

Gender training in the European Union: 'Gender Impact Assessment' training in the city of Vantaa, FINLAND*



'Gender Impact Assessment' training in the city of Vantaa, FINLAND

Background and general information

Name of the Organisation	CITY OF VANTAA (VANTAAN KAUPUNKI), TOGETHER WITH WORLD OF MANAGEMENT LTD, FINLAND
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Period	Generic, basic training on gender equality has been provided for the municipal staff (directors, experts, planners, etc.) since 2005/2006. In addition, basic training has been made available for staff involved in service delivery, for example on how to develop gender sensitiveness. The provision of hands-on, tailored training and support on specific gender mainstreaming methods and practices (e.g. gender impact assessment of budgeting) started in 2011.

* 'Gender Impact Assessment' training in the city of Vantaa, Finland' was selected as a practice on gender training in the European Union with potential based on the research findings from the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) project on gender training in the European Union. The project aims to facilitate dialogue between policy makers, trainers and researchers on how gender training can be used to support informed policy making in the EU and Member States. The information collected for the study is based on desk research and stakeholder interviews conducted by ICF GHK in 2012. Other outputs from the study include online databases of gender trainers and training tools and resources available on EIGE's website at: [http:// www.eige.europa.eu](http://www.eige.europa.eu)

**Context analysis**

The City of Vantaa is the largest employer in Vantaa with almost 12 000 employees. Women make up nearly four-fifths of this group. Yet, there are some statistically important gender differences, especially in relation to pay, with the average woman's pay being considerably lower than that of men. This has been confirmed by the results of a survey carried out among employees in 2008, which found that 4.9 % of employees had experienced sex-based discrimination¹.

The new legislation on non-discrimination (2004) and gender equality (2005) acted as an impetus for the City of Vantaa to work towards achieving greater gender equality in decision making and the services it provides. The training actions implemented since are based on these laws. Vantaa's equality plan of 2006 consists of three separate, yet interlinked parts: an 'internal' plan for staff matters, an 'external' plan for political decision-making and services, and a work book (Työkirja tasa-arvosta ja yhdenvertaisuudesta) for departments and individuals to study either alone or together with colleagues. In 2007, the City signed the European Charter on Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, and thereby the City publicly committed to promoting equality between women and men.

The Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination Development Plan (2009 - 2012) of the City of Vantaa is in line with these developments. It stipulates that departmental directors (deputy mayors) are responsible for taking into consideration gender equality and non-discrimination in their work. It also specifies that gender equality and a non-discrimination perspective are integrated into training for new staff, advanced training of line managers and customer service training. Finally, it calls for the introduction of Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) training for selected members of staff, especially those involved in preparing budgets.

Evaluation criteria**'WORKS WELL'****(Gender equality) objectives**

The key objectives of the gender training provided in the City of Vantaa are:

- to raise awareness of gender mainstreaming, and specifically, of different methods and tools associated with it; and
- to train employees with a focus on practical issues and specific activities that allow them to promote and take forward gender mainstreaming (such as learning to conduct gender impact assessments, to develop gender equality plans and to take into account the gender dimension in the municipal planning and budgeting processes).

The expected outcomes include:

- improving the capability of the municipality staff to conduct gender impact assessments (GIAs) and to develop gender equality planning;
- increasing the number and improving the quality of GIAs and gender equality plans undertaken in the City; and
- greater awareness of possibilities to improve effectiveness and customer satisfaction through gender mainstreaming.

Target groups

The Gender Impact Assessment training is aimed at key staff members from different departments of the City (e.g. education, social, health, employment, etc.), who are in the position to design policies and / or service delivery methods, and thus need to / should carry out GIAs as part of their work. The training was compulsory for the group of participants who were carefully selected by the directors to take part.

Aims, methods and tools used

The main aim of gender training carried out at the City of Vantaa in relation to gender mainstreaming is to be as practical and close to the actual work of employees as possible. The main training methods include:

- classroom-based training on gender impact assessment (GIA), typically in a form of two half-day sessions (plus additional homework);
 - practical, on-the-job support for staff carrying out GIAs and employees drawing up gender equality action plans for the first time. This training has taken the form of one-on-one, on-the-job advice and consultancy, depending on the needs and assignments of each employee / unit in question. Such support has been provided by an in-house gender equality adviser and an external consultant specialised in gender equality.
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Gender equality results (long term and short term). Outcome/specific changes as an actual result of the process/activity

The main short-term results of the training include:

- An increase in the number of GIAs carried out as part of policy making / service delivery planning processes.
- Improvement in the quality of GIAs carried out as part of policy making / service delivery planning processes.

The main medium and long term results that are expected are as follows:

- Achieving greater equality between men and women, in both decision-making and services.
- Including GIAs as a mainstream part of drawing, implementing and assessing service delivery plans.
- Minimising (potential) the negative impacts of policies / services on one gender.

As a practical example, the finding related to a GIA undertaken as part of the training activities in the social and health care sector can be mentioned as an example of good practice. The GIA in this area revealed that women with illegal substance abuse problems in Vantaa did not attend drug rehabilitation services, because they did not want to admit publicly that they have a drug problem (due to social stigma, etc.). Consequently, the health and social service department of the City designed a service, where female addicts did not have to attend institutional drug rehabilitation services, but could receive similar support at home. As a result, more women have started to use this service. At the same time, it has been found that providing such support at home, instead of in an institution, is more cost-effective. This demonstrates that training on GIA - and gender mainstreaming in broader terms - can result in positive outcomes for both citizens and public authorities.

Evaluation of good practice.

- The training has not been formally evaluated mainly because of the small-scale of this initiative covering only employees in one municipality and consequent budget restrictions.
 - The impact of the training has been monitored on an informal basis, for example in relation to how the staff started using the skills they have learnt in practice. This means that the quality of the GIAs carried out by the beneficiaries of the training have been monitored.
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Ways in which the good practice/activity could have been improved

Generally, the individuals involved in the initiative are satisfied with the results they have achieved. Because of the nature of the training provided there are no significant improvement plans or demands for significant changes: the training has been linked to concrete actions and activities that employees have to deliver.

Work-related pressures and subsequent lack of time to dedicate to training has been identified as the main challenge associated with the provision of gender training (this however applies to other type of training too).

Plans to gather financial resources and/or institutional arrangements

The training has been integrated into the practice of the City and will continue to be provided as / when needed. There is no specific budget, but the training funds come from mainstream budgets of individual departments. During the period 2010 - 2012, the training was partially funded by an ESF project 'Gender mainstreaming into practice'.



TRANSFERABILITY

Success factors

- **Practicality of the training provided.** The classroom-based training on GIA was followed by practical, on-the-job support for the staff carrying out GIAs. This ensured that the employees do not only learn the theory but also how to apply it in their actual job. It has been found out that generic gender training does not produce the same results.
- **Training and support based on a needs assessment.** An initial self-assessment process led to a conclusion that gender equality issues have been neglected within the City. Accordingly, a need for relevant and practically orientated training for employees in key positions in relation to budgets, service delivery and policy/programme making, was revealed.
- **Precise selection of training participants.** The staff chosen to take part in the training were carefully handpicked by the directors, with support from gender equality advisers. In this way, employees who can have the greatest impact on gender mainstreaming were identified (e.g. planners and other individuals in charge of drafting policies, services and programmes). The compulsory nature of the training for the selected group of participants helped to ensure high levels of participation.
- **Piloting the training / support in certain sectors** before it was introduced more broadly within the municipality.

Main obstacles

- **Subtle resistance to the issue of gender equality among some employees / individuals.** According to some opinions, there are no important problems in this field and other more important or urgent problems should be addressed instead (such as poverty).
- **Concerns over responsibility for gender mainstreaming.** Some employees do not think or know that gender mainstreaming is their responsibility. They believe that it is something that should be addressed only by gender equality experts.

Actual replication or spin-off effects

- The training has been integrated into the general practice of the City and its form is transferable and could be replicated by other larger councils. Yet, due to costs related to employing an in-house expert as well as buying-in some external expertise, financial limitations are the factors that could hinder the implementation of this initiative in smaller councils. In such cases, collaboration with other councils could be considered as a solution.

LEARNING

Lessons learned from the process

- Public commitment of the most senior officials from the City to achieving greater gender equality in decision-making and within the services it provides has helped to raise the profile of the issue and ensure it is taken seriously.
- Having an in-house person with a combination of institutional knowledge and understanding, as well as expertise on gender equality matters, is considered of key importance for the success of the initiative.

Sources

- Workbook on equality and non-discrimination (Työkirja tasaarvosta ja yhdenvertaisuudesta), City of Vantaa, http://www.vantaa.fi/instancedata/prime_product_julkaisu/vantaa/embeds/vantaawwwstructure/72174_tyokirja_tasa-arvosta_ja_yhdenvertaisuudesta.pdf [in Finnish]
- The guidelines / action plan for gender equality and non-discrimination in the City of Vantaa, 2009-2012 (Tasa-arvo- ja yhdenvertaisuussuunnittelun kehittämistoimen linjaukset vuosina 2009-2012), http://www.vantaa.fi/instancedata/prime_product_julkaisu/vantaa/embeds/vantaawwwstructure/72176_kh_060409_toimenpiteet_2009-12.pdf [in Finnish]

About EIGE:

The European Institute for Gender Equality is an EU agency that supports policy makers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality, by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable information on gender equality in the European Union. More information: <http://www.eige.europa.eu>
Neither EIGE nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for the content of the information contained in this publication.

Footnotes

1 How does the City of Vantaa promote gender equality and non-discrimination of all people? Seminar presentation for local female government decision makers - delivered by Ms Meija Tuominen, planning officer, The House of Municipalities, 19 May 2009.

