

Is gender equality an explicit issue in Swedish high schools? Results from a photovoice study with girls in a vocational program

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There is a contradictory picture of Swedish girls; they are talked about as academically successful and winner at the labor market, but at the same time stressed out, have low self-esteem and high as well as increasing mental health problems. The discourse as well as the gender equality politics are (Everyone sort of know) that Sweden is a gender equal society where women and men can both work and have children, take part in society and where there is (supposed to be) freedom from men's violence against women. This is true for some girls and women, but to fully understand the challenges and possibilities to work for a gender equal society we have to add an intersectional perspective, including several different power orders. This study will focus on high school girls in a vocational program (proxy for working class) who are invited to participate because of their lack of academic success, low self-esteem and lack of belief in the future. They are participants in a photovoice study aiming at wellbeing, academic success, safety and a positive view of the future. Their suggestions for change will guide an analysis of the high school's role in creating a gender equality supportive environment in line with the Swedish gender equality discourse.