

Institutional transformation



A process of organisational change that describes how gender mainstreaming can be implemented into a public institution and how already-existing approaches can be further advanced

Institutional transformation means a profound change within an institution which, as a consequence, also affects the outside environment. It encompasses changes in the basic values and beliefs that are dominant in a certain institution, as well as changes in the rules and regulations that lead to certain working results. Processes of change within institutions occur continuously due to their changing environment, thus creating new demands or incentives for change. This change happens either unintentionally (thereby risking inefficiency), or in a planned and coordinated way, with executives acting as managers and coordinators. Today change management has become a professional field for internal actors, consultants and academics.

Organisations and gender

Organisation theory demonstrates that the informal and invisible rules and regulations of an administration are crucial for understanding organisations. Organisations are not mechanical entities running according to fixed rules; instead they are entities with a certain momentum and non-documented rules and regulations, which are reflected in a specific organisational culture.

The core elements of organisational culture are implicit; they are practiced in daily routines, give a common direction to the members of an organisation, and are the result of learning and internal coordination within an organisation. Furthermore, they constitute a specific view of the world.

Individuals do not consciously learn an organisational culture, but they internalise it within a process of socialisation. This shows that institutional transformation can occur only if organisational culture is taken into account.

Key points:

Organisations are not gender-neutral entities.

Gender issues within an organisation are partly visible and partly tacit. The representation of women and men at all hierarchical stages of an organisation is only one (visible) indicator that organisations are gendered.

Organisations deal with gender differently – e.g. in an inadvertent manner or with a managed approach.

Processes aiming to bring about organisational change have to be adapted to suit the respective organisational culture.

Institutional transformation: an online tool for public institutions developed by EIGE

