

We 've shown 'em!

The women you are about to meet in this collection of interviews have succeeded in what they set out to do. They run their own businesses or are leaders in professions such as the police, the clergy, in journalism, medicine and so on. Unique, glorious women with differing desires, dreams and needs. Their most obvious characteristics, however, are their competence, leadership qualities and charisma.

These women have been successful but not because of positive discrimination on the grounds of sex or disability. Neither is their success due to resistance on their part or because less has been demanded of them.

On the contrary.

They have been successful because they are competent and very knowledgeable people.

The ambition of the Gender School project: "Female leaders with disabilities", is to introduce an extra dimension to the problem of sexual segregation, namely: that of being a woman and also being disabled. This is a field on which there is no research and very little is known about these women's situation.

Read and open your eyes, hearts and minds to the unique!



**GENDER
SCHOOL**
TO THE BENEFIT OF EQUAL
RIGHTS AT WORK

ISBN No: 978-91-976762-2-9

A book about unique women at work

Thirteen women, thirteen different experiences, thirteen role models

This book makes two things clear. One is that we journalists have not adequately described the conditions of life that the disabled have to cope with, whether their age be 27 or 67. The other insight I gain as I read is that disability is definitely not synonymous with resignation.

In this documentary record, Cecile Frödén has interviewed thirteen career women, giving them the opportunity to give an account of themselves and their work. It's about quite ordinary jobs: as project manager, reporter, doctor, clergywoman and rehabilitation instructor. One is a singer with audiences in millions; one works as a massage therapist; one is the chief of the mounted police. Two are politicians, one at the local level in Sigtuna and the other on the international level as Chairwoman of the Scottish Labour Party.

But the story of these women's working life differs from other interviews with people in various different professions. These women are at their jobs in spite of their physical disabilities.

It's the story of thirteen women with enormous willpower, with great energy, clear-sightedness and with the will to show others what is possible.

Manifest, also, in the interviews is the absence of bitterness. On the other hand, there is an almost ironical showdown with authorities, who saw disability pension as the only possible alternative. Just a little less self-esteem and little more trepidation when faced with all the practical obstacles would have removed

these women far from both labour market and leadership.

I believe they are aware themselves that they are unusual. But they all give distinct personal examples of how simple measures and consistent support could help others in the same situation onto the labour market. Some are employees. Others run their own businesses. It's not difficult to draw the conclusion that the costs of assistance would be repaid many times over if help could be set in where it was best needed.

The result would mean that more individuals would immediately exchange benefits for paid work and salary by coming out onto the labour market.

But I also get the feeling that all the women in the book want us others to have greater expectations of their capacity than we actually have and show. One of the main obstacles to surmount is obviously the prejudice and suspicion of the general public.

The Gender School project is doing an important job by allowing the women to speak through their own examples. Their stories indicate also the need for more resources and more media reports describing the work of politicians, police officers, clergy, entrepreneurs or magazine journalists from the professional angle rather than that of their disability.

The reader will have the opportunity to meet thirteen women, thirteen different experiences and thirteen role models for a better development. Read and reflect!

SIEWERT ÖHOLM