

Gender Mainstreaming of Regulatory Documents

Gender mainstreaming for better performance

Gender mainstreaming is a gender equality strategy aimed to improve the results of an organisation or activity. There is a focus on equality in services provides to citizen/customers/users and not on gender representation at the management level and salaries.

National gender equality objectives

Gender mainstreaming is Sweden's main strategy to achieve the national gender equality objectives. The central aim of Swedish gender equality policy is to ensure that women and men have the same power to shape society and their own lives. This aim is in turn divided into four key objectives:

1. Equal division of power and influence. Women and men must have the same rights and opportunities to be active citizens and to shape the conditions for decision-making.

Definition

The Council of Europe's definition of gender mainstreaming is generally accepted in modern gender equality work:

'Gender mainstreaming is the (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies, at all levels and at all stages by the actors normally involved in policy making.'

2. Economic equality. Women and men must have the same opportunities and conditions for education and paid work that provides lifelong economic independence.
3. Equal distribution of unpaid housework and provision of care. Women and men must have the same responsibility for housework and have the opportunity to give and receive care on equal terms.
4. An end to men's violence against women. Women and men, girls and boys, must have the same right and opportunity to physical integrity.

Gender equality and equal treatment

Gender equality is achieved when women and men have the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities in all areas of life. In Sweden, the term is used in reference to the relation between women and men. Equal treatment is a much wider concept that refers to the relations between all individuals and groups in society and is based on the notion that all human beings have the same value regardless of gender/sex, ethnicity, religion, social belonging etc. Thus, gender equality is an important aspect of equal treatment.

The chain of command

A regulatory document is a document describing how an organisation or activity is governed and managed. In order for gender equality to permeate all parts of an organisation or activity, the perspective must be integrated in its regulatory documents.

In order to gender mainstream a regulatory document, you first need to identify what and who are governing the operations in question. A chain is often used as a metaphor in descriptions of how an organisation or activity is governed and managed. The links of the chain represent the organisational levels where the different governing and management functions are located. The chain can never be stronger than its weakest link.

The top link consists of the governance external to the organisation or activity:

- Laws (such as the Swedish Instrument of Government, the Budget Act, the Government Agencies and Institutes Ordinance, the Administrative Procedure Act, the Discrimination Act and the Ordinance on Internal Management and Control)
- National aims and objectives (such as the national gender equality objectives)
- The national budget
- Letters of regulation
- Instructions
- Official assignments

The next level consists of internal governance. There are several different management models, for example balanced scorecard, but content-wise their components are often similar. The next link in the chain consists of general regulatory documents:

- Operational plan
- Budget material
- General policies
- Strategy documents

Planning instructions are often available for the development of an operational plan and a budget. Risk analyses are commonly used in the operational planning to identify and prioritise measures.

Operational plans and budgets are often available also at department and unit level.

Guidelines, checklists, routines etc. are often available at the level where the actual interaction with citizens takes place.

If the chain of command works as intended, the national aims in the top link of the chain should trickle down through the chain all the way to the individual citizen. The Swedish national gender equality objectives comprise one such aim.

The different instruments used for systematic feedback – follow-up, evaluation and mapping – comprise a central aspect of the governance/management. The reporting to the government is also important, and this is accomplished through annual reports, budget follow-up and dialogues where representatives from the government, the government offices and the management discuss results and future directions. A similar but internal dialogue regarding the results achieved is also common.

Checklist

When gender mainstreaming regulatory documents, you should answer the following questions:

1. What does the chain of command look like? Which are the most important regulatory documents? Draw the chain of command. Mark the most important regulatory documents.
2. At which levels of the chain of command can formulations regarding gender equality currently be found? Are they included in the most important regulatory documents? Are the formulations satisfactory or should they be updated? Are formulations regarding gender equality missing at any level?
3. What needs to be done to incorporate/update formulations about gender equality where needed? Who is authorised to decide that a gender equality perspective should be integrated in the management/governance? When are regulatory documents updated? Draw the annual cycle of operational planning and follow-up work. Indicate which actors are authorised to revise formulations in the documents. Also indicate at which points in the annual cycle new formulations can be added.
4. Are all staff members aware that a gender equality perspective is integrated in the governance/management? What can be done to make this fact better known?

Assess your regulatory document using a set of questions

Once you have identified your regulatory documents, it is time to assess them. This requires knowledge about gender/gender equality competence, change management and the work within the organisation. One single person does not need to know all of this; instead it is sufficient if several individuals meet this requirement together.

- Is gender equality expressed explicitly somewhere in the text?
- Do the regulatory documents make reference to women, men or gender/sex?
- Is it specified anywhere that the activities/services must be of equal value for everyone they target, regardless of gender?
- Is it specified anywhere that a gender equality perspective must permeate the organisation and its activities?
- Is the gender of target groups (citizens, young people, clients etc.) indicated where relevant?
- Are statistics and results separated by sex?
- Are the sex-disaggregated statistics described in text and analysed?
- Is it specified anywhere that results and indicators must be followed up gender-wise?
- Is it specified anywhere that achievement of objectives must be reported gender-wise?
- Have any particular aims related to gender equality been declared?

Base the assessment on the national gender equality objectives

Assessments of regulatory documents can also be based on the national gender equality objectives. Does the document (directly or indirectly) contribute to organisational aims and the national gender equality objectives? If the answer is no, is it desirable and is it possible to change?

Objective 1. Equal division of power and influence

Women and men must have the same rights and opportunities to be active citizens and to shape the conditions for decision-making.

- Do the activities/services affect women and men's opportunities to be active citizens? In what way?
- Have strategic priorities intended to achieve aims and at the same time contribute to the gender equality objective been defined? Do new priorities need to be defined on the grounds of gender equality considerations?

Objective 2. Economic equality.

Women and men must have the same opportunities and conditions as regards education and paid work which give economic independence throughout life.

- Do the activities/services affect the economic situation of women and men? In what way?
- Have strategic priorities aimed to achieve aims and at the same time contribute to the gender equality objective been defined? Do new priorities need to be defined on the grounds of gender equality considerations?

Objective 3. Equal distribution of unpaid housework and provision of care. Women and men must have the same responsibility for housework and have the opportunity to give and receive care on equal terms.

- Do the activities/services affect the opportunities for women and men to share the unpaid housework? In what way?

- Have strategic priorities aimed to achieve aims and at the same time contribute to the gender equality objective been defined? Do new priorities need to be defined on the grounds of gender equality considerations?

Objective 4. An end to men's violence against women. Women and men, girls and boys, must have the same right and opportunity to physical integrity.

- Do the activities/services affect men's violence against women or women's and men's, girls' and boys' right to physical integrity? In what way?
- Have strategic priorities aimed to achieve aims and at the same time contribute to the gender equality objective been defined? Do new priorities need to be defined on the grounds of gender equality considerations?

Gender-equal use of language and images

Feel free to use the training material in gender-equal communication at IncludeGender to assess the use of language and images in regulatory documents:
www.includegender.org

About this material

This material has been developed by Mikael Almén within the framework of the Gender Mainstreaming in Government Agencies project.