

Institutional Transformation

Example 1: Strengthening accountability for gender mainstreaming

Communication from the EU-Commission on incorporating equal opportunities for Women and Men into all Community Policies and Activities

The Communication recommends six lines of action: Employment and labour market, Women entrepreneurs and assisting spouses, Education/Training for women, People's rights, Development cooperation and Staff policy.

The communication addresses all member states and says that all EU community policies and actions should systematically consider a gender perspective beginning with the planning stage. Furthermore it takes into account that both – women and men – need to be committed to the idea of gender mainstreaming and that gender equality is not only about institutional mechanisms but also individual and cultural attitude and behaviour.

Questions and answers

What does the example show

The Communication is a clear commitment to Gender Mainstreaming. The Commission shows that it considers gender equality as an important issue to be included in the Commission's work. It clarifies which expectations are raised to staff. Therefore the communication is a top-down instrument.

As the European Commission is an important institution for agenda-setting within the European Union and its Member States it demonstrates the political will for gender equality.

Why is the example suitable for promoting institutional transformation?

Due to the fact that the communication has been published by the European Commission itself it is binding for the organisation. The rules of action outlined in the example are based on knowledge of the multidimensional issue of gender inequalities. Gender mainstreaming is related to concrete political action concerning f. e. education and training of women or women's access to the labour market. Also, the European Commission aspires to challenge existing discriminatory stereotypes inside the administration and within the European Union.

What was the example's line of action?

The European Commission participated in the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. The Communication was the outcome of a discussion in 1996, following this conference. The EU Commission publishes communications to draw attention on a topical issue. Although communications are policy documents with no mandatory authority or legal effect, it is highly recommended to all member states and various players and organisations to take it into account.

Which lesson can be learned in terms of success factors?

Since the communication by the European Commission was published in 1996, it is influential to the discussion on gender mainstreaming and is widely quoted. The communication was an important move for the many activities for the implementation of gender mainstreaming both within the Commission but also in Member States. It shows that a top-down approach which creates accountability is an important driver for a systematic gender equality policy.

High level Inter-ministerial Working Group on Gender Mainstreaming in Austria

The Inter-ministerial Working Group on gender mainstreaming in Austria was implemented in 2000 by the council of ministries. The tasks of the working group are:

- to support and consult on the gender mainstreaming implementation process in all of the Federal ministries as well as on all administrative levels.
- Exchange of information and of best practice (national and international);
- Development of criteria for the implementation of gender mainstreaming as a strategy ;

- Monitoring and evaluation of projects, measures and law in regard to objectives set within the implementation of gender mainstreaming

Questions and answers

What does the example show

Although the working group can also be defined as a support structure, it is an example on how to create accountability: the government members are high level executives of the Federal Ministries which are made responsible to move the process and communicating within their ministries and departments. The resolution on establishing the inter-ministerial task force for gender mainstreaming/budgeting refers to milestones of the implementation of gender mainstreaming such as the United Nations' Fourth World Conference held in Beijing in 1995. Referring to an international context is another factor which influences all members' accountability for gender mainstreaming.

Why is the example suitable for promoting institutional transformation?

The working group is exemplary for creating accountability for gender mainstreaming because it is deployed by the council of ministries which decisions are highly binding. It shows that commitment and accountability can be created through high level bodies if they acknowledge gender equality as an important objective of an institution.

Who is involved and in which way?

At the request of the Federal Minister for Education and Women the IMAG was implemented by the council of ministers. The federal Minister for Education and Women is holding the presidency of the working group.

What was the example's line of action?

The working group was created in 2000 by request from the Federal Minister for Education and Women to the Council of Ministers and was reviewed in 2010. It is affiliated to the federal ministry for education and women.

Which lesson can be learned in terms of success factors?

It is important to make executives/ the management level of an institution responsible for the implementation of gender mainstreaming as defined in law. This creates incentives for the rest of the staff. Also there is more accountability if a managing and coordinating body is in place.

System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality within the United Nations

The “UN system-wide Action Plan for Implementation of the CEB United Nations system-wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women” (UN SWAP) is based on a policy statement of the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). The SWAP has the character of a framework for a gender mainstreaming working plan to be applied to many UN organisations. It includes indicators and timetables, allocates responsibilities, and defines accountability mechanisms and resources.

Questions and answers

What does the example show

The SWAP shows that it is possible to create a high level of accountability by using mechanisms of accountability which are already anchored in institutions. It also shows that it is possible to define indicators for performance that are feasible and at the same time demanding in terms of achieving gender equality objectives.

The SWAP is strong on accountability. The term is explained in regard to the UN system and refers to standard accountability systems.

Why is the example suitable for promoting institutional transformation?

Its core elements were an introduction of accountability processes and mechanisms as well as results based management for the implementation of gender equality. It also takes up institutional transformation by including organisational culture as an issue. One of the 15 performance indicators is: “Organizational culture fully supports promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women” (p. 12).

Each of the 15 indicators has to be rated, with a rating system with a scale of five levels:

- 1 | exceeds requirements,
- 2 | meets requirements,

- 3 | approaches requirements,
 - 4 | missing,
 - 5 | not applicable
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Who was involved and in which way?

The action plan was developed by UN Women. Within the UN system all in all 35 partner entities are involved; seven of them as piloting entities. However, all UN entities are expected to report on the SWAP. The Human Rights and Gender Equality Task Force developed a scorecard to report on the UN SWAP indicator, as well as the technical notes.

What was the example's line of action?

In 2006 the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in a statement decided on a UN wide strategy on mainstreaming gender. Also the Economic and Social Council published a Resolution on "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system" in 2010. After the establishment of UN Women in 2010

Which components of the example relate to one or more of the 13 steps of the guide and how?


The SWAP also contains good mechanisms for evaluation (see Step 3). The indicators defined in the SWAP allow evaluating of the implementation of gender mainstreaming in a systematic way.

Which lesson can be learned in terms of success factors?

The example shows a strong commitment from the management level, also the existence of clear statements on top level of the UN on the significance of an effective approach to mainstreaming gender equality can be seen as a success factor in creating accountability mechanisms.

Resources

Statement by the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (2006):

[Read more on un.org](#) 

Brochure on SWAP by UN Women (2014):

[Read more on UN Women](#) 