



Equality and
Anti-Discrimination Ombud

Experiences in Nordic Countries concerning
discrimination claims in times of crisis. Lay-offs.

Deputy Director Mona Larsen-Asp

Equality and economical crisis

- The bank crisis in the 1980's and 1990's in Norway.
- From 1987 and until 1993 the maternity leave is increased annually, from 18 to 42 weeks with 100 % pay compensation.

Father's quota 1993

- The father's quota was introduced.
- Within three years – 70 % took it.
- Building of public kindergartens in spite of economical difficult times.



Women and political power

1980	1985	1990	1994	2009
Parliament				
24 %	34 %	36 %	39 %	36 %
Government				
12 %	26 %	44 %	42 %	47 %

Important milestones

- Minister of Children and Family Affairs.
- The Ombudsman for Children was established in 1981.
- Women's organisations within the political parties.

Ministers for Gender Equality

Matz Sandman

1990 - 1991

Grete Berget

1991 - 1996

Sylvia Brustad

1996 - 1997

Valgerd S. Haugland

1997 - 2000

Karita Bekkemellem

2000 - 2001

Laila Dåvøy

2001 - 2005

Karita Bekkemellem

2005 - 2007

Manuela R-Osmundsen

2007 - 2008


Anniken Huitfeldt

2008 -

Mrs. Prime Minister

- A little story of two small children discussing what to do with their lives.....
- Between 1981 and 1996 the Prime Minister of three Norwegian Governments was Gro Harlem Brundtland. In total ten years.





«In the last 20 years women have changed politics by putting other issues and values in focus than the men did. The participation of women has changed the content of politics considerably.»

Gro Harlem Brundtland in 1992



Public sector dominated by women

- In Norway 69 % of employees in the public sector are women.
- The private sector is more sensitive to the finance crisis than the public sector.
- Iceland experience the same pattern. Up till now, few women are out of jobs. Women dominate the public sector.

2/3 of the unemployed is men

- The consequences of the financial crisis are harder for men. In Norway 2/3 of the unemployed are men.
- The increase in unemployment is twice as high for men compared to women.
- 68 000 out of work (May 2009) – 44 000 men and 24 000 women.

Lay-offs for people they don't like

- 25 % of business leaders admit that they have used the finance crisis as an excuse for lay-offs of people that they consider to be less competent.
- 70 % of the leaders that have downsized the business during the last year, say that the company is not exposed for economic loss because the most valuable workers is still on board.

Cases at the Ombud 2009

- Gender and working life is dominating the cases at the Ombud so far in 2009.
- Key words are pregnancy and pay.
- 4 out of 5 cases are about working life.

Pregnant and lost their jobs

Case 1

- A store went bankruptcy due to the financial crisis. A new store was built on the ruins of the old one – a transfer of ownership was made. All but two pregnant employees was offered a new job in the new store.

Pay during parental leave

Case 2

- Two women had a verbal agreement with their employer to get full pay during parental leave. As a direct consequence of the finance crisis, the employer decided to cancel the agreement.
- Case closed – the women got full pay after contacting the Ombud.

The right to old-age pension

- During time of crisis the pressure on gained rights can be threatened.
- In TV2, a private television company, the management suggested cut in salary and a different system for old-age pension for the employees.
- Consequences for women and men are often different in favour of men.

From finance crisis to gender revolution in Iceland?

- Women get several of the most important jobs in Iceland.
- Main task is to clean up after the men...



Women still at risk in Iceland

«We still don't have an overview over the social consequences of the crisis, and still much can happen. But in order to achieve real change, it is necessary to make public the reasons for the collapse of the banks, the ones responsible must be prosecuted and quota must be used actively in order to break the structure of power.»

Lilja Mosesdottir

Bibiana Aido in Brussels

- Impact on political economic issues.
- Gender equality effect the society as a whole.
- Working life and especially the participation of women in paid work are key elements for gender equality.
- Men should take on the responsibility for care.

What if.....

If all decision making
on financial and economic
issues was made by women
only, would the world be
in this financial crisis now...?





Thank you for your kind attention!

www.LDO.no

Website in English only:

www.gender.no

