



## Sweden. Assessment interviews report Aug 31<sup>st</sup> 2015

The first steps in Sweden of the company counselling have been to get an understanding of the companies' view on the issue of equal possibilities in the carrier of the company. These contacts have also served the purpose of getting trust to the process, which is important in building stabile networks for change and improvement.

### Dialogues with the four companies, the project cases

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The CEOs of the companies were contacted, and they were booked for an opening interview. In two of the cases, it was the HR responsible that we actually met. During these discourses we have

- introduced the project framework
- investigated basic facts about the organisation
- assessed the status of equal opportunity issues in the organisation
- oriented on support resources on equal opportunity issues for companies and organisations
- discussed the issue of HR strategies for structural change
- decided how to proceed with support that would be meaningful for the company

### Method

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The interviews/dialogues had a duration for about one hour each, and took place as follows:

- Holms May 27<sup>th</sup>
- Östenssons and Poppelstaden June 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Aleris June 18<sup>th</sup>

The interviews were semi-structured around following key-questions:

- description of the company (activity, employees, history)
- role of the informant
- status equal opportunity work in the organisation
- views around equal opportunity efforts within the organisation (key-issues as described by the informant, wish for further development, orientation around support resources)
- interest to take part in the project activities (including ideas for content and form)

## Description of the companies (activity, employees, history)

### Holms Industri AB

Holms is a manufacturing company, a family business in the third generation. It was founded in 1927 and was Sweden's leading horse shoe manufacturers. In time, the advanced front-mounted attachments for tractors and wheel loaders increasingly dominated the business. Today the speciality is front-mounted attachments for sweeping and snow removal. Holms has 60 employees, 14% kvinnor, 86% män, and an annual turnover around 10 million €.

[www.holms.com](http://www.holms.com) (there is also an English version)



### Poppelstaden Omsorgsförvaltning AB

The company with headquarters in Motala has been active in the personal assistance since 1994. Poppelstaden offers personal assistance and social networks to individuals with functional variations. The caring employees are linked to specific clients. Including the administrative staff of ten persons the company totals to 285 employees, most of them in Motala, but also in other regional towns. 66 % women, 34 % men. Its annual turnover is about 8 million €. Poppelstaden is a partner in the cooperation of Care College in Östergötland. Other partners in the group is Linköping University, Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions and Care Providers.

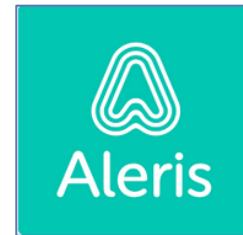


<http://www.poppelstaden.se>



### **Aleris Specialistvård Motala AB**

This company has 138 employees, 89% kvinnor, 11% men, and an annual turnover 17 million €. It has its headquarters in Motala, and is an independent daughter company to the bigger Aleris AB, Stockholm. The Motala company consists of a day surgery unit, a surgical reception, an operating unit, an orthopedic reception and a care unit.



<http://www.aleris.se/Har-finns-vi/Motala/Aleris-Specialistvard-Motala>

### **Östenssons Livs AB**

This family company was founded in 1963, when Gösta Östensson opened its first grocery in Motala. Today there are nine grocery stores, four of them in Motala, and then in other towns in the region: Vadstena (2), Skänninge, Borensberg and Linköping.

"Food and consideration from the neighbourhood" is the company philosophy. Östenssons work with local producers and has an ecological view towards their work and the goods provided. They have a bakery of their own, and a kitchen to provide catering. 158 employees, 72% women, 28 % men, and an annual turnover about 60 million €.

<http://www.ostenssons.se>



### **Dialouges/interviews**

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#### **Role of the informant**

**Holms.** Viggo Ericson is Managing Director.

**Östenssons.** Anders Lindblom is Business Manager.

**Poppelstaden.** Pekka Gillman is Operations Manager

**Aleris.** Eva Lindquist is HR manager.



### **Status equal opportunity work in the organisation**

There is a demand for all Swedish companies to perform salary surveys every third year, and employers with more than 25 employees must have action plans to achieve equal pay. Companies with more than 25 employees must also have a equal opportunity plan, that shall be upgraded every third year.

These basic demands are met in all these four companies.

In all dialogues we went through the central national webpage with tools for equal opportunity efforts, [www.jamstall.nu](http://www.jamstall.nu), and offered further support if they wanted more active work for equal carrier planning.

### **Views around equal opportunity efforts within the organisation**

(key-issues as described by the informant, wish for further development, orientation around support resources)

- **Holms**

– We have a recruitment problem, too few choose training for industrial work in their education. And we almost never get women to apply. We have tried different ways of working with school, and even pre-school, by opening up for study visits for example. We have also been engaged in Technological College (TeknikCollege), where young people can get basic training, and to see what the working place is like. Another project is Trampolinen, where our company adopted a whole class.

– When the teachers come with their pupils to our workplace, they often are surprised: “oh, how clean it is”, “it is very quiet”. To me this is a signal that they had a picture of an industry to be filthy and noisy, perhaps also heavy work. It illustrates the need for us to communicate what industry jobs today really are like, and I would really like to get out to teachers, as they can influence the children in school.

- **Östenssons**

– Every summer we take on about 60 summer workers, mostly young people. Half of them are returners; they have worked with us before. There are many more girls, about 50 girls and 10 boys. We wonder ourselves where the boys are. In my opinion, I can see that the boys that apply don't seem to be as service-minded as the girls. They often – not all of them, though – want to glide around, and avoid taking part in the work. For us it is not a problem that we have many female employees.

– In our management we have several women in leading positions – it comes from being a family company.



- **Poppelstaden**

- We would like to attract more men to our jobs, but our special problem is that the clients themselves often choose their personal assistant. When the assistants are in the organisation, they have the same salary, regardless of sex.
- We are out in the schools to recruit new assistants, and to inform about the job. Of course we try to stress that this is a job that suits both men and women.
- In our own organisation we pay attention to equal treatment generally, not only equality between men and women. That comes as a natural part as we work with people with functional variations. The question spills over to how we treat other disadvantaged groups. A good treatment is basic in our organisation.

- **Aleris**

- We are a workplace that is women-dominated. Few men take part in training and education, few apply to our vacancies. I would say that one of the problems is that we have difficulties to communicate the content of our work. There is for example a lot of technology today, which usually is said to attract men. I think that it is also a question of changing the picture of the caring sector in media. When they write or tell about hospitals and caring, it is about low wages, heavy workloads etc. And that is definitely not the whole picture.

### **Interest to take part in the project activities**

(including ideas for content and form)

- **Holms**

- Yes, we want to take part. We are engaged in efforts that help us to do better recruitment.

- **Östenssons**

- Probably not if it takes time. We are in an expanding process, and that is where our energy is today. We would probably be glad to take part in the conference in October, if there is something interesting for us in the transnational partners experiences.

- **Poppelstaden**

- Well, it is possible that we would like to take part in the project if it can focus on how we can get more equal recruitment.

- **Aleris**

- We would like to take part. And I would like to find ways to change attitudes to our workplace in our society: influence carrier plans with young people and to get a better understanding of the conditions in our jobs.



## Analyses

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The resulting analyses of the assessment have been disseminated back to the companies involved and to the local stake-holders. It will also be communicated at a more superficial level to the member companies in the company network of Tillväxt Motala.

- Three of the companies have a clear overrepresentation of one sex in the working force: the industry lack women, the food store company and the caring company lack men. One company (the service provider) describe their problem with balanced workforce as difficult to influence, as the end customers (the persons who needs care) choose their support, and they are quite traditional in their preferences.
- Two of the companies are family businesses. They think respectively that being family businesses has provided conditions that have helped to break down carrier obstacles for women. Women are well represented at management level in these companies.
- All four companies describe problems to recruit the underrepresented sex: the industry wants more women on all levels; the food store company and the caring sector want to recruit more men.
- Some of companies are active in dialogues and activities with training providers and schools to promote non gender biased profession choices, and want to improve that kind of effort. Their problem is that their time for this strategic work is limited, and activities are often ad-hoc ones.

## Activities, resulting directly from the assessment

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- **A think-tank workshop.** The four companies have been invited to a joint **workshop** Sept 2<sup>nd</sup>, with the purpose to build a network for strategic work for equal recruitment and carrier paths. We think of this as a joint think-tank to raise the question of gender based profession choices with schools and media locally. One of the inputs will be a product from a former transnational Equal project: Equal Professional Guidance in Schools<sup>1</sup>, a material that discusses what role school can have in nongender-biased carrier choices.
- **Network.** Our objective is to build sustainable **network activities** from the nucleus of the four companies, starting with promotion of non-gender biased profession choices for young people, but also for carrier guidance for unemployed/job searching adults. The next steps for this network will be planned in co-operation with the companies. It can be expected that also

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<sup>1</sup> Roland Cox, Jämställt vägval (2005). ISBN 91-975616-0-6



further company internal processes will grow from the network learning process.

- **SWOPS meeting.** The companies will also participate at parts of the SWOPS **transnational meeting** in October.
- **Tutoring/counselling.** All four companies have been offered **tutoring/counselling**, but have declined further actions during summertime. (Motala is a tourist city, and all of the companies have for this reason, or else vacations and extra workforce during June to August, a situation that they think is unsuitable for this kind of activities.) They will get new offers in September; tailor-made counselling for each of the companies, one-to-one.