



The United Nations has set itself the target of ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls all over the world. This includes eliminating violence against women and girls, and putting an end to child marriage and genital mutilation. It also includes recognising and appreciating unpaid care work and housework performed by women within the family, and ensuring full and effective participation and equality of opportunity for women in political, economic and public life.

## GENDER EQUALITY AFFECTS EVERYONE

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?

Gender equality affects a whole range of areas of public life. This is why Osnabrück's gender equality officer Katja Weber-Khan attends meetings of the cross-departmental management conference led by the mayor. This is how Osnabrück ensures gender equality.

### ➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

In 2014 Osnabrück approved a gender action plan. Today, all proposals for council resolutions must answer the question of how they will affect gender. Supported by a network of advice centres and associations many things have been implemented, ranging from systematic support for girls to part-time jobs in managerial positions.

### ➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?

In Osnabrück the gender equality officer is part of the municipal administration. She is also able to draw on a network of advice centres and associations. They support her work, and help identify where gender issues need to be addressed. Osnabrück also hosted the event 'In tandem against violence', which was funded by the federal state of Lower Saxony.

### ➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

In 2016, Osnabrück came fourth in the first 'Gender Award – Municipality With a Future' competition held under the auspices of the then Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth – reason to be pleased and an incentive to carry on. The gender equality officer Katja Weber-Khan intends to enlarge her network even further. The plan of action is also being evaluated and will be updated.



## Osnabrück ➔ Lower Saxony



Population:  
**162,403**



Mayor:  
**Wolfgang Griesert**



## ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY

Ending discrimination against women and girls all over the world – to achieve this goal, much has to be done for gender equality in a wide range of areas across society. **Katja Weber-Khan, the gender equality officer of the City of Osnabrück, is working to realise this goal.**

In 2014 Osnabrück approved a gender action plan. Today the gender equality officer always knows what is planned because she is involved in the work of the local authority and the city's decision-making processes. This enables her to ensure that gender equality is upheld. Might a decision stand in the way of gender mainstreaming, i.e. promoting equal opportunities for women and men? This question is raised for every project, and is part of proposals for council resolutions.

'Many people are not aware of the fact that a decision can affect gender equality', explains Ms Weber-Khan. Continuously asking the question raises awareness of the issue. The municipality wishes to set a good example for gender equality. It practices the 'shared management' model. Two people, both of whom work part time, share a managerial position. This means that despite working reduced hours they both hold a key position. There are currently two jobs of this kind in the municipality of Osnabrück.

Ms Weber-Khan is able to draw on a broad network of women's advice centres and associations. The gender equality officer has held her position for two years. Her predecessor spent 15 years building the network. Ms Weber-Khan intends to manage and expand it. 'It helps to see where structures are lacking, and then support the implementation of programmes', she says. Here is a current example: Refugees have created new tasks for the advice centres. For instance, the important topic of domestic violence also plays a role in the context of migration. This is why staff at various advice centres in Osnabrück would like to receive training in the field of intercultural skills. The municipality was able to support them with the event 'Working together against violence'. This was funded by the prevention council of the federal state of Lower Saxony, and Osnabrück was one of five cities in Lower Saxony to profit from this support.



Campaign in Osnabrück to mark the International Day to End Violence Against Women on 25 November (Photo: Monika Meißner)

'My work is very diverse', says Ms Weber-Khan. She mentions a girls' refuge in Osnabrück that she visits regularly. It has just celebrated its 25th anniversary. 'It is important to create free spaces in which girls can develop', says Ms Weber-Khan. Counselling and therapy is provided, but it's also important simply to have somewhere to meet after school. The 'Girls can do it' programme is designed for girls from migrant families where life is shaped by very traditional roles. The girls are shown that the world is also open to women.

In Osnabrück there is also the 'Family-friendly employer' certificate that companies can use to certify their credentials. Restaurants and shops can use the sticker 'Breastfeeding welcome' if they wish to give women an opportunity to breastfeed their child undisturbed.

There is no one major leverage point for gender equality. A large number of measures in a variety of areas act in concert and help bring about change. The City of Osnabrück has clustered them in its action plan – and new areas are being added all the time. This is the only way to achieve the major goal of gender equality.

### INTERNET ADDRESS

[www.osnabrueck.de/gleichstellungsbuero](http://www.osnabrueck.de/gleichstellungsbuero)