

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN PRACTICE

FACTSHEET

GENDER MAINSTREAMING AT NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN LEVEL

The idea of gender mainstreaming was developed by the United Nations (UN) community and appeared for the first time in international texts after the UN's Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985. This idea was formally featured in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing whereby the present conceptual framework and methodology for gender mainstreaming was developed. Gender mainstreaming was further reinforced in the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam, formalising the mainstreaming commitment at a European level.

On a national scale, gender mainstreaming has been on the Government's agenda since the 1980's. As early as 1989, the Public Sector committed itself to mainstream equality in policies, plans and programmes. For this purpose, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM Circular No.133/89) proposed a list of measures and directives on how Heads of Department were to promote gender equality and eliminate gender discrimination within their respective department.

Amongst the initiatives embarked on by the Government is Malta's ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1991, together with the transposition of the relevant European Directives aimed at safeguarding equality between women and men, girls and boys in various areas of life.

WHAT IS GENDER MAINSTREAMING?¹

- A process used to achieve gender equality.
- A holistic approach towards gender equality that tackles the interconnected causes that generate unequal relationships between women and men, girls and boys in all areas of life.
- Acknowledging the differences between women and men, girls and boys.
- Bringing the experience, knowledge, and interests of women and men, girls and boys to bear on the agenda.
- Establishing adequate accountability mechanisms for monitoring progress related to gender equality.
- Identifying issues and concerns related to gender equality across all areas of activities.
- Diagnosing the root causes of gender inequality and addressing the differences and disparities through remedial action plans.

THE AIMS OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING

- To ensure that the goal of a policy, project, programme, action or work practice takes into consideration the needs of women and men, boys and girls, and that the policy addresses these needs.

- To increase awareness and ensure that all public administrators and other actors understand the inequalities that exist between women and men, girls and boys, and the need to address such inequalities.
- To reduce gender bias which affects the actions of individuals and working of institutions.
- To pre-empt unintended negative consequences on women and men, girls and boys by means of integrating gender equality throughout all the stages of policy, project, programme or action drafting, implementation and monitoring.
- To ensure that policies, actions, projects and programmes are gender sensitive and actively seek to achieve equality of outcome.

BENEFITS OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING²

- It places individuals at the heart of policy making.
- It involves women and men, girls and boys and makes full use of human capital.
- It makes gender equality issues visible in the mainstream of society.
- It takes into account and equally values the diversity among women and men, girls and boys.
- It makes policies more effective by ensuring that measures implemented in their pursuance are equally accessible to women and men, girls and boys.

WHEN IS IT APPLICABLE?

Gender Mainstreaming can be applied to:

- Legislation, policy plans and programmes, budgets or reports, whether at the original drafting phase or at the stage of evaluation and re-development.
- All government interventions affecting all sectors.

GENDER ANALYSIS – A STEP TOWARDS GENDER MAINSTREAMING³

Gender Analysis is an effective instrument for Gender Mainstreaming which is carried out by means of analysing matters from a gender perspective and integrating such a perspective into policies, programmes and activities. It may follow the 4R method – Representation, Resources, Realia, and Realisation:

Representation (R1) – Survey gender representation of women and men, girls and boys in the various parts of the organisation and at all levels.

Resources (R2) – Examine and obtain information on how resources are allocated to women and men, girls and boys.

Realia (R3) – Analyse the current conditions and identify any gender patterns that exist in the organisation whilst identifying their impact on both genders.

Realisation (R4) – Formulating new objectives, measures and plans for remedying identified shortfalls.

HOW CAN IT BE IMPLEMENTED?

1. Ensure that the concept of gender mainstreaming and gender equality is well understood by those involved in the drafting of policies, actions, programmes and projects. This can be achieved through training, information sessions, dissemination of information etc.
2. Identify equality committees or equality representatives who will be responsible for gender mainstreaming.
3. Identify appropriate techniques and tools needed to measure, monitor and develop new objectives, measures and plans whilst addressing the need to educate the actors involved.
4. Analyse the current situation and obtain an overview of the degree to which the current gender equality objectives are being met. This can be done through the gathering

of statistics and data relevant to the action, policy, project or programme which is to be drafted, revised or implemented.

5. Identify and set targets on what needs to be achieved and identify the expected results.
6. Set up a monitoring system which consists of continuous checks, evaluation and follow up of the policies.

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?⁴

Internal and External actors should be involved in the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy. These include:

Internal actors:

- Politicians
- Government administrations
- Other stakeholders

External actors:

- Partners
- Experts
- Non-government organisations (NGOs)
- Interest groups
- Media

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- 2 European Commission., 2004. *EQUAL Guide on Gender Mainstreaming*. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equal/data/document/gendermain_en.pdf [Accessed 17th January 2012].
- 3 Extracted from: JämStöd, 2007. *Gender Mainstreaming Manual*. A book of practical methods from the Swedish Gender Mainstreaming Support Committee. [Online] Available at: <http://www.ann-boman.se/eng/verksamhet/The%204R%20Method.pdf> [Accessed 3rd January 2012].



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