

Institutional Transformation

Step 4: Developing a gender mainstreaming strategy and a working plan

Gender mainstreaming strategy

In accordance with the Guide's steps for organisational change, the basic elements of a gender mainstreaming strategy are:

- what type of gender mainstreaming support structure is to be established
- what equality objectives the organisation is to set itself
- how to communicate gender mainstreaming both internally and externally
- which gender mainstreaming methods and tools are to be developed and introduced
- how to strengthen the commitment of all staff members and how to develop their gender equality competence
- what kind of gender information management system is to be established
- how to launch gender equality action plans
- how to promote equal opportunities within the organisation's personnel
- how to monitor and steer the process of organisational change

Recommendation

In order to develop a potentially successful gender mainstreaming strategy it is vital to have in-depth knowledge of the organisation itself, including its hierarchies, processes and mode of operation. It is also important to clearly understand how gender mainstreaming can be sustainably implemented and enforced. It can therefore be very useful to call in external gender mainstreaming experts.

Step 1: set priorities and take small steps to pursue the introduction of gender mainstreaming



Gender mainstreaming strategy can either be carried out:



in cooperation between gender equality staff, external gender mainstreaming consultants and members of the senior management



or in a participatory procedure involving some or all of the workforce, based upon how organisational strategies are usually developed and decided upon within an organisation.

It is vital that gender mainstreaming does not appear to be a special measure outside of the organisation's standard operating procedures as this could potentially lead to resistance or the issue not being taken as seriously as others.

Working plan

A working plan sets out a detailed plan of how the gender mainstreaming strategy is to be introduced over a defined period of time. It specifies the planned activities and milestones, assigns responsibilities, allocates resources and sets a timeline.

Pilot projects

It may be advisable to introduce gender mainstreaming into selected units of an organisation to begin with. Such pilot projects may be very useful, for instance, if the matter is met with objections and resistance from within an organisation. Pilot projects can also serve to test out implementation processes and build up expertise. They can create signalling effects and act as a direct practical example to increase the acceptance of gender mainstreaming within an organisation.

The selection of pilot areas should not only be guided by the degree of feasibility (e.g. which part of the organisation would generally be open to such a topic?). Strategic considerations are also an important selection criteria (e.g. what are the key areas that have a recognised role model status? Which areas are appropriate in terms of transferability?). With pilot projects, utmost care must be taken to ensure that they do not remain isolated measures, but are implemented within the scope of an overarching strategy. From the very beginning, plans should be made about how to utilise the experiences gained and translate these into an organisation's standard procedures.

Example

The German Association for International Cooperation (GIZ), has created a gender mainstreaming strategy and a working plan including targets, indicators, responsibilities and planned activities.

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