



Implementing Gender Mainstreaming

***A National Public Service and Public Sector Initiatives
and Good Practices Document***

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National Commission
for the Promotion of Equality
Malta



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The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) is an autonomous governmental body that was set up as the national equality body in Malta in January 2004. The NCPE works towards the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of gender, family responsibilities and race/ethnic origin by raising awareness; monitoring national laws and EU Directives; implementing policies and providing assistance to the general public.

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Preface

Gender Mainstreaming has been recognised as an essential strategy through which gender equality can be achieved. The process of Gender Mainstreaming turns away attention from individuals and their rights, deficiencies or disadvantages and instead seeks to integrate equality into those systems and structures that produce such drawbacks. This ensures the prohibition to discriminate on the grounds of gender.

This document has been designed and published as part of the project titled “Living Equality” (VS/2007/0442) with the aim of increasing awareness on Gender Mainstreaming. This document begins by presenting a compilation of information on gender equality and the Gender Mainstreaming process. It also delves into the methodology which characterises this research. The key findings behind this research are then presented,

together with the ways in which Gender Mainstreaming is being implemented within the public administration. This document ends by presenting a selection of good practices related to the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming within the Public Service and the Public Sector.

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) would particularly like to thank all the public officials who took part in the focus groups organised for this study and those who endowed us with their good practices related to Gender Mainstreaming at their place of work. Acknowledgement is also reserved to the *Living Equality – VS/2007/0442* Project Coordinator, Mr Roderick White, for conducting the research, for compiling this document and for contributing to the specific needs for the finalisation of this project. The contribution of Ms Therese Spiteri, Senior Projects Co-ordinator also merits a strong mention.

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1. Defining Gender

'Gender' refers to the social roles and relations between men and women. This includes the different responsibilities of women and men in a given culture or location. Whereas the sex of an individual is biologically determined, the gender roles of women and men are socially constructed. The variables which make up the concept of gender may vary from one society to another, or even in different contexts within the same society.

Gender stereotypes refer to the oversimplified and standardised gender concepts that are commonly held by members of a particular social group¹. With the birth of the feminist and human rights movements, gender stereotypes started to be perceived as being socially constructed rather than biologically determined. Some examples of gender stereotypes are that males are competitive, strong, aggressive and independent, whereas females are sensible, sweet, submissive and dependent.

Gender stereotypes overshadow gender roles. Different roles are attributed to males and females, and these come to assign different personality traits and abilities to the different individuals. This leads to a form of self-fulfilling prophecy in that people start to report greater pleasure at the roles they become good at². As a result, greater ability in performing gender-appropriate tasks is reported, reflecting the gender stereotypic expectations. It is believed that the flexibility of the new roles, for example,

through the utilisation of family-friendly measures, will prove beneficial when compared to the rigidity of the gender stereotyped roles³.

1.1 Gender Equality

Gender equality emanates out of the advancement of human rights and is a fundamental aspect of democratic citizenship. It belongs to the basic and universally recognised civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. Infringement of such rights hinders societies from achieving the goals and benefits of development.

Gender equality refers to a concept where the rights, responsibilities and opportunities offered are not determined by sex⁴. It implies equal access to opportunities by focusing on the individuals' capabilities instead of their gender. Such equality occurs when the different behaviour, aspirations and needs of women

1 Cheal, 2002, p. 162.

2 Vogel, 2003.

3 Lang, 2003.

4 United Nations Officer of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. (2001).

and men are equally valued and favoured. The different treatment of persons according to their gender leads to gender discrimination. Gender discrimination can also occur when attitudes and behaviours promote gender-stereotyped social roles. Under Maltese law⁵, gender discrimination is also deemed to occur when persons are treated unfavourably because of their marital status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, or because of family responsibilities.

The search for equality is not a search for sameness. People vary in temperaments, interests, abilities, personalities and the amount of material goods that they possess. People can be different and equal. With the essentials of life available to all, everyone could all enjoy nature, develop individual preferences and live securely.

Over the years, gender equality has been sought through three different approaches. The **Equal Treatment** approach is based on the belief that women and men should be treated the same as each other. In effect, this often meant that women were treated the same as men⁶. This approach thus fails to address the differences between men and women.

Positive Action is an approach which recognises that whilst there are similarities between men and women, there are also differences. In recognising that men and women are different in some respects, it seeks to accommodate, or make up for those differences that are construed as 'special needs' of the under-represented sex⁷. Positive action also seeks to make up for past and present disadvantages associated with a particular gender.

The **Gender Mainstreaming** approach, as further explained in the next chapters, turns attention away from individuals and their rights, deficiencies or disadvantages. This approach focuses instead on those systems and structures that produce such drawbacks. It seeks to integrate equality into those same systems and structures.

5 Equality for Men and Women Act – Chapter 456 of the Laws of Malta.

6 Rees, T. (2002).

7 Ibid.

2. Gender Mainstreaming

In July 1997, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defined the concept of Gender Mainstreaming as follows:

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of Mainstreaming is to achieve Gender equality⁸.

The definition for Gender Mainstreaming used within the European Commission is based on the same principles and perspective:

Gender Mainstreaming is the integration of the Gender perspective into every stage of policy process – design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – with a view to promoting equality between women and men. It means assessing how policies impact on the life and position of both women and men – taking responsibility to re-address them if necessary. This is the way to make Gender Equality a concrete reality in the lives



of women and men creating space for everyone within the organizations as well as in communities – to contribute to the process of articulating a shared vision of sustainable human development and translating it into reality⁹.

Through the integration of a gender perspective, any planned action is assessed according to its implications for women and men. The ultimate goal of Gender Mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.

Gender Mainstreaming has also often been described as *putting on gender glasses*¹⁰. When gender glasses are prescribed for all existing agencies, the impaired gender vision or the total gender blindness would be removed, thus facilitating Gender Mainstreaming whilst promoting gender equality. Through this process inequality is not perpetuated.

⁸ Gender Mainstreaming, Extract from the Report of the Economic and Social Council for 1997 (A/52/3, 18 September 1997), Chapter IV, Coordination Segment: Coordination of the Policies and activities agencies of the United Nations System.

⁹ European Commission. (n.d.).

¹⁰ European Youth Centre. (n.d.).

2.1 The Core of Gender Mainstreaming

The core of Gender Mainstreaming is composed of two notions: the distinction between sex and gender; and gender equality¹¹.

As explained above, sex refers to the biologically determined differences between men and women. These differences are universal and are the same everywhere. On the other hand, gender refers to the social differences between women and men. These differences are learned and are changeable over time. Such differences may also vary both within and among cultures.

Gender Equality refers to the fact that all humans should be free to develop their personal abilities, and make choices without any limitations set by strict gender roles. Two important aspects behind gender equality are important:

- a. Being equal does not mean being the same. Women and men are different and equal.
- b. Through Gender Equality, the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of *both* genders are equally valued and favoured.

On these notions, Gender Mainstreaming is hereby defined as being a strategy for making women's and men's concerns, needs and experiences an integral dimension of policies and programmes so that both genders may benefit from equality. Through Gender Mainstreaming, gender equality becomes a reality in the lives of both men and women.

Gender Mainstreaming is about:

- women and men taking action;
- men and women benefiting from it.

¹¹ Saulnier, et al., 1999.

¹² OPM Circular 24 of 2000, Gender Mainstreaming, Malta.

¹³ European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. (2002).

¹⁴ EUROPA, 2007.

2.2 Gender Mainstreaming in the Local and European Context

Together with other governments, the Maltese government had endorsed the Platform for Action of the United Nations Fourth Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. This conference had identified Gender Mainstreaming as the main strategy for the achievement of gender equality. Gender Mainstreaming has been brought onto the national agenda via OPM Circular 24/2000¹². This circular placed an obligation on Permanent Secretaries, Directors General, Chief Executive Officers, Managers, Directors, Assistant Directors and heads of sections or units for Gender Mainstreaming to be implemented in all policy areas.

However, its implementation was rather limited, until the transposition of Directive 2002/73/EC¹³. This Directive ensures the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions. All Member States are required to transpose this directive prior to their membership within the European Union. Through this directive, the Member States are also required to forward all the necessary information to the European Commission by the stipulated deadline, to enable it to draw up a report on the application of the Directive.

Gender equality has, in fact, always been a key priority of the European Union. The Treaty of Rome introduced the principle of equal pay for work of equal value for men and women in 1957. Since the 1970s, the European Union has adopted thirteen directives on gender equality¹⁴. These have ensured, among other things, equal treatment concerning access to work, training, promotions and working conditions, including equal pay and social security benefits, as well as guaranteed rights to parental leave.

The prohibition to discriminate on a number of grounds, including sex, is well ingrained in Maltese legislation, including Chapter IV – Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of the Individual, of the Maltese Constitution, which arches over all other legislation.



3. Methodology

Qualitative methodology was chosen in order to compile the good practices and the national public sector initiatives related to the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming within the Public Service and the Public Sector.

This type of methodology was preferred over the quantitative slant because the former enables the flexibility, depth and openness¹⁵ needed to analyse the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming within an organisation.

The primary research method used for this work was the Focus Group. In fact, the good practices compiled for this document emerged primarily from the Focus Groups, conducted as part of the project *Living Equality – VS/2007/0442*, during September 2008. Focus groups are a form of group interview in which there are several participants in addition to the moderator¹⁶. The focus groups conducted as part of this project aimed at creating a better understanding of the synergies which emerge when implementing Gender Mainstreaming within the different ministries and departments. They aimed also at identifying the stumbling blocks encountered in implementing Gender Mainstreaming, and how these can be tackled.

For the purpose of this project, two sets of focus groups were conducted over eight sessions. The

first set of focus groups was conducted with Heads of Departments within the Public Service and the Public Sector. The questions asked during these focus groups delved into the ways public officials at the top management defined the 'Gender Mainstreaming' concept, and into the ways in which Gender Mainstreaming is being implemented. Reference was also made to the availability of family-friendly measures, to their perception of these working arrangements, to the provision of training on gender equality, and to the use of Gender Mainstreaming Tools. These sessions were also aimed at identifying the obstacles found in this process.

The second set of focus groups was carried out with the middle and lower management of the public service. These sessions analysed how the information related to the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming has been communicated to public officers in the middle and lower management. In order to identify the level of ownership of the concept of Gender Mainstreaming, participants were asked about how they define this concept, and about whether they know how this process is being implemented within the departments/entities

¹⁵ Neuman, W. L., 2003.

¹⁶ Bryman, A., 2001.

they work in. Questions about the availability of family-friendly measures, their perception on such measures, the provision of training on gender equality and the use of Gender Mainstreaming tools were also asked.

The focus groups' discussion aimed at identifying good practices and national Public Service and Public Sector initiatives related to the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming within both the Public Service and the Public Sector, as will be further illustrated in the next chapter. For the purpose of this document, good practices constitute any initiative, policy

or guidelines adopted to promote integration and ensure a culture of equality and respect amongst all persons. The good practices identified for this project are based on the grounds of gender. Apart from being compiled in this document, some of these good practices and initiatives were also promoted through an Electronic Newsletter which has also been designed and issued as part of the project *Living Equality – VS/2007/0442*. The e-Newsletter has the aim of creating an ongoing mechanism to promote debate on the implementation process of Gender Mainstreaming within the Public Service and the Public Sector.



4. Key Findings

The major findings which emerged from the focus group sessions are going to be addressed in this chapter to ensure that a Gender Mainstreaming culture will further develop within the Public Service and the Public Sector.

There still exists lack of awareness about Gender Mainstreaming among public officials at the different levels within the public service. Very few focus group participants recognised that Gender Mainstreaming is a process which concerns the planning and (re)organisation of the policy process through a gender perspective. The majority of the participants have instead argued that Gender Mainstreaming involves treating males and females in the same manner, irrespective of their needs. Other participants argued that Gender Mainstreaming is equivalent to having an equal number of males and females in the workplace, even if this entails positive discrimination. A substantial number of participants were not even aware of any particular measures through which Gender Mainstreaming is being implemented within the Public Service and the Public Sector. More communication and training on this aspect is therefore needed.

Even though the existence of Equality Committees within the Public Service and the Public Sector is in itself a good initiative, as will be mentioned in the next chapters, few of the focus group participants were aware of the existence of such committees. Those sentient of these committees emphasised that they were, however, not aware of any particular measure related to Gender Mainstreaming that have been the result of these committees.

None of the focus group participants knew what Gender Mainstreaming Tools were. After a short explanation on what Gender Mainstreaming tools are, some of the participants claimed that there is a lack of resources within the Public Service and the Public Sector for Gender Mainstreaming Tools to be implemented. Commitment from the top management is a prerequisite for the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming Tools, especially because of the resources needed to carry out an analysis using such tools.

The family-friendly measures were identified as the major mode through which Gender Mainstreaming is being implemented within the Public Service and the Public Sector. The reconciliation of family and working life had been emphasised by most of the participants as being of utmost important if Gender Mainstreaming is to prevail. The perception that exists is that family-friendly measures specifically exist to achieve a work-life balance. However the need to implement gender equality in both the private life and the professional life has been identified because the majority of the focus group participants were still of the idea that women should be primarily responsible of childcare, thus reinforcing gender stereotypes. On this wavelength, it was also noted that, even though the family-friendly measures are available to both male and female employees,

the feedback received was that the majority of those availing themselves of family-friendly measures are women. On this same line of thought, some participants also claimed that the family-friendly measures are not really conducive to women entering the labour market, and it is because of this that teleworking and reduced hours should be promoted more in this regard.

Another common perception among the focus group participants was that family-friendly measures are many times considered as a burden. This is because when an employee makes use of an alternative working arrangement, which involves his/her absence from the workplace, his/her workload has to be divided among the other working colleagues.

It is on this wavelength that many suggested the reintroduction of casual substitutes within the Public Service and the Public Sector. Some of the focus group participants also proposed a pool of substitutes which would be employed within the Public Service and the Public Sector on fulltime basis, who are then allocated to particular departments which experience shortage of staff due to absence because of family-friendly measures.

Participants pertaining to the top management, in particular, also explained that family-friendly measures reduce the abuse of sick leave among public officials, and make the employees emotively committed to their work. Moreover, as will be noted in the next chapters, good management is of utmost importance in availing employees with family-friendly measures.



5. Implementing Gender Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming brings the experience, knowledge and interests of both women and men on the same level of importance. Institutions and organisations may need to change goals, strategies and actions to ensure that both men and women participate in progress in their career. The main goal of Gender Mainstreaming is that of transforming unequal social and institutional structures into equal and just structures for both males and females. This would eradicate discrimination that may result due to one's gender.

Through Gender Mainstreaming, the needs of both women and men are considered. Through this process, the capabilities of an individual are valued irrespective of their gender. Both men and women benefit from the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming.

5.1 Why is Gender Mainstreaming essential in the place of work¹⁷?

Arguments for Gender Mainstreaming:

- Achievement of Social Justice Goals: Equality & Fairness
- Fulfilment of Legal Obligations
- Efficiency and Effectiveness

Gender Mainstreaming makes full use of human resources by involving both women and men. Access to employment opportunities are made equal through Gender Mainstreaming. Moreover, by introducing Gender Mainstreaming, policies would be gender inclusive while addressing the diversity between men and women. This would, in turn, make sure that such organisational policies

will not negatively affect any of the genders. Gender Mainstreaming thus leads to better administration.

Through Gender Mainstreaming, organisations can also improve their efficiency and effectiveness by maximising the human resources potential and by identifying and addressing local needs more effectively. Trained individuals would not be lost, if work arrangements such as reduced hours of work and teleworking are provided. In the light of flexible working arrangements, Gender Mainstreaming therefore helps to retain valuable and trained staff, because it takes into consideration the needs of both genders. Gender Mainstreaming also allows new ideas and concepts to be created by involving both genders in decision-making and in think tanks.

In the context of democracy and fair play, there is also a moral imperative which demands that proactive measures to ensure equality between women and men are pursued. There are also a number of requirements, both at EU and national level, which policymakers and practitioners are obliged to fulfil.

¹⁷ Council of Europe, 1999.

5.2 National Public Service and Public Sector Initiatives in Gender Mainstreaming

This section opens by focusing on the ways in which Gender Mainstreaming is implemented within the Public Sector and the Public Service. Reference is here particularly made to the availability of family-friendly measures, teleworking and the equality committees. This section then proceeds to focus on *The Public Service Management Code*, a document which is also regarded as a tool that sets up the gender equality culture within the civil service.

5.2.1 Family-Friendly Measures in the Public Sector

Family-friendly measures consist of those policies that facilitate the balance between work and family life. These measures help facilitate parental integration in both work and care, and thus promote the possibility of maintaining employment through various work arrangements. Family-friendly measures are available to all public sector employees¹⁸. The availability of family-friendly measures is one way of how Gender Mainstreaming is implemented within the local Public Sector. The list below refers to those benefits that are available to public officers on a substantive appointment.

Benefits available to Expectant Mothers

Maternity Leave	Fourteen weeks paid leave of which six weeks are to be availed of compulsorily after confinement.
Special Maternity Leave	Five weeks absence to be deducted from sick leave entitlement to ato resume duties due to a pathological condition arising out of confinement.

Benefits available to Fathers

Birth Leave	Two working days paid leave, to be taken within fifteen days of the occasion of the birth of their child.
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¹⁸ MPO, 2008 [a].

Benefits available to Both Parents

Adoption Leave	Up to five weeks adoption leave with pay available to the adoptive mother or father. This starts from the day that a child passes into their custody. If both parents are public officers, they may share this leave provided that they do not take adoption leave at the same time.
Leave to Foster Children	Special unpaid leave for a period which does not exceed one year.
Parental Leave	One year unpaid leave to take care of children under the age of six. This is available to public officers, who are parents, including adoptive parents, who have been in government employment for at least one year.
Career Break¹⁹	A career break of five years is available to public officers. This is granted once only for the care of children under six years of age.
Special Leave to accompany Spouse Abroad	A year of unpaid leave is granted to public officers to accompany their spouse abroad on government sponsored courses or assignments. This leave is renewable yearly on application for a maximum of four years.

Benefits available to Both Parents

Marriage Leave	Three working days paid leave on the occasion of the marriage of the full-time employee, to start not later than the first working day following the event.
Reduced Hours	Full-time public officers who have been serving for at least one year may be allowed to work on a reduced timetable of 20, 25 or 30 hours to look after children under twelve years of age, to care for dependent parents, children or spouses or, if they are over 50 years of age, for medical or serious humanitarian, family reasons or other specified reasons.
Urgent Family Leave	Four half-day (16 hours) leave from the annual vacation leave entitlement may be utilised by full-time employees on the grounds of force majeure for urgent family reasons. Such circumstances include: a. accidents to members of the immediate family of the employee; b. the sudden illness or sickness of any member of the immediate family of the employee requiring the assistance or the presence of the employee; c. the presence during births and deaths of members of the immediate family of the employee ²⁰ .
30 Days Unpaid Leave	These may be granted for any good reason. Adequate arrangements must be made with the employer beforehand.

A number of the good practices, related to the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming within the public sector and the public service, identified for this document, refer to some of the family-friendly measures described above. This was specifically done to highlight the fact that good management can easily lead to a working environment in which family-friendly measures are available.

5.2.2 Teleworking

Teleworking is defined as a “form of organising and/or performing work, using information technology, in the context of an employment contract/relationship, where work, which could be performed at the employer’s premises, is carried out away from those premises on a regular basis”²¹. Through such arrangement Gender Mainstreaming is also implemented, in that a person with family responsibilities can still be engaged in paid labour, whilst accommodating his/her needs.

The Public Administration of Malta has launched a teleworking policy in February 2008, which applies to all public employees. Moreover, Legal Notice 312/2008 has also been published in November 2008, with regards to teleworking. Such working arrangement supports employees and helps them to combine work with family responsibilities. It offers the possibility for employers to retain experienced employees and continue to benefit from their input, thus maintaining and possibly improving their department’s output.

All employees, whose job performance traits and skills, as well as the nature of their job are suitable for telework, can engage in this working arrangement as long as their place of work can support this. Teleworking is however voluntary and at the discretion of the director of the department, and cannot be demanded as a right by the employee. Neither can it be enforced as an obligation by the Head of the Department.

Some of the good practices related to the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming within the public sector are about teleworking. This practice is promoted since it is a manner through which the employee can achieve a better work-life balance.

5.2.3 Equality Committees

The Equality Committees consist of a network of officers from different departments within each Ministry. These work together as a point of reference for employees to ensure that equality is mainstreamed in all workings of each ministry. These equality committees are a development of the focal points that were established through the following circulars:

- OPM Circular No 133/89
Sex Equality
- OPM Circular No 66/91
Implementation Process for Equality Between Women and Men
- OPM Circular No 17/98
More Effective Focal Points on Gender Equality
- OPM Circular No 24/2000
Gender Mainstreaming

¹⁹ Three months of either the parental leave or the career break may be reserved or utilised by employees until the child reaches eight years of age. Three months unpaid leave of the total parental leave may be broken up in periods of one month at a time.

²⁰ In this regard, the ‘immediate family’ means the husband, wife and married or unmarried children, as well as family relations up to the first degree, whether living in the same household or not, and persons having legal custody of child. No advance notification is required to be given by the employee except in those cases where it is possible for the employee to give at least twenty-four hours notice of an event which is to take place and which requires the absence of the employee from the place of work for urgent family reasons.

²¹ MPO, 2008 [b].

Equality Committees within the Public Sector and the Public Service are to act on two remits, being race and gender. These committees are responsible to promote awareness on equality issues. They have to implement and monitor an equality policy and a sexual harassment policy. Equality Committees should also act as a point of reference for members of staff. They are responsible to mainstream equality. Moreover, these committees should liaise and report to the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE). On the other hand, NCPE regularly provides training to update gender equality committee members on equality legislation whilst providing further knowledge on equality issues. These committees also give feedback on their work through the questionnaires distributed by NCPE on a regular basis.

5.2.4 The Public Service Management Code

The Public Service Management Code (PSMC), is a document compiled by the Management and Personnel Office, which brings together all the regulations, circulars and policies on Human Resources Management in the fields of Employee Relations and Resourcing in the Public Service²².

This document also focuses on gender issues which are related to the daily execution within the public service, as portrayed in the following sections.

5.2.4.1 Equality of Opportunity

This code contains guidelines for members of interviewing boards, which are aimed at eradicating the discrimination on the grounds of gender and/or family responsibilities, whilst promoting the equality of opportunity in employment. This code maintains that:

- i. Applications from women and men should be processed in exactly the same way.
- ii. Records of interviews should be kept, when practicable showing why applicants were not selected.
- iii. Persons should be assessed according to their personal capability to carry out a given job. It is therefore discriminatory to assess persons on the grounds of gender and/or family responsibilities.
- iv. Questions asked during interviews should relate to the requirements of the job. Questions asked about family responsibilities or intentions should not be asked as they could be construed as showing gender bias.
- v. It should not be assumed that men only or women only will be able to perform certain types of work.
- vi. In the case of promotion, when general ability and personal qualities are the main requirements for promotion to a post, care should be taken to consider favourably the non formal qualifications arising from general experience and differing career patterns of candidates either gender.

(MPO, 2008, p. 27).

Such guidelines are aimed at eliminating gender discrimination related to employment. In fact, it is illegal to refuse a job interview, a job or a promotion to someone on the basis of gender or family responsibilities.

²² MPO, 2008 [c].

5.2.4.2 Advertisements of Vacancies

In light of the fact that the Maltese Law contains provisions which prohibit discrimination in vacancy advertising²³, the PSMC also makes reference to the advertisement of vacancies. This document argues that “[w]here applicable, advertisements are to carry reference to gender-inclusiveness immediately after the title of the call [...]” (MPO, 2008, p. 37)²⁴. This inclusion is a temporary measure until the discussions at the next collective agreement and the nomenclature are changed to terms that are gender inclusive.

Through OPM Circular No 133/89, issued in the 20th of November 1989, the civil service was recommended to start using neutral language “to eliminate sex stereotypes” and stop reinforcing them. Through such policy, the participation of both genders in paid labour was also encouraged. In fact the same circular maintains that calls for applications for the filling of vacant posts must be open to both males and females.

5.2.4.3 Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment refers to any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature. Such behaviour is unlawful. In line with the PSMC’s clause on sexual harassment, reference is made to a document entitled, ‘The Public Service: Guidelines on what constitutes sexual harassment and on the procedure to be adopted in cases of sexual harassment’. Such code of behaviour exists because the Public Service is committed to promote a dignified working environment and a harmonious relationship amongst all public officers (MPO, 2008, p. 363).

Even though the PSMC offers a very positive initiative towards Gender Mainstreaming and gender equality, one way to solidify and safeguard such initiative could be through the writing down of an Equality Policy. In fact one of the ways through which an organisation’s commitment to equality is solidified is through a Gender Equality Policy, as will be highlighted in the next section.

²³ In particular, reference is made to article 10 of the Equality for Men and Women Act, Chapter 456 of the Laws of Malta.

²⁴ The NCPE suggests that rather than re-gendering, the act of de-gendering should be given more importance (NCPE, 2008, p. 57). The NCPE has in fact issued guidelines for the production of vacancy adverts

5.3 Gender Mainstreaming Tools

This section proposes three other tools which beg implementation to mainstream gender further within the Public Service and the Public Sector. The tools that will be mentioned here are the Gender Equality Policy, the Gender Audit and the Gender Impact Assessment. Through the focus groups conducted as part of the project *Living Equality – VS/2007/0442*, it was established that the Public Service and Public Sector does not make use of these Gender Mainstreaming tools as yet. Information on these tools is therefore at this stage given for future implementation of these tools.

5.3.1 The Gender Equality Policy

A Gender Equality Policy signifies an organisation's commitment to promote equality in concrete terms. The equality policy should be written, and it should be reviewed and updated regularly. The implementation of such a policy could also exonerate an employer from legal liability in certain circumstances.

Equality policies should be in line with current legislations. They should have been the subject of consultation with individuals and groups within the wider working environments. Such policy should also be available to all those who come in contact with the particular organisation. The top management of the organisations should also explicitly endorse this policy.

The Equality Policy should contain the following details:

- a clear definition of Gender Equality, in line with relevant legislation;
- a clear statement that gender discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation is unlawful;
- a reference to employment;
- a reference to service delivery issues;
- a reference to the implementation and monitoring the policy and how this will be achieved;
- a reference to whose responsibility it is to implement the policy;
- a reference to disciplinary and grievance procedures;
- a reference to training and developing staff to promote equality.

5.3.2 The Gender Audit

The Gender Audit is a Gender Mainstreaming tool, through which an institution or department is analysed from a gender perspective at one point in time. Many organisations now use the term 'audit' for what previously they would have called an evaluation.

The Gender Audit came into use because the most commonly cited constraint about Gender Mainstreaming at the operational level was the lack of effective, consistent and systematic monitoring and evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming outcomes and impacts²⁵. Due to the fact that the Gender Audit analyses and evaluates policies, programmes and institutions

²⁵ Mikkelsen et al., 2002.

in terms of how they apply gender related criteria it was regarded as a solution to this 'problem'. In light of the fact that the Gender Audit examines not just accounts but also the systems and processes within institutions, the recognition of this Gender Mainstreaming tool has been derived from a growing awareness of the central role of organisational structure and culture in the design and delivery of gender-sensitive programmes and projects.

The Gender Audit requires consistent and demonstrated political will from the top management within an organisation. Gender Audits are primarily or heavily focused on the internal organisational self-assessments. The participatory components of gender audits comprise questionnaires and focus group-based planning processes, to assess results and to design an action plan. Gender-desegregated statistics are also an important requirement for Gender Auditing to be possible.

Working on gender issues obliges organisations to change aspects of the organisational culture which discriminate against particular actors on the basis of gender²⁸. On this wavelength, Gender Auditing allows reporting and the development of a process whereby an organisation can account for its social performance. It considers the staff's perception and understanding in an organisation. This leads to the development of an action plan for gender integration within an organisation, through which the areas that have to be changed are identified and the way forward is highlighted.

The Gender Audit process consists of the following steps²⁶:

1. A brief review of the current gender integration strategy adopted by the particular organisation is carried out.
2. A context-specific working definition of Gender Mainstreaming is provided. For example, the Department for International Development Malawi (DFIDM) construed Gender Mainstreaming as a "twin-strategy" involving the integration of women's and men's concerns in all policies and projects, and specific activities to be developed aimed at empowering women²⁷.
3. The appropriate quantitative or qualitative indicators with which to assess progress in Gender Mainstreaming should be identified.
4. A survey of staff attitudes about a range of gender issues within the organisation is carried out.
5. Findings are analysed and discussed.
6. An action plan is created to address the issues raised during the audit process. Change is therefore addressed in a tangible manner.

²⁶ International Labour Organisation, 2007.

²⁷ Moser, 2005.

²⁸ Sweetman, 1997.

5.3.3 The Gender Impact Assessment

The Gender Impact Assessment is also a Gender Mainstreaming tool, which is implemented at an early stage of the decision-making process when introducing new policies. This assessment is carried out to avoid unintended negative consequences and improve the quality and efficiency of policies before these are enforced. The Gender Impact Assessment compares and assesses the current situation with the expected development resulting from the introduction of the new policy.

Many might think that several policies are gender-neutral, in that they do not affect any of the genders in a different manner, but the truth

is very far from such a statement. The Gender Impact Assessment is purposely carried out to analyse how the introduction of a new policy can affect the genders differently.

In order to gender mainstream a policy, policy makers need to look at the resources which are available for women and men. The representation of women and men in decision making positions should also be addressed. Policy makers need also to look at the differences in what women and men experience in the daily lives. Particular gender roles are still being attributed by society and unless these are eradicated by society, individuals may not be free to pursue their particular ambitions.

The Gender Impact Assessment is carried out in the following manner:

1. Identification of the 'problematic' areas:
Those responsible for the Gender Impact Assessment have to be proactive and work closely with policy makers to produce policies which promote equality. Help can also be sought from the Gender Equality Committees and from NCPE.
2. Mapping of the gender relevance of the particular policy:
At this stage one asks: How will the particular policy affect gender equality? Common indicators which are very often found to relate differently according to gender are:
 - i. Participation (example the representation of men and women in decision-making posts);
 - ii. Distribution of resources (one gender may have more access to particular resources than the others); and
 - iii. Norms and values related to gender roles.
3. Envisioning – Creating Equality:
At this stage one asks: What can be done to achieve gender equality in the new policy?
4. Road Testing:
This stage is also referred to as the Gender Sensitising of the policy process. Ideas are at this stage pilot tested with consultative groups.
5. Monitoring and Evaluation:
Through this step, it is determined whether promoting gender equality through the new policy has been successful or not.

Gender Mainstreaming involves being sensitive to the needs of both genders. It involves valuing the capabilities of individuals irrespective of their gender. In implementing Gender Mainstreaming, organisations need to establish a structural and cultural basis to guarantee equal opportunities. This can be especially achieved by defining clear-cut responsibilities with regards to the Gender Mainstreaming process, and with finding sufficient resources for implementation, especially for the implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Tools.

It has to be highlighted that both genders gain from the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Equality. Elimination of employment stereotypes, for example, offers new opportunities for both genders. Facilitating

Gender Mainstreaming also means that the flexibility of the new roles, for example, through the utilisation of family friendly measures, will prove beneficial when compared to the rigidity of the gender stereotyped roles²⁹. It is therefore in the interest of all organisations to promote Gender Mainstreaming as a process which leads to Gender Equality.

The next chapter will now delve in promoting the good practices related to the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming within the Public Service and the Public Sector identified through this project. The promotion of these good practices is aimed at further replication of these practices in other policy areas and departments.



²⁹ Lang, 2003.

6. Good Practices in Gender Mainstreaming

Good practices constitute any initiative, policy or guidelines adopted to promote integration and ensure a culture of equality and respect amongst all persons, in this case on the grounds of gender.

Apart from being compiled in this document, some of the identified good practices and initiatives were also promoted through an Electronic Newsletter which has also been designed and distributed as part of the project Living Equality – VS/2007/0442, with the aim of promoting debate on the implementation process of Gender Mainstreaming within the Public Service and the Public Sector.

The Good Practices selected for the purpose of this publication revolve around three themes, these being:

1. Alternative Working Arrangements
2. Measures Addressing Child-Related Responsibilities
3. Communication of Information

The good practices within the first two categories were identified because *The Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men*³⁰ highlights the reconciliation of private and professional life as one of the ways through which Gender Mainstreaming is implemented. The reconciliation of private and professional life can be achieved through flexible work arrangements which are available for both women and men.

Flexible work arrangements are said to³¹:

- create a flexible economy;
- improve the quality of women's and men's lives;
- help people enter and stay in the labour market;
- use the full potential of the workforce;
- boost productivity; and to
- enhance employee satisfaction and the employer's reputation.

The good practices related to the third category, Communication of Information, have been selected on the basis of the importance which is attached to the process of having employees informed about their role in Gender Mainstreaming, and about the measures available to them that helps them achieve a better work-life balance.

It is important to add that the information which is presented here has been communicated to NCPE by the departments concerned. The information has not been changed in any way, except for editing purposes. It is good to be noted that all listed good practices were totally the initiative of the entities concerned. NCPE was only instrumental in bringing the information forward.

³⁰ Europa, 2006.

³¹ Ibid.

6.1 Alternative Work Arrangements

6.1.1 Flexi-Hours³²

Main Actors Involved:

Department of Contracts³³

Target Group:

All staff at the Department of Contracts

Date Introduced:

01 July 2008

Reasons for Good Practice:

This practice was introduced to allow the staff to address family commitments more easily. The introduction of the electronic attendance verification system made the introduction of Flexi-Hours easier. The introduction of this family-friendly measure helped to increase the efficiency of the staff performance and, consequently that of the Department.

Aim of Good Practice:

This practice was aimed at increasing staff motivation, therefore improving the Department's efficiency, and increasing staff flexibility, thus leading to a greater work-life balance.

Communication:

An internal communication was circulated. This was compiled and distributed by the Director General of the Department of Contracts.

Description of Practice:

The internal circular stated that: *The Department of Contracts shall be open as follows: Winter: from 06:45 to 19:15; Summer: from 06:30 to 15:30. Every staff member can opt to arrive earlier*

or stay over the usual indicated hours (Winter 07:45-17:15; Summer 07:30-13:30). All staff is expected to be at work during the Core Business Hours namely between 09:45 and 12:30. Whoever arrives later than 09:45, a half-day vacation leave shall be deducted from the yearly entitlement.

In line with the introduction of the flexi-hours, an electronic Attendance Verification System was also introduced.

Beneficiaries:

Since the introduction of flexi-hours, all staff members, namely 38 persons, have made use of this practice.

Positive Elements of the Practice:

The staff is more motivated and committed towards their work. The staff's performance and that of the department became more efficient.

Negative Elements of the Practice:

During the first few weeks of implementation, some staff members were overstaying at work and accumulating time-off even when their services were not necessarily required. This issue was addressed immediately and specific instructions, by the Director General, were given with regards to the schedule.

Additional Information:

This practice is highly recommended as flexi-hours facilitate the day-to-day running of the department, increases efficiency of the staff and also increases the staff's emotive commitment to their work. It also helps to make the best use of each worker's potential. In practice, it has proven to be one of the most important family-friendly measures.

³² The information contained in this section has been communicated to NCPE by the Department of Contracts.

³³ Within the Ministry of Finance, the Economy and Investment.

6.1.2 Reduced Hours (Case 1)³⁴

Main Actors Involved:

Saint Vincent de Paul Residence³⁵

Target Group:

All public officers who have been serving for at least one year, except officers in top management positions.

Date Introduced:

10 June 1999

Reasons for Good Practice:

This practice was introduced for better work-life balance. Reduced Hours are granted because of the following reasons:

- taking care of children till 12 years of age;
- taking care of elderly parents;
- taking care of disabled/dependent spouse or children;
- employees over 50 years of age, unable to work on fulltime basis due to medical or serious humanitarian and family reasons.

Aims of Good Practice:

This good practice was introduced because of a greater workforce which is bringing up their children or taking care of elderly parents.

Communication:

Through OPM circulars.

Description of Good Practice:

The following working schedules were implemented:

- 20 hours a week (reduction of 50% of the normal working hours)
- 25 hours a week (reduction of 62.5% of the normal working hours)
- 30 hours a week (reduction of 75% of the normal working hours)

The reduced hour rosters were arranged over three, four or five days a week to fit both personal and work situations.

Beneficiaries:

By Gender:

Females: 53; Males: 2

By Grade:

Enrolled Nurses: 15
Nursing Aides: 12
Assistant Principal Podologist: 1
Executive Officers: 3
Assistant Principal Physiotherapist: 1
Care Workers: 2
Senior Occupational Therapists: 3
Clerks: 4
Assistant Principals: 2
Senior Physiotherapist: 1
Senior Clerk: 1
Assistant Principal Occupational Therapist: 1
Hospital Auxiliaries: 3
Staff Nurses: 2
Ward Clerks: 2
Senior Podologist: 1

By Age:

25 – 30 years = 7
31 – 35 years = 18
36 – 40 years = 14
41 – 45 years = 9
46 – 50 years = 7

By Marital Status:

Married: 52
Single: 3

³⁴ The information contained in this section has been communicated to NCPE by Saint Vincent de Paul Residence.

³⁵ Within the Ministry for Social Policy.

Positive Elements for the Practice:

Employees do not lose their posts during these particular periods of acute family responsibilities. Through this family-friendly measure, employees can achieve a better work-life balance. The department does not lose the experience of these employees, because after a certain number of years, they return to their fulltime work schedule.

Overcoming Stumbling Blocks:

More employees were added to the workforce to make up for the employees on reduced hours. In many instances other employees working on reduced hours were recruited.

Additional Information:

This practice is recommended because it helps employees achieve a better work-life balance. Trained staff is better retained by the particular Department.

6.1.3 Reduced Hours (Case 2)³⁶

Main Actors Involved:

Department for Pharmaceutical Policy and Monitoring³⁷

Target Group:

All public officers who have been serving for at least one year. In this department, employees who make use of reduced hours having young children.

Date Introduced:

February 2008

Communication:

Through Circulars and the *Public Service Management Code*

Reasons for the Good Practice:

This good practice is needed to avoid hardship on employees who have young children and simultaneously attract more employees to work in this department. In this way parents of young children would be less likely to take long parental leave or terminate their employment. Reduced hours will be granted until the child reaches the age of 12 years.

Aim of the Good Practice:

The aim is to make the work environment as family friendly as possible.

Description of Good Practice:

The employee chooses the set of working hours that are considered more adequate for his/her responsibilities towards his/her family and which also fits the need of the department.

Beneficiaries:

Three married females, all pharmacists with young children.

Positive Elements of the Practice:

Employees have returned to their workplace without unnecessarily lengthening of their parental leave.

Negative Elements of the Practice:

Employees are not present during all hours in the workplace;

Solution: Communication by emails or printed memos.

Employees might need the same days not to report to work;

Solution: A plan is made such that there will not be more than one employee absent from work on reduced hours on a particular day.

³⁶ The information contained in this section has been communicated to NCPE by the Department for Pharmaceutical Policy and Monitoring.

³⁷ Within the Ministry for Social Policy.

6.1.4 Teleworking (Case 1)³⁸

Main Actors Involved:

Social Security Division³⁹

Target Group:

As per OPM Teleworking Policy, in principle, all employees, whose job performance traits and skills as well as the nature of their job, are suitable for telework, can engage in telework. Qualifying employees whether engaged on a fulltime or part-time basis, including persons working on reduced hours, on a definite or indefinite contract can telework.

Reasons for Good Practice:

Teleworking contributes towards facilitating the work-life balance of employees who have caring responsibilities. It offers more flexibility both to the management and to the employees.

Aim of the Good Practice:

To retain trained personnel who otherwise would have opted to avail themselves of unpaid leave or reduced hours.

Communication:

OPM circulars.

Description of Good Practice:

Social Security employees report at the office for at least 10% of their total working time to keep in touch with colleagues. At the office, they deal with any queries arising from the work carried out during teleworking while the bulk of the work is carried out at home.

Beneficiaries:

The Social Security Division already employs six officers (one male and five females) on telework. Another nine officers are being furnished with hardware and IT connection and will start teleworking in the coming days. All these officers were either on reduced hours or had to reconsider other employment options. Retraining is also being done on a regular basis.

Positive Elements of this Practice:

Instead of having employees utilising long leave, management can use this potential by encouraging telework and other family-friendly measures like reduced hours. It is also by far easier to retrain an officer who has a working background, especially in this sector, rather than training a new employee.

Negative Elements of this Practice:

Not all officers may be capable of working from home without supervision. Specific aptitudes are necessary.

Additional Information:

Strict supervision is essential to monitor teleworkers and their output. Supervisors should be in contact with these officers to ensure smooth running of the operation. In each and every case, both the officer and the organisation have to gain from teleworking. Otherwise, the objective behind this family-friendly measure would not be attained. Management also needs specific training to apply teleworking.

³⁸ The information contained in this section has been communicated to NCPE by the Social Security Division.

³⁹ Within the Ministry for Social Policy.

6.1.5 Teleworking (Case 2)⁴⁰

Main Actors Involved:

Department of Health Information⁴¹

Target Group:

All the staff

Date Introduced:

Late 2007

Communication:

Through an MPO circular

Reasons for Good Practice:

Teleworking is usually granted to staff to permit them to carry out work which does not require presence at the office whilst remaining in line with the Data Protection Act.

Aim of Good Practice:

This practice is aimed at increasing staff satisfaction and at increasing a work-life balance. Teleworking increases productivity and flexibility between personal and work schedules.

Description of Practice:

Quantifiable targets are set out prior to signing the teleworking arrangement and this is regularly reviewed.

Beneficiaries:

3 female employees: 1 assistant principal, 1 medical doctor, 1 clerk. These are aged between 34 and 39.

Positive Elements of the Practice:

Higher productivity is reported. Moreover, employees are more flexible in their work-life commitments. All this results in higher job satisfaction.

Additional Information:

Teleworking is recommended because productivity increased in the Department of Health Information, as explained above.

⁴⁰ This information contained in this section has been communicated to us by the Department of Health Information.

⁴¹ Within the Ministry for Social Policy.

6.1.6 Teleworking (Case 3)⁴²

Main Actors Involved:

Customer Services Department, Ministry for Gozo

Target Group:

Public Officers below Scale 5, and not on probation, whose tasks and duties could be carried out from home through telework

Date Introduced:

August 2008

Communication:

Communication was through circulars, electronic and regular mail to all staff. The measure was also personally communicated by the Head of Department to applicants for Maternity Leave, Paternal Leave, Reduced Hours timetable as well as Responsibility Leave.

Description of Practice:

Each application is evaluated and discussed with the Section Head who will be directly responsible for the teleworker. In cases where the tasks being performed by the applicants did not permit telework entirely, there were discussions with co-workers, who were office based, to shift tasks that can be done by telework for the teleworker, and the other tasks to the office-based worker. When changing tasks with a co-worker was not possible, the telework applicant was offered the possibility of a transfer to another section where possible. Naturally, the provision of the Telework Policy issued by MPO were followed in each case. The Section Head reports monthly to the Head of Department on each teleworker.

Beneficiaries:

In the three months since this practice was started, six applications have been processed. Three have started teleworking. Two are females, and one is male. The other three pending applicants are still on Maternity Leave, and are expected to come back to work after the fourteen weeks expire. There are four more applications being processed.

Positive Elements of the Practice:

Employees are retained at work and office based workers are more supportive of colleagues on Telework. So far, there appears to be no negative change in the section's output and all output targets and deadlines have been met.

Negative Elements of the Practice:

Two main stumbling blocks were encountered:

1. The issue of web-based IT systems and Security
2. Departmental Financial constraints to supply IT equipment to Teleworkers for home use.

The first obstacle was overcome by agreeing with the Teleworkers that inputting of data on IT work systems had to be done at the office, so they had the option of either swapping the inputting with another task with an office based colleague, or else attending for work at the office for the number of hours required by the inputting task.

The second obstacle was overcome through an agreement with the employee being granted approval for Telework to use their equipment at home. All agreed.

⁴² The information contained in this section has been communicated to NCPE by the Customer Services Department in Gozo.

6.2 Measures Addressing Child-Related Responsibilities

6.2.1 Childcare Provision⁴³

Main Actors Involved:

Employment & Training Corporation (ETC)

Target Group:

ETC staff and management, and private paying individuals.

Date Introduced:

Started in 2004. Practice is still ongoing.

Funding:

Part-financed by the ETC budget and service fees paid by parents.

Reason for Good Practice:

It is a family-friendly measure that encourages ETC staff to remain or return to employment earlier when they have children. The service is financially accessible to all staff. ETC staff members are provided with quality Childcare service that is flexible and affordable besides providing a healthy and happy environment for children.

Description of Practice:

- Provision of childcare service during ETC's normal working hours for children from 3 months to 3 years;
- Provision of child care service for children over 3 years during the school holidays

The Childcare service consists of a varied programme of activities, including water play, construction play, painting and colouring, and other forms of creative play.

The Childcare service is run by two qualified child carers, employed by ETC.

Beneficiaries:

Five workers currently make use of this service, whereas fourteen workers made use of the service during the summer of 2008. At the moment there are eight children enrolled in the Childcare service.

Outcome/Results of Practice:

- The ETC retained the expertise of its workforce;
- Staff had the opportunity to remain in employment instead of utilising the parental leave;
- The childcare service stimulates and enhances the children's emotional, social and educational development.

Main Weaknesses/Obstacles:

- Limitation of space: a tennis court will be used to increase the space available and address this problems;
- Budget limitation: ETC is seeking to obtain a sponsorship.

⁴³ The information contained in this section has been communicated to NCPE by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC).

6.2.2 Child-Friendly Offices⁴⁴

Main Actors Involved:

Department for Pharmaceutical Policy and Monitoring⁴⁵

Target Group:

Employees in this department who have young children

Date Introduced:

Introduced in August 2008, when this department was transferred to the current premises.

Communication:

Through Staff Meetings

Reasons for Good Practice:

This practice is needed to avoid hardship on employees who have young children and simultaneously attract more employees to work in this department. In this way parents of young children would be less likely to take long parental leave or terminate their employment. All staff having children can benefit from this measure.

Aim of Good Practice:

The aim is to make the work environment as family-friendly as possible, and attract parents with young children to work in this department.

Description of Good Practice:

Children can be brought to the officer and use the 'playroom' where they can play, read or do their homework, without interfering with the duties of the employees. The 'playroom' consists of a room with fitted carpets and no furniture except a table and some chairs. There are no carers in this directorate, so the children who are aged from 7 years upwards can draw and play with toys which they bring from home. A health assistant looks on them frequently as do the employees. The room is situated next to the offices so that the door can (or not) be left open for communication between the child and the parent/other staff.

This is not a child-minding facility, so child-friendly offices are not used routinely but sporadically when the parents need extra support. The other offices are also large enough and comfortable enough for a parent to bring a younger child if a problem is encountered with the usual child-minding facilities or if children have a school vacation.

Positive Elements of the Practice:

Employees will return to their workplace without unnecessarily lengthening their parental leave.

Additional Information:

This practice is recommended as it improves the employees' morale and makes the workplace a more pleasurable working environment. This practice is not used often as all parents have alternative child-minding arrangements. However, it is good to know that if a problem arises, these child-friendly offices can be temporarily used as needed.

⁴⁴ The information contained in this section has been communicated to NCPE by the Department for Pharmaceutical Policy and Monitoring.

⁴⁵ Within the Ministry for Social Policy.

⁴⁶ The information contained in this section has been communicated to NCPE by the Employee Relations Directorate, MPO.

6.3 Communication of Information

6.3.1 Brochure on Family-Friendly Measures in the Public Service⁴⁶

Main Actors Involved:

Employee Relations Directorate, MPO

Target Group:

The general public, and in particular employees in the public service and in the public sector.

Timeframe:

The brochure was published in December 2006 and distributed throughout 2007.

Funding:

The brochure was funded by ESF – 75% and Malta Government – 25%.

Reasons for Good Practice:

To inform people about the family-friendly measures in the public service and in the public sector.

Aim of Good Practice:

To encourage greater participation/retention of females in the workforce by informing them of the measures available to help them balance family/work responsibilities.

Description of Practice:

The brochure listed and briefly described the family-friendly measures in the public service. These also became applicable to the public sector following the budget speech of 2007.

Positive Elements of the Practice:

Better informed staff and encouragement of staff to avail themselves of these measures. The brochure was well received by departments and employees.

Additional Information:

Information about the family-friendly measures can be obtained from many sources. The MPO promotes the family-friendly measures through government circulars, seminars and through correspondence with departments and employees who are free to consult this departments or their respective Human Resource Managers/Directors Corporate Services. This brochure can be updated since the MPO is continually improving on the family-friendly measures. In order to increase effectiveness the MPO is open to new ideas on how best to present the information utilising the expertise of a professional designer.

⁴⁶ The information contained in this section has been communicated to NCPE by the Employee Relations Directorate, MPO.

6.3.2 Manual on Family-Friendly Measures⁴⁷

Main Actors Involved:

Employee Relations Directorate, MPO

Target Group:

The general public, and in particular employees in the public service and in the public sector.

Timeframe:

Work on the manual commenced in May 2008. It was uploaded on the Employee Relations website in July 2008.

Reasons for Good Practice:

To group all the family-friendly measures available to the public service and the public sector employees, in one publication, for ease of reference.

Description of Good Practice:

The main objective is to give a brief outline of the family-friendly measures, in customer-friendly language, with references from where further information can be obtained. This manual appears online as an appendix to the *Public Service Management Code*, which also contains detailed information about the family-friendly measures.

Outcomes/Result of Practice:

Information on family-friendly measures is easily accessible for everyone. Queries are answered without employees having to contact our office.

Positive Elements of the Practice:

- Transparency of procedures;
- Grouping of family-friendly measures in one handbook;
- Simple layout in customer-friendly language.

Negative Elements:

New policies might not be reflected in the manual until it is updated.

Reproducibility:

The manual is available online for the personal, non-commercial use of the general public. However, the material is covered by the provisions of the Copyright Act. Therefore, if the material is reproduced, it should be reproduced faithfully and MPO should be identified as the source.

Additional Information:

Positive reactions were received from persons that used this manual.

7. Conclusion

The promotion of gender equality in Malta is a complex matter that is intricately merged into all aspects of social history, current society and social relations. Gender mainstreaming should not only be implemented because of ethical and legal reasons, but also for the business benefits it is known to deliver.

This document, particularly the good practices presented herein, is particularly aimed at raising awareness on existing initiatives related to gender mainstreaming within the Public Service and the Public Sector. This will enhance the possibility of a multiplier effect within the public administration.

The availability of family-friendly measures is particularly encouraged as one way through which work-life balance can be achieved. Research commissioned by NCPE (2006) indicates that both employers and employees regard family-friendly measures as beneficial. Employers particularly attribute a number of positive elements to the availability of family-friendly measures, like increased

effort among beneficiaries, more employee loyalty, management efficiency and increased cooperation among workers. Employees, on the other hand, report more control of when and how to work, less frustration with organisational or technical support and more job satisfaction and security.

The process of gender mainstreaming should be upheld because it results in gender equality. Through such equality, gender no longer influences the notion of one's rights and opportunities. Individuals would instead be valued according to their capabilities. Gender stereotypes are further eradicated through gender mainstreaming, and individuals would be free to further their career and life ambitions independent of their gender.

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