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Gender Powers Policy

10 Questions and Answers
on the Concept of
Gender Mainstreaming

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Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

Foreword

The 10 questions on the concept of gender mainstreaming in this report are based on many years of experience gained through discussions in a wide range of organizations and institutions. They are intended as an aid for those planning or involved in the implementation of the concept.



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1. What is Gender Mainstreaming?

To understand gender mainstreaming it is necessary to look at its roots. The concept emerged from the activities of the international women's movement and its long and arduous experience with the inadequate implementation of its demands by governments and institutions. Recommendations for improving the situation of women were drawn up and passed by the first three World Conferences on Women. National governments made commitments to follow the recommendations, but it grew increasingly clear at following international conferences that the mere self-commitment of governments was inadequate and that the situation of women had hardly changed. Discussions focussed on how to overcome the status of the international women's movement as a petitioner to national governments and implement demands more effectively. The new strategy was called gender mainstreaming and was laid down in the documents of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. In the context of international women's politics, gender mainstreaming calls on governments to examine the effects of all policies on men and women, and not merely to entrust women's affairs to a single ministry.

Each political measure must be analyzed with respect to whether it improves the situation of women, has negative effects or doesn't affect women at all. Gender policy objectives of governments could then be made binding for all policy areas and the idea that there can be de-genderized policy areas or forms of policy abandoned.

In the context of international women's policy, this would achieve what the NGOs have already attained in the area of development policy: the "gender approach" in this sphere was intended to intensify "empowerment". While

empowerment is aimed at increasing women's decision-making power, the gender approach results in the integration of the gender perspective in all policy areas. Development policy has considerable experience with gender mainstreaming that can be applied on a broader scale in government activities.

Due to the feminist lobby and the tradition in its Scandinavian Member States, the European Union has increased its commitment to the principle of gender mainstreaming at international level. On the European level, women's groups succeeded in implementing the objective of "Equal Opportunity For Women and Men" as part of the reform of the EU Structural Funds in 1993. This marked the first establishment of a general concept for the promotion of equality opportunities in Europe. The mainstreaming strategy was described for the first time in 1995 as part of the "Fourth Action Programme on Equal Opportunities". The aim was to apply the achievements of the EU Structural Funds to the whole of EU policy: gender relations were to be taken into consideration in all policy measures. The principle of gender mainstreaming was given further impetus in the Treaty of Amsterdam. All Member States of the European Union agreed to apply the principle of gender mainstreaming in their policies: all measures of joint European policy should aim at eliminating gender inequalities. To promote the objective of gender equality, the European Commission decided on a "Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality" in June 2000, a comprehensive strategy that includes all Community policies and all Commission services. For both 2001 and 2002 the Commission implemented gender equality work programs (European Communities 2001).

In Germany too, the idea that women's policies are a horizontal task is not new. However, the implementation of this approach in the organization of political decision-making processes leaves much to be desired. As a rule, a given authority (the Ministry for Women's Affairs, the Equal Opportunity Office) defines women's policy and develops gender specific goals and measures. This authority then disseminates its results in "other" policy areas with the expectation that they will be implemented in these areas. In this context, it is always the political strength of the affected women and the extent to which they are organized that determine whether and how their demands are heard and implemented. Given these decision-making processes, women often remain in the role of the petitioner or can only make moral appeals.

Gender mainstreaming can be an innovative strategy for gender policy within organizations. Since most organizations have a (gender-specific) hierarchical structure and their political concepts and services appear as if they are gender-neutral, the introduction of gender mainstreaming marks a radical transformation.

The Federal Republic of Germany pledged to introduce the principle of gender mainstreaming in its national policies. There are a number of projects at federal level, some measures at state level and even a few successful initiatives. Some municipal governments have even started to implement gender mainstreaming. In addition

Definition of the principle

"Gender mainstreaming comprises the reorganization, improvement, development and evaluation of decision-making processes in all policy fields and areas of work of an organization. The objective of gender mainstreaming is to integrate the perspective of the relations between the genders in all decision-making processes and to utilize all decision-making processes for gender equality."

If decision-making processes in (political) organizations are likened to weaving a braid, then historically, the braid has been woven with the strands of rationality, feasibility and cost. If the potential effects on women are considered at all, it is only at the end of the process. In other words, a little bow is tied into the braid after it has been completed. In gender mainstreaming, on the other hand, gender relations is one of the strands in the braid, intertwined with the others and influencing decisions right from the beginning.

to the government authorities, civic organizations such as labor unions, foundations and continuing education facilities have started to introduce the concept.

2. Why Implement Gender Mainstreaming?

Gender mainstreaming can be made binding on the basis of legal and political requirements, subsidies or on the basis of commitment.

2.1 Legal and political requirements

Legal requirements for the introduction of the gender mainstreaming principle exist at European and national level. Article 3, paragraph 2 of Germany's Basic Law specifies dual objectives for government activity: the government shall promote the actual implementation of equal rights for men and women and take steps to eliminate existing inequalities. These objectives apply to legislation, administration and jurisprudence and to all levels of government: the federal government as well as state and municipal governments.

Since the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty on May 1, 1999, the EU Member States have been obliged to promote equality between men and women in the sense of gender mainstreaming in all community policies and in particular in community labor and employment policies.

Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union requires that Member States implement the principle of gender mainstreaming.

In Germany, gender mainstreaming is already been a guiding principle of various laws, e.g. in the **Job-AQTIV** Law, in the draft of the



Anti-Discrimination Law for the Integration of Handicapped Persons as well in the Law on the Welfare of Children and Youths.

The national government as well as state governments made political decisions on the principle of gender mainstreaming as early as 1998 (Lower Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt). The federal cabinet made a decision to recognize the equality of men and women as an overarching basic principle on July 23, 1999. This decision was followed by a cabinet decision of July 26, 2000 amending the Joint Rules of Procedure of the Federal Ministries: § 2 of the joint rules of procedure requires that all departments of the federal government apply the gender mainstreaming approach in all political, legislative and administrative actions of the Federal Ministries. Thus, the key conditions for the implementation of the approach have been met at national level.

More recently, gender mainstreaming has been the subject of coalition agreements at state level in the Rhineland-Palatinate, North-Rhine Westfalia, Bremen and Berlin.

The general assembly of the German Council of Municipal Governments passed the following resolution entitled "The Future of the City – The City of the Future" in May 2001: "A citizen-oriented service must include the evaluation of administrative activities with respect to any differences in their effects on the lives of men and women (gender mainstreaming)." The German Council of Municipal Governments adopted the principle for its own activities in June 2002.

Some city councils have already made similar decisions (e.g. Münster, Rostock, Wiesbaden).

This brief survey of the legal and political basis for the introduction of gender mainstreaming shows that the binding character of the principle is growing at national, state and local level and gaining ground in a growing number of policy areas.

The Federal Republic of Germany is not a pioneer in the implementation of gender mainstreaming. In the Scandinavian countries as well

as in Great Britain, the introduction of gender mainstreaming dates to the 1980s. Sweden has been implementing the principle in government activities at national, regional and local level since 1994 and has gathered a wealth of experience, especially at local level (Stepanek 1999).

2.2 Funding

In addition to these legal and political requirements, the principle of gender mainstreaming has also been applied in the international activities of the German government for the past ten years. As a provider of funding for projects in the so-called developing countries, the German government requires that the project sponsors and recipients take the gender-specific effects of projects into consideration. The implementation of the principle is in part the success of the international women's movement. However, an analysis of development aid conducted more than ten years ago revealed that many projects do not have lasting effects, because they fail to take the gender relations in each country into account. Gender training for staff and evaluation instruments have been elements of international development assistance for years.

The European Structural Funds are also administered according to the principle of gender mainstreaming. One of the instruments of the Framework Strategy to Support Gender Equality (2001-2005) is to force gender mainstreaming through the Structural Funds and the associated Community initiatives (EQUAL, Interreg, Urban and Leader) and to strengthen co-operative mechanisms in the Commission for monitoring the implementation of gender mainstreaming (Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM (2000) 335 final). Since 2002, the approval of EQUAL projects contains the requirement that all co-operating agencies undergo gender training during the initial phases



of a project. Those responsible for project control and evaluation are developing increasingly refined monitoring instruments. Project applications are classified according to their equality objectives in three categories: “equality promoting”, “equality oriented” and “equality neutral”. Projects that fall in the category “equality neutral” are not granted support.

It can be expected that with the increasing bindingness of gender mainstreaming the dependence of public funding on gender equality objectives will be introduced in other areas of public policy. The promotion of research projects by the German Ministry for Education and Research has long been linked to gender requirements.

2.3 Self-commitment

The legal and political requirements for use of the gender mainstreaming principle currently apply only to government activities. Other organizations, such as associations, clubs, labor unions and political parties, can introduce such requirements on the basis of self-commitment. The labor union ver.di, for example, has already written such a self-commitment into its statutes. The goals of the union include “the realization of gender democracy and the equality of men and women in the workplace as well as in commerce, society and politics through approaches such as gender mainstreaming.” At its convention in November 2001, the German Social Democratic Party made a resolution to introduce gender mainstreaming. The Heinrich Böll Foundation anchored gender democracy in its statutes and already has years of experience with its implementation.



3. How Is Gender Mainstreaming Implemented ?

Gender mainstreaming is linked to the introduction of a new perspective in the activities of organizations. It results in changes in decision-making processes in patriarchal organizations.

An organization is considered patriarchal when men occupy most decision-making positions and when organizational rationale and action follow traditional male thought patterns. Such thought patterns conceal the gender dimension of daily life, e.g. consider only gainful employment and not unpaid labor as work and set norms that are fitted to a typical male lifestyle and biography as standards (e.g. a 10-hour work day as the accepted requirement for management positions).

Gender mainstreaming means that gender relations are integrated in all activities performed by an organization. Such innovation can be made in an organization with a hierarchical structure only when management acknowledges

the approach and is committed to its implementation. The leaders of an organization must search for ways and measures with which the new perspective can be introduced in the day-to-day decision making processes. The long term objective consists of creating an environment in which no meeting takes place and no measures are implemented in which gender relations do not play a role.

Such transformation within an organization takes time and must be designed as a process.

The following steps are particularly important:

1. A decision on the gender policy guidelines of the organization;
2. A resolution by the management of the organization to apply gender mainstreaming;

3. A decision by management on how gender mainstreaming is to be implemented (first steps, pilot projects, responsibilities);
4. A decision for the establishment of the conditions needed for gender mainstreaming (e.g. sensitization and training of employees, the establishment of organizational requirements, definition of responsibilities);
5. A decision on the means for monitoring and evaluating the gender mainstreaming process.

Example:

1. *Central goal:* The access to and utilization of material resources is equal for men and women
2. *Strategic objective:* Fifty per cent of the funding for economic development is earmarked for women or benefits women.
3. *Operational objective:* Women make up half of the sellers at markets and city events.

Although the introduction of gender mainstreaming is a top-down process, this doesn't mean that the necessary changes in decision-making processes can be realized on the basis of an order by an organization's management. If gender relations are to be analyzed in all activities of an organization, in all of its measures and rules and in all daily professional activities, a new way of thinking is required of all involved parties: everyone must earn gender competence.

Reflection of one's own gender role, the ability to develop gender policy objectives and apply them to professional work as well as the ability to conduct a gender analysis are all important elements of gender competence. The latter also requires a sound knowledge of gender relations, which may be gained through gender training, self-education or continuing education courses.

The work necessary for the development of gender policy objectives should not be underestimated as a part of the gender mainstreaming process. It's not enough to base them on the wording of the Basic Law. Examples for the articulation of gender mainstreaming objectives can be found in the projects of the cities of Lübeck and Norderstedt, where the central goals of gender policy as well as its strategic and operative objectives have been developed for municipal services (see Hansestadt Lübeck 1999).

Experience with the introductory processes has shown that gender mainstreaming can not

be made binding for all work units simultaneously. Instead, an understanding of the processes must be gained through pilot projects (Schweikert 2002, Färber 2001). Appointing an employee to the position of "gender officer" can succeed only if the greatest possible number of employees has participated in gender sensitization and gender training. Gender mainstreaming doesn't mean that gender issues are the responsibility of a few experts, but of everyone in an organization. Of course, gender officers may be responsible for counseling, monitoring and assistance in the gender mainstreaming process, but actual responsibility resides with an organization's management.

The introduction of gender mainstreaming can be linked to development processes in an organization: The gender perspective may be integrated with an organization's activities if its goals, monitoring procedures, quality standards and assessment processes are designed with gender considerations in mind. The view from the outside, whether it be in the form of a consultancy or accompanying research, promotes the gender mainstreaming process. The municipal council of the city of Wiesbaden, for example, not only introduced gender mainstreaming, but also commissioned a university to conduct accompanying research. The learning capacity of an organization enhances gender mainstreaming and is at the same time a prerequisite for its success.

4. What Are the Benefits of Gender Mainstreaming to an Organization?

4.1 Quality improvements

The use of knowledge about gender requirements and outcomes increases the effectiveness of measures at the same time that it increases the focus on gender. All measures aimed at certain target groups require the application of gender specific knowledge in order to be effective. It is easier to recognize problems in target groups if the gender conditions have been analyzed.

By focussing analysis on a target group, planning can be conducted at the appropriate level of detail.

Examples

A state government endeavors to provide its citizens access to its policies via the internet. Applying gender mainstreaming requires that gender differences in the use of the internet must be taken into account. This will reveal that some groups of women don't even have access to the internet while some groups of males use it on a daily basis. This knowledge will in turn influence the contents of the web site and perhaps initiate a search for other communication channels.

A pharmaceutical manufacturer tests a new product not only on young males (as it did in the past), but also includes elderly women, many of whom are in poor health. This allows the manufacturer to gain a more comprehensive knowledge of the product's side effects, make more specific dosage recommendations and increase the effectiveness of the medication.

An analysis of counseling for welfare recipients reveals that women typically lack skills in childcare and that a lack of schooling or alcohol problems often play a role in the biographies of male recipients. The gender perspective leads to the provision of different services for men and women.

In many cases, gender analysis also provides a basis for preventive measures that help save costs in the future.

Example

A gender analysis of health behavior reveals that young men between 16 and 18 years of age have particularly risky behavior: They rarely heed physical signals of sickness and subject their bodies to strains that have effects of which they are unaware. The early implementation of health education for young males helps save future costs in the social security system.

4.2 Gender mainstreaming enhances the effectiveness of administrative processes

When gender analysis targets specific problems, it may require crossing departmental boundaries; project management and cooperation are then necessary.

Example

A research project of the Occupational Safety Department at the Ministry for Labor, Women, Health and Social Affairs in Saxony-An-



halt revealed that many women are exposed to harmful substances during pregnancy and that many small and medium-sized companies do not submit reports in compliance with the Maternity Protection Act. An information and counselling campaign involving all departments of the ministry was started on the basis of an analysis of the sources of these problems. For example, the ministry's health department co-operated with the state medical chamber to develop a continuing education course for gynecologists and the labor department evaluated job-rotation models for companies that have to deal with this problem.

4.3 Enhancing participation processes

Gender mainstreaming affects all tasks of an organization. In the public sector, it has effects on all public services. In particular, services that have been considered as gender neutral must be scrutinized: city planning, the planning of transportation and the promotion of the local economy must be analyzed in regard to their effects on gender and gender relations. But this is nothing new. In some cases, the introduction of gender mainstreaming will make the work of equal opportunity officers easier and give it more substance. In many cities, equal opportunity officers have been trying for years to promote the

participation of women in city planning or to conduct surveys of mothers' needs with respect to public childcare services. The implementation of gender mainstreaming makes participation even more important and ensures that it is an integral part of planning processes. Participation is often the only means for evaluating the effects of planned measures on men and women.

4.4 The financial benefits of gender mainstreaming

The earmarking of funds is already part of affirmative action policies in many areas. Financial assistance is provided only when recipients can demonstrate that they are capable of applying the gender perspective and following gender policy objectives (examples include the EU Structural Fund, international co-operation and Germany's Higher Education Act).

4.5 Gender mainstreaming serves the promotion of an organization's image

Openness to gender issues can not only help an organization in the search for employees but improve its image in the eyes of its potential clientele. Large international companies know how to publicize their equal employment strategies and hope, with good reason, that this will improve their image.

5. What Advantages Does Gender Mainstreaming Have for Men?

This question assumes that changes in gender relations will always lead to a win-win situation. Otherwise, there would be no grounds for the participation of men as required by gender mainstreaming. Such an approach, however, underestimates the so-called “patriarchal dividend” (Connell 1999). This term is used to connote the benefits that accrue unnoticed to men on a daily basis. Highlighting the benefits for men may also give rise to false expectations. Anyone who sacrifices privileges, money or power is not going to profit from their loss. The man who must refrain from candidacy to let a woman take a position certainly has no benefit.

Gender analysis focuses on positions from which women have been excluded or in which they have been disregarded or subject to discrimination on the basis of their sex. All areas in which the existing structures are built on typical male life styles are put to question. However, the introduction of the typical female life style into the structure of an organization may have advantages for other groups of men.

In gender research, both masculinity and femininity are seen as social constructions. This means that not all men follow and correspond to the male hegemony structures. Men can distance themselves from the norms and rules that apply to their gender the same as women. Not all men are in positions in which they have power over others and they differ according to their age, class, health, upbringing and marital status. “Thus, men are not a homogeneous (gender) mass with a single political interest” (Döge 2001, p. 34).

When males are looked at in all their diversity it soon becomes clear that their involvement in gender mainstreaming and the inclusion of the male gender in gender analysis has advantages and benefits.

■ **The man with political responsibility**

Men have a legal and moral duty to apply the gender mainstreaming principle. The positive effects of gender mainstreaming on the efficiency and quality of their work will help convince them of its advantages (see 3).

If gender mainstreaming helps move gender policy from mere proclamations to the application of rational analysis and specific objectives, it can become an element of a man’s professional qualifications.

■ **Man as partner and father**

The extent to which work and the family are shaped by male structures often becomes clear to men when they are confronted with the problems of their partners and/or daughters. If a man is open to these issues, he will find it easy to participate in gender mainstreaming processes, assume responsibility for them or to initiate them.

Gender analysis, which is conducted as an integral part of gender mainstreaming processes, reveals men’s health problems, the higher mortality rates of men, male work addiction and male violence. These problems are the negative results of the traditional male role, and even men who do not question male hegemony will have to deal with its effects.



■ **Men who don't fit the male stereotype**

The objective of more flexible roles will provide men who don't fit the male stereotype with more opportunities to overcome the traditional gender roles. It creates opportunities that aren't possible under stereotypical gender roles: for example, an active role in childrearing, new forms of thought, the ability to feel emotion, a different perspective

on sexuality. In addition, gender analysis reveals the gender-specific discrimination of men who work in atypical professions. Not all men have managerial positions; many remain in subordinate positions in nursing or educational professions. Improving the image of these female professions and ensuring equitable remuneration would benefit men and women alike.

5. Does Gender Mainstreaming Determine Gender Policy Objectives?

Gender mainstreaming first serves to reveal the relevance of gender. Differences between the genders can be found in most areas, whether they are related to the access to economic resources, political resources and work, or factors such as attitudes, preferences and habits.

The evaluation of existing differences must be made in the context of gender policy objectives. Gender mainstreaming strategies can be implemented only if they have clearly defined objectives. Every organization must define its objectives. This does not occur in a legal vacuum. Lawmakers and the courts have defined a number of requirements that determine the general direction of equal opportunity strategies (BAER 2002): the reduction of discrimination and support for those who have been discriminated against are essential for attaining equal opportunity in material terms. Nonetheless, objectives such as equality, equal opportunity, gender equity and gender democracy provide only general guidelines that are difficult to define as concrete goals. Is equality attained when 50 per cent of the women and 50 per cent of the men are represented in all areas? Does equal opportunity mean that women must serve in the military? Does gender equity mean that the funds earmarked for services to young females must also be spent on measures that focus on young males? Does gender mainstreaming mean that the underrepresented gender, not just women, must be provided support?

Whether and how gender equality policy is affected by gender mainstreaming is discussed in the following sections.

6.1 What does gender mean?

Oft bemoaned is the fact that there is no fitting German term for gender. Finding an exact equivalent is not easy, because the English language makes differences that are not made in German: in English, the term “sex” refers to the biological aspects and the term “gender” to the social and cultural dimensions of sex. The term gender can not be translated in a single German word. Gender is used to distinguish the social and cultural role of sex from the physical aspects of the term.

The use of the English term “gender” has become common in German due to the widespread introduction of gender mainstreaming principles in German language countries. Despite calls for a simple German term, the use of the English word has a number of advantages: first, it facilitates international communication among those involved in gender policy. More importantly, however, the term “gender” is linked to three messages that are not conveyed by existing German terminology:

■ **Message 1: Gender has a range of components, both biological and cultural**

The term gender indicates the social and cultural dimensions of the sexes. Gender is not synonymous with “sex”, which denotes the physical attributes of sexual categories. The use of the term “gender” is a conscious rejection of the belief that men and women are shaped solely by physical attributes. It implies the relativity of current manifestations of gender with respect to history, social status and culture. At the same time, it indicates that

social and cultural dimensions may change. Opportunities for political measures arise only if the given sex-specific roles, positions and identities are not seen as unalterable.

■ **Message 2: Men also have a gender**

Gender includes the male and female gender roles and their malleability, a feature that is not self-evident under the everyday concept of sex. Given that women have been and still are particularly successful in demanding their rights and working against discrimination, it is all too easy to conclude that gender issues are only women's issues. It even appears as if men do not have a gender in the sense that women do, but that they are the gender, while women are viewed as if they are a deviation from the male norm. This fact is even mirrored in language: male grammar forms always "include" women. The term "gender" im-

plies that "maleness" as well as "femaleness" are collections of attributes consisting of requirements, roles and norms that are socially and historically determined.

■ **Message 3: Institutions are not gender neutral**

Gender is not merely an attribute of individuals. Rather, the duality of gender is a principle that determines the structure of many social systems and shapes their rules. After all, women predominate in most private work activities and poorly paid professions while men dominate in positions of power. The question as to how gender relations arise and hierarchies are established can not be answered by analyzing individual behavior alone. It is necessary to analyze the mechanisms by which gender-related attributes are ascribed to social groups and the systems of controls that promote "genderization".



6.2 Gender: Difference or social construct?

The gender perspective assumes a critique of the traditional concept of “gender”. The question, “What is gender?” is alone enough to alienate many people. Nothing seems more certain than the fact that everyone has a gender and that there are males and females. The common notion of gender contains many assumptions that are not questioned.

Typical conceptions of gender are discussed in the following in the light of the recent theoretical debate on gender.

The following assumptions can be derived from the everyday meaning of gender:

1. Physical characteristics determine whether a person is male or female.
2. There are only two sexes.
3. Everyone is either male or female.
4. The gender of a person shapes their behavior.
5. Only individuals have a gender.

All of the assumptions are analyzed in the context of the recent gender debate that has been shaped by the results of empirical research as well as by philosophical analysis.

Assumption 1:

Physical attributes clearly determine whether an individual is a man or a woman.

The recent gender debate initially surrounded the distinction between sex and gender. This difference alone indicates that gender is not so easy to understand. In the course of the discussion, a third dimension was added to the phenomenon of gender, “sexuality”. Sexuality denotes the dimension of desire, sexual orientation and sexual identity. The use of these three dimensions (sex, sexuality and gender) as equal determinants of gender makes it clear that simple categorizations such as “that is a man” and “that is a woman” imply very diverse dimensions. Physical characteristics (sex) are merely one of many determining factors.

Common knowledge assumes that sex, in the sense of the determination of gender on the basis of physical characteristics, is always evident. However, this certainty is based only on morphological characteristics (primary and secondary gender attributes). Modern biology, on the other hand, has more than 5 methods for determining gender: in addition to morphology, gender can be determined on the basis of chromosomes, on the analysis of genital glands, hormonal analysis or on the basis of gender-related features in the brain. The clear-cut categorization of a person as male or female is no longer possible. Given the many methods for categorization known to modern biology, it is more appropriate to replace the bipolar classification of an individual as “man” or “woman” with the definition of a specific position in a multi-dimensional gender space.

Deconstructive approaches of gender theory go so far as to conceive of the human body as a historical, social and cultural construct. It is argued that nature neither contains nor creates categories; that categories such as male and female are culturally determined and serve to organize knowledge. This approach does not deny the existence of biological facts but emphasizes their cultural interpretation and the attribution of meaning to them. This point of view is a radical critique of all differences between the sexes that are based on so-called biological factors. Even scientific statements are subject to the constantly changing paradigms of their respective disciplines.

It can no longer be assumed that a person’s gender can be determined solely on the basis of physical characteristics. Physical features may be ambiguous and each characteristic subject to interpretation, standardization and polarization on the basis of cultural and social factors.

Assumption 2:

There are only two genders.

Ethnological studies have revealed that the two gender system is not found in all cultures. There are cultures and communities that know at least three genders and thus allow for life styles that

would be subject to repression in systems based on the duality of gender. There are men, women, berdaches, hijras and xaniths. Berdaches, hijras and xaniths are persons who are male but dress and act like females and are treated as if they were female. There are also African and Indian cultures that recognize a third gender status called “women with a man’s heart” which includes individuals who are female but work, marry and assume the role of parent (Lorber 1999).

Furthermore, there was a phase in European history during which a single gender model shaped perception. Until the 18th century, western philosophers and scientists believed that there was only one gender: male. Females were seen as an aberration from this “natural” norm. The female sexual organs were seen as the inversion of the male sexual organs (Laqueur 1992).

These empirical observations are evidence that the supposed certainty of common knowledge, according to which there are only two genders, is based solely on the norms of any given cultural environment. By expanding the horizon, it is easy to find different gender systems in other cultures and periods of history.

Assumption 3:

An individual is either male or female

Studies of fetal and embryonal development have shown the genesis of what is commonly perceived as sex to be an extremely complicated and sensitive process. Using the system of dual gender, the development of the sexual organs can only be determined after the seventh week of pregnancy. Prior to that point, there is no indicator whether an embryo is male or female. Three of every 1,000 newborns have “deviations”, in so far as their physical sexual characteristics are unclear. Hermaphrodites have more or less clear differences from physical attributes that are seen as male or female under the morphological definition of sex. Modern medicine, which is shaped by the concept of dual gender, sees this difference as pathological. In such cases, it is up to doctors to determine the “correct”

sex. This decision is based either the criterion of “the least deviation” or another method is used for the determination of sex. Surgery is then used to make clear what was initially ambiguous.

In addition to the uncertainty in the classification of gender according to biological categories of male and female, there are other indicators that allow for an ambiguous classification instead of just an “either-or” definition. Psychological theories of learning and therapy support the idea that every individual has male and female characteristics. The maturity of a person is seen as the personal ability to unite or integrate the male and female elements. This approach is based on the assumption that “sex” does not determine personal development. Even persons with physical features that are clearly male must not fit the social perception of “masculine”. They may also have behaviors or thought patterns that are considered “feminine”. Cultures may be defined on the basis of the stringency with which they differentiate between genders and whether deviations are sanctioned. The gender policy of a society is revealed in the dimension of “sexuality”. Societies in which homosexuals have a status equal to that of heterosexuals and are not subject to sanction as a deviation from the norm allow individuals to develop their sexuality and desires independently of their “sex”.

Thus, on the basis of modern science, ascribing male and female characteristics to an individual is much more appropriate than the strict classification as man or woman.

The polarized, dual system of gender limits natural diversity and the potential for individual development. It also ensures that the gender hierarchy remains intact.

Assumption 4:

A person’s gender can not be changed.

This assumption is refuted by transsexuality. Transsexuals reject the sex that has been assigned to their bodies. They don’t feel “at home” in the sex that has been assigned to them on the basis of their biological gender characteristics

and identify themselves with the opposite sex. They follow the paradigm of dual gender and believe in the ability to lead a socially satisfying life as either a man or as a woman. Prior to their operations, transsexuals experience their androgynism as extremely painful. They are subject to social pressures that require them to exist in a way that they do not want to live. The surgical adjustment of their physical features to correspond to the gender with which they identify themselves is the only way for many transsexuals to feel secure. In this case, the body seems to be more the effect than the basis for social processes. Surgery and hormone treatment are also an expression of the cultural and social pressure for the standardization of sex, sexuality and gender.

There are also individuals who avoid such pressures and practice a mixture of male/female sexuality and male/female behavior. Hermaphrodites can live as women and then as men. They resist the pressure for standardization. Dazzling portrayals of sex and experiments with male and female characteristics are common in artistic circles. Travesty is an expression of a practice that identifies the prevailing gender order as a cultural phenomenon by turning it on its head. Playing with gender has a provocative effect and thus reveals the deep roots of gender as a social phenomenon. At the same time, allowing a range of portrayals of gender is evidence of social progress in so far as it transcends rigid norms and allows individuals to live as they wish.

Assumption 5:

A person's behavior is determined by their gender.

Numerous studies have analyzed how gender shapes behavior. However, the overall results reveal that the differences among women, i.e. within the gender group classified according to "sex" are at least as great as the differences between men and women. Furthermore, the use of statistical averages should not lead to the conclusion that an observed difference between

men and women applies to each individual man and woman.

For "sex" to be a direct determinant of behavior, male and female physical features would have to be associated with specific, mutually exclusive dispositions. However, biological features (which themselves may be indistinct) can not be linked directly to behavior. Rather, the biographies of individuals may well contain incongruous developments in the dimensions of gender; between sex, sexuality and gender. A person who is considered a female on the basis of physical features may not be heterosexual, as required by "normality", but may be bisexual. She can distance herself from social expectations with respect to her behavior and act differently, in a masculine manner. She can also resist the social definition of her female status, e.g. as wife and mother, and the definition of her place in society. The same applies to persons who are classified as men. Their "sexuality", their desires, may focus solely on males, they may behave in a feminine manner and their social position must not necessarily coincide with society's expectations.

The decisive moment in each individual is the conflict between sex, sexuality and gender. This determines the specific form in which they experience their "gender". The observed differences and similarities between gender groups can no longer be considered the result of their "sex", but arise from the many conflicts with the other dimensions and social pressures to behave in accordance with one's gender. "Doing gender" is becoming an increasingly fruitful field of research. The focus is no longer on the differences between genders as such but on the mechanisms that make individuals fit into the gender roles defined by their social environment. The genesis of gender can be found in the daily interactions of men and women, boys and girls, in school classrooms, at the workplace and in the media. Once the mode of operation has been determined, however, it is possible to prevent negative results. If more is known about the social conditions that shape individual gender identity, it is possible to analyze them in a political context. Such a perspective must reject

The review of the six assumptions on gender are intended to underscore the fact that the common understanding of sex is not enough to clarify the concept of gender. The analysis of gender requires empirical and theoretical knowledge of it as a social construct. Personal experience (“I know my wife and therefore know all women” or “I know how men are, I have one.”) are by no means enough to provide a basis for a competent analysis on gender and gender differences. In Sweden, gender mainstreaming was used to introduce principles for earning qualifications in this area.

Even a cursory look at the common conception of gender reveals it to be extremely complex. The usual simplifications used to explain the differences between the sexes do not stand up to a critical analysis.

Empirically determined differences between males and females can not be reduced to their “sex” alone. Instead, they are to be understood in the nexus of gender. Gender denotes those aspects of sex that are part of a social construct. Thus, gender doesn’t imply the sex of an individual but the cultural and social mechanisms to which an individual is subject on account of his or her “sex”. The implementation of gender mainstreaming thus applies the gender concept to assumptions that don’t differentiate between “sex” and gender but accept:

- the dual, polar conception of gender, according to which males are by nature strong and action-oriented while females are emotional, social and sympathetic as a true reflection of reality instead of as stereotypes.
- the notion that there are “female” and “male” professions and thus take the cultural definition of gender types to be their biological definition.
- that the natural tasks of women consist of unpaid household labor and childcare – usually called “homemaking” – and therefore believe that it is the man’s duty to work full-time and secure the material basis for supporting his wife

and children. The equality of the sexes then exhausts itself in the equal status of different tasks, but the responsibility for specific tasks still occurs on an irrational basis.

- that the historically determined differences between genders are based essentially on sex and function to ensure successful cohabitation, thus confusing “sex” with “gender”.

A more refined understanding of gender also implies that all forms of gender hierarchy lose their legitimacy. Once gender is no longer viewed in its polarized, dual form, hierarchies based on differences between men and women lose all justification. Individuals are then encouraged to free themselves from the constraints that are based on their gender. Such an approach is even more important for the analysis of regulations and political measures: If these allocate work, personal orientation or skills on the basis of sex, then they must undergo a critical analysis. If gender mainstreaming cannot rely on the biological differences between the sexes but assumes that all differences are determined by “gender”, it must resort to reasons that go beyond the attributes based on the biological sex.

Such an approach does not deny that there are empirical differences between men and women; however, these differences are not ascribed to the “essence” of each sex and thus don’t apply automatically to every man and woman.

Gender includes the social canon for the determination of the effects of gender relations on each individual. Equity and equality are the legal norms applicable to gender relations in Germany. Thus, the framework for gender policy objectives of gender mainstreaming measures is well defined: They focus on overcoming all forms of authority and dominance between the sexes, at overcoming the male dominated structures and on ensuring the equal treatment of typically “female” lifestyles and work styles.



7. What Is Gender Analysis?

An essential component of gender competence is the ability to conduct a gender analysis. Gender mainstreaming processes do not end with the completion of check lists about the gender relevance of decisions in the form of “yes-or-no” questions. Gender analysis requires an adequate understanding of gender (point 6) and a knowledge of gender relations.

Gender analysis may be applied to a theoretical discourse, a political agenda, an organization’s budget or individual measures. It can be used to analyze any topic and must be performed in a number of steps:

1. Clarification of the gender approach and definition of the gender policy objectives.
2. Collection of gender sensitive evidence.
3. Definition of the gender sensitive problems.
4. Preliminary conclusions.

A gender analysis is built on the view that sex is not a biological characteristic of an individual but a social institution; that it is a social construct that simplifies a social order and defines its hierarchy. A gender analysis does not only ask what individuals classified as male or female think, say or do, but has a broader perspective: It analyzes the ways in which the dual, hierarchical institution of gender affects the problems that are being analyzed.

Gender analysis focuses on the way that structural conditions lead to situations in which potential individual diversity is restricted by the common concept of sex. Classification according to “sex” produces specific biographies, professions, interests and social status according to an understanding of sexual attributes that limits individual potential and perpetuates the hierarchical connotation of roles.

By virtue of their sex, women are paid less for their work, have less material power and less social influence, while men have better paid

jobs, more material power and more influence in society. If measures aim at these structural conditions for the hierarchy of gender relations, i.e. at the interface of the gender norms for men and women, they inevitably have political consequences. These consequences consist not only of the recommendation to women that they assert themselves and work to overcome existing gender hurdles on their own. They also don't consist merely of the recommendation to men that they relinquish the privileges that are based on their sex. Gender analysis focuses on the conditions that lead to the perpetuation of hierarchical gender relations. The objective is to change these conditions. Attempts at change can succeed only if they are part of a gender policy approach that considers the whole range of opportunities that are open to individuals who are categorized as either male or female. The clarification of the gender concept is therefore of central importance for any gender analysis. Gender concepts that define sex as biologically determined characteristics legitimate the differences between the sexes and accept them as immutable. An approach that is not based on gender as a one-dimensional concept but instead recognizes the differences between sex, sexuality and gender, rejects the social attribution of biological differences to individuals, attempts to comprehend the social construction of gender and views the gender hierarchy critically, must confront the political issues that are based on differences between the genders.

The gender approach provides a critical perspective of the gender-specific attribution of characteristics to men and women and can therefore not be abused to hide discrimination. At the same time, gender analysis neither views the discrimination of women from the individual perspective nor assumes that all women reject the differences between and the hierarchy of the sexes. It also doesn't assume that all men are responsible for the oppression of women. Rather, it assumes that each individual can identify with or distance itself from the gender hierarchy.

Gender analysis exposes gender hierarchies. Even when individuals can not perceive the gender hierarchy in which they live, this doesn't mean that the hierarchy doesn't exist. The fact that men and women view the gender distribution of labor as natural is viewed under the gender perspective as an indicator for the effect of the social and cultural environment on individual awareness. Men in particular are often unaware of the effects of gender on their lives. To many men, women are merely persons who enter their lives only because of their "sex".

Gender analysis requires empirical data that is structured according to "sex", i.e. according to the biological and anatomical characteristics of the respondents. However, differentiation according to the biological sex is not enough. In order to provide answers to questions on the effects of gender-related mechanisms, additional attributes that reflect gender roles must be included in any database.

Data must be differentiated according to:

- parental status, i.e. according to the family situation, age and number of children;
- age, i.e. according to young, mature and elderly women and men;
- labor force participation, i.e. according to whether men and women are employed on a full time basis;
- the personal disposal over material and financial means, i.e. according to whether a man or woman is less or better off in a material sense;
- the surrounding infrastructure, i.e. according to whether a man or woman lives in a rural or in an urban area;
- ethnic background, i.e. according to whether a man or woman is an immigrant.

Such detailed surveys are based on the perception that individual living conditions are determined by sociocultural factors that are

related to gender status. Gender does not determine homogeneous sexual groups, and statements about “males” or “females” are too broad; they merely blur the differences and hierarchical relations between specific groups.

Additional analysis is needed to reveal the functioning of processes that shape and perpetuate gender differences and gender hierarchies, including the historical and cultural development of gender relations. The days in which gender was used in Europe as a tool of oppression and for establishing social order (e.g. the right to vote or to enrol at a university) belong to the past. Direct discrimination on the basis of gender has been gradually removed from the legal system. However, in the social reality of daily life, gender has remained a powerful organizational factor, and even without a legal basis the gender hierarchy continues to be effective. Social norms must therefore be subject to continued scrutiny with respect to indirect discrimination and privileges.

Example

The reform of the Industrial Constitution Act was intended to correct the under-representation of women in works councils. The law doesn't specify a quota for women but for the underrepresented sex. At first glance, this regulation appears to meet the requirements of gender equity, since it also helps men when the male sex is underrepresented. However, this formal and abstract gender equity is inappropriate in the given historical and social situation. Demands for a quota for women arose from the fact that past efforts and goodwill proclamations were not enough to open the doors that were closed to women. Although it is “natural” for men to assume such positions by virtue of their gender, women, by virtue of their gender, are not considered appropriate for such positions. Women are excluded from such positions solely on the basis of their sex. Women are not elected, because females are assumed to be incapable

of asserting the interests of a group (many question whether women can even perform such a social function). Men, on the other hand, are not excluded from such positions, because it's assumed that they can represent the interests of an electorate (It is assumed that a man can “Take care of things.”). Men therefore don't have to be protected from not being elected on account of their gender, but women do. In the gender context, a quota for women is necessary to attain equality objectives. A quota for men promotes not equality but male privileges.

Equality can be an objective of gender policy, but gender policy must not serve abstract goals. In many cases, unequal treatment may be necessary in order to remove existing inequalities. Putting gender relations in their historical and social context is the only way to determine what can be done in each case.

Gender analysis is a tool for exposing the effects of the polar, binary gender model and showing how a gender hierarchy is created, secured and maintained. It is a critical analysis of the gender hierarchy in a social structure. It does not focus on women as the discriminated group, but assesses the positions of both genders and analyzes the effects of norms, rules, structures and processes on gender.

Example

The analysis of a municipal budget leads to the conclusion that the majority of educational counseling services are provided to young males whose mothers seek help. Approximately 70 per cent of the clientele is male. In view of this fact, it must be asked whether girls are being treated in a discriminatory fashion or whether boys have special problems. It's obvious that the simple rule of ensuring that half of all resources benefit females is inappropriate. From the gender perspective, the starting point for an analysis

must be based on the fact that the counseling services are provided mostly to young males who are brought to the counselors by their mothers. There are a number of gender issues revealed by this simple analysis:

■ It must be asked whether the inexplicable behavior of young females is such that mothers do not seek counseling services for them. The fact that fewer girls are brought to counselors does not mean that their behavior is less extraordinary. It only shows that girls' behavior appears less extraordinary. This may be due to the fact that they have other symptoms, are better adjusted, or that they behave "like girls are supposed to behave" and thus appear normal. Further analysis of the gender aspects of this situation is needed to determine whether the municipality has services that deal with the special problems of young females. Concepts that were developed for the provision of social services to young females must then be integrated with educational counseling. This may require additional funding for the municipality's educational counseling services.

■ The absence of fathers in the counseling reflects their apparent lack of concern for their children, which is based on the division of labor by gender. The absence of fatherly concern is an important socialization factor for girls as well as for boys that is little understood. A city administration is certainly not capable of making up for the absence of fathers in the upbringing of their children. Nonetheless, consideration must be given to the efforts (e.g. of counseling centers) that have been made to get fathers involved in the counseling and therapy processes. Such efforts should be supported and expanded.

This example shows that the simple motto of equality between the genders is not so straightforward in actual practice. As a result, the provision of equal funding is usually not enough to deal with the problems at hand. Gender mainstreaming requires the analysis of actual living conditions from the gender perspective and the identification of the problems specific to each sex. In many cases, this process will merely reveal the hidden aspects of the other sex: in the above example it would mean looking at the problems of girls and at the same time at the situation of fathers. It also makes it obvious that gender objectives are necessary. Gender mainstreaming processes reveal that the traditional hierarchical division of labor – in which mothers are primarily responsible for the upbringing of children while fathers delegate all responsibility for these tasks – is not acceptable. The finding that mothers usually bring their children to counseling services is seen as a problem. Wild and aggressive behavior is not seen as natural for boys and the more frequent use of counseling services by boys is not seen as the result of minor infractions against the normal male role.

Gender analysis must resort to a range of methods (see Döge 2001a). There is no universal method that fits all cases. The above examples show that an appropriate and well-founded professional approach is needed to interpret the results of gender analysis. Gender budgeting, a method for determining the effects of government budgets on gender relations (see Schratzenstaller 2002), has far-reaching objectives but must be developed in more detail.

8. Is Affirmative Action for Women Obsolete?

The relationship between affirmative action and gender mainstreaming must be clearly defined in all organizations in order to avoid conflicts, resignation and overly optimistic expectations.

8.1 Employees responsible for affirmative action are not superfluous

If gender mainstreaming is seen as an accomplishment of the women's movement and the gender issue permeates social institutions that were hitherto seen as gender neutral, its broader application should not result in the elimination of positions that have a gender approach or are involved in gender activities. Gender mainstreaming is supposed to result in the intensification of gender policies in an organization, not in their attenuation.

Gender mainstreaming requires that men assume responsibility for its implementation,

which may be new for many organizations. Since neither men in management positions nor those with skilled jobs have felt responsible for gender relations, gender mainstreaming is something new to them. This doesn't apply to women who have years of experience in this area. Affirmative action offices, women's affairs offices and women's centers are often the only units in organizations that have knowledge of gender relations. This knowledge and the related approaches are indispensable for gender mainstreaming.

Gender mainstreaming is the application of the gender perspective in the professional activities of all actors within an organization. This doesn't mean that all men and women in an organization must become experts in women's policy, but that professional activities must be viewed from the gender perspective. Problem areas, research results and indicators for the particular sensibilities and strengths of women



have already been delineated through feminist activities (NGOs, Women's Studies, institutional women's policy). It is then the task of skilled workers to take up these impulses and integrate gender mainstreaming in their activities. Those who were hitherto responsible for women's policy must continue to develop new impulses, more detailed analyses, new research topics and to present their research results.

Gender mainstreaming means testing and analyzing gender issues. This increases the transparency of gender policy objectives. Gender mainstreaming does not guarantee that a feminist agenda will triumph but does ensure that the implications for gender relations will be made evident. The widespread patriarchal notion that men "stoop" to deal with women's issues is transformed into the question of the gender implications of each measure. Gender mainstreaming is not a vehicle for the automatic assertion of feminist issues but the first step towards more transparency in the actions of organizations. The development of concrete objectives for women's policies, corrections and proposals remains the domain of those directly responsible for women's policy, even though these are developed in a dialogue with other experts. However, the legal norms of equality and equal opportunity are on their side.

8.2 Offices for women's affairs and affirmative action are not responsible for the implementation of gender mainstreaming

Since women struggled against past discrimination based on gender, many men assume that women alone are responsible for gender relations.

Offices for women's affairs, affirmative action bureaus, municipal women's centers and other institutions that are concerned with gender issues often have to explain how they wish to become involved in the gender mainstreaming process. The question itself reveals a misconception of gender mainstreaming. Responsibility for

gender relations is seen solely as the responsibility of one gender.

Gender mainstreaming should be introduced as a top down process. It is the task of management, whose responsibilities include ensuring the gender competence of employees, integrating the gender perspective in their area of expertise and providing guidance to employees.

How gender policy actors are integrated in the gender mainstreaming processes of an organization is an open question. Whether they take the initiative and/or act as monitor, whether they assume control functions and how their activities must be transformed or integrated with other positions within an organization; all these issues can only be answered in the context of the given organization and its gender culture. Those already responsible for affirmative action, however, should by no means be seen as solely responsible for the gender mainstreaming process. The speed and extent to which those responsible for affirmative action within an organization win over partners in other departments with whom they can co-operate depend largely on the acceptance and power position of these actors within an organization.

8.3 Affirmative action for women is part of the gender mainstreaming process in human resource development

The discrimination of women due to their gender role in the labor market has been thoroughly analyzed and – at least in the public sector – corrected through laws on affirmative action and equal opportunity policies for women. The establishment of offices for women's affairs and affirmative action in government organizations should help control the implementation of legal requirements.

Affirmative action measures are based on the discrimination of individual women within an organization and attempt to abolish gender-specific hurdles to equal participation at all levels and in all areas of an organization.

Objectives, measures and control instruments are anchored in affirmative action plans that are intended to shape human resources policy on a day-to-day basis. In general, a gender-specific inventory must be taken of all positions, salaries, gender-specific participation rates in positions with better pay and in continuing education. Evaluation systems, hiring practices and quality development methods must be analyzed with respect to their potential for discrimination. Affirmative action in administrative areas is based on gender objectives (equality), compiles a gender-specific inventory (statistics and analysis of procedures) and evaluates the results in the light of gender policy objectives. The results of such an analysis are used for planning purposes, especially in the area of human resources policy. Responsibility for the implementation of an affirmative action plan for women resides neither with the person responsible for affirmative action nor with the women's affairs delegate but with the human resources department and the management of an organization. Once this is ensured, the process is fully in accordance with the principles of gender mainstreaming. On the conceptual level, human resources policy in the public sector is already "genderized".

8.4 Gender mainstreaming

The term "affirmative action for women" can be problematic if it leads to the assumption that women require special consideration due to individual shortcomings. The grounds for the discrimination of women on the basis of their gender are not to be found at individual level but in the gender relations in which they live. In Germany's amended law on affirmative action, for example, the women's affairs officer at federal level is now called the Equality Officer.

Gender mainstreaming widens the perspective from women as a group to the discriminatory structures and mechanisms in society as well as to the awareness of men. It therefore requires considerable rethinking in the area of human resources policy.

Example

The gender objective of an organization is to ensure that the representation of women in management positions is equal to that of men. Affirmative action for women typically consists of the definition of quotas that guide personnel decisions, the rewriting of job descriptions and the introduction of control measures.

As experience has shown, such measures can achieve equality objectives at a very slow pace. An affirmative action plan for women that focuses on females alone is not enough. Gender mainstreaming always requires a gender analysis (see point 7) and thus focuses on the mechanisms that have resulted in the low participation rates of women in management positions. Affirmative action for women is thus supplemented by more far-reaching measures:

- the selection of job candidates is analyzed for practices that discriminate according to gender, e.g. whether they are judged on the basis of a *vitae* that is typical for males;
- the participation of men in maintaining gender relations in management positions is scrutinized. Seminars are held for managers to make them more aware of gender issues. Measures are developed that aim at changing the male role, e.g. flexible working time is introduced for all employees who have family responsibilities, there are incentives for individual training and employment in atypical professions;
- the extent to which requirements placed on managers and their job descriptions are structured around the typical male biography and thus closed to anyone who can not rely on the whole spectrum of private childcare and unpaid work in the household. There are more opportunities for part-time work and the "meeting culture" is changed.



The following measures benefit men, but also have indirect benefits for women:

- When fathers have flexible working hours and can therefore perform unpaid labor in the home, women must perform less unpaid labor;
- When seminars teach managers more about the situation of mothers and about the less apparent forms of discrimination, women can expect more understanding from their supervisors;
- When there are incentives for young men to work in atypical professions, e.g. in children's day care centers, male and female children are given new role models.

The problem is not one of overcoming the gender of any given individual but of recognizing the gender effects of social structures and abolishing their "masculinization". This means that the typical male life-style should not be the sole normative basis for defining the terms of active employment.

Thus, gender mainstreaming is the instrument for the creation of general conditions and structures that are appropriate for gender equality objectives. Gender mainstreaming is a means for avoiding future discrimination based on sex, gender-related hazards to health and gender-related austerity measures. It is therefore crucial

that the gender perspective be developed everywhere and integrated in all problem-solving approaches and analyses. It is not a matter of taking special measures to promote women as a group. Rather, the more comprehensive problem-solving approaches must focus on organizational culture, the networking of different departments and the transformation of procedures.

The implementation of gender mainstreaming is thus aimed at a lasting transformation of social structures.

Gender mainstreaming is therefore much more than the promotion of equal opportunity at individual level. Instead:

- 1 It broadens the promotion of women to the transformation of structures and the abolishment of discrimination against women;
- 2 It is aimed not only at women but at men, and in particular at men who are directly involved in the discrimination of women (e.g. by virtue of their lack of participation in unpaid housework or childcare) as well as at men who are excluded or have limited opportunities due to the male stereotype. Here again, the issue is not one of promoting individual men but of changing structures so that they allow for life-styles beyond the usual stereotypes.

9. Is A Self-Contained Women's Policy Still Necessary?

If gender mainstreaming is understood as an instrument for furthering gender objectives, it is evident that the objectives can not be contained in the instrument. The international women's movement also proposed a political agenda specifying the direction for changes in the representation of the sexes. Gender mainstreaming was a strategy for the implementation of the agenda by national governments. If women's politics is based primarily on the development and implementation of objectives, then it's still necessary to define objectives even though an organization has implemented gender mainstreaming. The fact that EU documents on labor market policy and the structural funds contain the gender policy objective of an equal distribution of paid and unpaid work is the result of a gender policy discussion in which the interests of those groups were asserted that demanded the recognition of all types of work. The objective would not have been set if it were not for these groups.

Women's politics define objectives, asserts itself and supports women.

The implementation of gender mainstreaming can not be used as a substitute for any of these objectives. Since sex is not related to personal political convictions (see point 7), and opinions about gender policy first arise following the confrontation with gender relations, the process will inevitably be controversial. In order for these controversies to be settled, however, women's policies are needed. Who, if not women, have continually referred to the violence against women, sexual exploitation, poverty and

the worldwide lack of participation of females in educational systems. Who, if not women researchers, have taken a critical approach to the male dominated sciences and developed alternatives. Who, if not politically active women, have criticized institutions, policies and laws, because they were based solely on a male life style.

Women's politics is made within institutions and beyond their boundaries. In organizations, the only people who have concerned themselves with gender issues are usually those who are involved in women's policy. Their knowledge and skills can be used in the gender mainstreaming process and for monitoring its implementation. Affirmative action measures that go beyond organizational walls such as the activities of feminist groups, women's projects or NGOs provide an important starting point for the organizations: The experience in the former West Germany shows how a strong women's movement can confront organizations from the outside and at the same time bring about internal changes. If the fact that national governments have pledged themselves to the principle of gender mainstreaming is seen as an accomplishment of the international women's movement, then gender mainstreaming is the means for implementing the movement's objectives. The notion that the women's movement becomes obsolete once gender mainstreaming has been introduced and that women's politics is fulfilled in gender mainstreaming processes is based on a misconception of its historical and political development.

10. Can Gender Mainstreaming Hinder Women's Politics?

The feminist movement has a critical view of the gender mainstreaming concept (Schunter-Kleemann 2000; Nohr, Veth 2002). Some see it as a means for suppressing feminist policies. Others don't trust organizations and believe that they have neither the competence nor the willingness to deal with gender issues on a daily basis. Others warn that gender mainstreaming is not the "great hope" that will break male domination and the masculine perspective. If feminists are replaced by "femocrats" who are employed by organizations as affirmative action officers, then the women's movement has dug its own grave (Woodward 2001). The international discussion of gender mainstreaming has also dealt with the issue of whether bureaucracies and organizations are capable of changing gender relations to benefit women. Scepticism is based on the fact the organizations' structures reflect the gender hierarchy and are dominated by a male organizational culture (von Braunmühl 2000).

These critical views are supported in part by empirical analysis. Studies in the area of development policy point out that "the color violet fades" when gender mainstreaming is made mandatory for organizations (Callenius 2002 p. 63). The summaries of EU reports assessing the status of gender equality and gender mainstreaming have repeatedly revealed the same experience: there is a lack of awareness, knowledge and funding for the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming. While these reports point to deficiencies in the implementation of a strategy that is correct in principle, there are also examples for the corruption of the principle. The latter reveal that gender mainstreaming can be turned on its head: instead of empowering women and changing the positions of men it has resulted in:

1 *The avoidance of any gender policy*

Examples

A city administration doesn't discuss a social plan for girls until the social plan for boys is completed. Since no one is capable of drawing up the latter, the plan for girls and the gender mainstreaming strategy are struck from the agenda.

Check lists are distributed that evaluate the gender effects of a measure with "yes" or "no" questions. Instead of a gender analysis, a simple survey is conducted. No measures are taken whenever "no" is checked.

Gender analysis exhausts itself in the counting of the "sexes": gender mainstreaming is reduced to the collection of gender-specific data. The data is not analysed and no conclusions are drawn.

2 *The weakening of (independent) feminist activities*

Examples

The position of affirmative action officers are deemed obsolete and abolished with the introduction of gender mainstreaming.

The affirmative action office is used for analyzing gender mainstreaming processes and overloaded with requests and demands.

Women's projects are "assessed" and denied support on the basis of gender mainstreaming arguments (e.g. with the argument that "the rest of management is responsible for gender issues").



3 Funding is reduced in half for activities intended for women

Example

Funding achieved through the political struggles of the women's movement are cut in half: the remaining half is earmarked for projects for men and boys.

The broader the diffusion of gender mainstreaming in organizations, the greater is the variety of experiences, both positive and negative.

The question whether gender mainstreaming is a means of transformation or affirmation, i.e. whether it is intended to overcome existing gen-

der relations or to strengthen them, is too general and abstract. The important issues are the successes and failures and the supportive and discriminatory features of organizations.

Gender mainstreaming would have never been developed without a strong women's movement. The success of the principle hinges on the capacity of men and women to view gender relations critically and to bring about their change. Gender mainstreaming is not a magic potion for establishing gender equality. It is an extremely demanding concept with a steep learning curve for individuals and especially for organizations. The political essence of the learning process requires democratic discourse. The fact that an organization initiates such a dialogue should be judged as an accomplishment in itself.

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