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**Diversity a tool for healthy workplaces in the mining industry**

**During Wednesday's Euro Mine Expo it was discussed, among other things, how the mining industry will be better at diversity. Uneven gender distribution can be a sign of a dysfunctional organization, says Lena Abrahamsson, professor of working science at Luleå University of Technology and chairman of Georange.**

**"The organization can still be ok, but it poses a risk. Even gender distribution is a tool for healthy workplaces”, she says.**

In connection with the Euro Mine Expo, Women In Mining held a networking meeting and discussion regarding skills & recruitment in the mining industry. Women In Mining Sweden, WIM Sweden, is a network focused on increasing gender equality in the Swedish mining and mineral industry, and serves as a platform where active industry professionals can exchange experiences.

During the meeting, Åsa Allan, site manager at Kaunis Iron, told about their extensive recruitment process to the mine outside Pajala in Sweden, which will soon be opened. There is diversity and finding the right mix of personalities in focus, but also finding suitable employees who live in the immediate area. She reported that, today, the have reached 40 percent women in the company.

But the percentage gender gap does not always play such an important part in the workplace equality, says Lena Abrahamsson.

"If you have a workplace with just men, it can be more equal than an organization with fifty percent women if it is based on stereotypical ideas about men and women. What matters is what perspectives exist and how people think around questions about men and women, says Lena Abrahamsson.

She believes, however, that gender distribution plays a role.

“The type of monoculture resulting from an unbalanced gender distribution gives a signal that there are problems. It can be a problem, but the figure itself is not. Therefore, it is important to look at what is happening within these figures”, she says.

The recruitment consultant Maria Söderberg at Dare Consulting, says that the most important thing is to look at the personality.

"I'm always looking for the right person with the right attitude and right values," she says.

Åsa Allan believes that gender distribution is important.

“Gender distribution does not reflect the society around the mine. That's an important factor that makes us need to increase the balance", says Åsa Allan.

Martin Eman, Manager Employer Branding at Boliden, believes that today's situation is a problem.

"If we want to be competitive in the future, we need to attract the best talents with the personalities we want. Should we only succeed in recruiting from fifty percent of the recruitment pool, then we will have problems. Especially as many industries and businesses compete for the labor force. Obviously, we must be attractive to all", says Martin Eman.

Åsa Allan points out that one cannot achieve growth with a stereotype group of people.

"That's what happens if you only have men, as supposed to having a good mix of gender, personalities, age and background", says Åsa Allan.

WIM Sweden is managed by Svemin, industry association for mines, mineral and metal producers in Sweden. WIM Sweden is also part of the international umbrella organization International Women In Mining.

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*Euro Mine Expo is an international fair and conference for the mining industry held every two years. It’s organized in Skellefteå by Nolia, Norrland's largest organizer of meetings, trade fairs and events. Euro Mine Expo will be held 12-14 June 2018 at Skellefteå Kraft Arena in Skellefteå, Sweden.*

*Kraft arena.*