

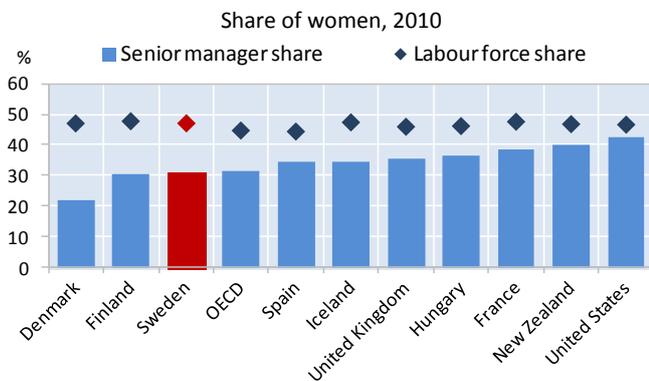


**Women’s strong participation in paid work has not been enough to close gender gaps in other labour market outcomes.**

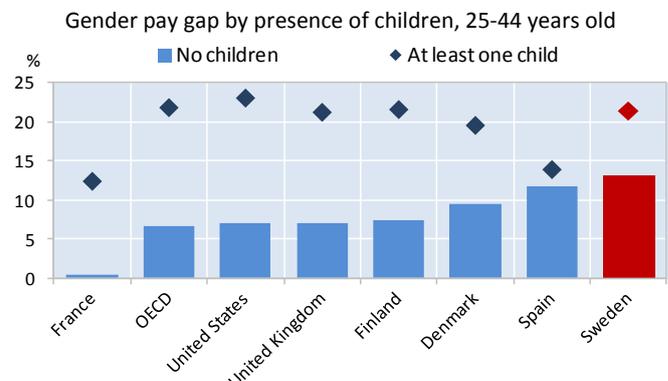
In Sweden, girls have been doing better than boys in school for some time raising concerns about boys overall performance in education. On average 74% of girls and 70% of boys [complete upper secondary education](#) within the stipulated time; almost half of the women aged 25 to 34 and one-third of men of same age have a tertiary degree. In contrast to most OECD countries, young men are slightly more likely (11%) than girls (10%) to be not in employment, education or training. Gender segregation persists in the field of study. Young men rarely pursue studies in health and welfare (where they are 17% of the graduates, 8 percentage points below the OECD average); while young women make up only 24% of the graduates in computer sciences and 29% of those in engineering. Policies are needed to make these subjects equally appealing for both girls and boys early on. It is important to get more girls to undertake such studies by, for example, raising awareness on the consequences of educational choices on career and earnings prospects or by better addressing the role of stereotypes in shaping preferences and self-perception about study subjects.

Sweden has invested in a continuum of work-family supports for families throughout early and middle childhood (including parental leave, pre-school and out-of-school hours care) thereby sustaining birth-rates as well as parental employment rates. At 72%, Sweden has achieved one of the highest female employment rates in the OECD (60%). However, motherhood still pushes many women to seek part-time employment: 18% of women work part-time (vs. 10% of men) and in more than a third of couple-families with young children only one of the parents works full-time. Women are concentrated in fewer occupations than men, usually in the service sector, and they are less likely than men to progress to senior management positions, making up for 31% of senior managers in 2010 and 19% of [boards of listed companies](#) in 2009.

**Women are under-represented in senior management**



**Motherhood comes with a higher pay gap**



In 2011, Swedish women earned 14% less than men – a pay gap just below the OECD average (15%) and higher than in many countries with comparable female employment rates. The pay gap is even larger (21%) among parents. Lower pay not only deprives women of higher earnings in the short term but it also exposes them to higher poverty risk after retirement. Due to lower pension contributions over the course of their lives as well as to longer expected life, the incidence of poverty among retired women (11%) is much higher than among retired men (5%). In Sweden, 13% of available parental leave (8.5 weeks) is reserved to fathers. A greater share could be reserved for them to encourage an even more equal distribution of paid and unpaid work among men and women – as would preventing parents from taking their leave at the same time.

Women are severely under-represented among business-owners: about one in three individually-owned businesses were owned by women and 6% of working women (vs. 15% of working men) are [self-employed](#) – less than the OECD average (10%). To promote female entrepreneurship, the Swedish government has a “women ambassadors programme” and provides financial support to 22% of women entrepreneurs but more action is probably needed to promote more growth and innovation among women-owned businesses.