

Viðskiptablaðið newspaper – October 2020

Interview with Founders of Empower

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Equality for export

Empower is a newly established international equality consulting firm. The company is based on equality in a broader context than just wage issues.

Empower is a newly established international equality consulting firm. The company is a forum for comprehensive advice, education, cooperation and a toolbox for gender equality. The company is based on the success of Iceland, Icelandic companies and institutions and a proven methodology.

Pórey Vilhjálmsdóttir Proppé, Dögg Thomsen and Dominic Nieper are the founders and owners of Empower, an international consulting company for gender equality.

All of them have worked as directors and consultants in gender equality issues with companies and institutions in recent years and decades. Dögg and Dominic have worked abroad for the past 25 years and therefore have extensive international experience and networks.

They have worked with organisations in diverse sectors, but most have in common that they are fairly masculine sectors such as energy, government, academia, insurance, manufacturing, finance, telecoms & more.

Empower also recently signed a contract with Althingi, The Parliament of Iceland after successfully winning the project bid against six other companies.

In 2021 Empower will export the successful methodology, making it available to organisations outside Iceland as there is a huge need for practical solutions in Gender Equality within the workplace.

The Empower Equality Roadmap is a long-term journey where the Empower experts examine equality in a broad context, with a special emphasis on gender-based prejudice, culture and intangible obstacles in equality issues.

Pórey says that he has found in her work that an equal pay policy was not enough for people to experience equality in the workplace and from that Empower developed. The consultancy is based on the Empower Equality Roadmap, a unique 360-degree approach to strategy making and awareness-raising project that addresses gender equality issues in organisations. "This is a proven methodology that works, practical but unconventional.

We therefore have a certain uniqueness," says Pórey. The Equality Roadmap is four-phase journey. Starting with a detailed analysis of the status of gender equality issues within the company is carried out, using a 360 ° analytical framework, with both a qualitative and a quantitative approach. Next, remedial work is started and great emphasis is placed on all staff being involved in that work. It is also important that the analysis was carried out at their workplace, rather than general equality challenges, so that they are invested in the project. After the improvement work, goal setting and finally the implementation part begins.

"The Equality Roadmap is a journey that companies take on a long-term basis. It is important to approach the project in a positive and constructive way," says Dögg.

A key component is that the material is not dry and is presented in plain English for all to relate to.

Empower also emphasizes knowledge and dissemination, which includes conferences and lectures. The company also offers different and exciting workshops where special emphasis is placed on shedding light on gender-based prejudice in corporate culture.

They say the key is that the content of the lectures, the equality indicator and the workshops are presented in plain English. "We use pictures, stories, quotes and humor. We use all possible means to make the content as interesting as possible. "