

United Nations Gender Mainstreaming Strategy:

Achievements and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

The paper provides an overview of the mandates, efforts and achievements in implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy at both policy and programme level in the United Nations. Progress in gender mainstreaming in both the intergovernmental processes and in the operational work of entities of the United Nations system is covered. The paper notes the persistent gap between policy and practice and highlights that, despite considerable efforts made, gender perspectives are still not an integral part of policies and programmes in the work of the United Nations. Major gaps and challenges in relation to use of gender analysis, development of gender equality policies, the roles of gender specialists, development of organizational competence and management commitment and accountability are outlined. The paper concludes that, despite failings in implementation, gender mainstreaming remains a critical strategy and considerably increased investment in the strategy is needed across the United Nations to ensure achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women.

Key words: United Nations, gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, competence development

Background

Gender mainstreaming was established as a global strategy for promoting gender equality because previous strategies had not been successful. Lessons learned from implementation of special projects for women in the 1970s and 1980s illustrated that, while such activities are essential for women's empowerment, by themselves they can not bring about the required changes in equality between women and men. Activities focused exclusively on women tended to be marginalized and did not always increase women's access to critical resources and decision-making processes³. The integration strategy of the 1980s attempted to address these failings by incorporating women's perspectives into project design and implementation. However, women's perspectives were usually perceived as additional components or 'add-ons' and were incorporated too late in processes to have any real impact. The attention to women often came after major decisions on policies, strategies and resource allocations had already been made⁴.

² The views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the United Nations.

³ Hannan, Carolyn, 2000.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Hannan-Andersson, Carolyn, 1999.

⁶ United Nations, 1996.

⁷ United Nations, 1997.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Awareness of these fundamental constraints led to the development of the gender mainstreaming strategy in the early 1990s. There was a shift from attempting to 'integrate' women into the existing development agenda to changing or transforming the agenda, so that it adequately responded to the priorities, needs and contributions of both women and men. The term 'gender mainstreaming' came from the objective to bring gender perspectives into the centre of attention or the mainstream of policy and programme development⁵. The strategy was endorsed by the Member States of the United Nations in the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995⁶. Further principles and guidelines were developed in the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) agreed conclusions 1997/2⁷.

The strategy is defined by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as '... the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension 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 is to achieve gender equality.'⁸

Critical principles for gender mainstreaming included establishing that responsibility for implementing the strategy rests at the highest

levels within organizations and that adequate accountability mechanisms for monitoring progress are in place. It was also emphasized that the initial definitions of issues/problems across all areas of activity should be done in a manner which allowed for the identification of gender differences and inequalities. Assumptions that issues/problems are neutral from a gender equality perspective should never be made.⁹

Gender analysis should always be carried out, separately or as part of existing analyses. The ECOSOC agreed conclusions called for clear political will and allocation of adequate resources for mainstreaming, including, if necessary, additional financial and human resources. Finally, it was highlighted that mainstreaming does not replace the need for targeted, women-specific policies and programmes, and positive legislation; nor does it do away with the need for gender units or focal points.¹⁰

Achievements in the United Nations

Gender mainstreaming is utilized to promote gender equality as an integral part of all substantive work of the United Nations. This entails bringing gender perspectives to the centre of attention in all areas – social, economic, political – and in all types of activities, such as data collection and research, analysis, legislation, policy development, development of projects and programmes, as well as in training and other institutional development activities. The United Nations uses the dual strategy called for in the Platform

¹¹ United Nations, 1996.

¹² Hannan-Andersson, Carolyn, 1999.

¹³ See for example, Commission on the Status of Women resolution 49/4 on Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all national policies and programmes, in United Nations Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement 7 (E/2005/27), chap. I; Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/34 on Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, in United Nations Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement No. 1 (E/2008/99); and General Assembly resolution on Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/RES/62/137), in United Nations Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 49 (A/62/49), Vol. I, Section V.

¹⁴ See, for example, General Assembly resolution A/RES/62/208 on the Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, in United Nations Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 49 (A/62/49), Vol. I, Section IV; Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/17 on Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, in Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement 1 (E/2008/99); and Commission on Population and Development resolution 2008/1 on Population distribution, urbanization, internal migration and development, in United Nations Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement 5 (E/2008/25), chap. I.

¹⁵ See, for example, United Nations, Security Council, 2000; and United Nations Security Council, 2007.

for Action – gender mainstreaming complemented with activities specifically targeted at women and gender equality.¹¹

Mainstreaming can require changes in goals, strategies and activities to ensure that both women and men can influence, participate in and benefit from development processes. It can require changes in organizations – in structures, procedures and organizational cultures – to create organizational environments which are conducive to promotion of gender equality. Development of awareness, knowledge, commitment and capacity of all staffs, promoted and facilitated by strong management commitment, is essential.¹²

There have been many achievements since consistent efforts to implement gender mainstreaming began in the United Nations in the mid 1990s but large gaps in implementation remain. Assessment of progress in implementation within the United Nations requires a focus on both the inter-governmental level where global policy is made and monitored and on the efforts of individual entities within the United Nations systems.

Intergovernmental Level

Policy recommendations on gender mainstreaming in inter-governmental processes – for example, in the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social

Council (ECOSOC) and the General Assembly – provide the framework for efforts across the United Nations system.¹³ These recommendations do not, in and of themselves, ensure change. Considerable follow-up is required to ensure implementation. More effective methods and mechanisms for holding the United Nations entities accountable to these policy recommendations need to be developed.

Apart from the mandates contained in the Platform for Action and the outcomes of the Commission on the Status of Women, there are also many specific mandates on gender mainstreaming in relation to different areas of the work of the United Nations – for example, on population, rural development, statistics, human rights, governance, poverty reduction, and crime and drugs – contained in the resolutions and agreed conclusions of different United Nations bodies, such as the General Assembly and the ECOSOC and its functional commissions.¹⁴ The Security Council has, in recent years, also brought gender perspectives into discussions of peace and security.¹⁵ While gender mainstreaming is not systematic in any of these processes, it is important to recognize the gains that have been made, and to build on the awareness raised and the concrete actions agreed upon.

Systematic monitoring of implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy has also been established in the intergovernmental

¹⁶ See, for example, the most recent report, in United Nations, 2008a.

¹⁷ See, for example, the most recent report, in United Nations, 2008b.

¹⁸ See, for example, the most recent report, in United Nations, 2008c.

¹⁹ See for example, United Nations Security Council, 2006.

²⁰ See: Agreed conclusions on Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, in United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, 2008.

²¹ Ibid.

²² See: www.un.org/womenwatch

²³ United Nations (2006).

processes. Since 1996, annual reports on implementation have been submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women,¹⁶ the ECOSOC¹⁷ and the General Assembly.¹⁸ The focus of these reports has changed over the years. Currently, the report to the Commission on the Status of Women focuses on gender mainstreaming in Member States; the report to the ECOSOC outlines the efforts of the United Nations system; and the report to the General Assembly provides information on gender mainstreaming in the intergovernmental processes. Since 2001, the Security Council has also encouraged relevant United Nations entities to report on implementation of gender mainstreaming through specific action plans focusing on the Security Council resolution 1325.¹⁹

In March 2008, the Commission on the Status of Women focused attention on resources for gender mainstreaming in its discussion on the theme 'Financing for gender equality and empowerment of women'.²⁰ One key finding was that gender equality policies, strategies and action plans are all too often established without assessment of the resources required to ensure implementation or of potential funding sources. This was also true of the gender mainstreaming strategy. It was established that little effort has been made to assess the allocation of resources to gender equality through the mainstreaming strategy.

The agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission recommended that resources for gender mainstreaming be increased and that more effective and transparent methods be developed for monitoring allocation and use of resources.²¹

Within the United Nations System

Entities of the UN system have increasingly focused on implementation of gender mainstreaming at both policy and programme levels. This work has been supported by the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality which promotes sharing of information on the strategy, including through the inter-agency web-portal, WomenWatch.²² In addition, the network organizes seminars on gender mainstreaming methodologies at its annual meetings to encourage sharing of experiences, lessons learned and good practices.

Recent innovations have included development of a system-wide policy and strategy on gender equality and empowerment of women²³ which is expected to strengthen implementation of gender mainstreaming. This policy and strategy was endorsed by senior managers through the High-level Committee on Programming and the Chief Executives Board. Building on this achievement, a results framework on the UN system-wide policy and strategy is under development.

²⁴ United Nations Development Group Taskforce on Gender Equality, 2006

²⁵ See for example the section on the portal WomenWatch on gender mainstreaming:
http://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/gender_mainstreaming_10314.htm

²⁶ United Nations Interagency Network on Women and Gender Equality, 2001.

²⁷ International Labour Organization, 2002 and 2007.

²⁸ United Nations Development Fund, 2006 and 2007.

²⁹ United Nations Children's Fund, 2008.

In addition, creative inter-agency work on operational work of country teams has led to increased attention to gender analysis and consultation with national machineries for women and women's groups and networks. Capacity-building on gender mainstreaming for country teams has been introduced and a score-card²⁴ to measure progress developed. Performance indicators for gender equality work in country teams are currently being developed.

Throughout the system, there has been a strong emphasis on development of policies for promoting gender equality with gender mainstreaming as the principal approach. These include overall organization policies on gender equality, as well as policies on gender equality in relation to specific sectors. Less has been done in terms of ensuring adequate attention to gender perspectives in existing mainstream sector policies, i.e. in policies on water, energy, entrepreneurship, poverty eradication and other areas. An important lesson learned is that policies on gender equality are only effective if implementation strategies or action plans are developed.

The United Nations entities have continued to work at operational level to ensure that gender perspectives are taken up in the wide range of activities undertaken, including data collection, research, analyses, capacity-development and planning, implementation and monitoring of projects and programmes.

Considerable work has been done within the United Nations entities on internal institutional development, such as capacity building, methodology development, and

development of monitoring mechanisms. Progress has also been made in developing tools for gender mainstreaming, including guidelines, manuals, and checklists. There are manuals or guidelines for almost every area of work covered by the United Nations system today.²⁵

Almost all United Nations entities have gender experts or gender focal points (sometimes regular staffs who are assigned to spend part of their time on promoting and monitoring progress in gender mainstreaming). The mandates, access to decision-making processes, support from management levels and resource allocations of these experts and focal points vary considerably across the United Nations system, and impact significantly on the effectiveness of the experts and focal points.²⁶

Innovative work has also been carried out on monitoring and evaluation. The ILO, for example, has carried out a number of audits which included a focus on gender mainstreaming,²⁷ and the UNDP carried out an ambitious comprehensive evaluation of all gender mainstreaming efforts which provided important learnings.²⁸ A three-phase process is currently underway in the UNICEF²⁹ which includes a self-assessment of the UNICEF's Gender Policy Implementation in five country offices and one regional office; a global evaluation of gender policy implementation; and a consultative strategic planning process based on the evaluation results and the priorities for change that will be identified.

Remaining Gaps and Challenges

Despite the knowledge gained and the efforts made, gender perspectives are still not seen as an integral routine part of policies and programmes in all areas in the United Nations. Gender perspectives are not as central to analyses, budget allocations and planning processes as they should be; gender analysis carried out is not consistently utilized in a systematic and effective manner; and the results of specific studies on gender equality issues do not always have the full intended impact on policies and programmes.

The work on gender mainstreaming in the United Nations over the past decade has highlighted many gaps and challenges that need to be addressed. Some of the critical challenges faced include: creating a better understanding among all professional staffs of the strategy and the direct implications for their work; strengthening management commitment to ensure top-level support is explicit and highly visible; linking gender equality policies to the broader goals of organizations; using gender analysis more consistently and systematically; developing more effective approaches in competence development which lead to concrete changes in attitudes and practices; facilitating more strategic roles and increased resources for gender specialists; and developing effective accountability mechanisms.

Let me elaborate further on some of ways to address these gaps and challenges identified in the United Nations efforts on gender mainstreaming.

Gender Equality Policies

Experience within the United Nations – as in other international organizations and among Member States – has shown clearly that the existence of a specific policy on gender equality, which highlights the gender mainstreaming strategy and has built-in monitoring and reporting requirements, facilitates attention to gender perspectives throughout the work of organizations. Efforts to mainstream gender perspectives into programme budget processes has illustrated that the more explicit the commitment of the organization to gender equality, the greater the potential for including gender perspectives in policies, plans, budgets and operational activities. Gender equality policies need, however, to highlight goals and targets, give guidance on approaches and establish measures of good performance, thus providing critical impetus for professional staff to take on responsibility for incorporating gender perspectives in their day-to-day work.

A number of important lessons have been learned from past experience in developing policies on gender equality which facilitate effective gender mainstreaming. Gender equality policies and action plans can develop “separate lives” and become marginalized within organizations, with no clear relation to other important goals, policies and strategies. It is therefore important that the goal of gender equality is clearly placed in the context of the overall goals of the organization, outlining the linkages between gender perspectives and the work of the organization and highlighting the implications for policy and programme

³⁰ For further discussion, see Hannan, 2000; and Hannan-Andersson, 1999.

³¹ See United Nations Development Group Taskforce on Gender Equality, 2006; and World Bank, 2002.

³² See for example, United Nations, 2002.

development. Priorities need to be established and the approach and methodology to be utilized in promoting gender equality as an integral part of the work of the organization explicitly outlined. The roles, responsibilities and accountability of management and other key categories of staff should be clearly described, as well as the institutional arrangements, including gender specialist resources and capacity building approaches. A concise “road-map” for gender equality should be further elaborated in an action plan which outlines clear measureable goals for all areas of activity with targets and time-frames, impact indicators for monitoring and evaluation and resource requirements and potential sources of funding.³⁰

An important element in the successful integration of a gender equality policy and action plan within an organization is the endorsement process by top management. Equally critical is the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation process, which actively involves top management. Some organizations have effectively utilized high-level gender equality taskforces or advisory groups for monitoring implementation of gender equality policies and action plans and accountability across organizations.

Gender Analysis

Gender analysis concerns more than cataloguing differences between women and men. It also involves identifying and documenting inequalities between women and men and requires attention to relations between women and men and how these are likely to impact on, or be affected by, the planned interventions. Gender analysis does not always have to be carried out through a separate analysis process. Gender equality perspectives

should be an integrated part of all existing analyses carried out as part of identification, preparation, implementation and monitoring of interventions, such as policy analyses, sector analyses and analyses carried out as the basis for development of country strategies or for assessment of implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategies and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

One of the most critical constraints in implementation of gender mainstreaming is the fact that gender perspectives are not included as an integral part of initial analyses of issues and problems. If gender perspectives are not dealt with explicitly and adequately in initial stages of analysis and planning, subsequent attempts to incorporate them can lead to resistance and to artificial “add-ons.”

Some organizations continue to base their work on the assumption that certain policy areas, for example, macro-economics and technical areas, are in principle “gender-neutral” and, as a result, gender analysis is not carried out.

Even where gender analysis is carried out, it is not always utilized effectively. The significant gender analysis in different sectors and issues, for example, through specific research and development of tools and resources, is not disseminated and utilized effectively. This can, for example, be seen in the work on the United Nations Common Country Assessments and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (CCA/UNDAFs) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).³¹ The level of analysis has improved significantly, but the results are still not seen in the implementation plans. One of the reasons is the limited understanding of the important linkages between gender perspectives and the defined goals and targets

of different sector areas. Gender perspectives are not seen as essential for achieving the goals of all policy areas.

Competence Development

Development of competence on gender mainstreaming within organizations – i.e. awareness, knowledge, commitment and capacity – is essential for successful implementation of the strategy. Training programmes should be more action-oriented, which implies more than simply tailoring to specific sectors. Capacity-building must focus on what participants do on a day-to-day basis and assist them to understand how they need to work differently to give adequate attention to gender perspectives. Experience has also shown that competence development will only be successful if followed-up adequately.³²

Innovative approaches should be developed and utilized in addition to more traditional training programmes. Guidelines, tools and strategies or action plans on gender mainstreaming can be developed with active involvement of participants in a more hands-on approach.

Gender Specialists and Gender Focal Points

The mainstreaming strategy requires shift of responsibility for promoting gender equality from specialists to all personal, especially management levels. This does not, however, imply that gender specialists are no longer required. The need for specialist support can be increased with implementation of the mainstreaming strategy, particularly during initial periods. Gender specialists should, however, focus on catalysing, advising and supporting efforts of others. Effective roles for gender specialists require clear mandates,

strategic location within organizations, strong support of, and direct access to, senior management levels and adequate allocation of resources. The role of gender specialists should be seen as supporting senior managers to fulfill their management/leadership responsibilities for gender mainstreaming.

Despite the constraints identified, for example, in relation to seniority, resources and the multiple tasks assigned to them, gender focal points across the United Nations system have made significant efforts and strengthened attention to gender mainstreaming. There is potential for gender focal points to be even more powerful catalysts for promoting gender mainstreaming if sufficient attention is given in establishing gender focal point systems to mandates, location and linkages, resources, and support mechanisms.

Management Commitment and Accountability

There is increasing practical experience that explicit and sustained senior management commitment can provide powerful impetus to gender mainstreaming. Where senior managers are prepared to state clearly that gender equality – implemented through gender mainstreaming – is a priority for organizations, real progress can be made. On the other hand, in organizations where overall gender equality policies are prepared without explicit management support apart from an official endorsement – i.e., where there is no development of a plan of action; no clear message to staff on the importance of the policy; no capacity development linked to the policy; no specific allocation of resources; and no follow-up processes established – there is little real progress.

The challenge is to find ways of holding all

³³ United Nations, 2000 and 2005.³⁴ Hannan-Andersson, 1999.³⁵ See: Agreed conclusions on financing gender equality and the empowerment of women, in United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, 2008

categories and all levels of staffs accountable for achieving the goal of gender equality and for effective implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy. Accountability mechanisms highlighting specific reporting requirements and establishing requirements for development of necessary competencies – including attention to how these competencies can be acquired– need to be developed within organizations. Links to performance appraisal systems – whereby promotion of gender equality through gender mainstreaming could be included in the “work contracts” negotiated between management and staff, with clear goals, actions, time-frames and reporting requirements – could be very useful. Specific monitoring and reporting processes need to be established, and indicators of achievement, particularly related to outcomes, identified.

Conclusions

It must be recognized that gender mainstreaming is not an end in itself, but a means to achieve the goal of gender equality. Like any other strategy, it is only as good as its implementation. Nowhere in the United Nations has gender mainstreaming been fully implemented. No entity has committed the management leadership and human and financial resources needed for systematic and effective implementation.

Some important lessons have, however, been learned within the United Nations. Recent reviews have noted the achievements made but pointed to the many remaining challenges.³³ While there are now many good policies and strategies in place, there remains a huge gap between policy and practice which must be addressed through development of concrete action plans, with clear time frames and adequate resource allocations. The good

practice examples that have been identified can be replicated in different contexts, both within and outside the United Nations.

Gender mainstreaming requires an active approach –it will not happen by itself. There must be a clear objective to mainstream attention to gender equality into all interventions and systematic and sustained efforts to achieve this. The gender mainstreaming strategy requires that attention to gender equality be explicit– the attention to gender equality issues must be highly visible and critical links to important policies and processes made clear.³⁴

One further major failing which needs to be urgently addressed is lack of measurement methodologies to assess the resources allocated to gender equality and empowerment of women through the gender mainstreaming strategy and the impacts of these investments. The need for improved methodologies, accountability and transparency in measuring allocation of and impact of resources through the gender mainstreaming strategy was also raised in the outcome of the 52nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2008.³⁵

Despite the many failings in implementation, gender mainstreaming remains a critical strategy in this new Millennium. Building on the many gains made and addressing the remaining challenges will require a significantly increased investment by all entities of the United Nations to ensure enhanced understanding of the strategy and the means to strengthen implementation. Above all, increased explicit commitment and follow-up by top level managers will be critical for success.

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Institutionalising Gender Mainstreaming: Tools in Berlin and Germany

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ABSTRACT

Gender mainstreaming is not an end itself but a tool to achieve gender equality. As a tool, it has four functions of analysis, education, consultation/participation and legislation. In Germany, the four categories are implemented as follows: Laws and rulings have been produced to promote gender mainstreaming as top-down process. Several analytical tools such as ‘gender impact assessment’ were developed to assess the gender impact of the outputs of core fields of the administration. Training workshops were conducted for administration staff and on the federal level, there is an ongoing project within the Public Service Academy to bring gender-aspects in the courses for public servants. In Berlin, an inter-ministerial commission on gender mainstreaming with a working group on gender budgeting is in control of the implementation process. Gender mainstreaming is a promising tool, however, to incorporate it into the everyday process of institutions requires time and perseverance.

Key words: gender mainstreaming, gender impact assessment, gender equality

Gender mainstreaming in the last years has become more and more known and acknowledged as a useful strategy to achieve gender equality in many parts of the world.

Under the umbrella of this strategy, an amount of knowledge has been produced, also leading to a qualification of gender mainstreaming processes. gender mainstreaming-tools are part of this knowledge: In many different contexts various gender mainstreaming-tools have been developed, serving to make gender equality an issue for everyday procedures in various public institutions. Tools have been created and further developed – depending on the respective subject and actors involved.

At the same time, a debate has begun in gender mainstreaming on the impact and potentials of gender mainstreaming as a strategy for changing gendered structures in societies. It has been asked, whether gender mainstreaming is the right strategy for effectively changing deep-rooted norms and disparities, gender mainstreaming being a process which is highly dependent on the adjustment to established rules and procedures. This means that gender mainstreaming runs a risk of becoming flawed and compromised, not tackling the precondition of gender but rather serving as an alibi without a real impact. This is why a debate on standards for gender mainstreaming is needed. In Germany, this debate has started some years ago and it has influenced the practical processes of gender mainstreaming: Practitioners and theorists have entered into a dialogue on gender mainstreaming that has not always been easy.

As we will see this dialogue has also led to the creation of gender mainstreaming – Tools which seek to include research findings into the routines of public authorities.

My own perspective is informed by my work as a consultant on gender mainstreaming. In this capacity I support public administration bodies to adapt gender mainstreaming-tools or to create own tools. At the same time, I have done scholarly writing and teaching on the theoretical subtext of the concept of gender in gender mainstreaming.

This paper, however, will focus on the more practical side of gender mainstreaming: A core thesis is: Quality gender mainstreaming needs tools that are able to be adapted to a certain political and administrative environment as well as to the subject concerned. Good tools are crucial to make gender mainstreaming an effective strategy for achieving gender equality. At the same time, gender mainstreaming has the potential to change the “mainstream” of governing because it leads to a more target-oriented policy formulation and to a learning process within the bodies of administration. It therefore can (and should) be part of a modernisation process of governance.

In this paper I will give examples of how tools have been developed and applied in German context. These tools are a key to success and effectiveness of gender mainstreaming. To do so, I will first define and categorise gender mainstreaming-tools. I will then go into German examples, highlighting the level of the German federal government and its implementation process, which started in 2001. A second set of examples comes from the implementation of gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting on a regional level. Berlin, being the capital of Germany, but at the same time, one of the 16 federal states

“Bundesländer,” has developed its own strategy on gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting since at least 2002.

I will end with concluding remarks and sum up some key points for good gender mainstreaming. I will also stress that the implementation of this strategy is a long-term process of change; some of the preconditions for making it a success story should be considered in each context.

1. “Gender Mainstreaming-tool” – A Definition

To define gender mainstreaming-tool, it is necessary to first clarify related concepts. First of all, it is crucial to differentiate between means and ends: gender equality being the goal and gender mainstreaming being the strategy to get there. This is important because gender mainstreaming too often is taken simply as a method which comes and goes. gender mainstreaming, however, should be understood as a long term strategy that needs a clear implementation plan, set goals, defined roles and allocated resources.

Several tools then are needed to make gender mainstreaming work. The challenge within gender mainstreaming lies in finding out which tool is adequate for which purpose. Sometimes common tools of an administration can be used as a gender mainstreaming-tool, for other situations, it will be wise to create a new tool.

Since there are many different Gender Mainstreaming-tools in many different variations today, it is adequate to give a broad definition of a gender mainstreaming-tool. It therefore could be described as “any method, regulation, procedure, or body which is created within a gender mainstreaming process to support gender equality as a goal”.

2. Classification of Tools for Gender Mainstreaming

The Database of Instruments for Gender Mainstreaming(DIGMA) offers a useful categorization of tools. Three main categories are proposed: Analytical, educational, and consultation/participation tools. A fourth category is added because legislation is a key for the success of gender mainstreaming.

A. Analytical tools are designed to “expose” the problem.

For example: statistics broken down in terms of gender, studies and predictions, research, verification lists, management guidelines and terms of reference, evaluations of the impact on gender and models for the analysis of differentiated impact, indicators, control tools.

B. Educational tools are designed to raise awareness, transfer information and support training.

For example: courses, follow-up actions, experts, manuals and syllabuses, booklets and files, educational materials intended for schools.

C. The consultation and participation tools are designed to improve the quality of political decisions and strengthen democracy.

For example: working groups or management groups and round tables for discussion, directories, databanks and organisational charts, the participation of the two sexes - and of all the social groups - in the decision-making process, conferences and seminars, hearings and consultative forums.” (Database of Instruments for

Gender Mainstreaming (DIGMA)).³⁶

D. The legal tools promote the top-down process of gender mainstreaming and can give orientation on goals, means and timeframes.

For example: basic law, rulings and resolutions are the basis for any step a public authority will take to promote gender equality and implement gender mainstreaming.

3. Gender Mainstreaming-tools Applied in Germany

Tools of all these four categories were applied in the example of the Federal Government of Germany and in the Berlin process of implementation:

- A. Laws and rulings have been produced to promote gender mainstreaming as a top-down process.
- B. Several analytical tools were developed to assess the gender impact of the outputs of core fields of the administration,
- C. Training workshops were conducted for administration staff; on the federal level there is an ongoing project within the Public Service Academy to bring gender-aspects into the courses for public servants.
- D. In Berlin, an inter-ministerial commission on gender mainstreaming with a working group on gender budgeting is in control of the implementation process.

It would go beyond the scope of this paper to describe these processes and all of the tools developed so far in detail. Therefore, I will now introduce some prominent tools from each

³⁷ Source (Translation by the author):

http://www.berlin.de/imperia/md/content/verwaltungsmodernisierung/publikationen/vgg_fassung_2005.pdf (last access 25th September 2008)

³⁸ See: Gender Impact Assessment (GIA):

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/docs/gender/

[gender_en.pdf](#) (last access 25th, September 2008)

³⁹ Furthermore, the Working Aids (in German language) on gender mainstreaming in Ministry-commissioned research, gender mainstreaming in the reporting system, and Gender Mainstreaming in public relations work that have been created so far.

category.

3.1. Legal Tools – Joint Rules and Decisions

On Germany's federal level as well as in the federal state of Berlin, a clear political commitment and a respective legislation were keys to the implementation of gender mainstreaming. The German Basic Law (which is equivalent to a constitution) gives a clear responsibility to any government to proactively follow the goal of gender equality. Article 3, Paragraph 2 of the Basic Law states: "Men and women shall have equal rights. The state shall promote the actual implementation of equal rights for women and men and take steps to eliminate disadvantages that now exist." (BMFSFJ, 2007: 18).

On the federal level, § 2 of the Joint Rules of Procedure of the Federal Ministries from 2001 ruled: "Equality between men and women is a consistent guiding principle and should be promoted by all political, legislative and administrative actions of the Federal Ministries in their respective areas (gender mainstreaming)" (BMFSFJ, 2007: 18). Berlin, being the leading state in Germany in respect to the concrete implementation of gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting today, also has an extensive legislative basis with detailed rulings by the parliament about when and how gender mainstreaming has to be put into effect. Berlin in the state's recent legislation has also made a strong link to the modernisation of the government structures and procedures and gender equality. For example, the law on the reform of the administration revised in 2005 states that the

objectives of the law are: "... cost transparency, an orientation on targets and impacts, including gender mainstreaming, intercultural opening and decentralisation of responsibilities of regulatory and budgetary responsibility." (VGG – Verwaltungsreform-Grundsätze-Gesetz).³⁷

3.2. Analytical Tool – Gender Impact Assessment

A typical and widely known gender-proofing tool is the Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) developed within the EU context.³⁸ It is a tool for an ex-ante evaluation, meaning the assessment of possible future impacts of a policy. This way of checking programmes, measures, and laws for their possible future impacts contributes to their sustainability and also aims at reducing costs: It will not be necessary to review a certain policy when possible negative impacts are excluded in advance.

The Working Aid – Gender Impact Assessment "Gender Mainstreaming in the Preparation of Legislation" is one of the core tools in the Federal Government of Germany.³⁹ The working aid was developed within the pilot phase of the implementation of gender mainstreaming. The ministries involved were the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Chancellery, and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, as well as the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

In the majority of cases the draft bills are introduced by the government. This means a certain ministry is drafting a law, and only after a lengthy procedure of consultation with

⁴⁰ The objectives of gender equality policy according to the Working aid are: "Elimination of disadvantages (discrimination), equal participation and freedom of both sexes to lead self-determined lives free of traditionally defined roles (true freedom of choice)" (BMFSFJ, 2007: 16).

other ministries and main policy actors, the parliament decides on that law. Impact assessment of law has become more important in this process in recent years. It is not only the possible gender impact that is an indicator of the quality of a future law. Other factors such as possible costs following a law or coherence with other laws and regulations are promoting good governance as well.

The first step of the GIA is the gender-relevance check. The key question the ministry drafting a law has to answer here is: Will the law concern persons? This is an easy question for some laws; for others it is not. The following two questions are in the centre of the relevance check:

This first assessment of relevance should be

(...) Are women and men each directly affected by one or more of the measures? Directly affected persons are those who are the target group of the proposal.

(...) Are women and men each indirectly affected by one or more of the measures? Indirectly affected persons are those upon whom the proposal may have an impact or who are involved in its implementation." (BMFSFJ, 2007: 7)

made not on assumptions about the impact on gender equality, but rather the analysis should be based on research results and empirical data. The annex of the working aid includes hints where data can be obtained. This means a link to the results of Women's, Men's and Gender Studies should inform the assessment of law proposals.

In case the answer to one of these questions is yes, a main gender impact assessment is obligatory and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth has to be involved. If no relevance has been

found, a further check is not necessary. However, the results have to be presented in the explanatory memorandum to the bill, that is, the non relevance can not just be stated but has to be explained to the parliament.

The main gender impact assessment is an in-depth analysis of the law: First, a precise description of the draft law itself is demanded: what is its purpose, on which database/s it is made, what measures are to be taken, and which possible alternatives of the law are there? This is then followed by the assessment of the impact on equality between women and men. Again the statement has to give information as to whether women and men are affected directly or indirectly by the measures taken and how it will change the situation of women and men. Will it improve gender equality in the respective subject or will it have adverse impacts on gender equality? Other questions of this phase of the assessment focus on the involvement of lobby groups. These associations should already be involved when drafting a law to include their perspective on the matter. Finally, an explanation has to be given of the regulatory impacts (direct and indirect) on men and on women in the light of the objectives of gender equality policy.⁴⁰

The results of the analysis have to be summed up by assessing the intensity of the regulatory impacts in regard to gender equality. In case a negative impact on gender equality in a respective field is assessed, compensatory measures such as promotion of women in a certain field are to be proposed. Further on, the assessment asks for steps be taken to improve the data situation – in case an assessment of the situation was shown to be difficult due to lack of data. Finally, a written record on the findings of the assessment has to be produced; it has to be integrated into the

⁴¹ See: GendA – Department for Research- and Cooperation at Philipps-University in Marburg: <http://www.uni-marburg.de/fb03/genda/projects/sgbll> (last access 25th September 2008)

⁴² In Berlin, gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting were introduced simultaneously. For more information on the implementation of gender budgeting in Berlin, see: Weinmann (2007) and Frey (2008).

text of the bill and the explanatory memorandum.

One example of how the additional work is a good investment in the future in Germany is the restructuring of the unemployment aid system. The law on the reform only partially included gender-aspects, thus leading to adverse effects: through the construction of a common unit, it is the couple and not the individual woman or man who receives benefits. This way the reform deepened female dependency on a male “breadwinner”. The law also has adverse effects on the labour market because intra-household decisions often do not match the labour market, leading to the result that well-educated citizens in the household unit (the majority of them women) are staying home and will not be integrated into the labour market again. This can be seen as a waste of human resources since the state spends money on educating these women. In view of the beginning phase of a shortage of highly skilled persons on the labour market, this will also have a negative economic effect in the near future.

A research study on the gender effects of the reform is now being conducted assessing the effects ex-post.⁴¹ This study is much more costly than an inclusion of gender-aspects within the drafting process would have been.

3.3. Educational tool – Gender-Project for the Public Service Academy

A classical educational tool in gender mainstreaming is gender training of the civil servants. There are many ways to conduct training; depending on the stage of the implementation process, the given time-frame, the target group and the content to be tackled. Some gender training strongly focuses on

sensitization and awareness with the aim of motivating participants to actively contribute to gender equality. This kind of training is often used in the beginning of the implementation of gender mainstreaming. Other trainings focus on implementation process itself, for example, participants learn how to apply tools for gender analysis. Another means to apply educatory tools is to integrate gender issues in mainstream education. Since the aim is to integrate gender equality issues into the mainstream, on the long term no additional gender trainings and workshops should be conducted but rather gender issues should be integrated into the study courses – not only in fields like family affairs and social policy but in all fields of administrative tasks. For example, the analytical tool Gender Impact Assessment (see above) should be part of a course on legislation in the public sector. Results of research and studies provided by gender studies should be included in fields like urban planning, social security or environment.

In Germany, there is a project on the Federal level, which exactly aims at inclusion of gender-aspects into the study courses of the public service academy. The project is a cooperation of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) and the Public Service Academy (BAkÖV) located in the Federal Ministry of the Interior. It started in July 2007 and will end in May next year.

In the project, selected study courses are analysed by gender experts who participate in the courses. The experts can this way analyse the courses and give written statements on methodological gender implications and the gender-aspects of the respective contents. Feed-back is given to the lecturers to enable

them to include gender-aspects within the didactics and in the content of the curriculum. Papers and guidelines on integrating gender-aspects into several fields of teaching are developed.

Heads of the project are two researchers from two different research institutes who are specialised in gender issues in adult education and in the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

There is a project steering committee with representatives from the Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the Public Service Academy, the Gender-Competence Center at Humboldt University and the Federal Administration Department. The results of the project will be:

- A. Working aids for integration of gender-aspects into the conception of study courses, proposals for gender sensitive teaching and didactical methods.
- B. Materials for evaluation of the quality of study courses with a gender-focus.
- C. A checklist for the selection of gender-competent lecturers
- D. The results of the project will be presented to a wider public in a conference. In addition, four workshops will be conducted for lecturers of the PSA, enabling them to apply the working aids and the checklist produced in the project.

As one can see, this project being an educational tool itself is producing new tools which then will be further developed. This shows us that gender mainstreaming is a continuous process of learning. Tools then are not final and stable, but they are elements of a continuous learning project. Gender-aspects can enrich a curriculum and provide it with a

sound research base. When, for example, organisational theories form part of a curriculum, a gender perspective on organisations can deepen understanding of how written and unwritten rules and procedures in a certain organisation also shape outcome of its work. Participants of a study course can deepen their knowledge of organisations. This again can improve the work of civil servants, leading to more efficient governance.

3.4 Consultative Tool – High Level Steering Group in Berlin

A crucial tool for implementation of gender mainstreaming is to establish adequate structures and to anchor responsibility in the respective institutions. Without such management tools, gender mainstreaming cannot be successful. An internal tool for consultation is establishment of steering committees or working groups within a government. The inter-ministerial working group of the Federal Government of Germany can be mentioned as one example. In some of the ministries, additional working groups were established which had the task to coordinate the activities within the ministry and pilot project(s).

The Berlin parliament in a ruling in March 2003 agreed on the appointment of the State Gender Mainstreaming Commission. It further ruled that the members are State Secretaries, thus stressing the top-down principle of gender mainstreaming. The commission is chaired by the State Secretary of the Ministry for Economics, Technology and Women. The commission is the central managing institution for implementation of gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in Berlin.⁴² Two sub-commissions, one for gender budgeting and

⁴² In Berlin, gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting were introduced simultaneously. For more information on the implementation of gender budgeting in Berlin, see: Weinmann (2007) and Frey (2008).

one for gender disaggregated data, managing and closely following the respective processes.

There is annual reporting of achievements in the eight ministries and each of the twelve districts.

4. Conclusion: The Added Value of the Institutionalisation of Gender Mainstreaming-tools

The examples above show that gender mainstreaming is more than just consideration of a social group (women) in administrative procedures. gender mainstreaming is part of modernisation processes in an administration because it contributes to impact analyses and to inclusion of research knowledge in decision making processes. It animates civil servants to reflect on policy targets and outcomes. In Germany, gender mainstreaming has contributed to a cultural change within the administration: from a reactive administration to a proactive and target-driven way of managing public affairs. Gender mainstreaming-tools – when becoming part of the “normal” procedures of governance – can inform and transform the mainstream. Even though this institutionalisation of tools will partly lead to an additional burden of work for the staff involved – it will still be a worthwhile investment because it will lead to better results of the work of public authorities.

However, some preconditions and success factors have to be considered. While the development and application of tools as described above can be considered a success story, there are also constraints: Although there is a clear assignment for implementation of GM in all bodies, processes are often slow. In fact, on the federal level, the process which started in a very organised and active way has slowed down in recent time. Sometimes there

is resistance against change in general and gender equality in particular. To deal with this, some key-points play a role:

- A. Top-down commitment to and clear rulings on gender mainstreaming as a strategy and gender equality as a policy-goal are crucial
- B. A body that is responsible for the management and monitoring of gender mainstreaming is a key motor for the processes.
- C. An implementation strategy which embodies all categories of tools, sets goals and a timeframe is necessary.
- D. A mixture of tools which are developed according to needs and tasks of the administration units involved ensures success of gender mainstreaming.
- E. External consultancy often is needed to stimulate learning processes within institutions. Consultants can play the role of a knowledge broker: they give advice on which tool can be developed or used at what stage of the implementation process, and they transfer academic gender-knowledge into practical work.

Looking at the processes and their achievements on the one hand and the many preconditions and constraints on the other hand, one thing becomes clear: Gender mainstreaming is not a quick undertaking that can be accomplished in a short period of time. The development of tools which fit into needs and logic of a certain governmental system needs gender-competence and a common effort. To bring these tools into the routines of an institution is another task which requires time for adoption and customisation. Processes of change need patience and perseverance, but it is worth going through these processes.

Gender mainstreaming and its tools are no exception to this rule.

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