

Institutional Transformation

Step 12: Promotional equal opportunities within the organisation's personnel

The gender mainstreaming strategy aims to change an organisation's orientation and modes of operation in such a way that the results and effects of the organisation's activities support the advancement of gender equality in all of an organisation's fields of intervention (output dimension as per the SPO model). However, promoting equal opportunities within an organisation and its personnel is not least a question of internal and external credibility.

Example

The UNDP's gender equality strategy includes a gender parity strategy 2013 to 2017. This parity strategy is an annex to the main gender equality strategy and gives detailed figures about the state of parity and disparities, also in comparison to other UN entities. The UNDP human resources unit is responsible for the gender parity strategy.

[View example](#) →

Key aspects

According to the Council of the European Union directives on anti-discrimination, which have become national legislation in EU member states, the prevention of discrimination is a legal obligation. Therefore, public institutions must take action in order to ensure equal opportunities amongst its personnel.

There are various fields of activity that can have an influence on internal equal opportunities. Which field should be focussed on more heavily depends largely on the state of existing provisions for equal opportunities within an organisation. The following aspects are thought to be the key fields of activity in most organisations in terms of ensuring equal opportunities amongst personnel.

Gender balance in staffing patterns and a fair representation of women in managerial positions

Figures clearly show that there is a long way to go to achieving equal participation of women and men in senior positions. In 2012, women occupied only 29% of the highest level positions within ministries and other government departments ([Source](#)).

Instruments like equal opportunities plans allow for a systematic approach of improving the gender-balance in staffing patterns and for monitoring the advancement of equal opportunities within an organisation. An equal opportunities plan usually consists of three parts:

- analysis of the current situation within the organisation differentiated by gender (e.g. positions, fields of work, salaries, participation in professional training programmes etc.),
- targets (e.g. in terms of quota) and
- planned measures for achieving the determined targets (e.g. mentoring programmes).

Engaging senior men

The European Commission's Network to Promote Women in Decision-Making in Politics and the Economy has published a working paper on "How to engage senior men to promote women to decision-making positions".



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Gender sensitive staff recruitment and performance appraisals

Provide fair procedures of staff recruitment as well as a performance assessment scheme that is not flawed by (gender) biases. There is evidence that a bias exists in the performance assessment of employees who work part-time. Stereotypes such as part-time staff being less motivated and performing worse per se than full time employees can lead to lower-ranking job performance assessments for part-time personnel. As women often represent the majority of part-time workers, this can lead to indirect discrimination against women. The procedures of staff recruitment and the criteria of performance assessment therefore have to be revised; senior managers and human resources staff alike should be sensitised to gender and other biases.

Equal pay for equal or comparable work done by women and men

The undervaluing of women's work is one of the main causes behind the gender pay gap. Due to gender stereotypes, women's and men's work is often valued differently, thus women earn less than men for doing jobs that could also be valued equally. For instance, in a situation where women and men are equally qualified, more value is attributed to responsibility for capital or technology than to responsibility for people.

Promoting work-life balance

The European Parliamentary Research Service provides an overview on the topic of reconciling work and family life with many links for further reading:

[View European Parliamentary Research Service: Reconciling work and private life](#) →

Examples of training manuals on work-life balance:

[View tools for job evaluation](#) →



[View ILO: Gender-Neutral Job Evaluation for Equal Pay: A Step-by-Step Guide](#)

Better reconciliation of work and family for women and men

Facilitating the reconciliation of work and family plays a key role in improving the gender balance in staffing patterns; a better work-life balance also helps to increase staff motivation. There are many ways in which an organisation can promote a better work-life balance of its personnel, these include flexible working arrangements, provision of childcare, temporary leave as well as supporting the return to work. Here, it should also be noted that provision of care not only includes childcare, but also care for the elderly and for disabled persons. The reconciliation of paid work and long-term care is especially difficult because care can be required for indefinite periods of time.

An equal share of care work among women and men is both a prerequisite of gender equality and an equality objective in its own right; however, activities to improve the reconciliation of work and family often only focus on women. Particular attention should therefore be paid to addressing the needs of male staff as well.

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[Download: Work-Life Balance – Training Manual](#)



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Fostering a gender-sensitive organisational culture

Promoting equal opportunities within an organisation also means creating an organisational culture that is gender-sensitive. Tackling organisational culture is not only a crucial element in implementing organisational change as part of gender mainstreaming (background paper), but also for providing a respectful and empowering atmosphere in the workplace, free from any form of harassment. This includes eradicating behaviour like sexist jokes and derogatory comments as well as establishing procedures for preventing and dealing with sexual harassment in the workplace.

Equality Pays Off

An initiative by the European Commission (DG Justice) named “Equality Pays Off” tackles the challenges of a shrinking and ageing European population and the decrease in the number of qualified people available on the job market. It mainly addresses private companies but the information can also be transferred to the public sector in part.

[Read more on European Commission](#) →