality (SDG 5) in the 2030 Agenda. Gender needs to be mainstreamed in all SDGs by actively addressing the status of women and girls in all activities.

More than one year has passed since the uprising of #MeToo. Swedish newspapers published testimonies from the Swedish actors’ academy on sexual abuse and harassment in their workplaces. A variety of calls from different industries followed. This shook Sweden to its core. How could so many women have been harassed in one of the most gender equal countries in the world? At the same time, it brought hope and demonstrated what collective action can accomplish. #MeToo has created faith in real change, which can advance the conditions for young girls to become future leaders.

Achieving gender equality is a slow process. Perhaps because of this, it is even more important to highlight the small victories and good examples, in order to not lose perspective of the immense progress we have seen in the last decades. Women are undertaking more leadership positions in several industries and are increasingly taking part in decision-making. Sweden is a leading advocate for gender equality, by applying a systematic gender perspective in every aspect of foreign policy. Countries such as Canada and France are following this example, with the realization that investing in women’s development builds resilient societies. Ultimately, it can be a very rewarding process of reflecting, unpacking, and sharing experiences of gender equality or inequalities in our daily lives, however not diminishing the great challenges we still face.

#MeToo has unveiled private stories, and the SDGs have provided systematic approaches. This gives decision-makers globally the opportunity to define the importance of gender equality, and truly come together to learn from each other, to transform current gender inequalities entrenched within structures and mindsets.

As a think tank, Global Utmaning recognized the need to form a female network of strong women leaders, to leverage their experiences, highlight global and domestic victories for gender equality and women’s empowerment, and to utilize their knowledge and expertise to develop concrete policy recommendations that can raise the status of women and girls. Since four out of 15 women in the network share the same name, we decided to name it the Sofia Network.

This is the first publication from the Sofia Network. It highlights women’s leadership as a necessity for a sustainable future; the importance of prioritizing gender-inclusive urban plans that can lead to improved quality of life for all, advancing women’s entrepreneurship, and social innovations that promotes inclusion and diversity. Once people of all backgrounds and abilities feel safe and confident to participate, we will truly realize the potential we collectively possess.
Introduction.

WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP – A NECESSITY FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Humanity is off track. The fact that we have spent the last century ruining our habitat, our livelihood, the air we breathe, and the water we drink, is proof enough. This is the result of old leadership, and the common good was defined by a few. Shrinking the gaps between groups and bringing diversity into leadership will be the only way forward. Some of us have to speak up.

Historically, many women have carried a lot of weight in times of crisis. Taking care of the family, working as nurses in warzones, as well as healing, helping, and nurturing others in their surroundings. Many times quietly, far away from the spotlight. Today, our entire humanity is at risk due to climate change, and a sixteen-year-old girl from Sweden, Greta Thunberg, speak up. This time, the world was ready for a young woman’s leadership. As a result, many other young people all around the world have risen up together, speaking their minds and showing their concerns for our common future. This time decision-makers are listening. Finally, we are entering an era where young and female leadership is taken seriously.

New forms of leadership

The leadership we see today is linear, and many companies and institutions are growing at the expense of the environment. Utilizing the world’s resources has led to welfare in many places. This leadership has lifted large proportions of populations from poverty to prosperous lives. However, in a new era, with new challenges, we are in profound need of a new types of leadership. We need new forms of leaderships that are long-term and...
increasingly manage to connect humanity with nature. A leadership taking responsibility for future generations, but that still produces goods and supplies for a prosperous life on our planet.

I see many of these features of leadership in many women that I meet every day. I believe that women have a more circular mindset by nature. An early study on female leadership, showed that women leaders place a higher value on relationships, have a bias for direct communication rather than following the chain of command, put themselves at the centre of the people they lead, are comfortable with diversity, and are skilled at integrating their personal lives with their lives at work rather than compartmentalising.

Women are increasingly taking place in management, leading roles and higher positions in companies and governments. But the world also needs more women entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs that will find new solutions of social impact. But, why is there so few? One reason may be that investors are to large extents men, which are more prone to invest in male entrepreneurs. It may be natural that you look for a younger version of yourself to invest in, but if investors not actively address their bias, more capital will never be available to women.

All the contributing authors are successful and powerful women from different industries. What they have in common is the focus on how we together can contribute to advancing gender equality in society and ensuring that young women are encouraged with self-confidence to foster future leaders.

“The Meeting with Melinda Gates Inspired Us to Form a Female Network That Can Inspire, Mentor, and Strengthen the Self-Confidence of Young Women and Girls”

The starting point for this publication was a roundtable consultation meeting together with Melinda Gates and 15 Swedish women leaders; entrepreneurs, decision-makers, tech-profiles, and one representative from the Swedish royal family. Many of whom were named Sofia. The meeting inspired us to form a female network of empowered women, the Sofia Network, with the purpose to inspire, mentor, and strengthen the self-confidence of young women and girls. The women around the table were asked to contribute with a chapter about their concerns close to heart, how they work to empower women, and provide policy recommendations on how to increase gender equality.

It is my deepest conviction that this publication will be an eye-opener for decision-makers, investors and other stakeholders, that the world is in need of more women leaders and entrepreneurs, and the only pathway is through empowering future generations. Only when the world is equal, humanity and planet will be back on track.

Tove Ahlström is a civil engineer with solid experience in sustainability and unique expertise in climate change and pharmaceuticals in the environment. Since 2018 Tove is the CEO of the think tank Global Utmaning and is affiliated with Al Gore’s initiative Climate Reality Project since 2013. Tove was formerly a Sustainability Manager at Apotea, a web-based pharmacy, where she developed the company’s sustainability strategy. In 2017 she was a finalist in Sweden’s Top Sustainability Manager, and in 2018 she was nominated to Sweden’s 101 Most Powerful Sustainability People in Sweden.

10.3: Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.

1 Sally Helgesen (1990), The Female Advantage: Women’s Ways of Leadership
CHAPTER 1. THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF RECRUITING WOMEN INTO POLITICS

Everything is changing in these times of political unrest. Our common democratic values are being challenged and we can see a sharp rise of populist parties around the world. Membership rates of political parties have dropped, yet citizen’s expectations for professional politicians are on the rise. The political parties will need to work more with strategic recruitment to survive. That includes recruiting women to politics and then make them stay.

Being involved in politics is a privilege. To be elected into office is an honour. Those are the basics. But why is it of strategic importance for the political parties all around the world to attract, recruit, and also keep more women engaged? There may be something to learn from Sweden, but even the Nordic countries are struggling with this to some extent.

The political impact of gender diversity

More diversity in the legislative process creates better policy. But to be frank, engaging women is not really about diversity. Women are half of the population, so it is more of a necessity. You do not have to subscribe to ideas of identity politics to reach that conclusion. There is also another reason: it is of strategic importance to make sure that competent people get into politics to save democracy and the legitimacy of our democratic political system.

The political world has been spoilt and has for a long time had a high influx of people willing to work there. That is changing. The political parties simply can not afford to waste good people who are willing to run for office and stand in elections. It is so obvious that I can hardly believe that I have to write this.

Author

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Senior Advisor,
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“BEING INVOLVED IN POLITICS IS A PRIVILEGE. TO BE ELECTED INTO OFFICE IS AN HONOUR”
The key questions are: who wants to become a politician? Is the recruitment up to standard? Do political parties attract women who want to become politicians and how do they keep them? This text will neither provide simple answers or a practical to-do-list. But the questions deserve to be taken seriously and dealt with within party structures.

First: Duty and engagement are two skills that are necessary for any good politician. It should be those who want to do something meaningful who run for office. The driving force is to either give something back to society or to change it with policy. In short, those who want to be politicians are the ones who want to save the world.

Second: The recruitment process has been more or less the same for quite some time. Though globalization, professionalization, digitalization, communication and the increase in speed of almost everything, has changed the conditions and requirements. There is room for improvement and there is definitely room for change, development and better strategy.

Third: The political parties are not really working hard at attracting or keeping women who want to become politicians. That is harsh, but true, and has to change. It is not about quotas or affirmative action. This is for real.

The expectations on political parties are grand. They should be professional yet inclusive. Open and agile yet substitute some control and provide processes. Political parties need to be in constant change to be relevant, modern and interesting. They also have to understand an ever-changing world, cope with quick shifts in public opinion, and manage all kinds of crises, be it economical, ecological, communicative or other.

Political parties face three main external threats to attract, recruit, and keep women in office. These are mostly the same all over the world: populism, polarization and toxic social media.

Populism

There is a difference between being popular in politics and being a populist. Popular politicians usually contribute to the political process. Populist politicians do the opposite. Populist parties and parties that claims to be anti the elite are growing and winning elections in several places around the world.

There is also a rise in the raw populism within almost all political parties in Sweden. The creeping populism that extends into proper parties degrades politicians as a group. You join a political party because you want to save the world and share a set of basic values with that political party. That is a rather small base plate. The political parties then add on extensive policy regarding economics, taxation, environment and many other issues. But there is no way that a political party has set policy for everything, then it would be a cult. Quite a lot is up to the elected politicians to deal with on a day-to-day basis.

The party program is a small shelter when the big storm of reality hits, a lot is yet undecided. That is why it is important who gets elected.

Polarization

The polarization of politics and the vilification of political opponents are increasing. Even in Sweden, famous for consensus, this is happening. There are deliberate misunderstandings, attacks on persons instead of policy, and dehumanization of the representatives from the opposition. This is for real.

I have no illusions. Politics is tough. It should be, because it is for real, and it affects the lives of every citizen. That ought to make us all humble, not angry. There is a lot written about the polarization of politics and how that affects policy and the political system. But politicians are humans too and have to work in this environment. It affects people. Sure, there are those who thrive in that kind of habitat – but are those the politicians we want?

Toxic social media

Another threat is the toxic social media. Dealing with that is one thing that clearly separates public figures in politics from professionals in any other fields, except media and other public people. There is a constant and sometimes erupting flood of hate and abuse from organized and disorganized trolls. They try to steal your energy and your time. It does not help the work and life-balance of any human being to be constantly connected to this.
Political parties can help by taking threats seriously and clearly communicate what is acceptable and what is not. Rough political debates and tough word exchanges is normal in this business. It is not for the faint of heart. But even here there must be limits and strategies for how to support each other in social media and public debate. The political parties can not control trolls but at least stand up against cyber bullying and threats.

**Last but not least:** I would hereby like to advocate the case of political parties, who do not lean on populists, click bait or a very raw political conversation. They should instead make the effort of recruiting and supporting politicians with integrity and have a strategy for recruiting and keeping women. That is one way of securing democracy in these interesting times.

Being elected into office means that you manage a lot of power. To do something useful with that power is a handicraft and it can be learned. It takes a lot of practise. It takes a lot of time. You are in it for the long game. It also takes a lot of cooperation and coalitions and it is significantly less glamorous than it looks like in the movies. Or even in the news. But the upside is that you can make a difference and you get to save the world one bit at a time.

**“POLITICS IS TOUGH. IT SHOULD BE, BECAUSE IT AFFECTS THE LIVES OF EVERY CITIZEN”**

Every woman in a leading position knows about it. Even though being a woman might be something that comes naturally to you, maybe you have been a woman all your life and you probably do not consider it as being a main factor in your political or professional engagements, it will be an issue. You will be measured against other standards, such as likeability. What you wear and how you look will be commented. You will be constantly reminded of the fact that you are a woman. If not by other politicians, trolls on the internet, men “who only mean well”, and the media will be helpful in pointing it out.

Hey reader! Get yourself a strategy for dealing with that. Do not let it waste your time. But it is not all up to you. Every modern political party, regardless of where it sees itself on the political scale, needs to work out a proper strategy.

Female politicians should create policy and try to save the world. Just as any other politician. They should not spend time on explaining the basics structures of gender for fact-resistant opponents. That would be a major waste of resources.

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Social change does not happen overnight. In most cases it takes time, patience and a huge amount of resources to reach the tipping point where true social change can occur. Unfortunately, time is not on our side when considering the challenges we face today. This is true not least when we look at the issue of gender equality and women’s empowerment. Although there are urgent needs to close the gaps, experience shows that overcoming structural inequalities takes generations.

Those of us who are not that patient, strive to find other paths than the traditional ones in order to change the status quo. For example, the campaign and movement #MeToo showed us that change can happen quickly and that individuals who take action using innovative methods can be game-changing.

Global outreach

At Reach for Change, we strive to harness the power of the individual to act as a catalyst for sustainable change. In other words, we aim to unleash the power of social entrepreneurship. In practice it means that we seek out individuals with solutions that can have a catalytic effect and help them scale their solutions and make them become sustainable. Our specific focus is to use this method to create a world where the needs of all children are met. Reach for Change spans across eighteen different countries, and we support hundreds of social entrepreneurs through incubators and accelerator programs. We know that social entrepreneurs – often even more than business entrepreneurs – require support and capacity building to take their ideas from proof of concept to growth.
Female change-leaders

More than half of the individuals that apply to our incubator programs, and more than half of the ones that are selected, are women. Many of these women – Change-Leaders, as we call them – also become role models that inspire other women and girls in their communities to follow. Faraja Nyalandu, founder of the online education platform Shule Direct in Tanzania, and Regina Honu, founder of Tech Needs Girls, are examples of female tech pioneers in our portfolio that have received global recognition and multiple awards for their ground-breaking work. Our program has evolved and today we support entrepreneurs, like these, and measure their success. The areas of which we evaluate their progress are problem and solution identification, leadership of their enterprise, financial sustainability, scale, and for us, what we consider to be the crown jewel – systems change.

Insights

We have supported social entrepreneurs for the past ten years and have currently supported over 600 social entrepreneurs, and more than half of those are women. Working with these entrepreneurs, we have gained several insights:

- The blending of social and entrepreneurship levels the playing field.
- We need to stay ahead of the game – that is why we have chosen to focus on tech and digitalisation.

Bottom-up approach

In Sweden, one of the first social entrepreneurs who went through our incubator program was Ida Östensson, founder of Make Equal, and initiator of several activist and public manifestation campaigns, such as #Fatta. By employing a solutions-based approach to gender equality, quickly identifying and addressing current events and challenges, and effectively using social media to mobilize movements, Ida has become one of the most visible advocates for gender equality in Sweden. She has also played a prominent role in implementing a new groundbreaking legislation around sexual consent to strengthen society’s ability to address issues of sexual exploitation.

At Reach for Change, we exclusively work with local entrepreneurs, who design bottom-up solutions to issues that they have identified in their own communities. This means that the specific strategies that they employ are highly localized and adapted to specific societal challenges as well as to specific formal and informal structures. Structural discrimination and unequal opportunities for girls and young women represent these old, archaic systems that need to change. Using social entrepreneurship as a catalyst for this systems change can both be effective, easily scaled and replicated across markets. In our experience, social entrepreneurship is a powerful method and a necessary complement to other approaches in order to close the gender gap for a number of reasons.

Female social entrepreneurs are role models that break existing barriers. In the business sector, men dominate the startup scene, they dominate as company founders and a vast majority of investments goes to these male founded companies. Our experience is that social entrepreneurship offers an arena where women can develop their entrepreneurial skills and where traditionally female qualities, such as empathy and care, are valued and necessary to be successful.

Another perspective is that the work of each entrepreneur can have direct impact. A key aspect is that social entrepreneurs have the ability to identify challenges and respond more quickly than institutions and established organisations.

“SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS A POWERFUL METHOD TO CLOSE THE GENDER GAP”
A traditional obstacle for female entrepreneurship is the lack of investment, and the barriers female entrepreneurs face when seeking to attract capital, for example. At the same time, women are overrepresented in the field of service and care. Many social entrepreneurs that come to Reach for Change are looking to innovate services and goods that cater to children and young people in the fields of education and health. Many also develop services as a direct result of experiencing that their needs are not being met. In fact, evidence from studies in the EU show that women are more likely to start social enterprises than traditional businesses. Combining traditionally male dominated sectors, such as entrepreneurship, and merging it with traditionally female dominated sectors is not only a way of leveling the playing field, but it also serves to cross-germinate between silos and build capacity.

• It is critical to start early to tackle structural barriers.
• Some lessons from our social entrepreneurs working with children and young people show us the need to start early when designing interventions were the outcomes deal with tackling structural discrimination and inequity. Innovations that aim to build capacity and tackle behavioural change at an early age can have a strong impact on changing inequitable patterns.
• Evidence shows that when one invests in behaviour changes at an early age, behavioral patterns have a greater chance of changing, then with later interventions and policy changes.
• Significant gaps in skill-sets, investments and ability to scale up due to structural inequality.
• One major obstacle for women in both starting enterprises, and taking them to scale, is the lack of access to capital. In the US, research shows that women start businesses with roughly half the amount of capital compared to their male counterparts. They receive only 2 percent of venture capital funds, and less than 5 percent of business dollars. The story is much the same across the globe, with biases especially creating challenging situations in emerging economies. It is not only the lack of investment and capital that reinforces structural inequalities, but it limits the possibilities for female-led entrepreneurs to scale up and become successful. All these factors serve to build the case for specific programs and interventions that not only build female capacity, but that stimulate the ecosystem of investors and purchases of services, to make them more diverse and inclusive.

Significant advancements in female empowerment and inclusion have been made over the last years. Advances are evident in numbers of participation, and also in behavioural change. It is critical that we do not lose this momentum especially when factoring in the megatrends that impact us today - such as climate change, inclusion, globalisation, and digitalisation. Advances in technology and new approaches are reinventing our consumption, information and production patterns. With these shifts, it is critical that we maintain a sense of equity in our progress. It is vital for a strong, diverse, equitable and productive society, that we have men and women participating on equal grounds in designing, using and paying for new types of services and goods. Unfortunately, we are not wholly convinced that we are always moving in this direction. Here is where we believe innovation and social entrepreneurship can be a driving force. That is why we have created the program of BRIDGIT – bridging the gender-tech divide, where we aim to scale and knowledge share ten innovations that can be game changing. Even though social change does not happen overnight, we are convinced that social entrepreneurship is an instrument that can speed things up. That is why we are committed to the journey of supporting these entrepreneurs to reach their full potential - to scale up, and to change systems.

Evidence shows that when one invests in behaviour changes at an early age, behavioral patterns have a greater chance of changing, then with later interventions and policy changes.

Sofia Breitholtz is the CEO of Reach for Change, a non-profit organisation that has developed a model to combine entrepreneurship and innovation with a strong engagement for vulnerable children. The organisation identifies and supports ‘Change Leaders’ – local social entrepreneurs with ideas to improve the lives of children and youth on three continents. Sofia has previously worked at Ernst and Young and consulted for companies such as Unilever, and also with development cooperation for the European Union in Southern Africa. She is the former Vice President for the Swedish social enterprise ‘Solvatten’. She is also Vice Chair for the non-profit organisation Project Playground.

4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

1 The British Council (2017), Activist to entrepreneur: the role of social enterprise supporting women’s empowerment
2 The Social Platform (2017), Women social entrepreneurs: a catalyst for gender equality
3 James J Heckman (2012), Promoting Social Mobility, The British Council (2017), Promoting Social Mobility
4 National Women's Business Council (2015), Access to Capital
Chapter 3.

FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY: AN INSPIRATION AND A NECESSITY

The fight for global gender equality is much more than a question of empathy or solidarity with half of the world’s population. It is much more than a question of fairness or rightness. The need for strengthened international commitment on gender equality stems from two facts: Firstly, women’s rights are human rights — empowering women is about the radical notion that women are people. Secondly, gender equality is a necessity for sustainable development and growth, both socially and economically.

Studies show that countries that step up their efforts to improve gender equality, also create more jobs, their GDP per capita increases, and get more apt to adjust to the challenges related to the aging population. The world economy would grow by 26 percent if women and men were equal in working life.

Equality as a driver for economic growth

My grandmother never got the chance to go to school. She was deprived of her fundamental rights because of a medieval and unfair gender order. Every day one hundred thousand girls are born into the same situation as my grandmother. Still today, more than 80 years after my grandmother’s birth, 130 million girls are denied of their right to education. Education is the fastest way to gender equality.

I was 15 years old when I decided to join a political party. I quickly felt at home at the Social Democratic party and its youth organisation SSU. Taking the step into politics was, for me, a choice driven by frustration over the recent developments in international politics and growing global injustice. Truth being told, it was not primarily gender issues that caught my interest. I was convinced that gender equality was already happening in Sweden on
a daily basis. With time, learning more about society and politics, I could see more clearly that we have a long way to go. Gender issues and the struggle for equality suddenly became the issues closest to my heart.

Pursuing a feminist foreign policy
Nonetheless, I am proud of Sweden, without a doubt, and I think that Sweden is a global role model for gender equality. When the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallström, in 2014, declared that Sweden was to pursue a Feminist Foreign Policy, I knew that something important had been set into motion. To quote Margot Wallström: “Ensuring that women and girls can enjoy their fundamental human rights is both an obligation within the framework of our international commitments, and a prerequisite for reaching Sweden’s broader foreign policy goals on peace, and security and sustainable development.”

The reactions were twofold to the decision. Either it was met with scorn and contempt, or it was welcomed and praised. Today, some years later, very few decision-makers show disdain towards our feminist foreign policy. Countries like Canada and France have now actually chosen to follow our example.

The idea of our feminist foreign policy was to make Sweden a leading advocate for gender equality and human rights by applying a systematic gender perspective in every aspect of foreign policy. That includes peace and security efforts. A feminist foreign policy is a realization that gender equality is not an issue besides other issues, it is a rights perspective that must permeate all issues. To counteract the systematic oppression of women is a matter of human responsibility.

As a member of legislative body in Sweden I want Sweden to be a role model to countries worldwide. We have taken the first step toward a foreign policy for the next generation — a generation that will never accept a world order where women are held back and seen as second degree citizens. We have shown that it is possible to modernize foreign policy and to take all aspects of conflict into account. I am sure that women all over the world will be inspired and feel empowered by this.

Rights, representations and resources are the three pillars of the feminist foreign policy. Women and men must be given the same rights. Women should be represented where decisions are made. Gender equality shall be given priority in the allocation of resources in the form of state budgets and aid projects.

A progressive path towards gender equality
Research also shows that gender equality contributes to peace and that peace negotiations where women participated have greater chances of becoming sustainable. Therefore, it is with pride that I can look back at what Sweden has achieved in the last 4 years. We have paved ground for increased female representation in peace processes and legal systems. We have pushed for issues of women, peace and security in the UN Security Council. In 2017, for the first time in history, references to women, peace and security were made in 100 percent of the Security Council’s statements on crisis situations.

We have increased the political and financial support for feminist agents of change, who in the shrinking democratic space are extremely vulnerable. We have also trained female peace negotiators, who participated in the process both in Yemen and in Syria.

In Sweden we have also adopted a new law on sexual consent, today copied by various countries. The threats to gender equality are not only present in countries in development. We live in a time when authoritarian tendencies are growing and where the global democratic space is shrinking. In European countries, such as Poland and Hungary, we see an increase in harassments of journalists, politicians and individuals who are committed to change. We also see new legislation implemented, that restricts fundamental human rights such as freedom of expression and of organization. Women and women’s rights organizations are, as always, the hardest hit.

With threats of rape, harassment and social exclusion, women are silenced. With restrictions on freedom of expression, meeting, and freedom of association feminist activists are muted. In Europe right wing extremists are gaining power. The common denominator for these forces is not only xenophobia, but also the hate towards women and gender equality as an idea. These forces have an obsession with taking control of women’s bodies.
Today we see a global setback for women’s sexual and reproductive rights, including the right to abortion. This happens at the same time as 800 girls and women die every day in complications correlated to pregnancy and childbirth. Uncertain abortions make up a large part of the deaths. Most of them could have been avoided. The world is currently witnessing one of the greatest humanitarian disasters in modern times. In crisis and conflict, teenage pregnancies, child marriage and gender-related violence increase.

Sweden’s voice on the global stage is important, perhaps now more than ever. We have shown that it is possible to create a modern and progressive foreign policy. A foreign policy where we stand up for human rights and international law, even if it costs. I want to continue that path. Sweden is and will continue to be a role model. The fact is that a fair and equitable society provides long-term and sustainable economic growth and strengthens democracy. Investing in women’s development reduces poverty, and builds stronger societies, democracies and economies.

The time for change is now.

“INVESTING IN WOMEN’S DEVELOPMENT REDUCES POVERTY, AND BUILDS STRONGER SOCIETIES, DEMOCRACIES AND ECONOMIES”

Aylin Fazelian is a Swedish politician of the Swedish Social Democratic Party. Since 2018 Aylin is elected as Member of Parliament and is currently one of the youngest MP’s. Aylin is a member of the Committee for Foreign Affairs, member of the Social Democrat Women Association Council ("S-kvinnor") and their spokesperson for international issues. She previously worked for Greenpeace in Gothenburg.
Today, for the first time in human history, more people are living in cities than in rural areas. This development brings new opportunities and challenges for both citizens and decision makers. The situation for girls and young women in cities deserves particular attention. Enabling citizens to be active participants in shaping their city is key to creating safe, sustainable and inclusive cities – which in turn is fundamental to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Recent research by Plan International shows that very few girls living in cities feel safe in public spaces. The number ranged from 3.2 percent in Delhi to 14.6 percent in Hanoi of the cities included in the study. Our research has also confirmed that sexual harassment is the greatest threat to girls’ safety in cities across the world. Ensuring that harassment and violence against girls is not tolerated in public spaces – or indeed in any space – and that perpetrators cannot go on with impunity is vital to improve girls’ sense of safety everywhere.

Influencing decision makers

Girls’ sense of safety is formed by their perception of the infrastructure and society as well as their personal experiences of urban life. Recorded levels of harassment or violence only tell half the story, as girls themselves tell us that violence is so normalised that many incidents are not considered worthy to report. To build safe cities we need to both understand and allow for girls’ experiences to influence decision making relating to urban planning and governance. A safe city for girls is a safe city for everyone.

With this in mind, Plan International works in partnership with girls and boys themselves as well as community leaders, teachers, parents and
CHAPTER 4. SAFER CITIES FOR GIRLS

which aims to also support girls’ activism by arming WOMEN LEADERS – EMPOWERING FUTURE GENERATIONS

and the annual “GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN, DRIVE SOCIAL CHANGE”

HAVE FOUND OTHER WAYS TO DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES, WHO HAVE TRADITIONALLY been traditionally excluded from formal decision-making processes, have found other ways to drive social change – coming together to demand safer, more inclusive spaces through activism. In spite of limited opportunities for participation, girls in cities around the world are rising up and making their voices heard, such as through the One Billion Rising campaign, and the annual Anti-Street Harassment Week where they join forces to speak out against gender inequality. Civil society must harness the force of such mobilisation, amplifying girls’ voices as they call for safer and more inclusive cities at global and local levels.

However, campaigning for their rights by challenging gender norms at a local level can put girls in further danger, with violence and intimidation often used to maintain the communities’ patriarchal order. Hence, civil society plays a key role in supporting girls in their role as activists; potentially providing platforms and connections which will aid them in their fight for girls’ rights and equality as well as holding leaders to account for bringing about lasting change.

“GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN, WHO HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN EXCLUDED FROM FORMAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES, HAVE FOUND OTHER WAYS TO DRIVE SOCIAL CHANGE”

Demanding change through activism

The world is witnessing a surge in the youth population. Children and young people under age 25 now account for 42 percent of the global population. The majority is living in developing regions. Today’s young people are globally connected, providing new opportunities for them to build communities, launch worldwide movements and engage with political discourses.

However, young people believe that their voice is not being listened to: 55.9 percent of respondents in a recent global study disagreed with the statement “in my country, young people’s views are considered before important decisions are taken”.

Girls and young women, who have traditionally been excluded from formal decision-making processes, have found other ways to drive social change – coming together to demand safer, more inclusive spaces through activism. In spite of limited opportunities for participation, girls in cities around the world are rising up and making their voices heard, such as through the One Billion Rising campaign, and the annual Anti-Street Harassment Week where they join forces to speak out against gender inequality. Civil society must harness the force of such mobilisation, amplifying girls’ voices as they call for safer and more inclusive cities at global and local levels.

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How to work alongside girls as allies

Plan International runs the Safer Cities for Girls programme which aims to create safe and inclusive urban spaces, empower girls and young women and challenge harmful gender norms. Through this programme, girls are able to express their needs and opinions regarding their safety in cities and identify issues which put them at risk. In this way, girls are able to shape our programmes in their communities so they have a meaningful impact on their lives and ability to realise their rights; they become agents of change, not passive beneficiaries.

The Safer Cities for Girls programme also supports girls’ activism by arming them with the tools they need to bring about change. For instance, having identified sexual harassment as the greatest threat to girls’ safety in cities across the world, Plan International is working alongside girls to raise awareness of the issue at the local level. Girls spoke of the harassment they experience on public transport, and are now running their own campaigns to tackle this issue while putting pressure on duty-bearers to ensure local policies protect girls’ safety. In Hanoi, for example, girls have produced comic books to bring the issue of harassment on buses to the public’s attention and provide tips for other girls on how to stay safe on urban transport.

In Delhi, Plan International supported girls to lead Girls’ Safety Walks to identify parts of the city which threaten their safety, and reclaim these spaces by putting pressure on their communities to make them safe and inclusive. Shopkeepers in the city now display a sign to show that their shop is a safe space for girls, as attested by girls themselves. Other changes being implemented in urban settings as a result of this girl-led programme include street lights being installed, public parks being cleaned up, and public toilets being properly maintained.

To support the girl-led movement for girls’ safety in cities, Plan International is also training public transport staff on how to prevent and respond to incidents of harassment or violence against girls. Bus drivers and ticket collectors are confronted and made aware of the consequences of gender inequality, harmful gender norms and the threats that girls face to their safety when they are in public spaces and using public transport. Alongside this, we also run workshops which educate community members on how to promote gender equality locally. Plan International is supporting boys and young men too, teaching them about harmful gender norms so they can become champions of girls’ rights and gender equality amongst their peers.
Stamping out the root causes of gender inequality

However, legislation will only get us so far. To create lasting change for girls, governments must commit to tackling the root causes of gender inequality. They must work with people at all levels of society, from civil society, NGOs, UN agencies and the media to community organisations, teachers, religious figures, as well as children and young people to tackle harmful gender norms that excuse violence and discrimination of girls and women. Only through meaningful and sustained participation from all these actors, especially girls themselves, can we build safe and inclusive cities for girls.

Involving girls in urban planning and governance

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development commits us to achieving gender equality and sustainable cities and communities by 2030. We cannot do this, nor fulfill the New Urban Agenda, without taking the needs and rights of girls into account in decision-making processes. Governments must therefore take a gender-sensitive approach to implementing the 2030 Agenda which allows space for meaningful youth participation. They should engage with youth- and women-led civil society organisations, as well as decision-making bodies in urban planning and governance, to ensure that cities across the world are safe places for girls to live; free from gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and violence.

To demonstrate their commitment to promoting girls’ safety in urban settings, national and municipal governments should undertake gender-responsive reviews of laws and policies pertaining to urban planning, governance and processes. They must allocate sufficient budget at the national and local level to ensure gender-responsive laws and policies are then fully implemented.

Additionally, it is vital that accurate data – aggregated by intersectional categories including gender and age – are collected, standardised and made accessible. Only then can we properly track our progress towards creating cities and communities in which girls are safe and able to realise their rights.

Governments should monitor all forms of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and violence, as well as girls’ perceptions of their own safety in urban settings.

With this data and meaningful participation from girls themselves, governments should put effective legislation in place to ensure girls’ safety and inclusion, criminalising all forms of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment. This legislation must be fully enforced, with perpetrators being held to account and incidents properly recorded. In addition, gender-sensitive and child-friendly reporting mechanisms and support services should be put in place to ensure that survivors of gender-based discrimination, harassment or violence are able to access appropriate support and safeguarding.

“GOVERNMENTS SHOULD MONITOR ALL FORMS OF GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, AND VIOLENCE”

Mariann Eriksson is the Director-General for Plan International Sweden since 2016. Since 2017 she is also the global Chair for Plan International’s 22 national offices. Plan International works to strengthen children’s rights and to ensure that girls’ equal terms are respected. ‘Girls get equal’ is an international movement and campaign by Plan International to globally end violence and discrimination against girls. International Day of the Girl Child was also instituted on the initiative of Plan International. Mariann has a long career in both business and non-profit and is an experienced leader. She previously served as Marketing Director at WWF Sweden.

5.2. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

Plan International (2013), Adolescent Girls’ Views on Safety in Cities

World Economic Forum, Global Shapers Survey 2017
Three quarters of the world’s poorest people live in lower middle-income countries, often without social security or adequate living conditions. Poverty and vulnerability is increasing within many countries as a result of unequal distribution of resources. Young women and girls are particularly affected by this inequality and experience oppression, lack of opportunities and social exclusion as a result. As the world is predominantly urban, poverty is becoming an increasingly urban phenomenon. More than 1 billion people live in low-income informal settlements, and inequalities are increasing the fastest in cities.

#UrbanGirlsMovement began with the conviction that “if we plan a city for girls, it will work for everyone”. The initiative maps good examples, stories, and lessons learned of gendered urban planning from multi-stakeholders globally. It specifically highlights ongoing initiatives and focuses on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the local level. In collaboration with a range of organisations, the purpose is to underline global pro-poor urban development initiatives targeting young women and girls in low-income areas in rapidly urbanizing cities, as well as to develop methods for local and urban development that can be applicable globally.

In the long-run, #UrbanGirlsMovement aims to contribute to improving the living conditions for young women and girls in vulnerable urban areas through highlighting participatory design and public space planning; promoting public health, sanitation, the right and access to education and employment, and security.

In order to fulfil the SDGs, the interlinkages and integrated nature of the goals and targets are crucial. In the first global mapping of good examples,
In line with implementing the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda, the project has directly or indirectly shown the local application of particularly SDG 3, 5, 10, 11, 16 and 17. The initiative also contributes to the development of new methods for local urban development and planning that promote safe and productive public spaces, and that can be applicable in a Swedish low-income area, as well as informal urban settlements globally. The ultimate goal is to propose new urban development methods for feminist urban planning to local municipal leaders and actors that serve the local implementation of the SDGs. This provides an opportunity for #UrbanGirlsMovement to provide policy recommendations to the Swedish Government on how to turn a Feminist Foreign Policy into practice and to identify new priorities for Swedish development cooperation, targeting young women and girls in vulnerable urban areas.

Lessons learned and recommendations

By mapping the local work of our partnering organisations we have managed to strengthen our belief, “plan the city for girls and it will work for everyone”. A city for everyone is a sustainable city, where both girls and boys can thrive and develop. But to get there we need to include everyone in the process. Many initiatives do not particularly target young women and girls, but it has been noticed that this group tend to, in a greater extent than men, take advantage of the opportunities provided. Women also often tend to carefully safeguard the longevity of the project or infrastructure put in place.

So, how should a city be planned in order to benefit the most vulnerable populations? Throughout our initiative we have identified a set of guidelines, particularly important for including young women and girls in the public space. According to our research a place that works well for girls usually embody the following features:

- **Good footpaths and public mobility.** A majority of the population does not own a car, but a majority of public space is taken up by roads. We need to widen sidewalks and make roads into walkable streets, making it possible to push a stroller, a wheelchair, or walk without having to looking down to watch your steps.
• **Places for women, children, and elderly to loiter.** Benches ought to be facing each other, rather than side-by-side, to make it easier for people to sit and have conversations. Our partners working in informal settlements have shared that if there are no benches, women wearing skirts or dresses will not sit down, nor will they stay out to loiter for a longer time. As squatting is more common among men, the city will automatically more accessible to them.

• **Good lighting and visibility is important in order to make a place less threatening during the dark hours of the day, for everyone.** A city where women cannot access the public space at all hours of the day is not an equal city. By making elements in the cityscape multi-functional and flexible, the space attracts different audiences at different times of the day.

• **Safety and presence of authorities contribute to the conception of safety.** The feeling that all activities carried out in a public place are visible often has the potential of increasing the feeling of safety.

• **Open access spaces.** Semi-public or semi-private spaces, such as parks, museums or restaurant terraces that require a free, systematically exclude the poorer part of the population.

• **Human-scale design.** Human-scale, well-adapted design and urban form. A place that is beautiful and differs in design from the majority of the city is less likely to get vandalized and will help strengthening the conception of safety.

• **Flexible, multi-purpose, and multi-functional elements.** For example, a staircase, a place to walk, to sit, a meeting place, a training venue, a playground, or a stage for performances. One element must meet several purposes and functions as it attracts different groups of people at different times of the day. The more flexible elements are, the more sustainable a place is.

• **Sufficient water and sanitation infrastructure.** Women are more vulnerable than men to insufficient or lack of toilets and sanitation facilities. In informal settlements the community often share toilets. These, as well as public toilets in high-income areas, must be well lit, clean, and secure.

• **Mixed-use services.** Girls and women are, to a larger extent than boys and men, in need of the proximity of services. Regrouping of various services or elements with multi-functions and mixed-use such as multi-service shops, or community centers that particularly benefit girls and women.

Finding solutions that have a positive impact on making cities more inclusive and equal should be a top priority, always putting people at the centre. To summarise, a city is balanced when there is space for all people to live, work, and play in equal measure.

**Elin Andersdotter Fabre** is the Programme Director for the Sustainable Cities Programme at the think tank Global Utmaning. She has a broad experience of working with various development issues - democracy, human rights, gender equality and security from international organisations, government institutions and civil society. Elin has previously worked with policy development and advocacy leading up to the UN 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals and the Habitat III New Urban Agenda. Her academic background is in political science with degrees from Stockholm University, Sciences Po Paris and King’s College London.

**Victoria Escobar** is an entrepreneur and social activist, Co-founder and Director of Operations of Changers Hub – an innovative entrepreneur hub with the ambition to create equal opportunities for young entrepreneurs in Sweden. Changers Hub has over 1500 members and two locations in Stockholm. The aim is to democratise success and enable young people in marginalised areas to succeed with their ideas. Victoria has an academic background in intercultural pedagogy from Södertörn University College, and has worked with youths and local development in urban areas in Stockholm since she was 15 years old.
Today, we only have 11 years left to implement the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. Private sector services, products and developments are crucial in order to succeed. However, for innovative organizations committed to diversity, equality and sustainability to grow, they need investors who cherish sustainability and realize the long-term profitability of such values. This requires a radical shift in the organization of investment firms. If we are to find and fund the great solutions-providers of tomorrow, we urgently need more women in leadership and investment positions in today’s venture capital and private equity firms.

Unequal representation

For the private sector to step up and implement the 2030 Agenda, the flow of investment capital needs to shift away from short-term profits and risk-mitigation to more on long-term profitability and innovations supporting sustainable development. Including women in leadership and investment positions are key to making this transition possible. Without greater gender diversity in the investment community, investors will fail to identify and see potential in innovations and solutions.

The investment community is extremely homogenous and male-dominated. It has been spared the same level of gender scrutiny as other related sectors such as business and politics. So, while equal representation and gender diversity in boards of companies and organizations has been the focus and Swedish listed companies have 40 percent women in boards, investment firms do not even have a tenth of the percentage of women in board positions.
The State of European Tech survey illustrated the gravity of the problem. 93 percent of all funds raised by European venture capital backed companies went to all-male founding teams in 2018. This highlights that it is only when investments firms themselves are gender equal and representative of society at large, that they will be able to truly work for positive change in the business community by finding and funding the great solutions-providers of tomorrow.

Opportunities for diversity and equality

The importance of investments and the investment community are often overlooked when looking for drivers of change for greater gender equality and diversity. It is only when we follow the flow of money, that we begin to understand that investors sometime are the very reason why diversity and gender equality are marginalized issues in some companies. By acknowledging the power of investments that today reinforces gender inequalities, we can turn this power around and use it to put pressure and promote diversity and equality in companies, thus society at large.

Opportunities for greater gender diversity and equality comes when investment firms put pressure on companies that are looking for investments, and make gender equality and diversity a precondition. Making diverse gender conscious investments is a pathway to sustainable development, and it is proven to increase performance, creativity and profitability. Diversity, inclusion and equality are core values for organizations looking to develop creative, innovative and profitable products and solutions to some of the great challenges facing the world today.

Diversity and inclusion is also in the world’s business plan: The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While it traditionally has been the responsibility of states to ensure a sustainable development, it is now widely acknowledged that companies really are in the forefront driving development of products, services and solutions needed to address these challenges.

We firmly believe that purpose-driven organizations, that relate their model of operation to sustainability and strives for equality and diversity, will see growth opportunities that are stronger and more long-term than those

Unbalanced investment community

A survey, conducted by Albright, illustrates that among Swedish private equity firms, only 3 percent of listed partners and 14 percent of investors are women. Sadly, it is difficult to look abroad for good examples. Even if some investors stand out from the mass driving a progressive agenda for gender equality and diversity, they remain marginal in an otherwise globally male-dominated sector. Figures from Preqin also show that private equity firms have the lowest percentage of female employees of any asset class, and no improvements have been made since 2017. For the glass ceiling to be shattered, we need to change the underlying system of the investment community and redefine the qualifications needed to reach senior positions. Today the whole investment community including expectations, work situation and behaviour, has been designed by men, for men. This is keeping women out of the industry.

This diversity and gender unbalance in the investment community has far-reaching consequences for the sustainability and prosperity of companies. And for society at large. We need innovative and creative companies that drive positive change and develop innovations that accelerate the transition to more sustainable societies. This requires different perspectives and gender balance.

Tracing how investors invest point to an unconscious biased. Male-dominated investment firms favour male dominated businesses. Many companies brought up by venture capital firms and on the rise in Sweden are often less gender equal or have a more humongous board, than larger and older, established, companies that operate more independently from investors. How can it be that the support of mainstream investment firms also causes a backlash in diversity and gender equality?

As investors we tend to look for what we are familiar with and what we recognize. Unfortunately, as the stage is set today, this behaviour reinforces male-dominance and hinders the pursuit for diversity and equality.
based on other, more traditional, delivery models. Recent research shows that companies striving for gender equality and diversity perform better financially. Inclusive workplaces are proven to attract and retain the brightest talent, as well as demonstrate improved channels of communication and improved social capital.1

**The importance of role models**

We are seeing a shift where equal representation and diversity is increasingly discussed among the investment community at large and companies and investors are addressing the unbalance. However, the investment community in Sweden, as well as globally, is still very male-dominated. Therefore, rather than highlighting single companies or organizations as good examples we would like to point to what individuals spearheading the development for more gender diversity are doing, different initiatives and good practices that are appearing in the investment community to counteract gender unbalance in the community.

Seeing is believing. Role models are one of the most important factors for women looking to become involved in the investment community. It is only when you have successful examples of female investors that you, yourself, dare to believe that it is possible to become an investor, regardless your gender. Role models leading the way and inspiring others. Examples of some of the powerful women we hold as role models include Arlan Hamilton. She was the first black, gay woman to break into the venture capital world and only invest in companies led by minorities and other underrepresented groups. Arlan has proven the untapped potential and powerful market opportunities that comes from investing in women, people of colour and LGBTQ founders.

Similarly, Caroline Berg, a Swedish power investor has pioneered long-term investments combining a focus on profitability and growth with requirements of equal representation in invested company boards. She argues that the leadership of companies must reflect their customer base.

Finally, Christine Lagarde, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), is an important role model who proved that it is possible to drive change through a platform focused on money, power and investments. During her leadership, the IMF has begun to realize that inclusion of women is one of the most important areas for positive development. Looking beyond the field of investments to other women who use their power and influence to drive positive change and who inspire us are Melinda Gates, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Angela Merkel.

Role models are only a means to attract interest and not enough to guarantee the inclusion of more women in investment firms. The companies must become an attractive employer and realize the sustainability and profitability of hiring people not normally considered for having the right qualifications. The Angel program by Atomico is one such example of how firms themselves can proactively attract new talents with diverse backgrounds. In the program, 12 people are selected to participate, and 8 of 12 participants are women, showing that talents with non-traditional qualifications find new investment possibilities the company otherwise wouldn’t have considered.

The community is starting to realize and acknowledge the difficulty of planning for work when you also have children. Companies with family friendly policies with extended maternity leave and emergency child-care solutions are signs of the shifting norm. Norms and expectations about qualifications and experience when recruiting new talent also needs to change. When recruiting, one way to move beyond the wide-spread biased of looking for what is already familiar is to bypass the requirement of having done an exit, which excludes candidates who haven’t previously had access to investment capital. Another practice is to anonymize the applications and their companies, focusing instead on their merits and results. When recruiting, using the GAP analysis is an effective tool to define what kind of competence really is needed for the firm to grow. This is part of a larger unconscious biased training that is urgently needed for everyone to change the male dominated culture and norms. Firms should also set clear goals about gender distribution in the recruitment process. Ultimately, we need to develop more standardized methods to analyze and evaluate gender diversity in investment firms and companies. We need to bring to the table a substation body of information about the state of equality before making investments decisions.

**Sweden can lead by example**

Sweden should step up and act as a leader for diversified and gender equal investment policies, both nationally and internationally. Sweden is considered to be one of the countries in the best position to deliver on the 2030...
Agenda and the SDGs, including the Climate Agreement (COP21) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA). However, one area where Sweden falls behind is in the realms of investments. Figures from Ownershift shows that only 4 percent of shares in Sweden are held by women. To lead by example, Sweden must to set its own house in order before conditioning development aid and investments abroad. How can a feminist foreign investment policy hold any legitimacy abroad if we have not yet delivered on our national goals of sustainable and gender equal investments?

The Swedish public pension funds (AP-funds) and other government owned investment capital need to advance their commitments for diversity and equality as many of them suffer from the same gender unbalance as the investment community at large. They too are male-dominated concentrating most of their investments in traditional delivery models. We cannot expect private equity and venture capital firms to take the necessary steps to advance their ability to acknowledge new and greater opportunities in sustainability and diversity, if public pension funds do not focus on this as well. The Swedish government needs to demand that the Swedish AP-funds focus their investments on sustainability in order to consider diversity and equality as a precondition for investments. Once we have developed models and systems to ensure sustainable and gender equal investments, then Sweden, being one of the world’s largest donors of development aid, could advocate more effectively for greater equality in the international investment community.

Anna Ryott is Chair of Board at Summa Equity. Anna is also on the board of Norsken Foundation, Axel Johnson AB and UNF, Global Entrepreneurs Council. Recently Anna worked as deputy CEO at Norsken Foundation. Previous to that she was CEO of Swedfund – the Swedish development finance institution. Anna has also worked as Secretary-General of SOS Children’s Villages and as a Management Consultant at McKinsey. In 2018, Anna was named Sweden’s Most Powerful Female Change Maker by Veckans Affärer and 2014 she was awarded with HM Konungens Medal for “Significant contributions to Swedish society and industry”.

Sophia Bendz is a Partner at Atomico, one of the biggest funds in Europe, where she’s responsible for sourcing in the Nordic region and heading up the Atomico Angel Program. She also advises founders on communications and marketing strategy and when scaling their brand. Sophia was the Global Marketing Director at Spotify from 2007-2014. Today, she is an full time investor and advisor to startups, and serves as a Board Director at The Ink Factory, Viktor Rydberg School Foundation and non-profit organization Race for the Baltic and Orten.is. She is also an active angel investor and has invested in startup’s such as Clue, Eastnine, O-school, Omnisus, Karma, Hedvig and Sana Labs.
Chapter 7.

DRIVERS FOR CHANGE IN THE TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

The technology industry today is not a place in which everyone can thrive and succeed. This is one of the most significant challenges we face. Many actors included in innovation systems work from outdated guidelines and support systems; going from business concept to start developing an idea, to product development to commercializing, and eventually raising capital. The process attracts more men than women as the operating conditions remain unfavourable to women. For example, most support agencies for start-ups are only available during daytime hours, the process quickly becomes very technic heavy, which creates bad odds for women to move forward with their ideas.

The start-up scene consists of approximately 80 percent men. For those who raise capital, the figures are similar, if not higher. This is the current situation in Sweden, as well as globally. Unfortunately, there are not many countries that can provide impressive examples. Even if Sweden is at the forefront of gender equality, the Swedish start-up scene is far from equal. It is not designed to include women nor to promote diversity. However, through a systematic approach, the playing field can be redesigned to attract more women, and most importantly, make women stay, evolve and provide the tools for progress. A restructuring of the entire start-up process is needed in order to include women and increase diversity.

Excluded from the start-up scene

Entrepreneurship is commonly associated with elitism. From a broader perspective, it is not designed to include women, people living in vulnerable areas, or people of a different ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds. Entrepreneurship is more favourable to people with large social networks,
Work-life balance

The main challenge for girls and young women are structural issues. It actually stems from gender norms in preschool, what is considered to be girlish and boyish. Unfortunately, this follow both men and women throughout their life, and have an impact on how they perceive themselves and their limitations. Companies have a responsibility to work more with changing attitudes and creating better conditions for future generations. We will most certainly not see an equal industry any time soon. According to a recent report it will take 108 years to reach global gender parity. However, we need collectively work harder to support the women in the industry, to attract more women, and to ensure that women want to stay.

From my experience, women who apply for jobs in the Tech industry, often have more prominent academic qualifications and can show better results than many men applying. Despite this, the industry is heavily skewed and male dominated. One of the reasons is the above mentioned large drop-out of women, after only a few years of work. Usually, when women in their thirties have their first child, a leading position becomes difficult. There is another large drop-out when women tend to have a second child. This creates obvious dilemmas for their future careers, however it is rarely spoken of.

I have many successful friends. I read about them in newspapers, about their multimillion companies. However, many of them have one common denominator – they are separated or divorced from their partner. These friends work in different industries, but they portray the same picture with difficulties balancing work and family which affect women to a larger extent. Once a woman leaves the industry, it is hard to get back in, and more so, to get a leading position. At the same time, women in leading positions are often considered as threats.

Success factors in leadership

My own journey has not been easy all the way. I am usually called “manly” because I am very straightforward and actionable. One of my primary success factors has been that I always had a clear vision, I am fearless,
To day we spend on average 3–4 years in the same workplace, compared to previous generations that could spend over 30–40 years in the same workplace. By 2020, we are expected to spend approximately 1–2 years at a workplace. Again, how will this impact the labour market and the demands on the employees? When jobs are replaced with technology, it means people have to reinvent and re-evaluate their qualifications, over and over again. Losing one’s job can lead to breakdowns, and in worse cases long-term sick leaves and permanent depression because their entire identity was connected to their profession. But what happens to a person when companies must let go of larger parts of their workforce and one will need to change work 10–20 times during their working life? New technologies place large demands on both societies and individuals. Capacity building and refining soft-valued skills are part of the solution, as well as a changed mind-set.

What can be done?

Both education and work experience is becoming increasingly secondary. In order to attract girls and young women, also from different socio-economic backgrounds, the industry must value other qualities. Even more decisive can be the mind-set, attitude, and the passion that people have. But these qualities rarely stand out in a resume. Daring to bring in people with little to no experience, as long as they have the passion, can be the best recruitment. Another recommendation for young people searching for work, is to stay informed and updated on current events; subscribing to several newspapers, undertaking internships in newly established start-ups, and working on developing new skills, including soft-valued skills.

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“WHEN JOBS ARE REPLACED WITH TECHNOLOGY, IT MEANS PEOPLE HAVE TO REINVENT AND RE-EVALUATE THEIR QUALIFICATIONS, OVER AND OVER AGAIN”

I work very persistently and I have set up goals. I do not take a “no” for an answer, and if I have decided on something then it will be so. If I get a “no”, I will find another way of getting there. Such traits are in my DNA.

I also care a lot about my colleagues, and fellow human beings. I usually manage to bring people together and run big projects because people want to work with me. I use the collective intelligence and always enter a project with the attitude that “let’s do this together”, and that one opinion is not more important than another. My leadership is value-driven but I would never have succeeded if I did not dare to fail. I have tested and failed many times, however I am obsessed with delivering on my vision. Key is to be able to communicate that vision and create commitment.

By 2025, 47 percent of all professions in the US are expected to disappear. The amount of pressure this will place on the labour market and on individuals is immense. Young people need to equip themselves with particularly soft-valued skills in order to stay relevant. Individuals will need to distinguish themselves from technology that will replace large parts of their work. Hence, soft-valued skills such as agility, mobility, flexibility, empathy and emotional intelligence, and creativity will be increasingly important.

Ishtar Touailat runs the Artificial Intelligence Incubator at IT Company Tieto. Ishtar is an awarded entrepreneur and woman in tech that has made an impact on business in Sweden. Her latest movement, FUTURISTAS, was created from the mission to equal the playing field of business by supplying women of all backgrounds with knowledge from the forefront of tech, entrepreneurship and business disruption. Ishtar has been awarded Sweden’s Most Powerful Business Woman 2019, Future Female Leader of the Year 2018, Sweden’s Super Talent 2017, and IT Woman of the Year 2016.
Expanding and securing freedom of speech and freedom of expression for both women and men is a key issue for democracy and sustainable development. Media plays an important role when societies advance gender equality and could speed up change so that everyone can live their rights. Media needs to be part of the equation, both in terms of presence, voice and use.

News has an agenda-setting function within society. Whatever is shown on the news is considered important. Wherever we go we are surrounded by images and stories that give us ideas and dreams, evoke hope and despair. We live in a mediatised world which makes it important to reflect on media ownership as well as who has access to media; who’s voice is heard and what stories are told?

News is about choices. Every reporter knows this, but it needs to be repeated. There is a persistent male dominance in the news with a slow progress towards gender balance. Often, editors do not seem to recognise women’s actions as newsworthy. The female role within news is limited, few are over 50 years old and their function is often stereotyped. Research indicates that women tend to be more visible in advertising and fiction, with a further risk of being stereotyped when beauty and youth is valued as their most important assets. These gender stereotypes are limiting for everyone, at the risk of fuelling prejudice and discrimination.

Section J is still important

The role of the media is crucial to reach gender equality. In the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, CEDAW, (the most ratified of all UN conventions), gender stereotypes are recognised as obstacles for gender equality. In 1995 the UN member states agreed
on the Beijing Platform for Action, explicitly pointing out media as one of twelve areas where action needs to be taken seriously if we are to achieve gender equality. Section J, Women and the Media, has two strategic objectives; to increase women’s access and participation media and to promote a non-stereotyped portrayal of women in media. These objectives are still valid yet more work needs to be done to walk-the-talk.

It is paramount in the UN Global Agenda for Sustainable Development, the 2030 Agenda, that the Beijing Platform for Action is reaffirmed (paragraph 11). The agenda emphasises the fundamental importance of achieving gender equality (SDG5), in order to realise the remaining SDGs: The achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities (paragraph 20). Despite this, only one target on gender equality comes close to addressing the media, 5.b: Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications. To measure potential improvements in regards to this target, there is still only one valid indicator: Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex. So how do we know if there is progress?

Luckily, the global community of researchers and activists have provided some key figures. Every five years since 1995, the Global Media Monitoring Project publishes the report Who Makes the News. The project is a quinquennial study where volunteers around the world monitor their national news sources for one day. The latest report from 2015 reveals that in the global news flow, a mere 24 percent of the reported subjects are about women and that the female reporters constitutes 37 percent. The report also shows that only 13 percent of the news from conflict areas involve women. This means that we get a skewed view of the world, where women’s lives and experiences are not considered newsworthy.

The key to gender balance

In general, Swedish newsrooms perform better than the global average, with women occurring in 31 percent of the news. Evidently, it seems to be really easy to achieve a gender balanced news coverage, if you put your mind to it. At the newsroom of the Swedish public service television company in Umeå, they have been monitoring the gender ratio in their broadcasted news for over 20 years. Due to the gender awareness and the ambition to level inequalities, they have achieved a 50/50 gender balance three years in a row. The key to success seems to be to create routines, do daily counting and make it a leadership matter. (This and other Nordic examples from journalism, film, gaming and advertising can be found in the anthology Making change. Nordic Examples of Working Towards Gender Equality in the Media.)

Since 2015, several newsrooms in Sweden use algorithms to check their online performance in terms of men and women, and since 2018 there are also newsrooms who deliver monthly reports to the journalists on the ratio of male and female sources in their production. Yet, there are Swedish newsrooms that have a profound male dominance in the news, that’s why the national average comes down to 31 percent women in Swedish news, a level that has been more or less consistent for the last 20 years. Change is possible but why are things happening so slowly? One explanation on the global level may be that the 100 largest international media corporations are dominated by men. Thirty corporations have no women whatsoever in their top management. In Sweden, one explanation can also be found in the long tradition of freedom of expression, with free, transparent and diverse media. There is a strong reluctance (and rightly so) for the State to interfere with the media industry as this could be considered as a kind of censorship. Self-regulation of the media is a strong tradition, when efforts have been made to address and regulate the lack of gender equality in the media there have been protests, both from the industry and politicians. That is why it is important for the media corporations and media educators to consider their role for sustainable development. Empowering women and girls in and though the media could be a way forward. For academia it is about providing research and new knowledge.

There is a lack of global, comparable and consistent statistics about the media sector. According to UNESCO only 15 percent of the UN member states provide sex-disaggregated data on the media. As mentioned earlier, the existing data on news media have mostly been collected by efforts from...
civil society, activists and researchers in joint action, such as the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) and the International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF) mapping of newsrooms. In 2013, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) also did the first EU Beijing Platform for Action follow-up of gender equality in decision-making media organisations.

Sweden can lead the way

The Swedish Research Council founded an international media research project, Comparing Gender and Media Equality Across the Globe that has created an open-access dataset to be launched in 2019. Existing data from GMMP, IWMF and EIGE is curated and quality checked so that it can be used together with other available global statistics. This opens up for a multidimensional approach, involving systematic, empirical analysis in order to understand qualities, causes and consequences of media and gender equality. The dataset offers opportunities for scholars around the world to do their own analysis and then to go beyond the numbers. However, future data collection about the media is crucial, especially from countries that are not part of any data collection at all on gender equality. Still, many countries do not have the capacity or will to take part in this data collection. Hence, it is important to support efforts like the Global Media Monitoring Project and encourage more countries to get involved and create stable infrastructures for data collection.

There are also examples of innovative collaborations. The EU Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme supports AGEMI, Advancing Gender Equality in the Media Industries. The project is aiming to bridge academia and the media industries with a learning platform, a resource bank and encounters between students and media representatives.

Freedom of speech and gender equality are interconnected and you cannot have one without the other in a sustainable world. Maybe we do not need to create new policies, much is gained if we just follow and monitor the commitment to CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action so that we can expand freedom of expression to include women.

Maria Edström is an Associate professor at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, University of Gothenburg. Her main research interest is gender, representation, and freedom of expression. She is involved in the research project Comparing Gender and Media Equality across the Globe and in the research centre AgeCap - Centre for Ageing and Health, both at the University of Gothenburg. In 2018 Maria Edström was an official delegate for the Swedish Government to the sixty-second session of the UN Commission of the Status of women. She is also an everyday biker and a certified Iyengar yoga teacher, introductory level II.
Today, the vast majority of venture capital is held by men, and goes to companies started by men. Time has shown a positive change for women entrepreneurs, and there are currently specific investments allocated to companies with a gender balance or founded by women. This chapter will highlight the situation for women, which is far from well-balanced, showcase good examples of a changing investment climate and address how entrepreneurship can become more attractive for young women.

In societies where women face obstacles in receiving funding to start up innovative companies due of their gender, will lose in the new economy, driven by innovations. The best business concepts are difficult to find. As a consequence, there are strong economic reasons for a thorough selection process to finding them. This process must be conducted among 100 percent of the potentials, not only 50 percent of them that are men. Hence, a well-functioning supply of capital to all skillful and talented entrepreneurs – women and men – is crucial for a country’s economic policy.

Women are more prone to start companies than men, which makes it eccentric that over 98 percent of all venture capital goes to companies founded by men. As authors of this chapter, and as entrepreneurs and investors, we need to ask ourselves, what kind of measures are needed to change these statistics and how we can make more capital available to young women, in order to stop history from repeating itself?

Female founders encourage other women

Recently, the Swedish CEO of Danske Bank, Berit Behring, stated that one of the biggest issues in Sweden regarding entrepreneurship is that so few women start companies. Berit Behring argues that by encouraging more
investment boutique bank that helps tech companies match with relevant investors. The four founders of Qalora; Simon Lidén, Oscar Hentschel, Camilla Lundin and Vendela Lillestroem, all worked at different startups during their time at Stockholm School of Economics. They soon realized how hard it was to raise money and decided to start a middle hand, helping companies with the process of meeting the right investor while letting the startups focus on their core business. To keep the quality of the startups high, Qalora Capital have rigorous requirements on the companies that they work with and only introduce the best ones to their investor network. When looking back at 2018, they found that 50 percent of the capital allocated from their investor network went to companies with female founders. This was not part of a specific strategy but happened when Qalora Capital helped only the best startups. Another example is Katapult Accelerator, a Norwegian incubator program for startups, that was just awarded a price as the best accelerator program in Norway by Nordic Startup Awards. Every year over 1500 startups apply to their program. Last year only 36 were accepted. Of these 36 companies, 40 percent had female founders. Both Qalora Capital and Katapult are new players in the field but tell a narrative of a new era. Even though we are still facing a lot of challenges in making more capital available to young women, we are at least starting to see some positive results.

While making more capital available to young women is important, we also need to, as Berit Behring argues, make entrepreneurship more attractive for women and encourage them to dream bigger. One way to do that is mentoring young women and making them see that they do not only have the same rights as men, but they also have the same possibilities for success. The entrepreneur, as a long-term and sustainable business maker, represents a special value to society in today’s economy, so often characterized by short-term thinking. This is an additional reason for removing obstacles to female entrepreneurship: to widen the group of entrepreneurs as a whole in society.

How come that 98 percent of all venture capital is still allocated to companies run only by men? A big part of the problem could be the fact that, still today, men hold the majority of the venture capital. When an entrepreneur identifies a problem to solve and creates a product, the next step is to try and sell the idea to a potential investor. Investors tend to look for ideas, companies and business models that they understand. If investor cannot understand the problem in the first place, they are unlikely to invest. When talking about the fact that male rather than female entrepreneurs get more venture capital or that men tend to get promoted faster or get offers to join the board of directors in a specific company, we often call it an issue of equality or a matter of human rights. But we need to look further. This is actually not only a question of rights but as much a question of economics – if not more. Study after study shows that there is a strong correlation between organisations with diverse teams and organisations with higher returns. So how come so many investors tend to take more risk than needed?

Investing for the future
When looking at these numbers it is easy to feel a bit of despair. What is worth fighting for if so little change comes in return? While insuring the problem itself is important, we should also acknowledge investors and VC-firms that have taken a step in the right direction. Qalora Capital is an investment boutique bank that helps tech companies match with relevant investors. The four founders of Qalora; Simon Lidén, Oscar Hentschel, Camilla Lundin and Vendela Lillestroem, all worked at different startups during their time at Stockholm School of Economics. They soon realized how hard it was to raise money and decided to start a middle hand, helping companies with the process of meeting the right investor while letting the startups focus on their core business. To keep the quality of the startups high, Qalora Capital have rigorous requirements on the companies that they work with and only introduce the best ones to their investor network. When looking back at 2018, they found that 50 percent of the capital allocated from their investor network went to companies with female founders. This was not part of a specific strategy but happened when Qalora Capital helped only the best startups. Another example is Katapult Accelerator, a Norwegian incubator program for startups, that was just awarded a price as the best accelerator program in Norway by Nordic Startup Awards. Every year over 1500 startups apply to their program. Last year only 36 were accepted. Of these 36 companies, 40 percent had female founders. Both Qalora Capital and Katapult are new players in the field but tell a narrative of a new era. Even though we are still facing a lot of challenges in making more capital available to young women, we are at least starting to see some positive results.

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8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.

Catharina Nystedt Ringborg is an experienced energy entrepreneur and investor. She has a long standing managerial background in the energy and water industry in Sweden, Switzerland and France. (AGA, Alstom, Fläkt, ABB, Swedish Water Dex.) She served on many boards and as advisor in listed and unlisted companies in the energy industry in Sweden, Norway and France. She was member of the environmental advisory board to the Swedish government, member of the board of the Swedish Broad Casting Corporation, co-founder of the North African Chamber of Commerce in Stockholm.

Today she runs a wholly owned family office in Stockholm, investing only in sustainability, often in cutting edge technologies in early phase. She is co-owner and board member in Tracy of Sweden, (digitalization of the forest flow and certification of origin), Solarus Sunpower BV, the Netherlands, (solar based CHP), Rewood AB, (purchase and sales of raw material to the power, heat, pulp and paper, and sawmill industries), Teraloop OY, Finland, (energy storage), Sustainable Energy Angels, (energy investments), Sensenode AB, (energy intelligence). She is advisor to the IEA in Paris (International Energy Agency) on renewable energy and to the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the UNGCF (United Nations Global Climate Fund). She is also vice chair of the think tank Global Utmaning.

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“EMPOWERMENT IS ABOUT WOMEN BEING ABLE TO USE THEIR VOICES TO THE FULLEST IN ALL ARENAS”

Melinda Gates, Stockholm 2018
Global Utmaning (Global Challenge) is an independent think tank based in Stockholm that promotes long-term solutions to ecological, economic and social challenges through collaboration between research, business, politics and civil society. The think tank is a node within international networks, working with strategic analysis, policy solutions and advocacy by producing policy dialogues, seminars and publications. The think tank is a non-profit association funded through grants from institutions, authorities, organisations and companies.

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