

Institutional Transformation

Example 5: Establishing a gender mainstreaming support structure

The City of Vienna' Department for gender mainstreaming

The gender mainstreaming Department of the City of Vienna accompanies the administration of the City of Vienna in the implementation of gender mainstreaming. It provides information and knowledge on gender aspects and it is responsible for strategic coordination and networking. It also delivers analysis and advice to the administration of Vienna. The department has an own [Website](#) section with manuals, documentation of conferences and other useful information.

The Department offers various forms of gender equality competence development: classical gender training workshops, development of working aids and guidelines – for example on topics like gender sensitive language or sex disaggregated data. There is also individual gender coaching. The selection of tools and methods is made in the light of the diverse administrative culture – which vary also from department to department within the Vienna government. Another important element is to have awareness campaigns which address the citizens of Vienna but also administration staff.

Questions and answers

- **What does the example show?**

The Vienna Department shows that in a certain constellation it can be useful to have an internal department with regular staff who are an integral part of the administrative body.

- **Why is the example suitable for promoting institutional transformation?**

Because it is a unit which is firmly installed in the administration the Department for gender mainstreaming, it can accompany organisation change on the long run. It can offer tailor made processes which lead to acceptance, learning and competence development.

Because it is not possible to have quick success when it comes to mainstream gender equality continuously efforts of networking and cooperation over the years can contribute to organisational changes.

- **What was the example's line of action?**

The Department was set up in 2005 as a project with three staff members. In 2011 it became a regular department within the "Magistrat" (central organization unit) with four staff.

- **Who was involved and in which way?**

The department is networking with other internal staff engaged in gender equality like for example the gender budgeting unit or persons responsible for women's health in the health department, or the specialist for gender planning in the construction department.

For special and research projects external consultants are hired or there is a cooperation with universities.

- **Which lesson can be learned in terms of success factors?**

The example shows: For mainstreaming gender equality it is important to stay on the ball for many years. Also continuously networking and cooperation with other supportive structures is a factor of success. Knowing the administrative culture and also administrative cultures of different departments is crucial to work effectively for providing support in an effective way.

Resources

Manual: "Gender Mainstreaming made easy":



[Read more on wien.gv.at](#)

Information in German Language:

[Read more on wieng.gv.at](#) 

The Institute for the Equality of Women and Men in Belgium

The institute is a semi-autonomous government institution which was established in 2002. It is the specialised body for gender equality that handles discrimination complaints but it also supports the government in the implementation of gender mainstreaming which is a legal obligation in Belgium.

The institute coordinates the interdepartmental coordination group on gender mainstreaming; it provides training to members of this group as well as to staff in different ministries. It also consults administration units continuously by providing information on the practical implementation of gender mainstreaming.

For example, it supports staff to include a gender dimension into policies, programmes and reporting. It provides information on gender issues to the units responsible in sectorial fields. It also has an internal knowledge management for gender issues in the respective policy fields.

The institute does research in its own capacity but also cooperates with gender experts and universities to gain knowledge in gender issues for the Belgium context. It also publishes reports on sex aggregated statistics.

Questions and answers

● **What does the example show?**

Gender mainstreaming is a learning process. A support structure is giving continuous advice to administration staff at is a relief for actors involved in the implementation: Learning needs stimulation from outside which can be provided by a support structure. The actors involved will feel more confident in being involved and actively participating if there is someone who is available to give advice.

Also, it will be difficult for administration staff to do research and managing information on gender issues within their work schedules. A support structure can serve as a service unit to promote gender mainstreaming at this point.

● **Why is the example suitable for promoting institutional transformation?**

The institute works in a structured and targeted way to promote gender mainstreaming implementation. To a certain extent it is autonomous – this means it is not possible for civil servants to just “delegate” the responsibility and the tasks for gender equality to the institute. At the same time it is attached to the government, therefore the expert staff of the institute has enough field competence to actively and practically support administration. Furthermore, the Institute is charged by the law on gender mainstreaming to support the process gender mainstreaming, which gives it a clear mandate to support the government and its administration in their obligations concerning gender mainstreaming.

The support structure can raise the acceptance for the implementation of gender mainstreaming and stimulate learning processes. The example also shows that the institute contributes to a more evidence based approach of governing, leading to better results and service provision of a government.

- **What was the example's line of action?**

The Department was set up in 2005 as a project with three staff members. In 2011 it became a regular department within the "Magistrat" (central organization unit) with four staff.

- **Who is involved?**

The Institute for the equality of women and men is composed of about 35 persons coming from different areas. It has a unit on gender mainstreaming with two persons working almost exclusively on the topic and other staff providing personal resources if necessary. There is also cooperation with networks of gender experts (like researchers and trainers) and Universities.

- **Which lesson can be learned in terms of success factors?**

The institute has twelve years of experience in supporting gender equality in the public sector. It shows that for learning processes within the administration it is helpful to have an impulse from more or less external actors. This can have a positive impact on institutional transformation. It shows that it is important to keep a support structure for a longer period than only one election period or a funding period with a structural funds period. The example also shows that if there are experts exclusively responsible for supporting a government it helps the gender mainstreaming process to become more evidence based and coherent and therefore contributing to the quality of the work of a government.

The Agency for Gender Equality within the European Social Funds in Germany (2009-2013)

The agency was setup as a private company outside the government. It aimed to ensure that gender mainstreaming is coherently integrated into the structures and procedures of Germany's federal ESF operational programme.

The Agency was committed to building gender equality competences among the actors involved in implementing ESF-programmes. It offered consultancy on different administrative levels on structural, process and thematic issues, in the form of training sessions, workshops, seminars, coaching, networking, data, statistics and gender budgeting. It published a range of short studies on ESF Thematic issues (like for examples gender-aspects in advanced vocational training or in the passing from school to professional life). Also it published current sex aggregated data on ESF target groups like persons with disabilities.

The Agency set up a website with extensive information and it also communicated via a mailing list and a newsletter. It also developed tools and guidelines to integrate gender equality issues into the ESF-programmes together with the responsible staff.

Questions and answers

● **What does the example show?**

The Agency for Gender Equality within the ESF is a good example how a support structure is setup in a way that is tailor made for a topic like the European Social Funds. It also shows that Knowledge management and communication as well as networking is an important element for effectively giving support. At the same time the example demonstrates that a support structure which is in place for five years only has its limits in regard to promoting structural changes.

● **Why is the example suitable for promoting institutional transformation?**

Knowledge from the outside can be necessary to stimulate changes within governmental bodies. The agency could set a benchmark on how to mainstream gender equality in ESF funded programmes and measures. It also contributed to learning processes and a rise in gender equality competence of responsible staff.

● **What was the example's line of action?**

The Agency was set up in March 2009 and conducted a needs analysis. On this basis it consulted more than ten programmes on different issues intensively – besides many more activities. In the last months of its existence the Agency organised a final conference and also published a book.

● **Who was involved and in which way?**

The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs contracted the Agency within ESF, which was a private company. There was a core team of four experts and three external experts, the latter contributing to the labour market policy team and the gender budgeting team. The team worked on different levels of the ESF: the managing authority was consulted as

well as actors from five ministries, who were involved in the implementation. Also actors from intermediate bodies, managing the ESF-projects were supported in mainstreaming gender equality. The Agency did not work directly on the level of single projects. These actors were addressed by the Agencies Website where project staff could find information on thematic issues.

● **Which lesson can be learned in terms of success factors?**

Knowledge and expertise on gender equality as well as a structured and systematic approach which is adapted to a certain domain (like the ESF) are crucial for success. Also an interplay between external experts and internal actors can be a fruitful process.

Resource

Concept of a qualitative Gender Budgeting for the European Social Fund developed by the Agency:



[Read more on European Social Fund](#)