Learning From Experience: Lessons in Mainstreaming Equal Opportunities
LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE: LESSONS IN MAINSTREAMING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Fiona Mackay and Kate Bilton
Governance of Scotland Forum
University of Edinburgh

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<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Assembly Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>(United Nations) Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIDA</td>
<td>Canadian International Development Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>CoE</td>
<td>Council of Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>CoSLA</td>
<td>Convention of Scottish Local Authorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>COSW</td>
<td>Commission on the Status of Women (*chk)</td>
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<td>CRE</td>
<td>Commission for Racial Equality</td>
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<td>DFW</td>
<td>Department For Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>EO</td>
<td>Equal Opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>EOC</td>
<td>Equal Opportunities Commission</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>GAD</td>
<td>Gender and Development</td>
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<td>GBA</td>
<td>Gender-based Analysis</td>
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<td>GDI</td>
<td>Gender-related Development Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>GEM</td>
<td>Gender Empowerment Measure</td>
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<td>GIA</td>
<td>Gender Impact Assessment</td>
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<td>GMS</td>
<td>Gender Management System</td>
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<td>GPCO</td>
<td>Government Policy and Communications Office</td>
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<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>Instituto de la Mujer</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISH</td>
<td>Index of Social Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSP</td>
<td>Member of Scottish Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEWS</td>
<td>National Exchange of Women's Services</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>OSW</td>
<td>Office for the Status of Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAET</td>
<td>Policy Appraisal for Equal Treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAFT</td>
<td>Policy Appraisal for Fair Treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SALA</td>
<td>Swedish Association of Local Authorities</td>
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<td>SWC</td>
<td>Status of Women Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWOT</td>
<td>‘Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats’</td>
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<tr>
<td>UGTC</td>
<td>Union General de Treballadors de Catalunya (Catalan General Workers Trade Union)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>WID</td>
<td>Women In Development</td>
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<td>WILD</td>
<td>Women's Institute for Leadership Development for Human Rights</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study addresses the issue of how mainstreaming equal opportunities can be instigated and sustained in the work of government and public bodies by drawing upon lessons from elsewhere. It considers, analyses and reports upon developments in mainstreaming practice and research in the 1990s and draws out concrete examples of innovative practice of mainstreaming at various government levels in Europe and beyond. This review develops understanding of mainstreaming, identifies gaps in knowledge and highlights the strategies, structures and tools needed for successful mainstreaming.

MAIN FINDINGS

- Mainstreaming is a social justice-led approach to policy making in which equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices are integrated into the everyday work of government and other public bodies.

- Mainstreaming aims to transform the organisational cultures of governments and public bodies and to improve the quality of public policy and of governance itself.

- Mainstreaming complements lawful positive action designed to address the historic and current impact of discriminating structures and practices.

- Specialist equality units play a crucial role in driving, coordinating and supporting mainstreaming.

- Mainstreaming is a term which is increasingly used, but is less well understood. There are substantial shortfalls in knowledge, awareness and techniques which appear common to the experience of mainstreaming in most countries.

- Mainstreaming is a strategy that can, without care, degenerate into tokenism where public commitment is given in principle but where in practice little is achieved.

- Gender equality has been the primary focus of mainstreaming in theory and practice. Further work is needed to develop generic equality tools. It must also be recognised that different equality groups may require different sorts of analyses and specific tools.

- Prerequisites or enabling conditions for successful mainstreaming include: specific equality legislation, structures and policy; statistics disaggregated by gender, race, disability and the like; comprehensive knowledge of gender relations and patterns of social division; knowledge of government organisations and administration; necessary funds and human resources; and the equal participation of women and men (and the fair participation of equality groups) in political and public life and in decision-making processes.

- Mainstreaming in the UK is at an early stage. Constitutional change and the government’s modernisation agenda are seen as important enabling contexts within which equalities work can develop both collaboratively anddistinctively at different levels.
Concrete examples are crucial for governments and other public bodies seeking to 'learn' mainstreaming.

Experience of mainstreaming has been seen to bring tangible benefits for governments and public bodies.

Whilst there has been much innovation, progress has been uneven and mainstreaming remains vulnerable to political and organisational change and loss of momentum.

Policy leaders such as Canada and the Nordic countries underline the importance of integrated strategies and systems for the development and implementation of mainstreaming.

Strong and sustained political will is probably the single most important factor for successful implementation.

Further systematic research is needed to draw lessons from the experiences of policy leaders and from UK local government.

WHAT IS MAINSTREAMING?

Mainstreaming is a relatively new approach to policy making in which equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices are integrated into the every day work of government and other public bodies from the outset, involving ‘every day’ policy actors in addition to equality specialists. It is a long-term strategy to frame policies in terms of the realities of people’s daily lives, and to change organisational cultures and structures accordingly. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to create a fairer society. The strategy is supported by the United Nations, the Commonwealth governments, the European Union, the Council of Europe and many governments world-wide. A number of arguments have been put forward in support of mainstreaming:

- It is a primary tool for the delivery of public policy objectives on the promotion of equality and the effective distribution and delivery of public services;
- It puts people, and their diverse needs and experiences, at the heart of policy-making and service delivery;
- It leads to better government through better informed policy-making and a greater transparency and openness in the policy process and helps to tackle democratic deficit by encouraging wider participation in the policy process through effective consultation mechanisms;
- As a process it tackles the structures in society which contribute to, or sustain, discrimination and disadvantage;
- It makes equality issues visible, demonstrating that equality is a mainstream concern with implications for all, and that it is not just a ‘cost’ or a ‘luxury’;
• Mainstreaming involves an acknowledgement that the task for removing imbalances and inequalities in society is a *shared* responsibility involving both women and men. It therefore makes fuller use of human resources by involving men as well as women in equality work;

• The application of a mainstreaming approach can avoid the adoption of policies and programmes which replicate discrimination and exacerbate existing inequalities;

STRATEGIES, SYSTEMS, TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

There is widespread misunderstanding and confusion over the meaning of mainstreaming and related concepts. This confusion arises from the lack of a clear definition of mainstreaming, the lack of practical examples of ‘what mainstreaming is’, and from the fact that concepts of equality and analyses of different equality groups are very complex. Mainstreaming is sometimes referred to as a tool, sometimes a process or method, and sometimes as a strategy.

It is useful to think of mainstreaming in terms of *principles, systems, framework tools* and *discrete tools and techniques*. Mainstreaming is supported by *principles* which set out commitment to, and conceptions of, equality, and *systems* consisting of *strategies, policies, structures, mechanisms and tools* through which these principles can be put into practice. *Tools* are diverse and can be used separately or as part of a *framework* or package. Mainstreaming is an *active process* combining these elements. Therefore the use of mainstreaming tools alone does not constitute mainstreaming but must be part of a broader mainstreaming system.

The Commonwealth Gender Management System (GMS) is a good example of a mainstreaming *system*. GMS has three main components; *structures, mechanisms* and *processes*, which need to be developed within an *enabling environment*. Structures to drive, co-ordinate and scrutinise include: a lead agency, usually the national women’s policy machinery; a gender management team; gender focal points comprising designated senior staff members in each ministry or department; an inter-ministerial steering committee; a parliamentary gender caucus; and a gender equality commission or council made up of representatives of civil society. Within these systematic structures various tools or mechanisms are employed to implement mainstreaming. Examples of other systems which combine strong co-ordinating structures, inter departmental working and collaboration at different levels of government, include the Nordic Council, Sweden, Norway, Canada and the Canadian Province of British Columbia.

There are three broad categories of tools: *analytical, educational* and *consultative and participatory*. In reality, most tools have multiple uses, for example, disaggregated statistics are useful as educational tools or in forming the basis of consultation, as well as for their analytical uses.

*Analytical tools are designed to 'expose' the problem.* Tools include: disaggregated statistics; surveys and forecasts; research; check lists; guidelines and terms of reference; gender impact assessment and differential impact analysis models; indicators; and monitoring tools.

*Educational tools are designed to raise awareness, to transfer knowledge, and to support training.* Tools include: awareness-raising and training courses; follow-up action; mobile or
flying experts; manuals and handbooks; booklets and leaflets; educational material for use in schools.

*Consultative and participatory tools are designed to improve the quality of policy-making and deepen democracy.* For example, working or steering groups and think tanks; directories; databases and organisational charts; participation of both sexes - and all social groups - in decision-making; conferences and seminars; hearings and consultative fora.

**MAINSTREAMING AND SPECIALIST EQUALITY UNITS**

There are debates and disagreements about what a mainstreaming strategy might entail, and its relative merits and drawbacks. In particular, it has been identified as a strategy that can, without care, degenerate into tokenism where public commitment is given in principle but where in practice little concrete or specific is achieved. This is particularly the experience in those places where ‘mainstreaming’ has been interpreted as a strategy which supersedes rather than complements specialist equality policy machinery and positive action projects. Whilst a mainstream approach is essential if equality issues are to be embedded within policy making structures, it operates most effectively when coupled with a powerful specialist co-ordinating body. Without co-ordinating structures, specialist expertise and lines of accountability, mainstreaming can become ‘everyone’s responsibility and no-one’s job’. The following roles have been identified for specialist units in complementing and supporting mainstreaming:

- Tackling specific issues of inequality with specialist policies and initiatives;
- Acting as a think tank for developing analyses of inequality;
- Developing techniques and tools for mainstreaming;
- Providing expertise and specialist knowledge;
- Disseminating knowledge;
- Publicising government commitment to equality and its achievements;
- Training and awareness raising;
- Acting as an internal lobby;
- Acting as co-ordinator for mainstreaming initiatives and point of contact; and
- Monitoring overall government performance in achieving equality goals and targets.

**EXPERIENCE OF MAINSTREAMING**

The study reviewed mainstreaming developments in a number of countries: Australia (including New South Wales), Austria, Belgium (Flanders), Canada (including British Columbia), Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United States (San Francisco). The study also drew upon a small number of examples of mainstreaming in UK local government.

Mainstreaming in practice is at a relatively early stage of development and, in most of the countries reviewed, work on mainstreaming is at a preliminary stage involving awareness-raising, establishing the need for mainstreaming, building support and alliances, and sharing ideas and good practice. There has also been the need to establish baseline data, such as gender disaggregated statistics; or carry out auditing of services, policies and departments. In
some instances, positive action has been used in creating enabling conditions for successful mainstreaming. Experiments in mainstreaming have produced tangible benefits including new and innovative ways of thinking and working, new or reinforced collaborative arrangements and cross-cutting working, and the development of new tools. Mainstreaming has provided the impetus for partnership working, amongst different levels of government and amongst public, private and voluntary sectors. There has been an emphasis upon lesson learning and lesson sharing.

For policy leaders such as the Nordic countries and Canada, government experience of mainstreaming has been seen to increase problem-solving capacity and to enhance sound evidence-based policy-making. In some instances, policy proposals with unintended and discriminatory implications have been exposed and modified before implementation. For citizens, including women, it has resulted in more transparent government and an enhanced voice and greater participation in the policy-making process.

The research found that while there has been much innovation in developing mainstreaming strategies, progress has been uneven. Common difficulties include lack or loss of political will, resistance from public officials, poor understanding, inadequate resources including expertise, and a lack of systematic and strategic planning and implementation. Mainstreaming was particularly vulnerable to political and organisational change. Embedding mainstreaming in organisational practices has proved problematic due to a lack of ownership by middle managers and staff. A ‘blame culture’ existed in some cases, where staff felt they were more likely to be penalised if they attempted equalities work and got it wrong, than if they did nothing at all.

EXPERIMENTS IN MAINSTREAMING

The examples reviewed demonstrate much imagination and innovation at all levels, with the development of collaborative working, the establishment of networks, the development of new tools and an emphasis upon lesson learning and lesson sharing. The following strengths can be drawn from the case studies:

- **Political will** is crucial to progress in most of the examples. Slovenia provides an instructive case of a country which has no track record in equalities work and which lacks most of the commonly accepted prerequisites to mainstreaming. The Slovenian government has started from scratch but, with high level political will, a committed ‘driver’ as co-ordinator and the proactive support of the UN, has already effected some change. In rural Spain and France local government provides political leadership which has driven collaborative working.

- **Collaborative working.** There are examples of collaborative working across public, private and voluntary sector in Spain, France and Italy bringing equality debates to the heart of sometimes small rural communities. These include networks of regional institutions, including government departments, regional councils, trade unions, politicians, voluntary organisations, professions and training bodies which are committed to integrating equal opportunities into their daily practices.

- **Awareness raising and training.** Much innovative work has taken place to establish the need for mainstreaming. The Fundacio Maria Aurelia Capmany, in Barcelona
demonstrates the effectiveness of a small NGO in working as a catalyst to mainstream discussion and debate on reconciliation of work and family life. International training modules have been adapted for use by Sicilian municipalities along with other ‘recipes’ for mainstreaming.

- **Tools.** Examples include, the New Zealand guidelines for gender-based policy appraisal which are seen internationally as a model, although they have rarely been used by policy makers at home. The CERES -Transfaire project has produced a manual for local and regional government. The New South Wales equity scorecard works as an important ‘eye opener’. Work is on-going in Ireland to develop gender and generic equality-proofing tools.

- **Participatory approach.** Participation and consultation are, of course, regarded as important mainstreaming tools. A range of internal and external actors have been involved in case study initiatives. For example, women’s groups have played a key role in promoting mainstreaming in Ireland. In San Francisco a CEDAW Task Force comprises of elected officials, trade unions, government employees, and community advocates with expertise in economic justice, human rights, violence against women, and health. Ownership of initiatives is promoted by involvement, for example the Italian principle of partire da se (starting from oneself) informs all training work in Sicily; in San Francisco, departments carried out their own self-analysis as part of an audit process.

- **UN and European contexts.** We see the importance of UN and European contexts in a number of the case studies. For example, San Francisco has built its mainstreaming programme around the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the UN has played a proactive role in supporting mainstreaming in Slovenia. All the European case studies are informed by work carried out by the Council of Europe (see Sections 1 and 2) and many of the projects have been funded or otherwise supported by the European Commission.

A number of common difficulties have been experienced in most or all of the case studies. These relate to: shortfalls in political will and bureaucratic support; lack of gender balance in decision making; lack of gender data, specialist knowledge and tools; lack of resources; ineffective structures; and vulnerability to change. These weaknesses make it difficult, in some cases, to move beyond mainstreaming as a mere ‘tick and dash’ paper exercise.

- **Lack of, or faltering, political will.** For example, mainstreaming tools may be developed but seldom or never used (e.g. New Zealand and Flanders). In Ireland progress is viewed as being undermined by lack of political will to commit resources to support mainstreaming and policy proofing work.

- **Bureaucratic resistance** was encountered to some degree in most of the case studies. For example, in Flanders, it was hard to persuade staff of the relevance of gender to their work and many officials were happy with a policy as ‘window dressing’. In Slovenia resistance resulted in the replacement of the Ministry of Finance by that of Education and Sports in the project.

- **Lack of gender balance in decision-making** is seen to constrain the development and promotion of mainstreaming in many of the country examples. In Slovenia a national strategy to promote the participation of women in politics is being developed.
• **Lack of expertise, information and tools.** The need for improved gender disaggregated statistics and other data was identified in many cases. Tools for monitoring and evaluation were seen as a common weakness.

• **Lack of resources.**

• **Lack of effective structures.** The need to embed mainstreaming strategies in effective structures was identified. The preliminary stage - and temporary nature - of many of the projects made it difficult to establish such structures.

• **Vulnerability to political and organisational change.** In several cases, political changes or organisational restructuring have resulted in the dilution or stalling of mainstreaming.

There are few examples of holistic or strategic mainstreaming, much of the experience is of piecemeal developments and one-off or pilot projects. The development of training and tools has sometimes taken place in the absence of more systematic structures and therefore should be seen as preliminary initiatives rather than as evidence of mainstreaming in action. The conceptual confusion about mainstreaming - is it a strategy? is it a method? is it just a buzz word we use to relabel what we are already doing? - is also evident in some cases. The examples here also reinforce the findings of other research that show whilst advances have been made in developing tools, there has been less progress in developing overall strategies and in deepening understanding of the conceptual issues underpinning mainstreaming.

**POLICY LEADERS**

The Nordic countries and Canada have emerged as policy leaders, there is also much to be learned from local government experience in the UK.

*The Nordic countries:* The Nordic Council of Ministers provides a striking example of an intergovernmental institution promoting mainstreaming through its Programme for Nordic Co-operation on Gender Equality 1995-2000. A three-year pilot project was launched in 1997, to develop and test methods and tools for mainstreaming. The 'umbrella' design of the project allows the sharing of experiences between the countries involved, and the co-ordination of activities through the Council of Ministers who commissions projects and reports to ensure that different sub-projects cover different areas and approaches. The strengths of the Nordic approach include:

• **Top level political support of mainstreaming.** For example, in Sweden and Norway commitment to mainstreaming is regularly restated in prime ministerial statements; in Norway equality goals have been built into government Action Plans. The importance of specific resources for equality work is also recognised.

• **Integrated mainstreaming systems.** For example, a strong co-ordinating structure exists at Nordic Council level including a Nordic Project Manager responsible for implementation and monitoring. Within individual countries, Sweden and Norway have particularly well developed systems with specialist co-ordinating structures, inter departmental working and collaboration at different levels of government.
• **Development of innovative tools and methodologies.** There has been considerable investment in developing and testing tools and methodologies. For example, the use of ‘flying experts’ has been piloted in Sweden. Swedish local government has developed the ‘3Rs method’ of awareness raising and analysis which has been adopted elsewhere. In Norway, Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines have been developed; and packages of mainstreaming methodologies and tools compiled in a number of participating countries including Finland. All countries are contributing to a Nordic Mainstreaming Manual.

• **Gender disaggregated statistics** are recognised to form a central plank of mainstreaming work. Sweden is well advanced in the collection and production of gender disaggregated statistics (see annual *Men and Women in Sweden*). Iceland’s Statistical Bureau is also committed to produce gender disaggregated statistics.

• **Sharing experiences and good practice.** Collaboration between the Nordic countries has provided a supportive environment through which progress can be made in all countries. The Nordic Mainstreaming Newsletter provides a forum for dissemination of ideas and lessons as do common activities including seminars, working groups, and study visits. For example, mainstreaming training in Iceland has been facilitated through the assistance of Swedish expertise.

**Canada (and British Columbia):** Canada provides a case of a well established and integrated strategy for mainstreaming gender equality based upon: high level political will, regularly restated; strong legislation concerning gender equality; and co-operation and collaboration between Federal, Provincial and Territorial levels. The Federal Government is committed to implementing gender based analysis in the development of policies, programmes and legislation; and to developing analytic tools, training approaches and data for undertaking gender based analysis. Canadians use the term gender based analysis to describe gender mainstreaming activity, analysis and research. Most Provincial governments and Territories are likewise committed to some degree of gender based analysis, most notably British Columbia. At both Canadian and British Columbian level, there is visible political commitment and integrated mainstreaming systems are in place including: specialist structures and gender experts within departments; strong co-ordinating mechanisms and lines of accountability and responsibility; policy appraisal frameworks; extensive training; and support in terms of gender disaggregated statistics and gender research.

Canada and British Columbia are regarded as pioneers of mainstreaming tools in much of the emerging literature. The Canadian *Gender-based Analysis* and the British Columbian *Gender Lens* provide general frameworks which can be adapted by departments. Several sector-specific manuals have been produced in areas such as human resources and employment; the justice system; international development and Aboriginal affairs. The schemas have also been widely used elsewhere. In both cases, successful mainstreaming depends upon:

• **Commitment to the principles and goals of mainstreaming** (a social justice strategy to create a fairer society; respect for diversity). For example, the Canadian Government has endorsed mainstreaming in the Federal Plan for Gender Equality;

• **High level support within government to implement and hold line ministries accountable.** For example, in British Columbia each new policy, programme and legislative proposal for Cabinet consideration must include an Equity impact assessment,
this refers to an analysis of implications not only in the area of gender but also sustainable development, social, regional and community issues, other equity groups, and health;

- **Building capacity to do gender-based analysis** (ongoing training; development of tools; support for departments to develop their own sectoral tools; collection of gender disaggregated data; timely policy relevant research; expert support). For example, the Canadian Justice Department has established a network of 55 gender equality specialists to assist their colleagues in mainstreaming. Canada has also established Centres of Excellence for Women’s Health to meet policy research needs;

- **Realistic resources**. For example, the Status of Women Canada currently has 100 staff;

- **Managing the process** (ongoing liaison and co-ordination between relevant departments and at different levels of government; sharing of resources and good practice). For example, a Director of Gender Based Analysis has been appointed by the Federal Government to co-ordinate the strategy and maintain momentum;

- **Communication and consultation** with women’s groups and equity groups; for example, women’s organisations are consulted on the annual federal budget;

- **Systems of reporting, monitoring and evaluating outcomes**. For example, a joint federal-provincial/territorial initiative resulted in the 1997 publication of Economic Gender Equality Indicators (EGEI’s), a set of benchmarks to assess the relative status of women and men, and to measure change over time. Indices included compare women and men in such areas as earnings, income from all sources, paid and unpaid work, education and training;

- **Management of emerging issues**. This has included adapting to changing political and economic circumstances. For example, greater devolution to provincial/territorial government level has meant that several key policy areas are no longer within the jurisdiction of the federal government;

Significant progress has been made towards mainstreaming gender equality into the work of governments in the above examples in Canada and the Nordic countries, however they share very similar difficulties and challenges with experience elsewhere. Although there is commitment across the board, implementation has been uneven, resistance has been encountered, relevance of mainstreaming is not always understood by public officials, and issues of resources (time, budgets), shortage of data and lack of expertise are all cited as reasons to do nothing.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

Shortfalls in knowledge, awareness and techniques are common to the experience of mainstreaming in most countries. In many of the examples much of the innovative practice is dependent on the commitment and experience of a surprisingly small number of politicians and specialist officers, who understand equality issues very well. Despite increasing public statements of commitment to mainstreaming equalities principles by governments, public bodies and councils, there is little evidence that the majority of politicians or public officials understand how this might be applied to specific issues. This suggests that mainstreaming is a
long term strategy requiring substantial investment in training and specialist support, the production of gender disaggregated statistics and other ‘mapping’ data, the employment of multiple strategies and tools, and the involvement of a wide range of internal and external actors including specialist practitioners, statutory equality agencies, academics, social partners and ‘ordinary’ women and men. The need for awareness raising and equalities policy appraisal training cannot be over emphasised and must be seen as an on going process rather than a ‘one-off’.

Finally, but perhaps most importantly, mainstreaming is dependent upon consistent and high profile political commitment. There is consensus in the literature, reinforced in this current review, that explicit, high profile and sustained political support is perhaps the single most important variable in the success or failure of mainstreaming. Equality policies both mainstream and specific depend upon clear political commitment and the recognition that the state can act as a site of social justice. We see this demonstrated most clearly in the Nordic countries and in Canada, where it has contributed to an integrated approach to mainstreaming. In Slovenia, political will has allowed mainstreaming to ‘start from scratch.’ Conversely, the case of New Zealand underscores the fact that well devised strategies will not get off the starting block without political and organisational will. The case of New South Wales demonstrates that a change of political leadership can lead to the stalling of equalities work.

To summarise, this review of developments in mainstreaming underlines the following needs for successful implementation:

- **The need for political will and leadership which is unambiguous, consistent and regularly restated in public.**
  - public commitment to the principles and goals of mainstreaming
- **The need for managerial drive and commitment at top level.**
- **The need for political and bureaucratic accountability including the duty to demonstrate by, for example:**
  - action plans and progress reports
  - equality impact statements
  - performance appraisal systems
- **The need for integrated systems for the co-ordination, monitoring and championing of mainstreaming, for instance:**
  - ministerial, organisational and parliamentary champions
  - a mainstreaming director or co-ordinator to progress and maintain momentum
  - mainstreaming management team
  - specialist equality units
  - equality focal points in ministries and departments
  - inter departmental and intergovernmental working groups
  - communication and dissemination strategies
  - management information systems
• The need to embed equalities in a permanent and sustainable way, for example, through:
  • ongoing training and awareness raising
  • building understanding of gender and equalities issues
  • developing sector specific policy case studies and analyses
  • robust systems of monitoring and evaluation
  • communication
  • fostering a sense of ownership - by policy makers, service providers, equality groups and citizens
  • a move away from a blame culture
  • effective incentives (and sanctions)

• The need for a statistics and research strategy to support sound evidence-based policy making, including:
  • gender disaggregated statistics - cross tabulated by race, age and disability
  • annual compendium of equality statistics
  • timely research which is gender and diversity sensitive
  • equality indicators

• The need for the adaptation and development of appropriate methodologies, tools and mechanisms for policy appraisal.

• The need for equalities expertise (and the recognition of equalities expertise), for example:
  • recognition of ‘gender know how’ and skill
  • role of specialist units
  • specialist staff and ‘flying experts’
  • input from statutory equality agencies and academics

• The need for gender balance in decision making and the fair representation of members of equality groups; and for a socially representative workforce.

• The need for ordinary voices to be heard through:
  • consultative fora
  • development of innovative tools to involve women and men in general, and members of equality groups in policy development

• The need for secure and realistic resources for change.

• The need for collaborative learning and exchange of good practice.
DEVELOPING A GENERIC EQUALITIES APPROACH

Gender equality has been the primary focus of mainstreaming in theory and practice, although more advanced models tend to incorporate a diversity perspective: in other words they take into account the realities of women’s and men’s lives in respect of race, disability and other dimensions of discrimination and disadvantage, including class, sexuality and religion. Examples of mainstreaming from other equalities perspectives remain rare but, when they do occur, they tend to be less sensitive to gender.

The logic of mainstreaming equality within the UK - and, increasingly the EU - context suggests that a generic approach should be developed. Easy assumptions cannot be made that concepts, systems and tools developed for gender mainstreaming can be automatically utilised for other equality groups, although it is undoubtedly the case that some are amenable for wider use. Work is needed to develop understanding of the requirements of a generic equalities approach which works with commonalities but also recognises that different dimensions of inequality may require different sorts of analyses and specific solutions. A generic mainstreaming equalities approach needs to combine the following approaches:

- **Equal treatment approaches** and anti discrimination policies and legislation (there must also be recognition that some equalities groups do not have legal protection).

- **Positive action approaches** which recognise the historic and current impact of discriminating structures and practices on different social groups, including women.

- **Gender/ diversity approaches** which recognise the impact of gender, the differences amongst women and amongst men, and the existence of multiple discrimination.

Defining mainstreaming as a strategy which draws upon legislative, social group and diversity analyses has various benefits. It enables the development of policy tools and decisions which are sensitive to the different legislative contexts within the UK; which take into account the significance of gender as it affects all women and all men; acknowledges the impact of social group disadvantage, (based on for example race, ethnicity, age and disability); and exposes the existence of multiple discrimination and the realities for those often made invisible by an approach which does not recognise the existence of gender as a division within equality groups (for example black women). Mainstreaming may result in positive action for certain groups of women and certain groups of men.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has addressed the issue of how mainstreaming equal opportunities can be instigated and sustained in the work of government and public bodies by drawing upon lessons from elsewhere. It has considered, analysed and reported upon developments in mainstreaming practice and research in the 1990s and has drawn upon concrete examples of innovative practice of mainstreaming at various government levels in Europe and beyond. This review develops understanding of mainstreaming, identifies gaps in knowledge and highlights the strategies, structures and tools needed for successful mainstreaming.
Practice is evolving, therefore the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive have the opportunity to develop their own models of best practice. Future systematic research is needed to draw lessons from the experiences of policy leaders in the Nordic countries and Canada and from UK local government.
THE PROJECT

This report updates and develops work on mainstreaming equal opportunities which was carried out in the Summer of 1998 to inform the thinking of the Consultative Steering Group on the Scottish Parliament.\(^1\) The project, conducted by the Governance of Scotland Forum’s sister organisation, the Unit for the Study of Government in Scotland (USGS) surveyed the literature on mainstreaming in Europe and elsewhere; discussed the experiences of different levels of government; and identified the key enabling conditions for successful mainstreaming in the Scottish context.\(^2\) The report highlighted that there were substantial shortfalls in knowledge, awareness and techniques which appeared common to the experience of mainstreaming in most countries. We noted that practice was evolving and that future systematic research would be needed. In short, everybody thought that mainstreaming was a good idea, but nobody seemed quite sure how to actually do it in practice!

More recently, an update briefing produced for the Equalities Unit of the Scottish Executive mapped some newly available material and highlighted outstanding gaps and problems. In particular it noted the difficulties in identifying concrete examples and policy case studies which could be used to inform training and mainstreaming development work at different government levels in Scotland.

> Despite the fact that many of these countries appear to have been implementing mainstreaming strategies for some time, and the often stated commitment to producing practical results and to monitoring and evaluation, these case studies do not seem to offer any concrete examples of [...] how mainstreaming [is] implemented in a given department for a specific policy and the results.\(^3\)

Whilst we endorse the view that mainstreaming cannot be reduced to a recipe or a step-by-step process nevertheless the gathering of concrete examples forms an important resource for governments and other public bodies seeking to ‘learn’ mainstreaming. Such examples can be used in training to increase understanding of the whole process, and to demonstrate how mainstreaming differs - in reality - from previous strategies.

The main aims of this project are:

* to address the issue of how mainstreaming equal opportunities can be instigated and sustained in the operation of the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive by drawing upon lessons from elsewhere;

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to consider, analyse and report upon developments in mainstreaming practice and research since the Summer of 1998;

to seek out concrete examples of innovative practice of mainstreaming at various government levels; and

to highlight the strategies, structures and tools needed for successful mainstreaming.

This report brings together all the material that was available within the constraints of the time span of the project (15 weeks). Bibliographic and internet searches were conducted and supplementary information was also gathered from selected government web sites in Europe and elsewhere.

Information gathered from a multi-staged email questionnaire survey to equalities machineries at various governmental levels forms a major part of this project. Potential examples were identified through existing contacts; contacts listed in published reports and conference proceedings; as well as through web searches. As the number of people working on mainstreaming issues in most countries is relatively small, we were able to identify most key players.

Selected local government case studies in the UK were developed through email and telephone contact and, in some cases interviews were conducted. The local government interviews produced rich data which emphasised many of the points raised elsewhere. While interviews with respondents from other countries may have produced more detailed data, the time and financial resources were not available for this. We have, however, been able to identify key countries where further systematic research would be beneficial. In this sense our current research was also a mapping exercise.

This report is divided into seven main sections:

**Section 1** provides background on mainstreaming as a concept and an initiative, and discusses the political contexts within which it is being developed. It defines mainstreaming, describes the main features of mainstreaming and outlines the conditions which enable or inhibit the successful development of the strategy.

A range of tools and techniques have been developed or adapted to mainstream gender equality and other equalities considerations. In **Section 2** we provide an overview of mainstreaming structures, tools and techniques and discuss some of the problems raised.

**Section 3** provides detail of mainstreaming as an emerging strategy in the UK.

**Section 4** reports upon examples of mainstreaming at national, regional/provincial and local government levels in Europe and elsewhere.

**Section 5** and **Section 6** focus upon two examples of integrated practice: the Nordic countries and Canada.

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4 A copy of the basic questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1. These questions were tailored according to the existing material we had on each example.
Section 7 relates to mainstreaming and the work of parliaments.

We conclude by drawing upon the research findings and upon the mainstreaming literature more generally to discuss the main lessons which can be learned from the experience of other governments and public bodies in terms of the advantages and disadvantages of mainstreaming equality as a strategy and the factors which contribute towards successful implementation.
SECTION 1 WHAT IS MAINSTREAMING?

INTRODUCTION

Mainstreaming has developed world wide and is being promoted at the UK and European levels as a relatively new approach to policy in which equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices are integrated into the every day work of government and other public bodies. It usually focuses upon gender equality but can also incorporate other dimensions of discrimination and disadvantage.\(^5\) It builds upon and complements specific equality policies and institutional structures. As well as addressing equalities issues, mainstreaming is seen as an important element of strategies aimed at improving the quality of public policy and of governance itself. Mainstreaming is also promoted as a strategy to tackle democratic deficit and lack of trust by encouraging the wider participation of citizens in the policy process through effective consultation mechanisms.

Practice is evolving in the UK and other countries at national, regional and local levels. Whilst there is intense interest in the notion of mainstreaming equalities in the work of governments and other policy makers, there is also uncertainty: mainstreaming is a term which is increasingly used, but is less well understood. There is ambiguity about the precise definition of mainstreaming and variation in the level of adoption in different countries and different state organisations. There are emerging policy leaders, particular the Nordic countries and Canada, but nowhere can it be said that mainstreaming is fully implemented.

There are debates and disagreements about what a mainstreaming strategy might entail, and its relative merits and drawbacks. In particular, it has been identified as a strategy that can, without care, degenerate into tokenism where public commitment is given in principle but where in practice little concrete or specific is achieved. This is particularly the experience in those places where ‘mainstreaming’ has been interpreted as a strategy which supersedes rather than complements specialist equality policy machinery and positive action projects.

THE CASE FOR MAINSTREAMING

Mainstreaming equality is essentially concerned with the integration of equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices into the every day work of Government and other public bodies from the outset, involving ‘every day’ policy actors in addition to equality specialists. It is a long-term strategy to frame policies in terms of the realities of people’s daily lives, and to change government organisational cultures and structures accordingly. In other words, it entails rethinking ‘mainstream’ policy making and service provision to accommodate gender, race, disability and other dimensions of discrimination and disadvantage, including class, sexuality and religion. A number of arguments have been put forward in support of mainstreaming:\(^6\)


• It is a primary tool for the delivery of public policy objectives on the promotion of equality and the effective distribution and delivery of public services;

• It puts people, and their diverse needs and experiences, at the heart of policy-making;

• It leads to better government through better informed policy-making and a greater transparency and openness in the policy process;

• It helps to tackle democratic deficit by encouraging wider participation in the policy process through effective consultation mechanisms;

• As a process it tackles the structures in society which contribute to, or sustain, discrimination and disadvantage;

• It makes equality issues visible, demonstrating that equality is a mainstream concern with implications for all, and that it is not just a ‘cost’ or a ‘luxury’;

• Mainstreaming involves an acknowledgement that the task for removing imbalances and inequalities in society is a shared responsibility involving both women and men. It therefore makes fuller use of human resources by involving men as well as women in equality work;

• The application of a mainstreaming approach can avoid the adoption of policies and programmes which replicate discrimination and exacerbate existing inequalities;

• Mainstreaming complements lawful positive action designed to address the historic and current impact of discriminating structures and practices.

POLITICAL CONTEXTS

Mainstreaming has gained its current high profile as a concept and a strategy for taking forward equality work as a result of developments at international, European and UK level. At global level, the United Nations explicitly endorsed and promoted the concept of gender mainstreaming in the Platform for Action which was adopted at the end of the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing. The Platform for Action calls for the promotion of the policy of gender mainstreaming, stating that:

Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes, so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.

In particular the Platform for Action stresses the need for the generation and dissemination of gender disaggregated statistics for planning and evaluation and the application of gender

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7 According to the Council of Europe, 1998, the UN had first championed the concept in 1985 at the Nairobi Third World Conference on Women.
9 UN Platform for Action, 1995, Section 209.
impact analysis in the development, monitoring and evaluation of all ‘micro and macro economic and social policies.’ Many countries have adopted a national plan for gender mainstreaming as a result of the Platform for Action, although there were no guidelines as to how to develop and implement this policy. The commitments made in 1995 will be scrutinised at a Special Session of the General Assembly of the UN in June 2000. Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century, commonly referred to as Beijing +5, will review and assess the progress of governments towards implementing the Platform for Action.

The concept has become increasingly topical in Europe in the 1990s, driven by the European Commission which has adopted mainstreaming principles in its policy making and its funding programmes. The Third (1991-95) and Fourth (1996-2000) Community Action programmes on equal opportunities sought to integrate, or mainstream, the objective of gender equality into all policy areas, in the context of the single market in Europe. The Fourth Action Programme focuses on the exchange and development of information and experience of good practice, studies and research and dissemination of information. The EC has funded several transnational research projects to develop mainstreaming strategies and tools and to share good practice. Member States are also now required to gender mainstream policies and programmes which receive Structural Funds 2000-2006.

Principles of gender mainstreaming have been expanded to include other dimensions of discrimination as a result of the Treaty of Amsterdam which puts equality between women and men, and amongst different social groups, as a core objective. It commits EU member states to combat discrimination based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Explicit links are also made between mainstreaming and wider issues of participation and consultation - current concerns of EU member states. Gender balance in political, social and economic decision making is seen as both a central plank of the promotion of mainstreaming, and also an important goal. For example, the Charter of Rome adopted by the women ministers of the EU member states in May 1996 states that:

The equal participation of women at all decision-making levels in economic, social and cultural structures is ... necessary to guarantee that the needs of women and men are taken into account in all policies, programmes and actions.

The under representation of women in political decision making is now well documented at national level, for example, comprehensive data on the women’s representation in national assemblies has been collected and published by the Interparliamentary Union since 1985;
and a fuller picture is emerging with respect to women at local government level. In the field of politics, the average female participation in the EU member states amounts to around 15% for the national parliaments and 16% for governments; at local government level women’s representation ranges from 4% in Greece to over 40% representation in Sweden. Around 30% of the present Members of the European Parliament are women as are 25% of the European Commissioners. Although there is a great deal of variation between different states and different levels, the relative exclusion of women from power is a standard feature of most liberal democracies. In other spheres of social and economic decision making, information is more uneven, but it is clear that female representation is even lower. The arguments for gender balance have been well rehearsed. Traditionally they have involved issues of justice, equality and the contribution of women’s talents. More recently they have been reinforced by ideas which link women’s representation with democratic renewal.

A renewal of politics and society will be realized with the joint contribution and balanced participation of women and men. This contribution and participation bridge the gap between citizens and politicians, revitalize democracy, and increase citizen confidence in the institutions of democracy.

Mainstreaming also requires the close involvement of ordinary women and men, and communities of interest in the policy making process and is underpinned by a recognition that ordinary people are ‘qualified’ to participate in policy making. Consultation and participation are crucial elements of successful mainstreaming both in terms of quality (‘ordinary’ people can often assess their own needs more effectively than policy makers) and democracy. Consultation and participation are areas of growing innovation. Both gender balance and increased citizen participation are seen to bring benefits to government and to counter the democratic deficit.

In the UK, the Equal Opportunities Commission (the statutory agency for the promotion of sex equality) has championed the concept in Britain and Northern Ireland. Post 1997, the Labour government stated its commitment to equality mainstreaming. New co-ordinating government machinery has been developed including a number of Ministers for Women at central, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish levels. A cabinet sub committee involving ministers from all major government departments aims to co-ordinate ‘women’s agenda’ across government. A Women’s Unit was established in 1997 (now located within the Cabinet Office). In addition, a Race Equality Unit has been established in the Home Office and a Sex and Race Equality Division within the Department for Education and Employment.

The government’s modernisation agenda with its emphasis upon innovative and forward-looking governance, ‘joined-up’ and strategic policy-making, and responsive quality public services is seen as an important enabling context for the development of cross-cutting strategies such as mainstreaming.

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17 Charter of Rome, 1996.
19 Women’s Unit Minister for Women; Women’s Unit briefing, Department of Social Security, 1998.
Devolution has provided a further motor for change: the new Scottish parliament and the assemblies in Northern Ireland and Wales have all endorsed a mainstreaming approach. In each case, a wider range of equalities dimensions - including gender, race/ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, age and religious belief, is being addressed. UK developments post-devolution are discussed later in this report.

At local government level, mainstreaming is being promoted by the statutory equalities agencies, the EOC and the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). Explicit links are increasingly being made between mainstreaming and the modernisation agenda of local government including community planning, partnership working, ‘Best Value’ regimes in service delivery, councils as employers, civic governance, democratic renewal and social inclusion.

One of the key documents shaping the present political climate in which mainstreaming equal opportunities is being advocated in the UK is the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry chaired by Sir William Macpherson. The inquiry was commissioned in response to allegations of racism within the Metropolitan Police Force in the investigation of the racist murder of teenager Stephen Lawrence in 1993. While the inquiry therefore had a specific focus, its findings and report, known as the ‘Macpherson report’ have a much wider significance. The Macpherson report introduces the concept of institutional racism where an institution is seen as collectively responsible for the failures arising out of direct and indirect discrimination, including prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping. It highlights the need for a corporate approach to be taken to effect organisational change and recommends that public bodies be under a duty to demonstrate fairness. Many of its recommendations are applicable to all institutions and public organisations throughout Britain. This concept has been further developed to cover gender, disability and sexual orientation under the umbrella term, institutional discrimination.

DEFINITIONS

A number of organisations have been working to establish definitions and to draw upon developing practice and experience to outline frameworks or guidelines for mainstreaming. The most influential definitions follow. They are all primarily concerned with gender mainstreaming.

Council of Europe

This definition of gender mainstreaming was adopted recently by a Council of Europe expert group.

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See www.homeoffice.gov.uk/ppd/oppu/slawr.htm
22 An example of this new usage can be seen in the City of Edinburgh equality strategy, Edinburgh 2000: Mainstreaming and the Development of an Anti-Discriminatory organisational Culture, October 1999. Further discussion of the significance of the Macpherson findings for mainstreaming can be found in Section 3.
Gender ‘mainstreaming’ is the (re)organisation, 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.\textsuperscript{23}

**European Commission**

The Commission of the European Union defined mainstreaming in the following way in its communication on the strategy.

Mainstreaming involves ‘mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality by actively and openly taking into account at the planning stage their possible effects on the respective situations of men and women (the gender perspective).\textsuperscript{24}

**Equal Opportunities Commission (Great Britain)**

The EOC framework document on ‘mainstreaming’ gender equality in local government notes that:

Mainstreaming is the integration of equal opportunities into all policy development, implementation, evaluation and review processes ... mainstreaming involves making equal opportunities the responsibility of a wide range of actors including politicians and external partners.\textsuperscript{25}

The work which has most influenced the debate around mainstreaming has been that of the Council of Europe Group of Specialists, which reported in 1998. It noted that there was little consensus in the definition of mainstreaming when it was first developed by various governments and public bodies. However they make five general points:

- Definitions focus on the broad goal of achieving equality but are not always explicit about what is to be brought into the ‘mainstream’;

- Many definitions merely describe a strategy, often reducing the definition to partial aspects of gender mainstreaming. The definition and the goal become one and the same, gender mainstreaming becomes the goal and is seen as an end in itself;

- Some definitions focus upon gender mainstreaming a transformative strategy;

- Many definitions implicitly assume mainstreaming involves a shift from specialist actors to ordinary policy makers;

- Mainstreaming is often not defined at all.


\textsuperscript{24} European Commission, *Communication on mainstreaming: "Incorporating Equal Opportunities for Women and Men into all community policies and activities*”, COM(96) 67 final, Brussels.

A number of commentators have noted that there is conceptual confusion and that mainstreaming, as a term, is used loosely and vaguely; sometimes referring to a strategy or approach; sometimes referring to a method.\textsuperscript{26} The authors of a forthcoming report on mainstreaming in a number of EU countries argue that mainstreaming is hindered by this misunderstanding in the use of terms and uncertainty at the level of implementation, the authors locate these problems in the poor ideological underpinnings of the policy. There is also confusion at the level of descriptions of mainstreaming, it is seen as a tool, method, and strategy. Sue Yeandle, Christine Booth and Cinnamon Bennett argue that these confusions can be overcome if mainstreaming is understood, as it has been promoted by the European Commission, as a dual strategy, and further that: ‘If mainstreaming is to effect transformational change, it will simultaneously provide both the strategy and methods for achieving equality.’\textsuperscript{27}

**FACILITATING CONDITIONS**

Whereas mainstreaming can sometimes be characterised as a managerial or organisational strategy, experience makes clear that politics is at the heart of mainstreaming, and that political will is necessary for it to succeed. The Council of Europe expert group identified the following factors as necessary conditions or facilitating factors.

- **Political will**
- **Specific gender equality policy**
  1) Equal opportunities legislation and anti-discrimination laws: equality legislation serves as a safeguard against discrimination, not least in the labour market. This legislation is a necessary basis for the promotion of equality.
  2) The existence of mechanisms such as equality ombuds or equality commissions or councils for protection against discrimination.
  3) A strong national equality machinery (administrative organisation) with sufficient tools and resources (both human and financial) to exert influence on policy at all levels.
  4) Specific equality policies and actions to address specific women’s - or men’s - interests.
  5) The existence of equality divisions or focal points within each ministry.
  6) Research and training on gender equality issues.
  7) Awareness-raising about gender equality.
- **Gender Statistics**
- **Comprehensive knowledge of gender relations**


\textsuperscript{27} S. Yeandle, C. Booth and C. Bennett Criteria for the Success of a Mainstreaming Approach to Gender Equality, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University, unpublished report, 1999, p. 12.
- Knowledge of the administration
- Necessary funds and human resources
- Participation of women in political and public life and in decision-making processes

The Council of Europe Expert Group stresses that gender mainstreaming is unlikely to succeed in societies where there is little or no history of ‘traditional’ equality policy and where there is little knowledge base; or where the expertise of equality specialists and agencies is not recognised or used. This expertise is seen a necessary condition for starting gender mainstreaming.

Recent European transnational research conducted by a team from Sheffield Hallam University\(^ {28} \) suggests that facilitating conditions for mainstreaming can be grouped into three categories:

1. Appropriate structures and systems, together with the values and commitments which underpin them;
2. Aspects of human relations and interpersonal relationships without which gender mainstreaming is unlikely to work; and
3. The availability of suitable tools and methods which can enable gender mainstreaming to be professionally and successfully enacted.

The researchers note that it is a moot point as to whether all three types of conditions need to be in place before gender mainstreaming can be successfully implemented. Within each category are further factors which relate to:

- Sensitivity to socio-political context;
- Raising awareness;
- ‘Champions’;
- Alliances and Networks;
- Gender ‘know-how’ and Competence;
- Commitment (committed individuals at all levels);
- ‘Bending agendas’ - adapting strategies successfully used to pursue other objectives to secure gender equality ends;
- Positive Action;
- Organisational Cultures and Structures - project based, team approaches, networks;
- Relative Autonomy - of organisations from the wider organisational structures;
- Tools for gender mainstreaming;
- Everyday Life - placing everyday needs of women at centre of objectives.

**MAINSTREAMING AND EQUALITY**

Policies on gender equality over the past two decades have focused on legal rights and equal treatment, measures to promote changes in attitudes and initiatives to empower women. They

\(^{28}\) S. Yeandle, C. Booth and C. Bennett *Criteria for the Success of a Mainstreaming Approach to Gender Equality*, 1999, p. 20. DGV at the European Commission intends to publish the research at a future date.
have resulted in considerable progress. However inequality and discrimination still exist and women remain at a disadvantage in many areas of economic, social and public life.

Teresa Rees has argued that concepts of equal opportunities have evolved from the liberal notion of equal treatment, described as *tinkering*, via positive action (and occasionally positive discrimination), described as *tailoring*, to ‘mainstreaming’ or *transforming*.29 These three approaches can also be characterised as: the *equal treatment perspective*, the *women’s perspective* and the *gender perspective*.30

Liberal approaches to *equal treatment* rest on the assumption that treating men and women the same guarantees equal opportunities. The perspective has its roots in liberal notions of abstract individual rights and has developed into anti discrimination policies and legislation. Evidence demonstrates that the liberal approach to equal treatment has typically characterised most provision, and continues to characterise much policy-making. The resulting ‘gender neutral’ approach to policy and practice produces at best slow change in the disadvantaged position of many women. There is increasing recognition that equal treatment may not necessarily produce equitable results because women and men have different life experiences to consider. Denying difference, particularly the gendered realities of women’s lives, their reproductive work and their unequal burden of care for men, children, the sick and the elderly, can lead to ‘equality in form, not equality in fact.’31

*Positive action* or the *women’s perspective* recognises difference. It views women as a disadvantaged social group and aims to redress some of the historical and structural inequalities which result from the differences between men and women. For example, special training may be offered to women re-entering the work force in recognition that women are far more likely than men to take time out of paid work for child rearing and other domestic responsibilities. Positive action seeks to ensure a ‘level playing field.’

The *equal treatment perspective* and the *women’s perspective* can be seen as mutually supportive. Many women’s initiatives depend upon legal precedent, for example the use of quotas or affirmative action to rectify under-representation in decision-making bodies. The persistence of inequalities has, however, resulted in growing awareness of the complexity of the issues and the need for new approaches, new strategies and new methods which tackle inequality at a structural level and which include a wider range of actors. Mainstreaming is one of these strategies. The attraction of mainstreaming is its potential ability to get below the surface to a deeper level of understanding and awareness of the ‘hidden, unrecognised and unremarked ways in which systems and structures are biased in favour of men’ and redress the balance. ‘It involves lateral thinking to see how apparently gender-neutral practices, which appear to offer equal access to all, in fact act as exclusionary mechanisms for women.’32

The mainstreaming approach works to balance the individualisation of the *equal treatment perspective* and the one-sided focus which characterises positive action or the *women’s perspective*. It does so by shifting the focus to gender relations - a *gender perspective*- and

30 Yeandle et al., *Criteria for the Success of a Mainstreaming Approach to Gender Equality*, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University, unpublished report, 1999.
by also emphasising the diversity of experiences amongst women as a group and amongst men as a group.

[It] represents a different conceptualisation of gender equality. Mainstreaming essentially depends upon a focus on gender rather than only on women, and fully acknowledges, for the first time, the relevance of men’s lives to the equality debate. The gender perspective recognises that adapting the organisation of society to a fairer distribution of human responsibilities must aim to transform men’s roles and well as those of women.33

All three strands are seen to be complementary and are crucial to successful mainstreaming. Mainstreaming is seen as a ‘three-legged stool’ with each approach representing a support.

According to Yeandle and her colleagues, development of equalities understanding and approaches has been uneven in EU member states. There are differences amongst countries and differences within individual states in terms of the stage of development of each type of approach. The gender perspective is seen as least developed in all member states.

The mainstreaming strategy advocated in the European Commission’s Communication on Mainstreaming can be summarised into three basic demands or goals, which correlate to the three equalities perspectives:

- **Resources** - to secure more funding for equality projects and redistribute resources to address disadvantage - *the women’s perspective*.
- **Voice** - to address the democratic deficit and secure a gender balance in decision-making - *the equal treatment perspective*.
- **Vision** - secure the reconciliation of home, work and family life - *the gender perspective*.34

**MAINSTREAMING AND EQUALITY MACHINERY**

Equalities work has focused primarily in the past upon specific equalities structures and policy machinery.35 Mainstreaming has developed as a new strategy to take equalities work forward but must be placed within the context of the history and considerable achievements of specialist structures and policies. Specialist equality policy machinery is seen as both a necessary precondition for mainstreaming and a parallel - and complementary - strategy.

Specific equalities structures have considerable achievements in progressing equality in terms of:

- Specialised knowledge and expertise;
- Detailed analysis of gender relations and other forms of inequality;
- Development of specialist policies; and

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35 A brief overview is provided in USGS *Mainstreaming Equal Opportunities*, 1998.
• Development of democratic practice.

However specialist structures have experienced the following difficulties:

• They have been located on the ‘margins’ of government rather than in the ‘mainstream’ of society;
• Their power has been limited;
• They have had little influence on policy areas which affect women and men in their everyday lives;
• Specific equal opportunities policies cannot counter the inequalities caused by other policies; and
• Specific policies focus on only one side of the problem and involve limited actors, rather than society as a whole.

Commentators argue that the adoption of mainstreaming should not be seen as proof of the failure of specific sex (or indeed, in the context of the UK, race) equality structures but rather an indication of the persistence and complexity of equality issues and the need for multiple strategies which work both horizontally (that is, across the board) as well as vertically (specific).36

There has been debate about whether ‘mainstreaming’ as a strategy negates the need for equalities policy machinery. In some instances the adoption of ‘mainstreaming’ as a policy has been accompanied by the disbanding of equal opportunities units and committees. However all those organisations which have formulated frameworks and guidelines on ‘mainstreaming’, for example the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the EOC (Britain), have stressed that ‘traditional’ equality work needs to continue in tandem with ‘mainstreaming’.

Gender mainstreaming cannot replace and render redundant specific equality policy and machineries. When ‘mainstreaming’ is mentioned as a new strategy to achieve gender equality, it is always stressed that this strategy does not replace ‘traditional’ gender equality policy, but complements it. They are two different strategies to reach the same goal, i.e. gender equality, and must go hand in hand, at least until there is a real culture and consensus regarding gender equality in the whole of society.37

Mainstreaming is not a replacement for equality legislation. Nor is it a replacement for specialist equality teams. It provides a framework in which equality legislation and other equality measures, such as positive action, can be placed strategically. Positive action aims to complement legislation on equal treatment by contributing to the elimination of inequalities in practice”.38

A dual and complementary approach is needed: on the one side, the systematic application of gender impact analysis and its continuous monitoring and evaluation of all Community policies and activities; on the other side, the continuation, and when

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feasible, strengthening of the specific positive measures which are currently being applied.\textsuperscript{39}

Mainstreaming and specific equality strategies have different starting points, involve different actors, and are concerned with different sorts of policy. The starting point for ‘traditional’ forms of equality work is a specific problem resulting from inequality. A specific policy solution for that problem is then developed by an equality machinery. The starting point for ‘mainstreaming’ is the everyday policy process (including existing policies and policies under development). The policy process is then reorganised so that the ‘ordinary actors’ such as departmental officials and politicians take a gender (and other equality) perspective into account, and equality as a goal is reached. Mainstreaming is a long term social justice-led strategy for social transformation; it may take some time before it is effectively or fully implemented but it has a potential to achieve sustainable change. ‘Traditional’ forms of equality policy can achieve faster results, but are limited to specific policy areas and do not necessarily effect change to the policy and practices of government and the public sector as a whole.

The following roles have been identified for equality policy machinery in complementing and supporting mainstreaming:\textsuperscript{40}

- tackling specific issues of inequality with specialist policies and initiatives;
- acting as a think tank for developing analyses of inequality;
- developing techniques and tools for mainstreaming;
- providing expertise and specialist knowledge;
- disseminating knowledge;
- publicising government commitment to equality and its achievements;
- training and awareness raising;
- acting as an internal lobby;
- acting as co-ordinator for mainstreaming initiatives and point of contact; and
- monitoring overall government performance in achieving equality goals and targets.

**MAINSTREAMING AND OTHER EQUALITIES**

Gender equality has been the primary focus of mainstreaming in theory and practice, although more advanced models tend to incorporate a diversity perspective; in other words they take into account the realities of women’s and men’s lives in respect of race, disability and other dimensions of discrimination and disadvantage, including class, sexuality and religion. Examples of mainstreaming from other equalities perspectives remain rare but, when they do occur, they tend to be less sensitive to gender.

The logic of developments at EU level, particularly the Treaty of Amsterdam, and within the UK, suggests a need to develop mainstreaming as a *generic* equalities strategy. However, easy assumptions cannot be made that concepts, systems and tools developed for gender mainstreaming can be automatically utilised for other equality groups, although it is undoubtedly the case that some are amenable for wider use. Work is needed to develop

\textsuperscript{40} USGS, *Mainstreaming Equal Opportunities*, 1998.
understanding of the requirements of a generic equalities approach which works with commonalities but also recognises that different dimensions of inequality may require different sorts of analyses and specific solutions. Some commentators, such as Teresa Rees, argue that mainstreaming is amenable to tackling institutional discrimination across a range of equalities dimensions, such as race and ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and age and that there is a pressing need to develop tools and expertise in these respects. 41

Others, notably Mieke Verloo, caution against a ‘one size fits all’ approach, arguing that strategies and tools developed for mainstreaming gender equality are not necessarily appropriate or workable in other areas of discrimination.

One difficulty is that equality work is at different stages for different social groups: in many states women may have de jure equality and have benefited from programmes of positive action which may mean that mainstreaming seems a logical progression; for other social groups the picture may be very different. For example, gay men and lesbians in most European countries have not achieved full legal equality or civil rights and have seldom been the focus of positive action programmes. Therefore strategies may require different ‘timing’ for different structural inequalities.

Verloo’s second concern centres on the different mechanisms and rationales which underpin and perpetuate discrimination. Different forms of inequality work in different ways. Racism does not necessarily work in the same way that sexism does: for example, the sexual division of labour is central to gender inequality but may play a lesser role in the construction of ‘race’ hierarchy. The issues facing gay men and lesbians - and the strategies they adopt - may differ from those of ‘visible’ minorities. The adoption of generic mainstreaming may therefore prove unhelpful and ineffective.

My point is: all these inequalities have their own system, and we need to know more about them in order to even think about using mainstreaming as a strategy to address these inequalities. It would be one of my priorities to develop this knowledge, but I think that we are not taking them seriously if we pretend that mainstreaming will make something happen there.42

Mainstreaming must also be underpinned by an understanding of the complex interaction between different dimensions of difference and discrimination which tend to be undertheorised in equal opportunities programmes and initiatives. For example liberal feminism has adopted the concept of ‘double jeopardy’ - adding racism to sexism - to describe the experience of black women. However black feminists have argued that experiences cannot be simply ‘read off.’

The assertion that black women experience the same ‘sexism’ as white women plus racism/ethnocentrism which, presumably, is the same as that experienced by black men is also inaccurate. As black feminists have been asserting for over two decades, black women experience a sexism which is racialised and a racism which is gendered (just as black men experience racisms which are gender specific and white women experience sexism through the prism of white privilege). That is, their experiences cannot be deduced from the experiences of either white women or those of black men. This inadequate theorisation leads to the assumption that policies and strategies

designed to facilitate access for white women need only the addition of cultural sensitivity to be effective for black women.\textsuperscript{43}

We return to some of these issues in the Conclusions.

SECTION 2 MAINSTREAMING IN PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE

In Section 1 we noted that mainstreaming as a strategy is often confused with mainstreaming as a tool. Rees distinguishes between mainstreaming principles (such as integrating equality, taking a holistic approach, promoting values of participation and consultation, building ownership; and ‘visioning’ equality) and mainstreaming tools (such as gender monitoring, gender impact assessments and awareness raising). The tools are needed to put the principles into practice, but the existence of tools alone does not necessarily imply that mainstreaming is underway. It is also important to note that mainstreaming is not only concerned with process but also with outcomes; it is a social justice-led approach to equalities which seeks to transform structural discrimination and contribute to the creation of a fairer society.44

There is a need, therefore, to clarify the uses and purposes of tools. The first point to note is that mainstreaming tools are diverse both in terms of type and in terms of what they are intended to achieve. Most importantly, tools will only be useful if there is an understanding of wider contexts of aims, objectives, structures and the like. It is useful to think of mainstreaming in terms of principles, integrated systems, framework tools and discrete tools and techniques.

Principles involve the underpinning values and goals of mainstreaming; integrated systems involve the strategies, structures, processes and mechanisms through which the aims and objectives of mainstreaming are operationalised and implemented; framework tools operate at a lower level and can be part of integrated mainstreaming systems, they involve the use of a cluster of tools to achieve a broad aim whereas discrete tools are used at specific instances to achieve more specific aims. An example of framework tools (sometimes called mechanisms) would be Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) where a collection of discrete tools such as disaggregated data, consultation exercises, manuals, and so on are combined with awareness-raising and training to aid policy-makers to integrate a gender perspective into their work. While this level of tool lies above that of the discrete tools, it is not of itself mainstreaming. This is an important point as confusion about this distinction is noticeable in many case studies. Successful use of a GIA may mean that the needs of some women have been mainstreamed into service design and provision in that area, but mainstreaming requires a whole set of structures, procedures, and cultural changes as well as the use of these frameworks for achieving specific aims.

This section first focuses upon systems of mainstreaming and examples of framework tools. All of the above require, as well as many other things, the collection of information and statistical data on women. We therefore look at gender disaggregated statistics and Gender Equality Indicators, in particular the GDI and GEM, as tools which have been developed for this purpose. Finally, the range and purposes of mainstreaming tools and techniques are considered.

The Gender Management System developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat, provides a model for the integration and strategic implementation of an equalities perspective at national government level.

**The Commonwealth Secretariat Gender Management System Series**

This series of guidebooks and manuals details the Commonwealth’s model for implementing a mainstreaming strategy for gender equality. The Gender Mainstreaming System (GMS) has been designed to help governments implement a mainstreaming approach to gender equality and to suggest frameworks for monitoring and evaluation. While the handbooks are aimed primarily at governments and advancing gender equality through promoting political will, the importance of creating partnerships between government, the private sector, and civil society is emphasised. GMS is based on a ‘stakeholder’ approach and on three broad principles: empowerment (representation in decision-making bodies and control over resources), integration (transformation of existing structures), and accountability.

The concept and methodology of GMS has been developed to assist Commonwealth governments in realising the vision of the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development, and is connected with the move from a Women In Development (WID) to a Gender and Development (GAD) approach within development theory. Unlike the former approach, which attempted to incorporate women into structures designed to ‘male’ norms, the GAD approach attempts to change the structures and the norms on which they have been based. It recognises not only the differences between women and men but also differences within these groups and the possibility for multiple lines of discrimination /disadvantage. Mainstreaming is seen as a systematic and holistic approach which, by integrating a gender perspective into all areas of an organisation’s work, can transform that organisation. Despite being designed from a development perspective, these handbooks are useful to all governments interested in implementing a mainstreaming strategy. The series covers the sectoral areas of development planning, finance, the public service, education, trade and industry, agriculture and rural development, information and communications, as well as equal employment opportunities policy, gender-sensitive indicators, and a general GMS handbook. Forthcoming handbooks will continue with the sectoral approach as well as introducing ‘themed’ booklets on issues with particular relevance to gender equality. The handbooks are accompanied by quick guides which provide key points and recommendations.45

The GMS has three main components; structures, mechanisms and processes, which need to be developed within an enabling environment. The system is diagrammatically represented in Figure 2.1.

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45 For further information contact the Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX, United Kingdom. See also http://www.thecommonwealth.org/gender
**Structures**

Turning first to structures: six key components are identified which work to drive, co-ordinate and deliver mainstreaming.

**A Lead Agency**: usually the national women’s policy machinery e.g. Ministry for Women’s Affairs, Office for the Status of Women.
*Roles*: initiating and strengthening institutional arrangements; co-ordination; monitoring; advocacy; communications; media relations; reporting.

**A Gender Management Team**: includes representatives of the Lead Agency, other key government ministries, and civil society.
*Roles*: leadership for implementation; defining broad operational policies; indicators of effectiveness; time frames; monitoring performance.

**Gender Focal Points**: designated senior staff members in each ministry or department.
*Roles*: Co-ordinates gender activities (e.g. training); responsible for promoting mainstreaming within their ministries.

**Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee**: members are the Gender Focal Points and representatives of the Lead Agency.
*Roles*: Ensures mainstreaming in all ministries is effected and that strong links are established between ministries.

**Parliamentary Gender Caucus**: comprise committed members of legislature.
*Roles*: Raises awareness; lobbies; promotes equal participation of women and men; scrutinises parliamentary structures, procedures and matters under debate.

**Gender Equality Commission / Council**: representatives of civil society such as academic institutions, NGOs, professional associations, media and other stakeholders.
*Roles*: actively represents and advocates the interests of civil society in government policy making and implementation processes.

**Levers**

Within the GMS framework various levers of change are identified. These can be classified as:

**Communication levers**: information flows are crucial which not only give an accurate picture of current gender differentials within an organisation and society as whole and allow a diagnosis for appropriate action; but also continue to provide information which can inform ongoing decision making;

**Awareness levers**: these levers are necessary to challenge and change institutionalised discrimination and stereotypical norms and values within an organisation and within society more generally;

**Incentive/boundaries levers**: with the increasing emphasis upon performance -based public service, these levers use incentives (that is, rewards for positive achievements) and
boundaries (which define the limits of acceptable behaviour and the sanctions the organisation will enforce if behaviour is unacceptable - that is, discriminatory).

**Figure 2.1 Commonwealth Gender Management System**

![Commonwealth Gender Management System Diagram](image)


**Mechanisms**

The following specific frameworks and tools are highlighted.

**Gender Analysis**: which assesses how policies, plans, and programmes impact differentially on men and women and upon different groups of women and men (*communication and awareness levers*).

**Gender Training**: promotes gender awareness and sensitivity (*awareness lever*).
Management Information System: communicates critical information throughout the GMS, e.g. gathering and dissemination of sex disaggregated data (communication lever).

Performance Appraisal System: is modified to become gender sensitive. Thus performance targets will explicitly include gender equality goals. This ensures accountability is the basis of decisions on what incentives or sanctions can be applied in each case (incentive/boundary lever).

It is argued that through the appropriate use of a combination of tools which trigger these three types of lever a process of cyclical and planned change can be implemented. Each repetition of the cycle results in progress and brings the organisation closer to its goal of gender equality and gender equity.

The system is disseminated through a series of handbooks for specific sectors (e.g. finance, education) which provide models for implementing a GMS in the given area, including examples of what this might mean in practice. The handbooks explore the connections between gender and the sector in question, discuss relevant tools and how to use them and give recommendations for action. Case studies are used to demonstrate good practice and to identify requirements, needs, and problems. Each handbook sets this information out in the context of the development and aims of GMS. The handbook for education includes analytical tools and guidelines for conducting a gender impact analysis of government policies, plans, programmes and projects in the formal and non-formal educational sector. The Guide combines indicators and key questions which can be tailored to the specific context and task. Several of the handbooks contain glossaries of key terms used. Models for establishing a GMS, engendering national budgets and macroeconomic policy, creating ‘gender-aware medium-term development plans’ and promoting gender awareness in the planning cycle are also given.

Other examples of integrated systems include Canada’s Gender Based Analysis model and British Columbia’s Gender Lens model. The structures, processes and mechanisms in place in these systems are considered in the country examples sections. Here we consider some of the framework tools used to facilitate mainstreaming: Guides to Gender Analysis and the British Columbia Gender Lens guidelines are aides to policy-makers, highlighting gender issues and questions to be considered at all stages of policy development, implementation and evaluation.

GENDER LENS AND GENDER BASED ANALYSIS

The Canadian Federal and British Columbian Provincial guides to gender analysis are aides for policy-makers to be used at all stages of the policy cycle. They raise questions and suggest actions which should be taken at all stages of the policy development, implementation, communication and evaluation procedures. In Canada, the term Gender-Based Analysis is synonymous with mainstreaming as understood in the British and European contexts. As is evident from the Canadian case studies in Section 6 of this report, mainstreaming is at an advanced stage in Canada and has benefited from high levels of political support and resources.

The British Columbian Guide to Gender-Inclusive Analysis, ‘Gender Lens’ breaks the policy-making process down into eight phases, for each of these key issues and questions relating to
gender equality are raised in order to help policy makers integrate a gender perspective into their work and to develop evidence-based policy and decision making. The eight phases are:

1. Identify the Issue
2. Define Goals and Options
3. Define Information and Consultation Needs
4. Conduct your Research
5. Develop and Analyse Options
6. Make Recommendations/Decision-Seeking
7. Communicate the Policy/Programme
8. Evaluate the Policy/Programme.

The guide includes hypothetical examples to demonstrate the gender impact of a particular policy/programme at each stage as well as quotations from women relating to each stage outlining some of the issues and problems raised. For each stage the guide addresses three questions.46

- What to consider
- What to ask yourself
- How to ...

The Federal level Gender-based Analysis Guide: Steps to incorporating gender considerations into policy development and analysis comes in similar style and format to the British Columbian guide. It is supported by a Gender Analysis Backgrounder which can be found at the web site of the Women’s Bureau Human Resources Development Canada.47 This booklet sets out the reasons for doing GBA, what this means for policy-makers and factors to be considered. It looks at the public policy implications of gender trends in the economy, and addresses frequently asked questions about GBA. These critical questions are countered with factual examples and explanations. In this instance, six steps are identified, which are reproduced in the following figure.

**Figure 2.2 Summary of Canadian Gender Analysis Steps**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Identifying the Issue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• In what ways are both women’s and men’s experiences considered in identifying the issues/ How are both men and women involved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How is diversity being considered?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What do women’s organizations and gender-sensitive researchers say about the issue?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How does the definition of the issue take into account Government’s objectives regarding equality?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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46 The guide is available on the BC website at http://www.weq.gov.bc.ca
47 See http://www.hrdc-drhc.ca/stratpol/women/home.shtml
2. Defining Desired/Anticipated Outcomes

- What does Government want to achieve with this policy, and how does it fit into its stated commitments to social and economic equality between women and men? How can this be measured in practical and statistical terms?
- How will you determine if diversity, in addition to gender, will be a factor in the outcomes? What information have you sought (statistics, studies, consultations) to determine this? Can the Women’s Bureau be of help? How?
- Who will be affected? How will the outcomes of this policy be different for women and men? What other policy outcomes may be indicated by looking at gender and diversity?

3. Information Gathering

- Is available data disaggregated by gender at all levels of analysis? Is information regarding equity groups, including Aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities, and visible minority groups disaggregated by gender? If not, where can this information be obtained?
- In collecting basic information in your subject area, have you ensured that the resulting data will support gender-based analysis if necessary?
- How will both qualitative and quantitative data be collected?
- Will you consult with women’s organizations and/or key women in the area about available resources and about women’s experiences of this issue? If you are asking organizations or individuals to compile, fax or mail resources, or to attend consultations, how will you reimburse them for their time and expense?
- Have you consulted documents about the gender implications of the issue, including pamphlets, parliamentary briefs and statements by women’s organizations? Can the HRDC Library or the Women’s Bureau help?
- If you are conducting primary research, are data collection questions appropriate, and respectful of the dignity of research participants? Have affected groups participated in developing the research design?
- In what ways does the research you consult or conduct address the differential experiences of gender and diversity? Are the documents you are using or researchers to whom you are assigning tasks aware of gender issues?
- If you are hiring consultants, have they demonstrated a capacity to perform a competent gender-based analysis? How?
- If you are using a computerized simulation model, are you using gender as a factor? Do you have access to the expertise of someone knowledgeable about gender issues to help interpret the results? Can the Women’s Bureau help?

4. Development and Analysis of Options

- In what ways will the option disadvantage some groups or provide an advantage for others? Does the option have a differential impact on women’s or men’s social or economic position?
- Will further consultation take place with women’s organizations and key women in the area about the impact of each policy option on women? Do you need the advice of the Women’s Bureau?
- Will the analysis of each option outline how it supports equity and point out where equity may be compromised?
- Have you attempted to develop innovative solutions to gender/diversity issues you have identified? What solutions have the affected groups suggested?
5. Communication

- How will any differential consequences based on gender and diversity, and their social and economic costs, be communicated to decision-makers?
- In what ways will gender equity be a significant element in weighting and recommending options?
- Will the recommendation suggest how to implement the policy in a gender-sensitive and equitable manner?
- Have communication strategies been designed to ensure information is accessible to both men and women and fair to diverse communities?
- How will information be communicated to women who are members of other equity groups (Aboriginal women, women with disabilities, visible minority women)?
- How will the participation and contributions of both women and men in the policy development process be acknowledged and communicated in an appropriate and respectful way?
- How will the aspects of the policy supportive of gender equality be highlighted and communicated?

6. Evaluation

- Are gender equality concerns incorporated into the evaluation criteria?
- What indicators will you use to measure the effects of the policy on women and men?
- Who will review/analyse the quality of the analysis? To whom will the assessment be reported? Will this include consultation with women’s organizations or key women in the area?


Gender analysis questions are identified for each stage and hypothetical examples are used to illustrate the questions. Further discussion of the development of mainstreaming in Canada can be found in Section 6, together with examples of mainstreaming in action.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT: THE NETHERLANDS AND FLANDERS

Gender Impact Assessment tools are another example of framework tools or mechanisms which involve the use of several techniques. GIAs are based on tools designed to assess the likely impact of policies on the environment (Environmental Impact Assessments). They are ex-ante procedures which means that the impact on gender relations is assessed before the final decision on a given policy proposal is taken. Modified GIAs have also been used to assess the impact of existing policy on women and men in order to create baseline data and as awareness-raising or educational tools. GIAs work to expose the gap between assumptions about policy target groups and reality, challenging the gender-neutral or androcentric bias of much policy and reformulating it to take account of gendered reality. Thus GIAs are often promoted as tools which enable policy-makers to make better policy, that is, relevant to the needs of the target group, effective, and able to achieve its aims. Gender Impact Assessment is based on the argument that policy needs to be firmly rooted in an analysis of the actual experiences and diversity of the population.

GIAs can have weak or strong effects depending on how and when they are conducted. GIAs conducted early in the policy process have a stronger effect on the formation of policy than

48 This guide can be found at the Office of the Status of Women website, http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca
those conducted near the end or after policy has been made. Serious attempts to increase participation and consultation as part of this process will also increase the impact of a GIA. Reactive analyses, which aim only at being non-discriminatory will have a lesser effect than proactive analyses which aim to enhance equality.

Gender Impact Assessment has been pioneered in the Netherlands by academic Mieke Verloo. The Dutch GIA (the EER) assesses the potential impact of a policy proposal before the final decision on that proposal is taken. Ideally, the EER works to develop a ‘virtuous circle’ in the policy-making process whereby the results of the EER are fed back into the policy-making system to create better policy proposals.

EER is based upon a theoretical analysis of the factors which influence and contribute to gender inequality in Dutch society. It has two parts, the first asks whether the policy is relevant to gender issues and establishes the baseline situation in the policy area. The second uses the theoretical framework to analyse the likely impact of the policy in terms of gender equality.

The second stage is carried out by considering three variables: the basic structures central to gender inequality; the basic processes which constitute and reproduce gender inequality; and the central structures for advancing gender equality. More specifically: stage one considers the division of labour and the organisation of intimacy; stage two addresses the distribution of and access to resources and the existence of “rules” (interpretations and norms connected to gender); stage three assesses the impact of the policy upon equality, (equal rights and (un)equal treatment of (un)equal cases) and, autonomy (possibility for women to make decisions about their own lives).

Most EERs have been carried out by academics, sometimes in conjunction with civil servants. The tool requires a fairly high level of gender expertise and its effectiveness would be compromised by the lack of this. The tool, when used successfully, also works as an ‘eye opener’ or awareness-raising educational tool. It demonstrates to policy-makers the unintended consequences of their policies and the need to take gender into account. To date, five years from the development of the tool, nine EERs have been conducted and two are in process. The areas involved have included the Ministries of Education, Justice, Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries, and Domestic Affairs. As it has only proved possible to conduct EERs on a very small proportion of the new policies which have emerged, the process of selection is seen as very important. Verloo suggests that screening committees could be established to consider all policies and then decide whether an EER is necessary (as is the case with environmental impact assessments in the Netherlands); or that instruments such as SMART be used to assess whether a policy has gender relevance.

Some positive outcomes resulting from the use of EERs have included:

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• Demonstrating that what had been viewed as a ‘gender neutral’ plan to restructure secondary school education would, in reality, reinforce educational gender segregation;

• Showing that a supposedly ‘gender neutral’ reform of the electoral system would result in the reduction in the number of elected women politicians;

• Highlighting that a strategy for chronically sick people had been designed around the needs and lives of young men, whereas most of the chronically sick are older women.

A recent review\(^\text{52}\) of the instrument concluded that it is in principle a good instrument, though changes are necessary to the context in which it is used. The tool needs to have a more central position in the policy-making process, being used at the earliest possible point, political support needs to be increased, and the findings of the tools need to be translated into alternatives, recommendations and guidelines for use by the people who commission it. The evaluation found that EERs were most successful when applied jointly by external experts and internal policy makers.

Following the EER, other instruments have been developed and used. For example, the Gender Impact Test, a simpler tool, has been developed and used at the local and regional level. In 1998, the Dutch Association of Local Authorities also designed a GIA for the local level.\(^\text{53}\)

As noted earlier, the Dutch GIA (EER) is underpinned by sophisticated theoretical understandings of gender and has been developed within the context of high levels of academic expertise about gender relations in the Netherlands and a specific political history of emancipation policy. As such it is not easily ‘exportable’ to other countries with different policy and political contexts.\(^\text{54}\)

The Flanders GIA was developed in 1997 by academic researchers who were asked to produce a tool similar to the EER. Its developers had thought the Dutch EER was unsuitable for Flanders due to four reasons: the high degree of specialisation needed; the cost in time and money; the dependency on the quality of information; and the omission of a requirement for the construction of alternatives.\(^\text{55}\) The instrument was modified and simplified from the more sophisticated Dutch prototype to take into account the fact that Flanders had little or no tradition of gender expertise or equality policy; equalities work is further hampered by the lack of gender disaggregated statistics which map the relative positions of women and men in society at either national or regional/community level; and by a lack of political and bureaucratic commitment. The instrument is more educational and process-oriented than the Dutch EER. It does, however, still require some knowledge of gender issues for its correct implementation and therefore depends on the administration’s capacity to develop such knowledge.


\(^{54}\) Verloo, ‘Making Women Count in the Netherlands,’ forthcoming.

The tool developed consists of three stages: *stage one*, to trace the gender dimension of a policy proposal; *stage two*, to estimate its size; and *stage three*, to formulate alternatives where necessary. To enable the tool to be used by policy-makers who do not necessarily have any previous experience of gender work, the first step is designed to require less expertise and to stand alone if necessary. The Flanders GIA exposes inconsistencies between the basic assumptions of the policy proposal and the real situation in the policy field in terms of gender. At present, due to the lack of gender expertise it is used primarily to raise awareness by confronting policy-makers with a mechanism which makes them look at their own policy proposal from a different angle. The instrument is accompanied by a handbook, explaining the aims and concerns behind such a tool, as well as its operation. Unlike the Dutch EER, the tool has not been used since it was completed in 1997.

**Complexity versus Usability**

The differences between the Dutch and Flemish GIAs, resulting from the different contexts of these countries, give rise to an issue around the use of ‘experts’ versus ‘ordinary policy-makers’. The mainstreaming strategy aims to integrate a gender perspective into normal work at all levels of an organisation. Therefore existing staff should be enabled to incorporate this into their daily work. While bringing in expertise is recognised as a necessary and desirable measure to aid staff and to guide mainstreaming work, if gender analysis remains solely in their domain, it may not be correct to say that mainstreaming has been implemented. This issue creates a tension in tool design/creation which is evident in comparing the Dutch and Flanders examples. On the one hand, there is a desire for a sufficient level of complexity to create a subtle and useful tool; on the other hand, there is a need for simplicity so that the tool can be used effectively and without sole reliance on ‘experts’. If a tool is too complex, it is likely to be reduced to simple questions or check lists which do not really address the issue. This was seen in the case of the Dutch Gender Impact Test, developed for local government level. This problem is also apparent in the tool discussed below, Levy’s *Web of Institutionalisation*.

**WEB OF INSTITUTIONALISATION**

*The Web* is a complex framework for gender mainstreaming which requires a high level of understanding of gender equality, relations and power structures. It was designed by Caren Levy of University College, London (UCL) to facilitate the mainstreaming of gender in planning, policy, programmes and projects, primarily in the context of development work. The tool is used to assess the extent to which mainstreaming is underway, and the strengths and weaknesses of the process, in a specific context. It also considers the extent to which practices have become institutionalised, that is, the extent to which the process has been absorbed into institutional norms. *The Web* can then provide the basis for defining strategic

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58 The Dutch EER creator, Mieke Verloo, makes it clear that mainstreaming cannot be reduced to the use of a technical instrument but that such instruments play an important role within wider strategies. Verloo, Making Women Count in the Netherlands,’ forthcoming, pp.42-43.
action by highlighting *Routes Through The Web* which will strengthen the mainstreaming process.59

*The Web* comprises thirteen elements which each represent a site of power. The analyst considers these sites of power and the relationships between them in order to develop a picture of the opportunities or resistance to the change which gender mainstreaming is attempting to bring about. For some purposes, the elements in *The Web* can be grouped into different spheres of influence, for example, the citizen, the policy, the organisational and the ‘delivery’ spheres. The form the elements take is context specific. The tool needs to be combined with methodological tools for understanding gender relations in society and in policy intervention. These could be around gender roles, access to and control over resources, gender interests and need, and their combination in different policy approaches. A set of indicators to monitor the process of gender mainstreaming can be defined from each element in *The Web*.

The problem of complexity versus useability is raised by Levy herself,

> A key challenge has been how to develop methods to apply The Web that are manageable without losing the necessary complexity of the tool. This has been done primarily through the experience of training and is an ongoing process.60

**THE “3RS METHOD”**

In 1995 the Swedish Government allocated funds to the Swedish Association of Local Authorities (SALA) to develop its JAMKOM project. The JAMKOM initiative seeks to establish methods of analysing and promoting equalities work in local government and to share and publicise good practice. The ‘3Rs method’ evolved out of this initiative as a tool for incorporating a gender perspective into the work of local authorities. The method has also been used in other Nordic countries.

The primary objective of the method is to increase understanding about the division of power between men and women and the structures and norms which hinder gender equality, and to identify the ways in which these need to be changed. The tool enables the user to conduct a systematic gender analysis, assessing the position of women and men in a given policy field, and to define priorities for action. The tool could also be adapted for conducting analyses based on other factors such as race or age. The ‘3Rs’ stands for *Representation, Resources* and *Realia*. Representation and Resources are quantitative variables, whereas the third variable, Realia is qualitative.

The idea behind the method is that a systematic review of men’s and women’s ‘representation’ in different places and positions within the council department’s or public board’s field of operations, and of the distribution and utilisation of resources, should trigger discussions about why the ‘products’ of local councils - that is, goods, services and jobs - are as they are, and raise questions about who gets what, and under what conditions?


According to project co-ordinators based at SALA, the pilot schemes that have been carried out by the councils/boards have shown that the method has been successful in raising awareness. The surveys and analyses that have been carried out have led to the rethinking of gender equality in the councils’ or boards’ spheres of operation, including the writing of specific gender equality objectives into their normal guidelines. Some have also decided to include gender equality in their budgets, to collect new and continuous information in the form of statistics and different types of customer surveys, and to actively monitor the impact of the different measures. The 3Rs method has been adopted, and some municipalities have decided to spread the method to other committees and administrative authorities.

The method, in brief, consists of the following elements:

**Representation**

*Representation* refers to the ability of women and men to get their voices heard within a given policy area. The council departments or boards must map the levels of representation of men and women in decision making positions, starting with the composition of the committee/board itself and the administration. The process then moves to ‘mapping’ contacts involved in the policy process and producing sex disaggregated ‘contact lists’. These mapping exercises are all designed to raise awareness of gender imbalances of representation. A study by SALA using this method showed that women politicians were more likely to have contact with other women than with men, whereas the majority of the contacts of men politicians are men. This research therefore demonstrates the importance of having a high percentage of women in local government as this is one way of improving women’s chances of having their ‘say’.

**Resources**

The *Resources* analysed by the R test are money, time and space. These measurements are used to supplement the information gathered in the *Representation* phase of the analysis. The analyst looks at the resource allocation within organisations (time women /men speak at meetings, pay comparisons) and in service provision. One example of this is that certain committees/boards have constructed ‘salary trees’ showing the total number of women and men and their position on the salary scale. One committee studied the gender distribution among artists exhibiting at the local art gallery, and the information was completed under the resources section of the test by recording how much money was paid to the female and male artists respectively. The lack of resources has been identified as a barrier to involvement in decision-making processes.

**Realia**

*Realia* is qualitative, this stage is concerned with exposing and challenging the norms and values embedded within local authority structures and practices which underpin decision-making and which may reinforce gender inequality. These are complex - sometimes hidden - issues which can be difficult to grasp. Various methods are used to make these issues transparent. On the face of it, some aspects of *Realia* may seem trivial, but they add up to a
larger picture of services being designed to a male norm which exclude the realities of women’s lives and needs.

Some committees/boards have looked at the Realia by studying, together with the staff, such things as morning assembly at day-nurseries, and classroom dynamics. Others have visited different establishments for which they are responsible. The politicians have formed multi-party groups and gone to places like sports centres and noted things such as lighting, hairdryers and sauna space. They have also interviewed employees about the amount of attention they give to girls and boys, women and men. The amount of time and attention given to boys and girls by the staff of sports centres has been used to expose assumptions that boys are better at / more interested in sport than girls are.

One Swedish town planning committee that took part in piloting the 3Rs method has used ‘mental maps’ to help build up an understanding of how different categories of citizens felt about a particular urban renewal area. This involved groups and individuals who could not be reached through the types of groups and organisations that the committee routinely consulted.

According to project organisers:

Politicians who have been involved in different studies have expressed their satisfaction. Some have said that they have received greater insight into their field of operations and that they understand better what gender equality really means and how they can specifically work for it.61

GENDER DISAGGREGATED STATISTICS AND INDICATORS

We turn now to look at some specific tools. Gender disaggregated statistics and other gender-sensitive data underpins mainstreaming. They have crucial uses in awareness-raising, informing policy making, monitoring and evaluating the impact of policies and programmes, and assessing trends over time. The production of good, transparent gender data was a priority action area agreed by governments as part of the Beijing Platform of Action which emerged from the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

A small number of governments, notably some of the Nordic countries and Canada, produce comprehensive official gender statistics as a matter of course. In the case of Sweden they are published annually to allow for the monitoring of progress across all government policy areas. Many other governments are committed to improving the collection, collation and dissemination of gender statistics although progress is uneven. In some instances, women’s NGOs have filled the information gap, for example between 1993 and 2000, the Scottish women’s organisation Engender produced an annual Gender Audit. Drawing from varied sources, ranging from government statistics and academic research to annual reports from voluntary organisations, the publication pulled together available information and gender

statistics on a range of areas and offered commentary on the position of women in Scottish society.\(^{62}\)

In Sweden, gender disaggregated statistics are a central plank of its mainstreaming strategy. Statistics Sweden, the official statistics service first set up a special unit for the production and promotion of gender statistics in 1983. Since 1992 statistics collected on individuals have been disaggregated by sex in an annual publication: *Men and Women in Sweden*, which summarises information in areas such as: health, crimes, work, income, pay, power, education, smoking, the elderly and so on, together with international comparisons. This publication is seen as invaluable in mainstreaming training and policy analysis; it is also seen as an important resource for civil society.\(^{63}\)

In 1996 - as part of the overall gender mainstreaming strategy - work was carried out in the Ministry of Labour to present labour market gender statistics. For example, unemployment statistics had routinely been presented in the following categories: Total; of which women; of which younger people; of which older people; of which handicapped; of which immigrants. This presented all but middle-aged, non-handicapped, non-immigrant men as “special” or “problem” groups. The statistics have since been rearranged into three columns: *Women, Men* and *Total*. These are each cross-tabulated by other equality dimensions such as race/ethnicity, age, disability and so on. ‘Young, immigrants and handicapped are women and men. And now we find that civil servants and politicians pose new questions, because of the visibility of women and men.’\(^{64}\)

Statistics Canada’s role in compiling and disseminating gender-disaggregated data is seen as a crucial component in the development of relevant policy research for gender-based analysis. In partnership with the Policy Research Fund at Status of Women Canada (see Section 6), Statistics Canada published *Finding Data on Women: A Guide to Major Sources at Statistics Canada*, a document which provides information on gender-disaggregated data sources that can be used in carrying out gender-based analysis.

**Indicators**

Indicators ‘summarise a large amount of information in a single figure, in such a way as to give an indication of change over time, and in comparison to a norm.’\(^{65}\) Successful mainstreaming therefore requires the development and use of gender-sensitive and/or equality indicators. The following section draws upon the discussions of a symposium on gender equality indicators involving Health Canada, Human Resources Development Canada,

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\(^{62}\) The organisation has indicated that the Gender Audit 2000 is the final report it is to produce and has called upon the new Scottish Executive and Scottish Parliament to take on responsibility for this awareness-raising work. See Engender, *Gender Audit 2000*, Edinburgh. The EOC (Great Britain) also produce short annual summary fact cards.


Statistics Canada, Status of Women Canada and information drawn from the Commonwealth Secretariat GMS reference manuals.  

Three primary potential applications of indicators within mainstreaming work are:

- **As an input**: using the indicators to inform analysis  
  Gender disaggregated data can give a comparison of the situation of women and men in the policy area which will then inform gender analysis. For example, analysis of transport policy in Sweden revealed that while women were the main users of public transport, provision followed male patterns of travel, therefore, ‘public transport answered to the needs of those who do not use it’.

- **As a results measure**: to measure the success of analysis  
  For example, an indicator measuring the ratio of women to men in all levels of an organisation can be used to measure the success of a policy designed to overcome segregation in the workforce. On a national level, the GEM indicators (see below) can be used to measure and track the position of women relative to men in terms of ability to participate actively in economic and political life. Thus GEM can be used to measure the success of a range of policies aimed at improving women's participation.

- **To raise awareness**: as a tool to sensitise policy-makers and the public to problems and the need for specific gender/equal opportunities analysis  
  Providing and publicising disaggregated data can turn a private issue into a public or social issue; an example of this would be the dissemination of statistics on domestic violence or the gender pay gap. Collections of gender disaggregated statistics across a whole range of areas builds up an overall picture of patterns and trends in gender inequality.

However, there are particular issues which relate to the use (and misuse) of indicators. Indicators are not ‘facts’ which exist ‘out there’ for the policy analyst/maker to use. Rather, they are created and ‘validate particular world views and prioritise selected areas of knowledge.’ The lack of statistical and other data on the position of women in various policy fields has been noted at several points in this report and in the country examples. The majority of existing indicators are designed around gendered assumptions, which tend to lead to the ‘invisibility’ of women. These assumptions can be summarised as follows:

- Many traditional indicators assume that women and men experience the world in the same way.

- Alternatively, women figure in traditional indicators primarily as mothers or caregivers, further relations among the family are often obscured by a focus on the head of the household, often defined as the male breadwinner.

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The main indicators used at an international and national level are GDP (Gross Domestic Product), ISH (Index of Social Health), and the HDI (Human Development Index). All of these are ‘gender invisible’.

The need for information on the position of women has led to the development by the United Nations of new indicators, notably the Gender Related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). The former gives gender disaggregated data and adjustments of the Human Development Index for women and men. The HDI compares 175 countries on three basic measures: longevity, educational attainment and life expectancy. The GEM measures women’s participation in the economic, political and professional fields. It aims to examine whether women and men are equally able to participate actively in economic and political life.

These national level indicators can be used to give comparisons between countries on different aspects of gender equality. It is important to note that very different results will be obtained depending on the specific indicators used. For example, The United Nations has ranked Canada first in the world in terms of human development, but this drops to second place when the status of women is factored in. Canada ranks 47th out of 55 countries the UN compares in terms of women’s wages as a percentage of men’s, behind all industrialised countries studied and behind many developing nations.

The recognition that indicators are not value free raises questions which must be addressed in the development and use of equality indicators. There are three main ways in which gender has been looked at in the construction of equality indicators:

- By measuring the individual attainment of women;
- By disaggregating data by sex and other categories (age, ethnicity, disability);
- By comparing the status of women relative to men.

All of these approaches, as well as the GDI and GEM indicators, tend to take men as the standard against which women are measured. This is a serious point for a mainstreaming strategy which aims at being transformative, rather than just ‘adding women in’.

A number of questions or points need to be considered when designing and using indicators in mainstreaming work. They are summarised below:

- **Consideration that equality indicators cannot be used as stand alone tools.**
  *They need to be interpreted within an explicit framework and used in conjunction with other tools and resources. They will not constitute policy analysis on their own.*

- **Is it possible, or indeed desirable, to attempt to reduce complex social and economic phenomena to a single meaningful statement or stylised fact?**

- **To what degree is there a ‘fit’ between indicators and social reality? Whose reality do they correspond to?**

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• How can we develop indicators which meaningfully measure qualitative variables and experiences?

• Consideration of the need to develop expertise in using and interpreting indicators

• Indicators need to be supplemented by additional information from other sources.

• Indicators need to be combined with clear targets and plans to improve results.

However, when used appropriately, these measures can provide brief and powerful descriptions of women’s current situation and benchmarks against which success of particular initiatives and the need for further work can be assessed. Other examples include the New South Wales scorecard (see Section 3), performance indicators (used in the past in the Australian Women’s Employment Strategy), and the Finnish Equality Barometer.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Mainstreaming involves the reorganisation of policy processes so that gender and/or equalities issues are dealt with in ‘mainstream’ policy making by mainstream policy actors. This necessitates the development or adaptation of a range of tools and techniques. The Council of Europe classifies tools into three broad categories: analytical tools and techniques; educational tools and techniques; and tools and techniques which facilitate consultation and participation. Most tools and techniques have been developed within the context of gender equality, although many, but not all, are amenable to use in generic equalities work.

Analytical tools are designed to ‘expose’ the problem.

Tools include: disaggregated statistics; surveys and forecasts; research; check lists; guidelines and terms of reference; gender impact assessment and differential impact analysis models; indicators; and monitoring tools.

Educational tools are designed to raise awareness, to transfer knowledge, and to support training.

Tools include: awareness-raising and training courses; follow-up action; mobile or flying experts; manuals and handbooks; booklets and leaflets; and educational material for use in schools.

Consultative and participatory tools are designed to improve the quality of policy-making and deepen democracy.

For example, working or steering groups and think tanks; directories; databases and organisational charts; participation of both sexes - and all social groups - in decision-making; conferences and seminars; and hearings and consultative forums.

Tools can be differentiated by the purpose they are intended to serve. In reality, many tools could be placed to all three categories, for example, disaggregated statistics are often useful
as educational tools or in forming the basis of consultation, as well as for their analytical uses.

The following figure summarises some of the main mainstreaming tools and techniques and their uses.

**Figure 2.3 Summary of mainstreaming tools and techniques**

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Involving ministers, parliamentarians and other elected officials, and high ranking bureaucrats to promote political commitment. Courses at middle management and ‘street level’ focus on awareness-raising, but equally highlight how these persons can put equality mainstreaming into practice and integrate it into their work. Work at this level is vital to promote ‘ownership.’ Specialist training for persons who need to apply specific tools and techniques such as gender impact assessment and differential impact analysis.

Working or steering groups, task forces and think tanks

Mainstreaming requires exchanges of information, experiences and knowledge as well as co-operation and co-ordination of activities between various actors. Therefore, channels for inter divisional and interdepartmental collaboration have to be set up, including specific equality machineries and external partners where necessary.

Directories, databases and organisational charts

Directories, databases and organisational charts help policy makers consult with individuals, groups or organisations. Examples include the database of women’s organisations which has been established by the Scottish Executive Equality Unit.
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<td>Timely, policy relevant research is a crucial component of an effective mainstreaming strategy because it identifies current issues and problems and can formulate potential solutions. Research may involve any of the tools listed above. In addition, it can provide new insights and ideas. For example, Canada has a wide ranging research strategy which underpins their gender based analysis including five research Centres of Excellence for Women’s Health.</td>
<td>These are specialists in (usually) gender issues, who provide education at the level of a unit or department. These experts temporarily join a unit or department in order to provide intensive help to those persons who have already had an awareness-raising course and training. Specialists intervene in order to put people on the ‘right track’. Their role does not consist in doing the work of the unit. Flying experts may be seconded from specific equalities machinery or from academia. Examples of flying experts can be found in Sweden and British Columbia. There are also examples of longer term secondments to provide ongoing specialist support.</td>
<td>Gender mainstreaming requires the full participation of both women and men in all fields of society, not the least at the decision-making level. Lists of qualified women, quotas, positive actions and other special measures for the recruitment, appointment and promotion of women, are ways to ensure the participation of women in decision-making. Guaranteeing an equal participation of both sexes in decision-making also involves the evaluation of existing personnel policies. Several governments, particularly the Nordic countries, have quotas or targets for achieving gender balance in political decision making and in public bodies involving social partners. Equalities mainstreaming requires that men and women from equalities groups are fairly represented in decision making bodies and have guaranteed access to the policy making process. There is also a general need for balanced work forces in government and other public bodies.</td>
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<th>Checklists, guidelines and terms of reference</th>
<th>Manuals and handbooks</th>
<th>Consultative Forums</th>
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<td>All these tools are intended for policy-makers, serving as a help to put mainstreaming into practice. Checklists explain what gender and/or equalities mainstreaming is about, set out the objectives and describe the action to be taken. Guidelines and terms of reference are more general tools. Terms of reference are meant for governments and ministerial or parliamentary committees. Guidelines are primarily aimed at civil servants. Policy-makers need to already have considerable knowledge of gender and/or equalities issues in order to implement guidelines effectively.</td>
<td>These tools contain very practical information and can help individual persons to integrate a gender or equality perspective into their work. They explain why, where, when and how to incorporate a gender/equalities perspective in policies and contain important sources of information and background material. Examples of training manuals can be found in Canada, British Columbia, New Zealand and Flanders. The Commonwealth Secretariat has developed a whole range of handbooks, covering sectional and thematic issues, as part of its Gender Management System.</td>
<td>Consultative forums are needed which provide meaningful channels of communication between groups of women and policy makers; and men and women of other communities of interest. Recent Scottish examples include the establishment of a Women in Scotland Consultative forum and a Scottish Civic Forum.</td>
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<th>Gender impact assessment and Differential impact analysis methods</th>
<th>Booklets and leaflets</th>
<th>Hearings/Panels/Public Meetings and Commissions of Enquiry</th>
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<td>Gender impact assessment (GIA) has its roots in the environmental sector and is a typical example of an existing policy tool that has been adapted for the use of gender mainstreaming. GIA allows for the screening of a given policy proposal, in order to detect and assess its differential impact or effects on women and men, so that these imbalances can be redressed before the proposal is endorsed. GIA can be applied to legislation, policy plans, policy programmes, budgets, concrete actions, bills and reports or calls for research. GIA methods require a considerable amount of knowledge of gender issues. Examples include the Dutch and Flemish Gender Impact Assessment initiatives. Generic differential impact analysis methods or ‘equality proofing’ assesses the differential impact of policy proposals on different social groups.</td>
<td>The publication of promotional booklets or leaflets about gender and/or equalities mainstreaming, for wide distribution in the public administration and among the general public, provides information and raises awareness. For instance, examples may be given of policies which have caused damage to people and society as a whole because gender and/or equalities perspectives had not been taken into consideration. Cost-benefit analyses and examples of good mainstreaming practice are useful for dissemination. Frequently Asked Questions counter common criticisms and misunderstandings with factual examples and clear explanations. These are useful for both training and public awareness purposes.</td>
<td>Hearings provide an opportunity to communicate information and also enable people to participate in the policy-making process. Hearings allow for the direct participation of people in developing and deciding on policies which concern them.</td>
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<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
<td>Educational material for use in schools</td>
<td>Conferences and seminars</td>
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<td>Monitoring and Evaluation consists of the continuous scrutinising, follow-up and evaluation of policies. It can take the form of regular meetings and reporting or of research and special studies. Regular reporting has to be preceded by the establishment of relevant procedures, evaluative tools and analytical and performance indicators. Reporting is not an end in itself and the outcomes have to be assessed and taken into account in policy preparing and planning processes. Other forms of monitoring include evaluation research, e.g., in Norway academics are routinely commissioned to evaluate existing equalities policies. Monitoring and evaluation is considered to be the weakest area of implementation in most case study countries.</td>
<td>There is a growing concern that children and adolescents should learn more about society as a whole, about gender relations and about equalities issues being a part of human rights. Equalities issues are also an integral part of citizenship education. Therefore, there is a need for educational material for use in schools, including information packs, television and video programmes. Engender's Gender Audit which compiles information on the status of women in Scottish society is used widely in schools to support student projects.</td>
<td>The organisation of public conferences, seminars and press conferences creates opportunities to inform the public in general and those concerned by policies.</td>
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UK discrimination law currently covers sex, marriage, race and disability. In addition the Government and other public bodies are bound by European Commission law which is expanding as a result of the Treaty of Amsterdam. The UK is also a signatory to a number of international treaties and conventions prohibiting discrimination on various grounds.

In 1997 the proportion of women MPs returned to the House of Commons doubled to 18.2%. Since the 1997 General Election, new co-ordinating government machinery has been developed including a number of Ministers for Women at central, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish levels. A Cabinet sub committee involving ministers from all major government departments aims to co-ordinate a ‘women’s agenda’ across government.\(^7\) A Women’s Unit was established, initially within the Department for Social Security, and later relocated in the Cabinet Office. In addition, an All Party Group on Sex Equality was formed in November 1997 in association with the Equal Opportunities Commission to promote issues of sex equality.

Mainstreaming in the UK is at an early stage. Constitutional change and the government’s modernisation agenda are seen as important enabling contexts within which equalities work can develop both collaboratively and distinctively at different levels. The following brief account highlights some of the main features of its development at different governmental levels. Although equal opportunities legislation remains a matter reserved for Westminster; Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland each has responsibilities and duties to promote equal opportunities in the work of their parliaments, assemblies and other public bodies.

**UK GOVERNMENT**

The former Conservative government first issued guidance on policy appraisal for different social groups in 1992 which was revised, after consultation with various government departments, into Policy Appraisal for Equal Treatment (PAET) in 1996. It was largely through PAET that the government carried forward its post-Beijing commitment to mainstreaming equal opportunities.

In 1998 the incoming Labour government issued new PAET guidelines to all departments. They cover equal treatment for race, sex, and disability and were jointly issued by the Home Office (which has responsibility for legislation on race equality), DfEE (which has responsibility for sex and disability discrimination legislation, civil rights for disabled people, promotion of race equality in employment and policy responsibility on tackling age discrimination in employment); and the Minister for Women in the Cabinet Office (who has responsibility for women’s interests).

The Women’s Unit is working to implement PAET and is currently committed to producing a framework for gender impact assessment as part of a broader project examining how to take mainstreaming forward. This work is in early stages and further details were not available at time of writing.

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\(^7\) Women’s Unit, *Minister for Women: Women’s Unit briefing*, Department of Social Security, 1998.
According to the guidelines, policy appraisal is about good government, making sure that policy has the effect government intends. Therefore departments need to know the impact of their policies on different groups. There are three steps to the policy appraisal process:

Policy makers are advised to make full use of existing research and statistics and, if necessary commission new data, disaggregated by gender, race, disability and age; to consult experts, interest groups and service users; and to carry out a differential impact assessment. Policy proposals must include an impact analysis ‘which clearly brings out the effect on particular sections of the population, and how you have addressed any relevant differences’.72

PAET guidelines have been criticised as having significant weaknesses resulting from vague objectives and the lack of machinery for monitoring and evaluation. Further, while PAET is supposed to be carried out in every department, in practice gender-related work is often referred back to the Women’s Unit. Although it is seen as too early to make anything other than provisional judgements, commentators argue that there is no clear view as to what mainstreaming entails or ought to entail and that practice falls far short of principle. Furthermore, mainstreaming has developed as a form of ‘gender proofing’ policy rather than involving women and other equality groups in policy development.73

Figure 3.1 Policy Appraisal for Equal Treatment

1. **Check** how your policy or programme will affect, either directly or indirectly, different groups of people - for example women and men, disabled people and those from different ethnic groups.

   You will need to be sure that the measures will not result in unlawful discrimination

   You will also need to consider the question of unequal impact on those groups who do not enjoy specific legal protection but who, as a matter of good policy, you wish to consider, such as older people or groups toward whom specific policy initiatives are being directed, such as young unemployed people.

2. **Identify** whether there is any adverse differential impact on a particular group or groups and then decide whether it can be justified in policy terms even if legally permissible

3. **Take action** if necessary.

   http://www.womens-unit.gov.uk/99/equal.htm

**SCOTLAND**

The new Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive have each made a commitment to mainstreaming equal opportunities considerations into policy making, although the power to legislate on equal opportunities is reserved to Westminster. As defined in the Scotland Act 1998, equal opportunities means:

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73 For a critique of PAET see F. Beveridge, S. Nott and K. Stephen, Predicting the Impact of Policy: Country Report, United Kingdom, Feminist Legal Research Unit, University of Liverpool, 1999, p.165.
The prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between persons on grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or of other personal attributes including beliefs or opinions such as religious beliefs or political opinions.74

The first elections to the Scottish parliament resulted in a substantial proportion of female MSPs (37.2%) although there were no black or minority ethnic MSPs of either sex. In addition, women hold important ministerial posts and committee convenorships. An Equal Opportunities Committee has been set up in the Parliament, one of eight mandatory committees (there are sixteen committees in total), and an Equality Unit has been established within the Executive Secretariat of the Scottish Executive. The Minister and Deputy Minister for Communities are responsible for equality matters.

Equal opportunities was one of the key principles adopted by the Consultative Steering Group (CSG) which was established by the Secretary of State at the end of 1997 to help draft Standing Orders and Procedures for the parliament. The four key principles – Sharing of Power, Accountability, Access and Participation and Equal Opportunities – have subsequently been endorsed by the members of the new parliament. Under the Standing Orders and Procedures the parliament meets at times that are more compatible with family life and recognises Scottish school holidays. In addition, there is potential to feed-in the views of women and men in the community or from different groups and organisations in the consultative channels envisaged for the parliamentary committees and the pre-legislative process. The decision of the parliament to establish a Civic Forum also allows the opportunity for women and men to be represented in the Forum and to engage with the policy-making process.75

A Women in Scotland Consultative Forum was established in 1998 and continues to be an effective force. A Race Equality Advisory Forum was established by the Scottish Executive in 1999. The work of the Race Equality Advisory Forum will include forming action plans to eradicate institutionalised racism in all areas of Scottish life and advising on the best way for the Executive to consult people with ethnic minority backgrounds.

Mainstreaming is seen as one means by which the Scottish Parliament can deliver upon its key principles.76 The Standing Orders of the Parliament require that all Executive Bills are accompanied by a statement of their potential impact on equal opportunities, which is a significant step towards the development of a mainstreaming approach. In December 1999, a mainstreaming check list and explanatory leaflet was produced jointly by the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality in partnership with the University of Edinburgh Governance of Scotland Forum to assist MSPs in this scrutiny role and was launched by the First Minister. The EOC and CRE argued that,

Effective mainstreaming depends upon clear political commitment and will. All Members of the Scottish Parliament have a role to play in the appraisal of government

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74 Scotland Act 1998, Sch.5, Section L.2.
76 MSPs endorsed the report prepared by the Consultative Steering Group (CSG) which outlined this power sharing model and recommended standing orders and procedures with embodied these principles. Consultative Steering Group on the Scottish Parliament, Shaping Scotland’s Parliament, 1998.
policy and legislative proposals for equality implications; and the integration of equality from the outset in their own legislative proposals. MSPs as individuals and as members of Parliamentary Committees can act as visible champions of mainstreaming: scrutinising the equality implications of policies and legislative programmes; encouraging a culture of equality sensitive governance; monitoring the performance of policy makers; and ensuring two way communication between the public and political decision makers. The Equal Opportunities Committee has a crucial role in terms of building expertise and developing effective methods of monitoring and evaluation.\(^77\)

The following questions were printed as a credit card sized checklist to assist MSPs as a first step towards mainstreaming.

**Figure 3.2 Mainstreaming Equalities: A Checklist for MSPS**

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<td>1.</td>
<td>What is the policy for? Who is the policy for? What are the desired and anticipated outcomes?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Do we have full information and analyses about the impact of the policy upon all equalities groups? If not, why not?</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Has the full range of options and their differential impacts on all equality groups been presented?</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>What are the outcomes and consequences of the proposals? Have the indirect, as well as the direct, effects of proposals been taken into account?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>How have policy makers in the Executive demonstrated they have mainstreamed equality?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>How will the policy be monitored and evaluated? How will improved awareness of equality implications be demonstrated?</td>
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The first Parliamentary debate on equality was also held in December 1999 and the checklist was used/referred to on several occasions by MSPs.

The Equal Opportunities Committee has established several sub-groups, including gender, race, disability and sexual orientation. The committee is currently conducting an audit of equality statistics and related mapping information.

The Equality Unit’s role in developing and supporting work on mainstreaming equality is central to the Scottish Executive’s commitment. It published a draft Equality Strategy in January 2000 and is conducting a wide consultation on its proposals. The main strands of its proposed work programme include: a training and development strategy on mainstreaming equality across the work of the Scottish Executive, with public bodies and more widely; a strategy for raising awareness both internally within the Scottish Executive, and externally;

work to secure improvements to baseline and ongoing information together with statistics, data and research; and work with the statutory equalities agencies and other bodies to develop practical tools for equal opportunities impact assessment and for monitoring and evaluation; and ways of sharing and disseminating good practice. It aims to work in partnership with and be supportive of all departments of the Executive including the Scottish Executive’s Personnel Directorate, with sponsored bodies and more widely. The Unit plans to engage with existing networks such as that established by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA), and will build links with statutory equality agencies and with other external organisations, academics and interested parties.  

Preparatory work has already been carried out by a Women’s Issues Research Consultant who was appointed in 1998. Such work included developing networks of academics and other researchers, disseminating research on women’s issues, and setting up the Women in Scotland Consultative Forum. There is an ongoing process of dialogue between politicians, policy makers, and women’s organisations, that it is expected will continue to develop and to inform policy making. A database of more than 1,000 organisations has been established which has greatly enhanced the Equality Unit’s capacity for communication. It is currently being used to consult widely on the Unit’s draft Equality Strategy.

One example of the new approach to policy making is the current research and consultation exercise commissioned by the (then) Scottish Office to explore issues affecting women’s use of various forms of transport and to identify the key priorities for improvement. The project, which ends in Spring 2000, comprises a research review, a consultation with key organisations to identify their views of women’s transport needs, a large scale self-completion questionnaire survey of women’s experiences of transport, and a number of smaller discussion groups. The overall aim of the study is to produce a set of draft guidelines for central and local government policy makers to assist them in ‘gender auditing’ transport provision and future transport policy.

There are clear expectations by women’s organisations and other equalities activists in Scotland that effective mainstreaming requires the development of meaningful models of consultation and participation, through consultative fora and other mechanisms. As such the **democratic** and **participatory** potential of mainstreaming is being emphasised by Scottish civil society. As Alice Brown notes:

> There are high expectations that the new Scottish Parliament will provide a genuine opportunity for the participation of women in the democratic process, not just as elected members, and that there will be different channels and avenues through which the voices of women in Scotland can be heard and can have an impact.  

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MAINSTREAMING IN WALES

As in Scotland, the new Assembly is seen as creating an opportunity to move forward with regard to equalities matters in Wales. Women are 40% of Assembly Members (AMs), although again, as in the Scottish case, no black or minority ethnic candidates were elected as AMs. An Equal Opportunities Committee has been created which is one of only two standing committees. The Committee, which will in the first instance concentrate on the issues of race, gender and disability, has a remit to ensure that the Assembly has effective arrangements to promote the principle of equality of opportunity for all people in Wales. It is responsible for producing an annual report on equal opportunities, as required in the Government of Wales Act.

Mainstreaming has been identified as a strategy for achieving this aim though it is at very early stages in the Welsh Assembly. The commitment to the strategy is based in Section 48 and 120 of the Wales Act which make specific reference to the need for due regard to equal opportunities in the functions and business of the Assembly. Therefore equal opportunities must be considered within all the Assembly’s activities, procedures and outputs.

An Action Plan for mainstreaming equal opportunities in all of the Assembly’s activities has been developed. The initial tasks include gaining an understanding of where the Assembly currently stands in relation to equal opportunities, and raising the awareness of all officers and politicians within the Assembly. The first of these two activities is underway in the form of an audit described below. The Equal Opportunities Committee will have responsibility for monitoring and auditing the work carried out under the plan and Heads of Division will be directly accountable for progress, or the lack of it, on equality issues. An Equality Policy Unit has been created in the administration.

Concerns have been expressed that mainstreaming in Wales could be ‘a tag used without understanding’ and that there is a need to move beyond words to practical actions. As a first step in the process of ‘seeking under its obligations to make equality for all come true,’ the Equality Unit has initiated an audit of all Assembly activities, that is, all policy divisions of the old Welsh Office. The audit, in the form of a survey involving interviews, briefings and so on, will gather information on the base line situation of current practice. The survey includes the following questions:

- how is policy developed and delivered?
- who and how is consultation being carried out?
- how are equality implications considered?
- are there statements in place on equalities at the moment?
- what monitoring and evaluation procedures are in place?

The Unit is working closely with Assembly Members on the audit and there will be an interim report in 2000. Following the report, practical strategies and measures will be devised to integrate equalities considerations within all policy areas and to start to change ways of thinking about equality. The overall aim of these strategies and measures will be to develop

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81 Rees reports that the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) and Disability Wales jointly lobbied in Wales for the issue of equal opportunities to be written into the Government of Wales Bill. Rees, 1999, p.9.
‘practical actions which treat people fairly - that is give proper regard and consideration to all.’

Although it is early days in respect of any assessment, Teresa Rees argues that:

Gender balance, together with the provisions in the Government of Wales Act, combined with the embedding of equality into the organisational arrangements bodes well for the establishment of a culture that takes equality seriously.

NORTHERN IRELAND

The Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement reflects the contribution of the Northern Ireland Women’s Coalition in the peace talks, for example, its sections on the treatment of victims, its extensive equality mainstreaming agenda, and the institution of a Civic Forum as a second, advisory Chamber. The 1998 elections to the new Assembly were more successful than those to the failed assemblies of the 1970s in returning women but only 14 of the 108 seats (13%) are held by women; far short of the levels of representation in the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly.

The new statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity in the Northern Ireland Act 1998 has grown from the Good Friday Agreement, and from recognition of the need to address the weaknesses of the non-statutory Policy Appraisal for Fair Treatment (PAFT). PAFT was used exclusively in the Northern Ireland Office. It has been criticised for a number of reasons including the lack of positive requirements to promote equality of opportunity and the lack of a clear and consistent notion of how the term ‘unfairness’ should be defined. Further, it was not clear when a PAFT should be carried out. The fact that the assessment was carried out behind closed doors meant that there was a lack of accountability and transparency, and resulted in a lack of monitoring and evaluation.

The new duty aims to introduce a mainstreaming strategy by making equality issues central to the whole range of public policy debates. The key parts of the Act are Section 75 and Schedule 9. Under Section 75, each public authority is required, in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinions, racial groups, ages, marital status or sexual orientations; between men and women generally; between persons with a disability and persons without; and between those with or without dependants.

The requirement to pay ‘due regard’ was stated, rather than just ‘regard’ to reinforce the fact that it is a stronger requirement than that of promoting ‘good relations’. This was a response to fears that the ‘community relations’ duty may be used to escape from the full implications of the equality duty. The two duties are to be seen as complementary. The duty to promote equality of opportunity is understood to positively include affirmative action. The key

82 Information from telephone briefing with Assembly for Wales Equality Policy Unit, November 1999.
concepts in implementing the equality duty are impact assessment and participation and the duty relates to all relevant policies, not just those specifically aimed at promoting equality of opportunity.

A new Equality Commission for Northern Ireland was established in 1999 which took over the functions and responsibilities of the Commission for Racial Equality for Northern Ireland, the Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland, the Fair Employment Commission and the Northern Ireland Disability Council. In addition the Commission will assume responsibilities in respect of the statutory duty on all public bodies to have due regard to promote equality of opportunity.

Section 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 makes provision for the enforcement of the duties under Section 75. The Section is not exclusive, other methods, such as Judicial Review, may be used if the provisions here prove unsuccessful. In brief, public authorities are each required to produce ‘equality schemes’ which state how the authority will fulfil these duties. The equality schemes are to be drawn up within six months of the commencement of Schedule 9 and submitted to the Equality Commission. Exemptions can be given by the Commission in writing under limited circumstances, and can be taken away at a later date. Equality schemes must conform to guidelines issued by the Commission with approval from the Secretary of State.

Reflecting the emphasis on increased participation and consultation in the requirements, these guidelines will be altered following a consultation exercise. The schemes will contain the following elements: how the duty will be fulfilled in relation to the relevant functions; a timetable for measures proposed; arrangements for consultation, training and monitoring; and arrangements for ensuring, and assessing, public access to information and services provided by the authority. Public authorities are required to carry out five yearly reviews of their equality schemes and to inform the Equality Commission of the outcome of the review. The Equality Commission is required to produce an annual report on the operation of the equality duty and the steps taken to promote equality of opportunity.

Christopher McCrudden, an expert commentator on mainstreaming, has argued that the success or failure of the equality of opportunity duty in mainstreaming equality in the governance of Northern Ireland is dependent upon,

The willingness of all those involved, politicians, public servants, and civil society, to operate these provisions with skill, imagination, determination, and in good faith.87

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In the UK context, it has been the case that local government has been more proactive and open than central government in promoting more equal opportunities for women and other disadvantaged groups in respect of both employment practices and ‘gender-proofing’ service delivery. Local government pioneered many progressive employment practices in the 1980s;

and councils were commonly characterised as model employers of the 1990s;\(^{88}\) Scotland was no exception to this trend.\(^{89}\)

By the early 1990s, more than half of all British local authorities had devised policies which fell within the broad remit of equal opportunities, although a far smaller proportion had specific structures such as women’s or equal opportunities committees, or had specialist staff. Women’s and Equal Opportunities Committees have made some significant advances in ensuring the representation of previously excluded or under-represented groups. In England, many specialist committees have now been disbanded, although specialist officers remain in the administration, often based within larger corporate policy divisions. Post local government reorganisation in 1996 there are a number of different approaches to managing equality issues in operation in Scotland, although it is still the case that the dominant model is to have specialist officers at the centre, linked to an equal opportunities committee or sub committee structure. In Wales, there has been a tendency to create new specialist posts and in some cases equality issues have become part of corporate policy making.

The development of equal opportunities good practice and mainstreaming is not uniform in local government, rather the pattern remains of pockets of good practice. However, whereas central government and the new devolved governments are experimenting with mainstreaming for the first time, many local authorities have considerable experience of some elements of what is regarded as mainstreaming or integrated equality good practice: training, information, action plans, gender perspective assessment, specialist support and co ordination, and specialist advisers within departments. Furthermore it is at local government level that some of the innovative consultation methods have been pioneered, for example, women’s surveys, information and consultative road shows, specialist and community fora.\(^{90}\) This has allowed local authorities to review practice and reflect upon both the strengths and weaknesses of mainstreaming approaches.

In the context of progressing equal opportunities work in local government the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) argues that there is widespread agreement that equal opportunities need to be ‘built into’ the policy process through mainstreaming. The integration of an equalities perspective into everyday policy making and service delivery in local government has been pioneered over a number of years by a small number of progressive local authorities, although they have seldom referred to such initiatives as mainstreaming. Such authorities have developed a comprehensive and even-handed approach to equalities, involving a systematic examination of the needs and concerns of different groups in relation to different areas of service provision, and accompanied by mechanisms for consulting these groups, which go beyond tokenism. These arrangements are likely to imply specialist advisers, inter departmental co-operation, strategic equality action plans and targets, multi-agency approaches and partnership initiatives.\(^{91}\)

The following figure outlines the EOC framework of essential elements for implementing mainstreaming in local government. Although some local authorities have built up expertise and good practice in this respect, it is unlikely that any one authority has fully implemented

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\(^{88}\) A. Coyle Women and Organisational Change, Manchester, EOC, 1995.


this holistic model. In particular, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are under developed although both the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) and the Local Government Management Board (LGMB- now renamed The Employers Organisation for Local Government) have piloted equality performance indicators. A number of authorities, for example Fife Council, have recently pioneered the use of Equality Audits in service departments.92

Links have been made between mainstreaming and other aspects of the government’s programmes for modernising local government, such as community planning, partnership working, ‘Best Value’ regimes in service delivery; and issues relating to civic governance, democratic renewal and social inclusion.

**Figure 3.3 Mainstreaming Local Government: EOC Framework of Key Components**

The Macpherson Report - with its emphasis on the responsibility of organisations as a whole to challenge institutional discrimination and change organisational cultures and its recommendation that there be a duty to demonstrate fairness - provides an impetus from which mainstreaming strategies can be (re)promoted and strengthened by the police, local government and other public agencies (see Section 1). The *duty to demonstrate fairness* highlights the significance of monitoring and evaluation within the mainstreaming approach, increasing the likelihood of achieving concrete results rather than just good intentions. Mainstreaming also offers a means to achieve new anti discriminatory institutional cultures

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through its involvement of the whole organisation, its emphasis on awareness-raising and education, and its promotion of new ways of working.

A number of projects are underway at local government level to try to develop generic equalities benchmarks and handbooks for mainstreaming generic equalities. For example, a collaborative project involving the CRE, the EOC and the Employers’ Organisation for local government is currently working to develop and publish a new equalities standard for local government that covers race, sex and disability equality. The new standard will build upon and replace the existing racial equality standard (REMQ) which was published by the CRE in 1995. It will provide performance indicators and benchmarks by which progress can be monitored. Mainstreaming guidance has been developed by partnerships of statutory equalities agencies, local government, voluntary organisations and academics in both Scotland and Wales.

It has not been within the scope of the current project to conduct a comprehensive survey of mainstreaming initiatives in local government, although such work is needed and would provide valuable lessons for all levels of government. The following examples are illustrative of some of the practices and experiences of local authorities. We first report upon the London Borough of Haringey’s race equality review and its proposed new generic equalities strategy, Mainstreaming Plus; we then reflect upon the lessons which arise from the mixed experiences of mainstreaming at the London Borough of Hounslow; we turn next to Fife Council’s model of equalities work with its emphasis upon community participation and capacity building; and finally we discuss the City of Edinburgh Council’s new mainstreaming anti discrimination strategy and a concrete example of mainstreaming in practice in respect of the needs of older people.

Mainstreaming and Haringey’s Race Equality Review

Mainstreaming race equality was first introduced in the London Borough of Haringey in 1992. The strategy has recently been evaluated as part of Haringey’s Race Equality Review of 1999 which followed the publication of the Macpherson Report. The Review found that while Haringey was still one of the leaders of race equality practice in the UK, and that mainstreaming has produced some concrete successes, there were also significant problems and weaknesses. The Review recommended adopting a new strategy, Mainstreaming Plus, to enhance existing race equality mainstreaming practices with specific equalities structures and actions.

The overriding concerns of the Race Equality Review report were: to improve race relations work and to tackle institutional racism; to protect against any further deprioritising of equalities; to create another push for mainstreaming; and to embed mainstreaming properly in the Council’s structures and practices. The new commitment was driven by the understanding that:

It is important for all agencies adopting this approach to ensure that mainstreaming is not in practice a covert way of letting equalities slide back down the agenda of priorities.

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The failures of the existing mainstreaming strategy were put down to three broad trends:

- the lack of sustained political and managerial focus;
- the deprioritisation and denigration of Equalities; and
- the potential to remove Equalities from the council’s agenda.

In more detail, the shortfalls identified were:

1. The initial effective implementation of mainstreaming had not been sustained. 
   *This had been due to financial crises, the emergence of other priorities, such as the emphasis on finance issues, the lessening of the corporate steer on Mainstreaming, and the intensity of change within the Council.*

2. Implementation had been considerable but was too patchy and inconsistent, varying from service to service and within services.
   *As a result, mainstreaming had not become securely embedded in the organisation.*

3. The mainstreaming message had been diluted over time.
   *Insufficient reinforcement of the message had led to misunderstanding about the purpose and meaning of mainstreaming, of unhelpful attitudes going unchallenged, and in some cases of poor practices creeping back. The presence of mixed messages from management had added to this process.*

**Mainstreaming Plus**

The enhanced approach, *Mainstreaming Plus* has been devised to push race and other equalities work forward and to overcome the weaknesses identified. The present political context is seen as helpful with respect to the government’s modernisation strategy, the national currency and approval given to mainstreaming, and the recognition of the need to provide better services for a changing population.

The logic of mainstreaming and the Government’s approach to anti discrimination nationally - with its emphasis on much more close working between the equalities commissions - would suggest that this should be a new generic approach to equalities and not to race equality on its own.95

In particular, the review argued that to refocus Equalities in Haringey required:

- strong and consistent political leadership - no mixed messages;
- a new and sustained managerial push - constant steer; and
- the embedding of Equalities in a permanent and sustainable way.

A main tenet of the enhanced strategy will be the *duty to demonstrate*. Building upon the recommendations of the Macpherson Report, the council has stressed the need for monitoring and evaluation to enable it to demonstrate its equalities work in concrete terms to the wider community.

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There is a striking and inescapable need to demonstrate fairness ... in order to generate trust and confidence within the minority ethnic communities, who undoubtedly perceive themselves as being discriminated against by the system.96

Monitoring and evaluation are seen as an essential part of mainstreaming at all stages in order to provide a baseline and to determine need, to ensure a fit between principle and practice, and to demonstrate outcomes. The inadequacy of ethnic monitoring of service delivery was named the most important practical deficiency of equalities work in Haringey. The Review argued that monitoring must become a systematic part of all Council activity and data ‘must be analysed, evaluated and used in demonstrable ways to inform future business planning, service redesign and service improvement initiatives’.97

The Review favoured creating a borough-wide partnership incorporating the requirements of modernisation (consultation, participation, and partnership working) to tackle cross-cutting issues of equalities. It was therefore proposed that Haringey Council should lead the establishment of a new Haringey Equalities Partnership (HEP) with multi-agency membership based around a shared common purpose of tackling inequality, promoting cohesion and respecting diversity.

The lack of a cross-directorate forum focusing on equalities issues was seen as one of the weaknesses in existing equalities structures. It was therefore proposed that a new Equalities Management Team was established, chaired by the Chief Executive, serviced by the Head of Policy, Equalities and Diversity, and attended not just by the equalities officers in directorates, but by a senior manager in each directorate. New Equalities Forums were proposed where they do not already exist, reporting to the directorate management team.

Turning to employment issues: the two main concerns identified were the under representation of specific communities and the under representation of equalities groups at the most senior levels. To address these issues, the council intends to work with minority ethnic communities to identify barriers and take positive initiatives and to establish a new and separate target for senior posts. The use of a search agency to identify suitable candidates has been suggested to help achieve the new target.

The Review recommended that there should be a dedicated Equalities and Policy Resources in each Directorate combining in equal measure equalities and generic policy responsibilities to encourage embedding equalities in generic policy initiatives.

Clear evidence of effective mainstreaming and good service delivery was found, especially in the areas of Housing and Social Services; Regeneration, Partnerships and Social Exclusion, and Education Services. However, across directorates the review revealed:

- Relatively poor understanding of equalities issues and their relevance to effective service delivery;
- Weak monitoring systems with few linkages to policy development of service redesign;
- Situations where equalities is often marginal to the directorate policy and planning process;
- Pockets of resistance to moving equalities forward;

• Too many casual assumptions that professionalism and officer neutrality is a guarantor of equal treatment; and
• Limited evidence of initiative and innovation on equalities from mainstream management.

Further, practice was seen as too variable between directorates and between services, with insufficient management drive in some areas. There was a lack of a cross-directorate body or structure and some directorates had no structure for managing equalities across their wide-ranging services.

Research by Eve Featherstone into the implementation of mainstreaming in Haringey council also highlighted weaknesses. In particular, it found that management systems, such as the appraisal scheme and service planning, were in place but not in use throughout the organisation. Thus policies relying on these structures, such as mainstreaming, could not succeed. The reliance on these structures also meant that staff tended to avoid addressing their own and their team’s values and attitudes towards equalities issues. The lack of functioning systems downgraded the perceived importance of mainstreaming, thus support and systems needed to be developed at this level. Commitment also needed to be embedded at all levels in order that equalities work be kept on the agenda, and be more resistant to setbacks. There was a lack of clarity as to the role of managers in mainstreaming equalities. Further, equalities work was viewed as a high-risk no-win activity. In other words, staff and managers were more worried about attempting to tackle equalities issues than about not implementing them. They felt it was very easy to get this work wrong, and that they were more likely to get blamed as a consequence of this than if they ignored the issue. There was a lack of basic information and understanding by staff of equalities issues, and a large gap between policies and procedures on the one hand and, on the other hand, real work practices. This demonstrates that, even in a council which is at the forefront of race equality, there are problems with implementing a mainstreaming strategy. These have arisen primarily from a lack of political commitment, lack of structure, and lack of understanding and knowledge. In the face of these obstacles, equalities good practice remains in isolated pockets and mainstreaming fails to take root. However, evaluation has highlighted these problem areas and there now exists the opportunity to strengthen these areas and to establish mainstreaming more firmly. According to the council, in a context of rapid change and competing priorities, the importance of mainstreaming must be clarified and continuously stressed.

Mainstreaming lessons from Hounslow Council

Hounslow Council developed mainstreaming strategies for equal opportunities in 1987 and its long experience in this area provides useful lessons to be learnt. As with Haringey Council, while much has been achieved - problems and weaknesses have also been identified. At present it is felt a new emphasis on mainstreaming is necessary in order to build on existing achievements and to ensure continuing successes. The example highlights the

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difficulties faced in ensuring that change happens in practice and that efforts do not simply constitute ‘paper exercises’.\textsuperscript{99}

Mainstreaming was not used to describe equalities work in Hounslow when it began, rather the term ‘integration’ was favoured. This was a strategic decision due to the perceived dangers attached to the use of the former term, which was often interpreted to mean the disbanding of specialist provision without building other expertise (the term mainstreaming was used later as the strategy developed). Integration or mainstreaming was introduced with the aim of providing better services, which were targeted at those with the greatest need, and which were flexible and appropriate. It was seen as a mechanism for redress in the sense of creating access where this had previously been denied.

All departments and sections were involved in the implementation of the strategy. An Equality Unit was created and based in the Chief Executive’s Office, and the community was also involved in the process. The Head of the Equality Unit was also part of the corporate team, providing access to the corporate level, thus mainstreaming in theory permeated all levels and sections of the council. At its height, the unit employed ten staff and dealt with a range of equalities issues, including gender, race and disability. There was a concentrated effort to mainstream in service delivery from 1987 to the early 1990s, this push has since diminishes and the mainstreaming structure weakened due to resource pressures.

Mainstreaming was co-ordinated by the Head of the Equality Unit, who also held responsibility for its implementation, while nominated persons from departments were responsible for co-ordination at the departmental level. Through the realisation of their action plans on equalities, all staff were involved in mainstreaming on a day-to-day basis; while some of these people would have been involved with equalities work previously, this was not the case for the majority. A process of learning both by the experts and by ‘ordinary’ staff in departments existed, with staff encouraged to bring forward their own ideas and solutions. Consultants on equality issues were brought in from outside the council, but on the whole, expertise was ‘home grown’. Networking with other equalities people in other councils was considered important.

Mainstreaming is perceived to have changed the way people worked ‘in pockets’. It aimed to change the policy-making process at a structural level, but formalising such change was difficult and thus structures tended to be impermanent and fragile; in practice, new networks and lines of responsibility often did not take effect. Departmental loyalty and organisational cultures were cited as barriers to such change, the current modernisation of local government was seen to represent an opportunity to tackle this kind of resistance.

The Equality Unit ran several successful pilot projects in the community as well as exercises to ascertain the needs of the community and how these affected service provision and participation. One project examined issues around access to the council for people with disabilities. As part of the exercise, people with disabilities were invited to a meeting around access issues and were asked to find their way to the appointed location in the civic centre and to report on the experience. It was discovered that while the route for abled-access was well-signed, this was not the case for access for people with disabilities; the room was hard to find and the route was badly maintained. A second exercise, looked at participation by the

\textsuperscript{99} Briefing with Munira Thobani, Head of Community Team, formerly Head of the Equality Unit, of London Borough of Hounslow (25.10.99).
community in the service planning process. It monitored service users of the environmental planning service and found that the service was used predominantly by white men. Further research showed that many women and members of ethnic groups expressed the desire to be involved but cited barriers to participation including access, safety and transport.

Review

An independent review of the Council’s mainstreaming strategy was carried out after the first five years, while it noted the council’s achievements and supported the approach taken, it identified time resource problems and a number of organisational barriers to implementation. The recognition by the review that equalities should be the responsibility of directors, not of specialist equalities staff was seen as a major advance. New action plans resulted which pledged a recommitment to equalities work (it is interesting to note that a similar process has occurred following Haringey’s review - see above). To promote equalities, staff attended a briefing session and watched a training video, and a poster and postcard campaign was launched in the community to foster and demonstrate support for equalities work there. Despite this new push, it was felt by some that mainstreaming suffered from a lack of commitment and many of the initiatives proposed were in practice no more than ‘paper exercises’.

The restructuring of Hounslow Council in the early 1990s led to the loss of equality resources. Equality officers were given combined jobs, including policy and equality officer roles, which meant that equality issues were de-prioritised as other issues were pushed to the fore. This reorganisation and its consequences for mainstreaming underlines the fragility of mainstreaming and the position of equalities work. The lack of organisational support meant that it was left to individuals to implement the policy, creating more pressure for those who face a disempowerment within the organisation which often reflects that faced in society, as equalities champions tend to come from equalities groups. Cut-backs were felt to be consequences of the de-prioritising of equalities within the council and in the political environment more generally.

Two examples of innovative instruments developed in Hounslow which, it is argued, were not fully implemented due to lack of political will were STEPS and the ‘setting standards’ initiative. STEPS, which stands for Strategic Equality Plans in Service Delivery, was developed by Hounslow council as a model for reviewing existing services from an equalities perspective. It had been hoped that it would be integrated in Best Value reviews, however this did not happen, although the instrument was picked up and used in this way by other authorities. For the ‘setting standards’ initiative, a draft paper was produced, outlining bronze, silver and gold equality ‘kite marks’. The marks were designed so that the majority of departments would be at the lowest standard already and could aim to attain higher. It had been hoped these would become part of Performance Indicators already used by the council, however the attempt to integrate charter-marks into performance review processes did not come to anything in practice. For the future it was recommended that such issues must be addressed at Chief Officer level and that responsibility for reaching equality performance marks must lie at this level to ensure that principle moves on into practice.100

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100 Briefing, London Borough of Hounslow (25.10.99).
Lessons

Former Head of the Equality Unit, Munira Thobani felt there were lessons which should be learnt from Hounslow’s experience with mainstreaming equal opportunities, these are summarised in six points below:\footnote{Briefing, London Borough of Hounslow (25.10.99).}

- All vacancies at the top levels of the council structure should be used to redress the under-representation of equality groups. If this ‘gap’ were closed it was felt the larger numbers of women and representatives of equity groups would promote a culture of sensitivity and listening. The failure to promote equalities groups to the top levels and the subsequent impact on equalities work was considered to represent a ‘collective failure of the organisation’ and thus redressing this must be a top priority. Haringey’s proposal of using search agencies to get applicants from minority groups into recruitment processes above P08 level (see above) was suggested as one way of doing this.

- More training and awareness-raising amongst staff, particularly based on case studies giving concrete and real examples of how and why policies need to change is needed. Training must also address issues of backlash and resistance, and factual based training is identified as the only way to do this. At present, it was seen as difficult to get Members to go on training courses. Learning also needs to occur within specialist departments, there is often an assumption that just because someone may have knowledge of one equality issue or area this extends to all, however this is normally not the case.

- Focal points for equality work are needed within departments and it is necessary to make lines of accountability clear to ensure that responsibilities are taken seriously. In Hounslow, each directorate nominated a senior manager to be responsible for equalities work and the nominated officers together formed an equality sub-group at chief officer level. This responsibility was written into job descriptions but was not carried out in practice as demonstration of carrying out this task was not required.

- Equality work is central to delivering quality and to assessing need. It should be considered as part of doing one’s job properly. People-focused services must take people and their needs as drivers, and this means addressing diversity.

- While real problems with implementing a mainstreaming strategy were identified, this was not necessarily recognised throughout the council. The fact that mainstreaming was in principle being applied sometimes meant in practice that nothing was done and that equalities issues have not been discussed. This danger was amplified by two factors, firstly, the lack of sanctions which could be used against those who did not integrate equal opportunities into their work, and secondly, the lack a duty to demonstrate. Thus the introduction of both sanctions and a duty to demonstrate were seen as crucial.

- In order for mainstreaming to produce real outcomes, explicit thinking about equalities was essential within the organisation. It was felt that this was not happening in Hounslow. A more productive relationship needs to be built between the specialists within the council and other members of the organisation. Too often the specialists are regarded as some sort of ‘thought police’ rather than as occupying a supportive role. This process
could be aided if requirements for integrating equalities came from the top level of the organisation.

Mainstreaming within Fife Council

Fife Council provides a good example of the development of consultation and participation necessary for successful equality mainstreaming. Brief details of mainstreaming in Fife Council are given before turning to focus on aspects of consultation and participation. The definition of mainstreaming used by the council is given in its Social Equality Strategy below:

Figure 3.4 Extract from Fife Council’s Social Equality Strategy

The council’s approach to equality will be based on an integrated approach which means that the commitment to overcome disadvantage is rooted in all areas of the authority’s activity, including:

- the services which it provides
- the Council’s employment practices
- the Council’s corporate policies
- the extent to which citizens are consulted and involved in Council decisions.

Mainstreaming is co-ordinated by specialist equalities officers. There has been support from the top for mainstreaming but this has been patchy in practice. Specialist staff believe that ‘rubber stamping’ of service plans occurs to some extent. Resistance has been met at all levels, which specialist staff see as based upon a fear of change, an unwillingness to commit resources and a lack of knowledge.

Specialist staff in corporate policy have a strategic role in the development of equal opportunities work, specifically their remit is to:

- co-ordinate work on equal opportunities throughout Fife Council;
- ensure that the implications for equality of opportunity are reflected in the key corporate strategies such as decentralisation, participation, anti-poverty and quality;
- develop corporate policy in the field of equal opportunities;
- support the activities of services in developing equality initiatives; and
- establish and support mechanisms for consultation with disadvantaged groups.

102 Based upon briefing with Sarah Hutchison, Team Leader (Service Development) Corporate Policy, and Neelam Bakshi, Human Resources Management, Fife House. (29.10.99).
Each strategy sector has established a working group on equal opportunities, chaired by senior officers. These groups are responsible for drawing up annual action plans on equal opportunities.

The provision of services for people with hearing difficulties was given as an example of a service which had been successfully mainstreamed. Previously, a person with hearing difficulties would have to go through the deaf/hearing department. This in effect meant that there was one person, the leader of the department, who had a detailed knowledge of the hearing impaired community. This both compromised confidentiality and, when this person died suddenly, left the community with no access to services. In light of this, provision was mainstreamed and the hearing impairment service closed. Experts were moved out to departments so that the hearing impaired can go straight to the relevant department and their needs are catered for. There is now also access to a communicator who can accompany a client to appointments, for example at a health centre or a parent’s evening. The service is paid for by the education or health service concerned.

In 1997 an equality audit was conducted to determine the current baseline situation on equalities work within the council. The audit identified pockets of excellence, however these were not mirrored elsewhere, and for most departments the baseline situation was low. The Equality Unit has attempted to foster centres of excellence and to disseminate good practices elsewhere.

**Fife’s work with consultation and participation in the community.**

Fife has sought to extend ‘ownership’ of mainstreaming: in the first instance by involving departments; and in the second instance by promoting meaningful consultation and participation by the community in the development and monitoring of services. Various models of capacity-building and improving consultation have been successfully tested by the Council and community forums involving, for example, women, people from ethnic minority backgrounds and disabled people. There is a strong focus upon issues of diversity and responsibility within the forums. Community networks around issues of gender, race, disability and sexuality, have increasingly taken on more responsibility for consultation and representation. Currently about 50 per cent of the Equality Unit’s resources go directly to the community through these networks. This is seen as important as it gives organisations control over the development of issues and enables innovation. Those networks which already had strong organisational bases to support them, and where there was also an obvious overarching body, have been the most successful. Joint communication strategies exist among the networks.

The *Women in Fife* directory is an example of a women’s network producing and using a handbook in an innovative way. Small groups within Fife Women’s Network worked on specific areas to provide information about services and facilities available to women in the region (for example, health services, leisure facilities and training opportunities). The experience of creating a database, researching and producing the directory provided training and empowerment for members and led to increased participation.

While the network approach has proved largely successful, networks are not as diverse as had been hoped. In particular, mental health, sexuality and social inclusion issues and perspectives are under represented. Equality specialists argue that consultation and
participation exercises need to be extremely sensitive to the danger of further marginalising groups which already suffer exclusion. If such exercises leave part of the target population uninvolved, these people will then face an exclusion from the defined ‘excluded group’. Fife Council address this issue, in part, by monitoring non-users of services as well as service users. It operates a ‘proactive’ strategy to encourage capacity-building and participation in these communities.

Fife Council has used the networks to facilitate a major consultation exercise called, *People’s Priorities* in which networks carried out consultation with the community on what should be in the Council’s service plans. The exercise was seen as taking mainstreaming beyond the Council by involving people at the level of agenda setting. A ‘Balanced Reporting’ was attempted with the views of network members balanced by other Fife residents, in order that the report was seen as coming from the people of Fife in their totality, rather than from specific equity groups.

**Lessons from City of Edinburgh Council**

The City of Edinburgh Council has recently endorsed a comprehensive approach to mainstreaming and the development of an anti-discriminatory organisational culture. *Edinburgh 2000: Mainstreaming and the Development of an Anti-discriminatory Organisational Culture* defines the objective of mainstreaming as:

> To change the formal organisational culture to one which ensures that targets are set, objectives agreed and outcomes monitored in a way which is inclusive of the needs of equalities groups and communities of interest. Change in the formal organisational culture must be underpinned by change in the informal organisational culture. Achieving change in the informal culture is a long term process which will require support for employee development and training as well as on-going commitment from senior managers and elected members.

In order to achieve effective mainstreaming and ensure the development of anti-discriminatory organisational culture the council has identified the need for action in the following areas:

- involvement of elected members as the public face of the council
- leading role of chief officers to drive change
- involvement of middle managers and other staff to ‘own’ the strategy and deliver change
- participation of equalities groups and communities of interest
- policy development and monitoring
- service planning and provision and monitoring
- employment policies
- employee development and training
- specialist resources

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104 Briefing, Fife Council, (29.10.99) This was not the first time such an exercise had been attempted, and drew on the experiences of public consultation on the Council Budget in previous years.
The strategy is at a very early stage and a Chief Officer has been nominated to co-ordinate and steer the overall strategic approach to mainstreaming within the council. Proposals include: training and awareness raising programmes for politicians, senior officers and other staff; focus groups to explore the attitudes and knowledge of staff; the development of mainstreaming initiatives for incorporation in service plans, including performance indicators; equalities issues to be integrated into staff development programmes, including customer care; review of consultative and complaints mechanisms to ensure inclusivity; the development of tools and techniques such as differential impact assessment and service users statistics; specific equalities considerations and involvement to be built in to performance measures, partnership agreements, service planning processes and Best Value reviews.

Mainstreaming the needs of older people into service delivery design, an example from Edinburgh Council

A preliminary review of council services for Older People has just been completed by the City of Edinburgh Council. The review will have several stages, hopefully culminating in a proposed City Plan for Older People. The first stage involved defining key issues which affect older people and the report of this stage is currently being written up. The published report is intended to become a basis for wider public consultation and participation.106

The process of review is understood to be in itself a process of mainstreaming, through which expert knowledge and understanding is spread throughout the council, raising awareness in all departments of issues affecting older people. While it was decided that at present a specific initiative was needed to consider the needs of older people within Edinburgh; it is hoped that in the future increased awareness and understanding by all of the issues involved will mean that such considerations are routinely addressed.

The review covers: access to adult education and lifelong learning; leisure and recreation services; social care services; transport; housing; advice services (including welfare benefits and financial advice); older people living in the city’s Social Inclusion Partnership areas; community safety; and carers’ support. It also takes account of plans for health promotion and health services. In addition, the review takes into account issues already identified as of particular concern to older people such as low income, poor housing, illness and disability, and residential care.107

It was recognised that there are many sub-groups within the group of ‘older people’, for instance, older women, minority ethnic elders, older disabled people, and that these people will experience different needs. The following example is concerned with the work on mainstreaming the needs of older people from minority ethnic groups, including, the specific requirements of minority ethnic elders who also suffer from ill-health and who have disabilities. The review also recognised that older women have specific needs and form the majority of the older population, of people with disabilities and are often more impoverished than their male counterparts.

106 Telephone briefing with Sue Brace, Assistant Director of Social Work at City of Edinburgh Council (8.10.99); additional information from City of Edinburgh Council questionnaire response.

107 From City of Edinburgh Council, Review of Older People’s Services information leaflet, undated.
The Chief Officer, seconded to carry out the review, worked with members of other departments to raise awareness and improve understanding within these departments as to how their service provision might affect older people and to develop ideas about what changes needed to be made. These representatives formed a City Planning Group at corporate level which worked on the service review. The Equalities Officer, the Chief Officer and planning group were involved with mainstreaming on a day-to-day basis. While there was not an explicit policy of mainstreaming when this process started, it became clear that a mainstreaming strategy was being used to achieve the policy of addressing the needs of minority ethnic elders in a fairer and more open way. The City planning group identified the need for a ‘strategy manager’ who will oversee the review and act as a ‘progress chaser’ or co-ordinator, this will be the responsibility of the Chief Officer. There were no experts brought in from outside.

The aim of mainstreaming was to ensure that the needs of older people from minority ethnic groups were given full consideration in developing a new City Plan for Older People. As a group, older people’s needs have been difficult to assess, agree upon and meet within existing mainstream planning and provision. The City Plan will cover a five to ten year period, but the work of mainstreaming the needs of different groups into service provision will be ongoing.

According to the review team, it is at present hard to assess whether this example of mainstreaming changed the way people thought about their work, or the process of working. The approach has, however, played a part in shaping the final report. Mainstreaming is seen as a much more robust and open approach than previous equal opportunities strategies providing a more proactive and positive way of working; there is also a greater sense of partnership with the communities concerned. It is anticipated that the real testing point for the strategy will come when the service changes are implemented, and that this is the point at which problems will show if they exist. Training needs have not yet been assessed, but it is anticipated that they will be linked to the needs of front-line staff. So far, no resistance has been encountered. Feedback so far from minority ethnic communities has been good. A recent consultation exercise with minority ethnic elders was considered very successful with a much higher turnout and participation rate than anticipated.108

KEY POINTS AND COMMON THREADS

Mainstreaming was adopted relatively early in many local authorities and the experiences and lessons learnt here could be used to inform the development of more recent mainstreaming approaches in other bodies and levels of government. The government’s modernisation agenda, and emphasis on social inclusion, poverty, ‘joined-up’ government, consultation, needs-based delivery, and so on, are seen to provide an enabling context within which to pursue equalities mainstreaming. There are common threads running through the examples from local government which are reinforced by other research in Britain and elsewhere.

Mainstreaming has been effective as a strategy for promoting equal opportunities in the work of local government and concrete results have been achieved in terms of raising awareness about the importance and relevance of equal opportunities, of building commitment, and in improving service provision, participation and consultation. These achievements are, however, uneven and have tended to occur in ‘pockets’ rather than throughout the

organisation. Mainstreaming as a strategy has, in some cases, resulted in local authorities disbanding specialist structures and staffing, or not establishing equalities machinery in the first place. There are concerns that this interpretation of mainstreaming results in ineffectual tokenism, in the absence of adequate knowledge, resources and structures; and without the strong presence of women and members of equalities groups in senior management and as elected members.\textsuperscript{109}

Several key lessons have emerged from these and other examples, which are outlined below:

- it is hard to sustain mainstreaming without strong political and managerial support;
- it takes time and a lot of effort to embed mainstreaming in the formal and informal structures of an organisation, and that until this time, mainstreaming will be vulnerable to organisational changes and to the loss of dedicated people;
- continual reinforcement and emphasis of the mainstreaming message, and clarity in statements, reminders, monitoring and so on, are vital to guard against resistance, apathy, and confusion;
- monitoring and evaluation are essential;
- the ‘duty to demonstrate’ should be made common practice;
- mainstreaming requires structural changes to facilitate cross-departmental working;
- staff need to feel that they can be confident in tackling equalities issues and that they will be rewarded for good work, and reprimanded for ignoring these issues. This will be essential in overcoming the present zero-sum attitude found in many authorities. In other words, at present there is more incentive not to do equalities work than to do it;
- mainstreaming presents the danger that in practice equalities issues are ignored because ‘mainstreamed’ issues are not seen to require any special attention;
- there is a need to ensure that equity groups are represented at the top levels of organisations;
- there is an ongoing need for training and awareness-raising;
- consultation and participation with and by the community is a crucial plank of effective mainstreaming.

SECTION 4      LESSONS IN MAINSTREAMING

This section reviews some examples of mainstreaming. A brief description of the project or development and relevant contextual material is given, followed by a report of some of the issues raised. We look at examples from different levels of government and other public bodies in San Francisco (USA), Australia (including New South Wales) and New Zealand; and within Europe, Flanders (Belgium), France, Italy, Slovenia and Spain. In Sections 5 and 6 we focus upon examples of integrated systems of mainstreaming in the Nordic countries and in Canada.

The first three case studies are drawn from outwith Europe: they report on mainstreaming (or equivalent) developments in the City and County of San Francisco in the United States; Australia at Commonwealth level and in the State of New South Wales; and in New Zealand. Information is largely drawn from responses to our questionnaire survey and supporting documentation.

SAN FRANCISCO (USA)

Mainstreaming work in the City and County of San Francisco is based upon a human rights approach. In 1998 San Francisco passed an Ordinance implementing the principles underlying the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Ordinance provides an approach to eliminate discrimination and ensure equal opportunity. It requires the authorities to examine the different needs, roles, and responsibilities of all persons and then to ensure that the budgets, employment practices, and provision of services reflect those differences. The CEDAW Ordinance also works to promote gender equity and equal access in: economic development and employment; violence against women and girls; and health care.110

The CEDAW Ordinance broadly defines discrimination against women and girls as any:

108 Distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of sex that has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political economic, social, cultural civil or any other field.111

110 CEDAW is an international treaty that was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979. Although more than 165 countries have ratified CEDAW, the United States still has not done so; consequently, it is not subject to CEDAW’s obligations. At least nine states, eleven counties, and twenty cities have passed resolutions urging US ratification of CEDAW, but San Francisco is the first and , currently, the only city in the United States to begin to implement CEDAW in its own laws. Organisers from Seattle, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Boston are presently working toward similar initiatives. The passage of the ordinance resulted from a public/private partnership between the San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women (COSW) and a consortium of community organizations spearheaded by the Women's Institute for Leadership Development for Human Rights (WILD). The Ordinance has received international recognition. It was included in the United Nations Development Fund for Women's collection of best practices worldwide for implementing CEDAW. (San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women questionnaire response, 1999).

111 The definition of discrimination includes gender-based violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately.
The following account is based upon the questionnaire response of the San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women and the executive summaries of recent and forthcoming progress reports on the implementation of CEDAW. The Commission on the Status of Women (COSW) is a department of the City and County of San Francisco whose purpose is to ensure women and girls equal economic, social, political and educational opportunities throughout the city.

**Structures and strategies**

The Ordinance required the creation of a Task Force to assist with its implementation; a pilot programme of evaluating selected departments for discrimination in the areas of employment practices, budget allocation, and the provision of direct and indirect services; and the development of gender analyses that identify discrimination and provide remedies for such discrimination, if found.

The Ordinance also requires the provision of human rights education for city employees and the integration of CEDAW principles into City policies. Finally, the City seeks to work toward implementing the principles of CEDAW in the private sector through good example and leadership.

The San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women is responsible for local implementation with oversight from an 11-member CEDAW Task Force whose membership is drawn from elected officials, trade unions, government employees, and community advocates with expertise in economic justice, human rights, violence against women, and health.

**Departments under the spot light**

The first step in the implementation process has been to carry out a gender analysis of selected departments. Two departments were chosen as pilots, Juvenile Probation and Public Works. The Department of Public Works was selected for its large size, non traditional employment opportunities for women, and provision of indirect services (services not provided directly to an individual person), such as street construction and building design. The Juvenile Probation Department provided an opportunity to examine service provision to an increasing population of diverse young women.

The aim of the analysis was for departments to examine - in a proactive way- the different needs of the population they serve and employ and to integrate those needs into their daily work.

Both departments were requested to designate a management-level employee to serve as a liaison to the CEDAW Task Force and the Commission on the Status of Women. International consultants were commissioned to draft guidelines and conduct the analysis. The two departments underwent gender analysis in the summer of 1999. Interviews and briefings were undertaken, documentation gathered and analysed; and budgets and services scrutinised. The analysis was conducted with the help of department staff, unions, and

112 See http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/cosw/cedaw/
community representatives. It also involved the departments carrying out a self analysis based upon guidelines prepared by the consultants. This strategy was informed by the view that critical self-examination is essential for any long-term change.

The departmental evaluations worked as eye openers as well as providing base line information. According to COSW:

> The very process of conducting a gender analysis created an awareness of and sensitivity to gender-related issues in both departments. Most departmental personnel not only were receptive to the exercise and saw it as a proactive approach to eliminate discrimination, but some staff, on their own initiative, have begun to change the way they evaluate their policies and programmes to serve all persons more effectively. Top management at the Juvenile Probation Department expressed that the gender analysis had a decisive impact on their operations. Similarly, staff at the Department of Public Works acknowledged that service delivery may impact on women and men differently. Many staff members of both departments appreciated the vision of incorporating an awareness of human rights with a gender lens into their work, recognizing that they serve a diverse population with many needs. 113

Both departments were publicly praised for their co-operation. COSW noted that they exhibited great courage and honesty in participating in this process.

**Department of Juvenile Probation**

The Department of Juvenile Probation (JPD), with a budget of approximately 25.9 million dollars, had already begun to address the different needs of its rapidly growing female population prior to the exercise. Community organisations had been funded to provide gender-specific programmes and the department had a track record of good communication and community links.

However the enquiry found that these programmes were not well publicised amongst staff who regularly worked with young female offenders. Consequently, not all girls who could benefit from the programmes were referred. More training was recommended to ensure that staff were equipped to refer and place clients appropriately. Much of the innovative work with young women was not ‘mainstreamed’ into departmental budgets but relied upon temporary and insecure funding. The evaluation recommended that the funding and gender programming in each division of the Juvenile Probation Department be integrated into the regular budget process. In addition to sustaining current funding, the evaluation underscored the need for additional or redesigned services for young women, including: gender specific mental health services; support services for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence; parenting advice; pregnancy prevention education, delinquency prevention work with ‘at risk’ girls: and substance abuse prevention, education, and transition planning.

The report notes that, as a result of extensive outreach, the Juvenile Probation Department’s workforce is diverse with respect to both race and gender, and generally reflects the population served by the Department. However it found that women are still under-represented in non traditional employment areas such as engineers and utility workers. The Department plans to conduct greater outreach to remedy this under-representation.

113 COSW, CEDAW Executive Summary, 1999, p.2.
The Department of Public Works (DPW), which had less history of gender related work. The department is responsible for maintaining city streets, public areas, and buildings. It has a budget of approximately 115 million dollars and a staff of 1,549. The Department of Public Works has a training department that promotes quality and fairness in the workplace and has done work in relation to staff retention and professional development. However, the report notes that women are under represented in non traditional employment areas.

With few exceptions, the Department of Public Works had not integrated a gender perspective into its service provision. Part of the reason was seen to be that the Department of Public Works mostly provides indirect services (services such as street cleaning that are not provided directly to an individual person) where the gender impact is not immediately obvious and is difficult to address. In addition, many of the Department’s projects are client-driven whereby different city departments, also lacking training in gender specific needs, request assistance with their buildings. Consequently, projects will not include a gender element unless the Department of Public Works begins to bring this emphasis and awareness to the client department’s attention. COSW note:

It is critical for departments to begin examining the role of gender in the provision of indirect services, most obviously in the area of safety concerns for women. While not all indirect services have a gender component, it is critical to institutionalize the questions so that gender concerns are not overlooked. What are women’s needs? What are men’s needs? How, if at all, do the needs differ based on gender? How can the concerns of all persons be best incorporated in to the project? Some bureaus were uncomfortable even asking these questions, but without asking these questions, we will never know if there are gender concerns.114

The report notes that when such questions are raised and taken into account, as for example the Bureau of Architecture has done, innovations are introduced such as additional lighting and visibility where customers enter and leave public facilities.

The Department of Public Works maintains a well-developed system for receiving community input through neighbourhood forums. The evaluation argued that these forums could be expanded to examine and address the impact of its indirect service on women and other traditionally under represented populations. It was also recommended that the Department conduct ‘walk throughs’ of buildings under construction by males and females who will use the completed facilities.

Historically, the Department of Public Works has been subject to much outside criticism from community groups, Supervisors, and female employees for its lack of a diverse workforce. At present, there is female under-representation in most job categories, particularly the skilled trades, maintenance workers, and technicians. It has begun to address these deficiencies through different schemes, most notably the Project Pull internship programme which challenges stereotypes and provides high school students from groups traditionally under represented in architecture, engineering, and other similar fields the opportunity to work in the Department. The evaluation recommended that further efforts be made and strategies be developed in partnership with other City departments, unions, tradeswomen’s associations.

114 COSW, CEDAW Executive Summary, 1999, p.3.
and community organisations. The Department was also called upon to expand its family-friendly workplace policies.

**Cross-cutting Themes**

Several themes emerged from the evaluation which were not deficiencies specific to the departments, but applied city wide. Firstly, there was a widespread lack of knowledge and understanding although it was found that those departments that had implemented some gender specific programmes demonstrated a greater understanding than those departments that did not.

Many department personnel were unaware of the framework of human rights in which all rights and needs are interconnected. Further, the concept of gender discrimination, in contrast to sex discrimination, was quite new to them. When the education process was missing or unsuccessful, it was obvious that the department’s analysis suffered greatly. In this respect, the Juvenile Probation Department, with its recent history of funding gender-specific programs, had a head start in understanding the gender analysis process. While the Department of Public Works staff members, in particular the top management, were receptive to participating in this process, the Department analysis suffered from an unfamiliarity with gender issues and human rights work. The report calls for general education on human rights with a gender perspective; together with specific training for staff to learn how to incorporate gender concerns into budget planning, programme and service development, and employment practices.

Secondly, there was an absence of comprehensive data needed to monitor and evaluate the gender equity performance of departments in terms of budgets, services and employment practices. In some cases official department policy called for such information to be collected, but in practice it did not happen. In other cases, information was collected but not analysed or used to inform policy. Neither department in the study could provide detailed information on budget allocations for specific gender purposes.

Thirdly, the report details the need to create a more fair and equitable workforce with family friendly workplace policies and effective recruitment for a diverse workforce.

**AUSTRALIA**

Australia is notable for its tradition of strong women’s policy machinery in government at Commonwealth (national) level and also at State level, particularly New South Wales. In this context, mainstreaming as a concept is viewed with suspicion by women’s organisations where it has been seen to have provided the rationale for abolishing or downgrading women’s units, services and policies at various governmental levels, by different administrations, at different times. For example, in New South Wales the Coalition Government of 1988-94 adopted a ‘mainstreaming’ strategy which involved the dismantling of virtually all the specialist units which had developed over the previous decade and a substantial reduction in specialist services for women. Women’s issues were simply incorporated into the

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115 COSW, CEDAW Executive Summary, 1999, p.4.
‘mainstream’ with little or no training, awareness raising or institutional delivery mechanisms in place.\textsuperscript{116}

**National Commonwealth Level**

The Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women (OSW) was established in 1974 as a Women’s Affairs Section in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The Office co-ordinates the development of policies to raise the status of women, monitors the impact of Government policies and programmes on women, and is a catalyst for new policies and approaches. As part of the Prime Minister’s Department, the Office has access to Federal Government Cabinet Submissions, and is able to advise on the gender impact of matters under Federal Government consideration.

Australian Government departments provide relevant programme data disaggregated by gender in their annual reports and other administrative data. Many departments maintain specific women’s programmes or consultation processes. Specialist units in line departments such as the Rural Women’s Unit in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Australia, and the Regional and Rural Women’s Unit in the Department of Transport and Regional Services play an important role in enhancing linkages and co-operation.

According to the OSW in the period up to 1993 work on gender equality was largely concentrated in the Office which allowed other Federal departments to ‘too easily shirk their responsibility to address gender issues in their policies and programmes’. Following a review of women’s policy machinery, the government committed all areas of the Commonwealth bureaucracy to consolidating and increasing the gains made toward establishing full equality for women and to ‘designing, assessing, monitoring and evaluating policies and programmes in terms of their relative impact upon men and women’, that is, mainstreaming. The current Commonwealth Government has reaffirmed this policy of mainstreaming.

The Australian Government believes that gender should be an integral part of public policy development and public sector management. Committed to building a society which allows all Australians to look to the future with confidence, the Government believes that the work of all government departments is improved when they consider the implications of gender on their policies and programmes.\textsuperscript{117}

The Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women prepares a Ministerial Statement at Budget time which outlines the issues and programmes contained within the Budget which specifically impact on women. The National Women’s Non-Government Organisation Funding Programme provides operational funding to national women’s non-government organisations. The Government also funds a national women’s communication network - National Exchange of Women’s Services (NEWS).

Critics of the Commonwealth Government argue that this approach, in practice, has led to reduced resources for women.

\textsuperscript{116} New South Wales DFW questionnaire response, 1999.

\textsuperscript{117} See www.dpmc.gov.au/osw/content/new/countrystatement1999.html. Additional information from OSW questionnaire response.
NEW SOUTH WALES

The Department for Women (DFW) has not adopted a formal mainstreaming strategy although gender based analysis has been carried out in practice through cross-agency collaboration in certain areas; and work with individual agencies to ‘engender’ a particular policy or programme. The success of such work is seen to rely upon the promotion of a gender analysis of an issue and strategies to embed such understandings in the practices of government agencies.

There is a clear differentiation between Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) and women’s policy work, with EEO responsibility held by the Office of the Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment while the Department for Women is responsible for coordinating policies and programmes in relation to women, across agencies, and preparing reports for government, giving specific parliamentary support for the Minister, and undertaking particular projects/policy developments, mainly in conjunction with other agencies.

According to the DFW questionnaire response, it is currently working with the Department of Sport and Recreation to develop policies and checklists on making sporting organisations and facilities more gender-inclusive, and doing similar work with Health. Industrial Relations and Education also pursue gender equity strategies that are integrated in various ways with mainstream work although responsibility for the mainstreaming strategies is generally held by the women’s units and the DFW sometimes works with them (and sometimes with the mainstream departments).

The DFW is developing an ongoing network of interested agencies to progress work on gender analysis. In 2000 it will finalise development of its gender analysis methodology and training package and testing it with an agency that is not yet applying a “gender filter” to its work. DFW has also provided advice on the collection of appropriate gender disaggregated statistics in a range of policy areas including transport and employment. It has worked with other agencies to propose supplementary statistical survey on part-time and casual work which has provided policy relevant data.

Scorecards

DFW in New South Wales has carried out some preliminary work on a gender equity scorecard as a means of raising awareness and monitoring progress. The scorecard consists of basic measures which show the current state of progress across areas such as income, gender violence, work, health, decision making, education and training, and housing. For example, a draft scorecard on women and work would give scores for factors such as unemployment and participation rates, a comparison of male and female earnings, proportion of job shares and so on. These New South Wales scores would be compared with Australian figures and with those of international leaders. The process of determining and agreeing key indicators with relevant agencies is seen as an important ‘eye opening’ exercise which also contributes to shared perspectives. Comparisons of NSW data with Australian and international data are seen to assist in drawing lessons from elsewhere. When fully

developed, the scorecard could also measure trends over time in relation to a small number of key indicators. These relate to the department’s overall policy framework which is informed by CEDAW articles and Beijing strategic objectives (see Section 1).

The DFW has carried out an audit of government agencies’ activities and is in the process of analysing its findings to inform a new Action Plan. Specialist staff see New South Wales at an early stage of explicit mainstreaming with the need for further work in the areas of: capacity building; education and training; data and research; gender inclusive and gender specific needs assessment and impact assessments; gender inclusive planning, consultation and communication; and building gender analysis into current processes and practices including planning and budgeting.

Carrying out a gender analysis on a policy or program is a bit like having your blood pressure checked - the dangerous answer is “don’t know.” If the gender impact is not investigated, there is always a possibility that the policy or program will not work well for women.\[^{119}\]

In considering their new Action Plan, they have been able to draw upon the experience of many years of equalities work which ‘retrofits’ with mainstreaming.

**NEW ZEALAND - GUIDELINES FOR GENDER ANALYSIS**

In 1996, the Ministry of Women’s Affairs published guidelines to provide a framework for carrying out a gender analysis of policies.\[^{120}\] Gender analysis examines the differences in women’s and men’s lives, identifies the underlying causes of these differences and aims to achieve positive change for women.

The aim of the guidelines was to help policy-makers to achieve the New Zealand government’s stated policy goals in terms of gender equality and the integration of a gender perspective into all policy-making. In addition to the public sector, the guidelines also focused on private companies and organisations, and were meant to help improve management practices and targeting of products and services. In the guidelines, the policy process is divided into six stages: defining desired outcomes, identifying problems and issues, developing options, analysing options and making recommendations, implementing decisions, monitoring and evaluating policies. For each of these stages, the guidelines provide issues to consider a given policy from a gender perspective.

The guidelines were cited in the Council of Europe Report as a good example of a manual meant to help individual policy-makers to integrate a gender perspective in their daily work, however lack of political and bureaucratic support meant that they were not implemented for several years and then only on a voluntary basis. The government of the time was committed to market principles and the guidelines were voluntary. Therefore, Departments were asked to use the guidelines to assess policy but there was no obligation to do so. There has been no official monitoring but it is suspected that usage has been low.\[^{121}\] Plans to work with the New Zealand State Services Commission and the Audit Department to develop ways of integrating

\[^{121}\] New Zealand MWA questionnaire response, 1999.
the expectation of gender analysis into formal accountability documents such as chief executives’ performance agreements, and departmental purchase agreements (a formal structure by which Ministers ‘purchase’ certain outputs such as policy advice, from their departments) did not come to fruition.

The incoming Labour government (November 1999) is reviewing equal opportunities legislation and looking to re-establish equal opportunities structures.

The political environment, the lack of specialist support, policy development and co-ordination is regarded to have contributed to the failure of mainstreaming in the 1990s in New Zealand to move beyond a paper exercise.

We turn now to examples from Europe. Material is drawn from a number of sources including Council of Europe, European Commission and EOC reports, European Commission-funded transnational research projects and responses to our questionnaire survey.122

EUROPE: MAINSTREAMING IN RURAL AREAS AND REGIONS

The following two examples of European transnational mainstreaming projects are concerned with developing mainstreaming structures and sharing experiences and lessons between smaller councils in mainly rural areas.

Trans-Faire

The Trans-Faire project123 which originated in the Rhones-Alpes region aims to encourage regional and local authorities in France to pursue policies which will promote gender equality in line with European trends, particularly in the areas of youth employment, professional training and reconciling work and family life. By bringing relevant actors from the public and private sector together (for example council officials and business people) in the place du marché, the project raises awareness of gender issues and allows those involved to share ideas and experiences. Bi-monthly meetings are supplemented by regular working groups, training for senior officials and the distribution of information. The ultimate aim of Trans-Faire is to transfer practices and strategies to other regions. It is part of the EC-funded transnational Ceres project which is co-ordinated by Spanish partners. It has three objectives:

1. To integrate equal opportunities into the development of youth employment,
2. To demonstrate the benefits of using female resources for the modernisation and competitiveness of employment/companies.
3. To aid the reconciliation of work and family life.


Trans-Faire works through a network of regional institutions, including government departments, regional councils, trade unions, politicians, voluntary organisations, professions and training bodies which are committed to integrating equal opportunities into their daily practices. The institutions have to draw up strategic plans outlining how this is to be done. Representatives from these institutions participate in working groups on the application and implementation of these policies. Several tools and techniques are used, including the collation of gender disaggregated statistics, awareness raising and training courses for various groups, including senior government officials, and consultative meetings. The results of the project to date are:

- A report by the Economic and Social Council setting out the conceptual framework for gender equality policies at regional level.
- Policy incorporated in the text concerning the government’s strategy for the Rhones Alpes region.
- Several gender equality initiatives provided for in the policies of the project partners.
- Extension of the Trans-Faire network at regional, national and European level.

Problems encountered have included resistance to the approach and difficulty in translating good intentions into practice. On-going education and training is seen as important to tackle these problems. In addition, medium-term and long-term projects are seen as crucial to embed gender equality practices.

**CERES - Mainstreaming at the local and regional level.**

CERES is a project funded by the EU which aims to promote methods and ideas around equal opportunities. Pilot projects run under the CERES umbrella examine ways of implementing mainstreaming as a strategy for incorporating equal opportunities into the policies and actions of organisations. There is an emphasis upon discussion and collaboration with transnational partners is used to develop ideas, share practices and disseminate findings. A manual produced as a result of the project identifies the following criteria for successful implementation of mainstreaming:

- Mainstreaming should be combined, at least until established, with positive action and specialist units;
- Key named individuals with specific responsibility for mainstreaming work;
- Gender disaggregated data and information on which to base policies and programmes;
- Respect for diversity;
- High level commitment;
- Participation and collaboration;
- Monitoring and evaluation.

Work plans should be developed which include:

- Clear determination of priorities;
- Data and information on the reality of women’s and men’s lives;
- Objectives and timetables;
- Specific actions to be taken;
- Identification of adequate resources.
The CERES project was based in the rural area in the Southwestern region of Madrid in two communities: MISSEN and Las Vegas. The area covers 14 municipalities. It involved both the political and administrative sides of the local councils and boards. The CERES project was promoted by the General Directorate for Women of Madrid region.

Phase one (October 96-July 97) was a mapping exercise of current and possible future policy in the areas of employment and economic development, social welfare and quality of life, and social and cultural activity by the Co-ordinating Committee and the Board of Local Representatives. Phase two (July 97-June 98) comprised of workshops on the application of mainstreaming, securing commitments and proposals from local and regional bodies and sharing experiences with transnational partners.

Specific activities of the project have included meetings for technical and political actors in youth policy to raise their awareness of gender issues, a gender awareness campaign for boys and girls and information and training. These initiatives have created a base from which mainstreaming can be implemented.

The lack of disaggregated data created problems for developing a resource map in phase one, and in phase two gender neutral assumptions about policy, particularly in education and transport, were identified. These were challenged by the introduction of a gender perspective.

Sharing transnational experiences.

An exchange seminar was held to analyse the CERES and Trans-faire projects and to share findings. The following issues were raised at the seminar:

- The need for active political commitment to mainstreaming;
- The need for commitment to the strategy and to specific plans for achieving it;
- Learning from others within and outside the organisation - the need for cross departmental and cross-institutional working;
- Involving men and women in mainstreaming, demonstrating its importance to both;
- The need to combine mainstreaming with specific positive actions;
- The importance of transferring experiences and of transnational relationships.

Transnational Encounters have been organised to exchange experiences. For example, an exchange of experiences of mainstreaming at the local and regional level was held at Chinchon in May 1998 and was attended by partners of CERES including the EOC (Scotland) and Edinburgh University. Laurence D’Uville, Regional Delegation for Women’s Rights, in the Rhone-Alpes region of France highlighted the difficulties involved in moving from specific action projects to an integrated approach to equal opportunities. They include: the misconception of mainstreaming as the end of specific attention or reference to equal opportunities; and second, the tendency for mainstream provision to remain unchanged due to lack of analysis of the purpose of, and need for, specific action programmes.124

Discussion of three projects, ‘Trans-Faire’, ‘Mainstreaming Equal Opportunities in local Government’ (EOC, Scotland) and ‘The reorganisation of local government and equal opportunities’ (Edinburgh University), led to the following conclusions:

• The importance of the local/regional level as an arena for promoting equal opportunities and for creating models for the national level;
• The fundamental importance of political commitment;
• The need for training and development of methods and practical resources for implementing mainstreaming;
• The need to change attitudes and to create new approaches to policy-making;
• The need for a legislative basis for mainstreaming -particularly emphasised by UK speakers;
• The need for equal opportunities commitments to appear in written documents;
• The need for financial resources to develop the strategy to ensure that it does not remain at the stage of good intentions on paper;
• The need to challenge idea that equal opportunities is exclusively of interest to women. To this end it is necessary to base arguments on economic issues and social improvement for the whole of the population.

The participants agreed that it is therefore necessary to:

• Influence political attitudes and practices;
• Acquire political commitments and translate them into real practice;
• Search for mechanisms in order to develop and implement mainstreaming, as well as for evaluating this strategy.

SPAIN

Formal government bodies and policies designed to incorporate gender issues into law and the policy making process have been relatively slow to develop in Spain. A system of agencies, legislation and equality plans is emerging and the Constitution contains several articles which establish gender equality as a value to be pursued and protected. Legislation with regard to equal employment opportunities, employment laws, workers rights with regard to pregnancy, adoption and family responsibilities, are complemented by the work of governmental women’s policy machinery, the Instituto de la Mujer.

The Instituto de la Mujer (IM), created in 1983, is the only institution in Spain charged with securing equality between the sexes. Its role is to promote public policies to foster equality between men and women and it is responsible for preparing three year Equal Opportunities Plans. Since the IM became operational there has been an attempt to involve most Ministries in the task of promoting equality for women. The third Equal Opportunities Plan, 1997-2000, includes as one of its ten objectives:

To integrate the dimension of equal opportunities in the policies of the public administration and public institutions and to foster co-operation with both non-governmental organisations and international organisations by mobilising all policies to attain equality. 125

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However, a recent report on mainstreaming in Spain126 argues that this statement of intention to put into place a mainstreaming policy is not accompanied by any of the political measures needed to enforce it. The report reaches four main conclusions:

1. Spain is moving towards a more modern conception of equality, though there is a lack of clarity and even contradiction within Spanish law with respect to the appropriate approach.
2. The Spanish model presents serious difficulties in terms of achieving the necessary autonomy for improving the position of women within society.
   • The role of the IM as the sole formulator of public policies for women is criticised due to its lack of connection with the feminist movement, and in contrast to its practically non-existent role as executor of the policies;
   • The position of the IM within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is criticised as giving the IM insufficient clout;
   • The Equal Opportunities plans lack rigour in monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of their proposals.
3. The Spanish government’s information policies on women seem to have had little impact, suggesting that the Government has not used its privileged position in relation to the media to women’s advantage.
4. The public policies on women’s issues have practically excluded the feminist movement.

Two examples of mainstreaming in practice follow, the first drawn from a recent Council of Europe conference on mainstreaming in Athens; the second is drawn from the Sheffield Hallam University transnational project, Criteria for the Success of a Mainstreaming Approach to Gender Equality.


The intention of this project127 has been to mainstream the issue of domestic violence in order to effect cross agency solutions. A multi agency approach was used with actors from different sectors such as health, education, social work, law, academia and women’s organisations. Methods have included awareness-raising and prevention measures, education and training, social resources, health policy, legislation and legal practice, and research.

The project was co-ordinated by the Institute for Women’s Affairs at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The Ministries of Education and Culture, Internal Affairs, Justice, and Health have also taken part, as well as the Autonomous Communities and women’s NGOs with experience of violence-related projects. Responsibility for implementation lay with the Institute and the ad hoc Ministerial Departments of the Ministries involved, especially the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

The project involved all policy levels, and included analytical, educational, consultative and participatory tools as well as research tools, though no details of these are given. Implementation of the project has involved politicians, academic specialists, administrators,
researchers, experts, NGOs, mass media, and the police force. Special training as part of the plan has been given to education personnel, police officers, health personnel, social service professionals, and the justice system personnel.

Evaluation was carried out after the first year of implementation. The evaluation process made use of the following techniques and indicators: documentary analysis, interviews with key actors, a country-wide questionnaire measuring the results of the plan (a second such questionnaire will be carried out at the end of the Action Plan). Responsibility for monitoring lies with the Labour and Social Affairs Ministry, via the Women’s Institute. Each year the needs, implementation and results are evaluated. The methods for monitoring included: information and reports of personnel involved, personal interviews with the persons responsible for the programmes, discussion groups with the targeted groups, other information sources, records, questionnaires, and the like.

Spain: The Fundacio Maria Aurelia Capmeny.

The following example is based on research conducted by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University in collaboration with its partners on mainstreaming. The research was commissioned by DGV of the European Commission and carried out in 1998-9. The case study of the Fundacio Maria Aurelia Capmany is best understood as an example of how an organisation committed to promoting gender equality can create networks and raise awareness of gender issues which will facilitate, or create an ‘enabling environment’ for, the implementation of a mainstreaming approach.128

The Fundacio Maria Aurelia Capmany is a non governmental organisation in Barcelona which was set up by the UGTC (Union General de Treballadors de Catalunya - General Workers Trade Union) with the key aim of pursuing gender equality. It conducts research into women’s paid employment and then promotes ways to reconcile work and family life through the development of pilot projects and through lobbying.

The Fundacio is an independent network, its members or ‘patrons’ represent both individuals and organisations, including all tiers of government in Barcelona, and a link to the autonomous government of Catalonia. The Fundacio is named after the late socialist feminist Maria Aurelia Capmany, who has become a ‘symbolic figurehead’ around which the ‘patrons’ have come together. The network is a research, information and discussion centre, which provides legal and employment advice, support to women’s groups and trade union activities. It has developed ten projects over three years in the areas of employment and new technologies, working conditions, emancipation and participation, and training. The Fundacio has developed and fostered conditions which will facilitate the implementation of a mainstreaming strategy in Catalonia by raising awareness of equality issues, conducting research, disseminating information, and creating support. Through the network of ‘patrons’ it has created focal points within other organisations which can be used to support and bolster mainstreaming work within these organisations.

128 C. Bennett, C.Booth and S. Yeandle Criteria for Success in Gender Mainstreaming: A Case Study report of the Fundacio Maria Aurelia Capmany, Barcelona, Spain, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University, unpublished report, 1999.
IRELAND: BRINGING EQUALITY OUT OF THE MARGINS

Mainstreaming is increasingly accepted as necessary to bring equality ‘out of the margins’ in policy making in the Republic of Ireland. This coincides with the expansion of equality legislation and the inclusion of wider social groups, including women’s organisations in the policy making process.129

New employment legislation in Ireland has extended the scope of equality protection beyond gender to include amongst other factors, age, race and disability and provides for the statutory prohibition of sexual harassment. The Employment Equality Act, together with the Equal Status Bill 1999, will (if implemented) extend equality protection beyond the sphere of employment to education and provision of goods and services. However, actual changes to the situation of women and other disadvantaged groups have been limited. Horizontal and vertical segregation within the workforce continues to exclude women from the benefits of Ireland’s economic success, and this exclusion is exacerbated by women’s under representation in policy-making processes and by the gendered dimensions of poverty.

An increasing interest in proofing procedures as a method of integrating equalities is evident and a number of administrative procedures for ‘proofing’ policies for their impact on women have been introduced as part of a mainstreaming approach.

The National Women’s Council of Ireland (NWCI) a non governmental organisation, which represents 150 women’s organisations and around 300,000 women, has successfully lobbied the government for commitment to develop statistical methods to evaluate unpaid work and for the development of equality proofing. These commitments were included in Partnership 2000, the agreement drawn up between the national government and the National Economic and Social Forum (NESF), (a social partnership membership of which has expanded from traditional groups such as business, farming and trade unions to include voluntary organisations such as women’s groups).

Equality Proofing

The NESF has defined the key features of an effective equality proofing procedure as:130

- identification of equality objectives and setting equality targets;
- development of data gathering processes adequate for monitoring the achievement of these targets;
- establishing the equality implications of any particular policy or practice prior to its implementation;
- development and implementation of strategies to achieve equality targets;
- creation of independent monitoring systems to analyse and review progress; and
- regular public reporting on progress.

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Guidelines for gender proofing within the context of the EU Structural Funds have also been developed and a Working Group on Gender Proofing is currently preparing detailed guidelines for gender proofing. In addition, Poverty proofing guidelines were developed in 1998 for all legislative and ‘significant’ policy proposals. Consideration is currently being given to the introduction of a comprehensive system of equality proofing in policy making, to incorporate perspectives of race, disability and sexual orientation.\(^{131}\)

However, many essential features of an effective proofing procedure are seen as lacking. No additional financial resources nor provision for training have been committed and consultation with outside bodies is not a requirement or even a general practice. Cabinet confidentiality requirements prevent impact assessment statements coming under public scrutiny, making it difficult to assess their adequacy and objectivity. A recent report into mainstreaming initiatives in Ireland commented:

> Progress to date (1999) has not moved beyond the development of ‘women-friendly’ policies on an *ad hoc* and piece-meal basis. Women continue to be under-represented as agents in the formation and implementation of public policy. Although some moves have been made toward a more participatory approach to policy-making, much remains to be done if these changes are to translate into concrete improvements for women. Gender proofing has not yet developed into a systematic and effective mechanism for promoting gender equality. Women continue to be treated as an homogenous groups and the particular interest of women from disadvantaged groups are often overlooked. The absence of gender disaggregated data in many areas and the failure to develop effective monitoring procedures makes it difficult to assess the impact of existing equality strategies.\(^{132}\)

According to the report, advances in partnership working and consultation have been undermined by the under-representation of disadvantaged groups and a lack of transparency in Government. These factors have been exacerbated by the lack of political will to commit resources to support mainstreaming and policy proofing work.

There are few opportunities for any other than the Government of the day to propose policy and legislation. Furthermore, consultative and partnership processes are affected by the existence of a two-tier system within the partnership process: the community and voluntary sector are excluded from the more influential NESC (National Economic and Social Council) and are therefore not involved in all negotiation, given only an ‘invitation to comment’. This ‘two-tier’ system has a gendered impact as women are under-represented amongst traditional social partners, such as farming, business and trade unions.

Commentators argue that the merging of the Department of Equality and Law Reform with the Department of Justice in 1997 marked the marginalisation of equality issues within the government; Equality and Law Reform is viewed as the junior partner within the Department. This marginalisation was confirmed by the loss of full Ministerial representation for equality issues at Cabinet level. The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality and Women’s Rights is free to consider any issues of law or policy relating to gender equality, yet again the inclusion of the Justice portfolio is seen as reflecting a lack of understanding of the complexity and significance of equality issues.\(^ {133}\)

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Commentators stress that many of the weaknesses of mainstreaming in Ireland are mirrored elsewhere. They call for strengthening of the strategy in order to move beyond a mere ‘tick and dash’ paper exercise.\textsuperscript{134}

**ITALY, “MAINSTREAMING RECIPES”**

This example highlights the dissemination of good practices of mainstreaming.\textsuperscript{135} It aims to promote mainstreaming in European local authorities through the creation of a ‘cook book’ of good practices which can be used by small municipalities who do not have the ‘know-how’ to implement mainstreaming. The project focuses on urban and social policy. The project was initiated by Sicilian municipal council of Arcidonna in the Province of Palermo. Arcidonna along with its local and transnational partners and the Project leader is responsible for implementation. The project is funded under the EU’s Fourth Medium Term Action Programme and started in December 1998. It has two stages, the first ran until July 1999 and was concentrated at the local level. The second stage runs from October 1999 to July 2000 extending the work to the national and international level and will include an interactive website for local administrators in Europe. While the project ends in July 2000, it is intended that the process of mainstreaming in local authorities should continue after this point.

The project uses consultative and participatory tools, though these are not specified in the project report. Educational and training tools are being developed, which draw upon European and international training materials and modules, including the International Labour Organisation (ILO) module on gender policy planning. Training programmes are to be undertaken in the second stage of the project, including short seminars for local administrators. The Italian principle of partire da se (starting from oneself) informs all training work. The project has also involved participants in ‘study visits’ abroad.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), equal opportunities experts, politicians, and local administrators are taking part in the project. Responsibility for monitoring the project lies with a specialist group in Arcidonna, together with some of the European partners (including Stockholm and Berlin).

Some successes have already been reported, with many Sicilian municipalities copying the recipes. There is, however, no information given on the how well these recipes have worked when implemented in these different authorities. According to the project organisers, many other Italian municipalities are willing to join the project, and European partners are spreading the idea in their regions.

In terms of problems encountered, there was a delay to the start of the project caused by changing political circumstances. Elections in the Province of Catania created insurmountable financial problems and thus the Province could not be a co-financier as originally intended. The Province of Palermo was thus left as sole financier and ‘a certain diplomacy’ was needed to convince it to take this role.\textsuperscript{136}

\textsuperscript{135} Roberta Messina, ‘Mainstreaming Recipes’ in Council of Europe, Gender Mainstreaming: a step into the 21st Century, report of conference held in Athens, 16-18 September, 1999 (EG/ATH(99)3).
NETHERLANDS/ FLANDERS: GENDER IN BALANCE

Netherlands is commonly recognised as being advanced in terms of gender equality policy and the Dutch Gender Impact Assessment Tool was discussed in Section 2. It was noted earlier that Flanders (an autonomous region of Belgium) has looked to the Netherlands for ideas and tools for mainstreaming. This example describes the work of Dutch experts in devising a mainstreaming tool for the Flanders government in respect of Human Resource Management.137

The Ministry of the Flemish Community made a commitment to integrating its equal opportunities programme into overall personnel management in 1997 and undertook a project to reorganise its Human Resource Management. The project involved gaining the support of top management, increasing gender knowledge and expertise within the organisation, using analysis and consultation to design an approach for implementation, and evaluation of the project in order to define new action steps for 2000 and beyond. It is intended that the government department will take responsibility for anchoring a gender perspective in Human Resource Management as an ongoing process.

The Equality Unit at the Ministry of Emancipation Affairs took the initiative to start a collaborative project between the Ministry of the Flemish Community and gender experts at the University of Nijmegen. The project, involving academic researchers, top management, middle management and the Equality Unit, ran from January 1998 to March 1999 and was driven by an interdepartmental group on personnel policy. Middle managers were directly involved in implementation, using the instruments designed, changing procedures, implementing projects and organising seminars and training. The project has been supported by the Minister responsible for personnel policy at the Ministry.

The project has six steps constituting a mix of analytical, educational, and participatory research and intervention techniques detailed in the following figure.

Steps One and Two constitute a joint definition of the gender problem in the organisation. The mission statement is the result of consultation between top bureaucrats and researchers. Steps Three and Four involved the participation of middle management, the staff normally involved in designing and implementing personnel policy and a subsequent analysis by researchers. In Steps Five and Six, consultation is the basis for the researchers to tailor the analysis to a proposed set of instruments and tools to be used in the future.

Figure 4.1  The Dutch/Flemish Balans model

| Basis:  | Consulting opinion leaders to compose a mission statement on mainstreaming gender in HRM |
| Adoption: | A seminar leads to the adoption of the mission statement by top bureaucrats. |
| Learning: | The instrument of self-assessment is used to transfer gender expertise to the organisation and knowledge about the organisation to the researchers. |
| Analysis: | Self-assessments are the input for a SWOT analysis, which is theoretically grounded and results in a preliminary action plan. |
| Nuance: | Intensive consultation leads to a differentiated tailor-made approach, in which checklists, procedural commitments and training are central elements. |
| Selection: | The experiences with the project are evaluated, resulting in a selection of action steps for the future. |

Source: Council of Europe (1999).

Three types of techniques and tools were used: analytical tools included SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analyses, self-assessments, checklists, criteria for gender expertise, research projects, and a report based on sex-disaggregated data. Educational tools included a seminar on part-time work in leading positions and training. So far, training has consisted of a short session for top management in 1996, but extra training will be organised as one of the action steps. The overall design of the project was participatory involving researchers and staff in a joint learning initiative. Focus groups and a gender advisory network were also used.

It is not clear from the example what understanding of gender analysis is used. It appears that gender neutrality is seen as the goal, in which case this example does not seem to fit with the idea of mainstreaming as a transformative strategy. In the example, the emphasis lies on the reorganisation of Human Resource Management, to ensure gender neutrality in processes and procedures. The aim is to (re)distribute resources in a balanced - that means fair - way, and to counterbalance gender bias.

The Equality Unit at the Department of Emancipation Affairs, was able to provide expertise on gender relations. There was little to no expertise elsewhere within the Flanders government.

According to project organisers, problems encountered related to difficulty in persuading staff of the relevance of gender to their work. It was noted that some participants were apparently happy with mainstreaming as ‘window-dressing’. A lack of recognition of the role of the organisation in the (re)production of gender inequalities stemmed from a reluctance to accept structural and cultural influences on what were considered personal choices. Participants who indicated that they had learned about the gender problematic from the self-assessments either had received previous training on the subject, or were very open-minded and interested in the subject. Other participants indicated that they still did not see the relevance of gender to their work. There was a recognition that more needed to be done in the areas of education and training to tackle this resistance. It is recognised that ‘sensitising’ the participants to the subject will require a longer and more intensive process than the completion of a questionnaire and the attendance of two meetings.

The administration in Flanders has been undergoing restructuring during this period. In circumstances of internal upheaval, implementation has been hard to maintain and there have been few stable structures in which to embed mainstreaming.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN SLOVENIAN GOVERNMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Slovenia provides an interesting example of mainstreaming in government. Few of the perceived prerequisites or enabling conditions for mainstreaming equalities exist in Slovenia and there is little experience or tradition of equalities work. The government has therefore had to develop knowledge and expertise in this area as the project has progressed and training has played an important role. Awareness raising is being facilitated by the collection of base line data on the current situation of women and men in Slovenia. Gender expertise is also being developed amongst national government and external experts.

The project, funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Women’s Policy Fund, aims to establish gender mainstreaming as a standard tool for policy-making in the Government of Slovenia, thus ensuring that a gender perspective is integrated into the entire policy development process, policy implementation and monitoring. This is to be done through sensitisation, capacity-building, and institutional development. In the initial phases, three Ministries are taking part: Education and Sports, Family and Social Affairs, and Labour. Expected results include:

- Among policy-makers, an increased understanding of, and sensitisation to, the importance of gender mainstreaming and equality issues, and development of the skills and knowledge required to put these into practice.
- A government “statement” on the integration of a gender perspective in policy development.
- The formulation and adoption of a gender mainstreaming plan which will include pilot projects.

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• The creation of an organisational structure which will ensure full implementation, monitoring and evaluation of pilot projects.

The project is divided into two phases, the aim of the first phase is to gain acceptance of the strategy of mainstreaming in Slovene government policy development. The next goal will be for each ministry involved to prepare and implement a pilot project for the next year.

There is a mainstreaming co-ordinator who is responsible for the daily management of the project, including recruitment and supervision of the national and international consultants, organisation of local workshops and seminars and training. The Women’s Policy Office is responsible for monitoring and reporting to the Slovenian Government and the UNDP.

**Political Will**

Political will was demonstrated through the signing of a ‘contract’ of co-operation by the three ministries involved and the Women’s Policy Office. The ministries also appointed senior public servants as members of the inter-ministerial working group. This group has five members, two from the Ministry of the Interior, and one each from the Ministries of Education and Sports, Family and Social Affairs, and Labour. These members do not have experience with equality work, but were chosen due to their personal interest in the issues. Political will is further conveyed through national gender equality policy. Women are poorly represented in politics and decision-making processes, therefore a national strategy for the participation of women in politics is being developed.

The project employs policy tools and techniques in the three main categories: analytical, including: statistics, surveys, research and guidelines, educational: awareness-raising and training courses, national and foreign experts, the Council of Europe final report, and consultative and participatory: a working group, a strategy to increase women’s participation in political decision-making, seminars and hearings.

The initiative for the project was taken by the Women’s Policy Office and a foreign expert appointed by UNDP. Responsibility for implementation lies with the Women’s Policy Office and the inter-ministerial working group. The main actors involved are the three key Ministries and the director of the Women’s Policy Office, and other politicians, academic specialists, domestic and foreign experts and administrators.

According to the project co-ordinators, the results so far appear to be positive, including an understanding of the issues by the working group, the ‘sensitisation’ of a number of state administrators to the importance of gender equality and mainstreaming, and the formulation of a national mainstreaming plan. The ministries are starting discussions on equality issues and are willing to send people for training.

General training on equality and the situation of women and men in Slovenia was given to members of the inter-ministerial working group and administrators from various ministries. In addition, members of the inter-ministerial group and the Women’s Policy Office received training on how to integrate gender mainstreaming into their work through workshops. There are plans to give further training to the inter-ministerial group on gender impact assessment methods and training of gender experts on monitoring procedures, tools and analytical techniques.
Difficulties encountered included problems in securing the initial co-operation of Ministries which resulted in the replacement of the Ministry of Finance by that of Education and Sports in the project. Gaining co-operation needed intensive persuading and strong arguments from the Women’s Policy Office. There were also time resource problems, with only the personal commitment from the working group helping overcome the constraints on their availability to work intensively on the implementation of the project.

AUSTRIA: THE ‘FRAUENWERDSTADT’ MODEL PROJECT.

The following example is based on research conducted by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University in collaboration with its partners on mainstreaming. The research was commissioned by DGV of the European Commission and was carried out in 1998-9.

This case study is an example of a positive action project, the consequences of which were to mainstream the needs of women and men into future policy making and planning processes. Therefore the project was an awareness-raising exercise which led to the mainstreaming of gender, although the mainstreaming strategy was not adopted in the project itself.

The ‘Frauenwerkstadt’ is a model housing project, which involved women in the planning, design and management of building a residential area in Vienna which placed women’s everyday needs at the centre of its objectives. The idea originated from a mainstream project of the Frauenburo, the Vienna Municipal Department for the Promotion and Coordination of Women’s Affairs, to build women-friendly housing. The Frauenburo follows a policy of making consideration of women’s issues routine and normal in every department of the city council, and combining this with women-adapted policy-making to address disadvantage and discrimination.

A seminar and political campaign on ‘women and the city’ which included an exhibition and a questionnaire to the public, had raised awareness of the issues around gender and planning, and resulted in the creation of the Frauenburo. These activities raised the political acceptance of women’s issues on mainstream agendas. The project was able to exploit a favourable context of urban housing expansion. Apart from the condition of using only women managers and women architects, it followed mainstream procedures and budgets. The project was able to secure the support of the key actors, including politicians and the Executive City Counsellors for Housing, Planning and Finance, this was facilitated by the commitment and reputation of the head of the Frauenburo, who was herself a town planner. Operating within mainstream regulations created problems for the project and led to compromise on some elements.

The project has succeeded in raising awareness of gender issues in planning and bringing these onto the mainstream agenda, it has also changed the organisational culture, and increased the number of women regularly short listed for architectural competitions. Not all

141 C. Bennett, C. Booth and S. Yeandle, Criteria for Success in Gender Mainstreaming: A Case Study report of the ‘Frauenwerkstadt’ Model Project, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University, unpublished report, 1999.
of the project’s criteria were met, this is put down to a lack of time, overly bureaucratic regulations and non-compliance by the builders.

**SUMMARY**

The examples discussed above represent a cross-section of mainstreaming in action. They vary enormously in scale and content, some are small collaborative pilot projects whilst others have involved the implementation of integrated systems within government. Some are relatively new to equalities work, others have long track records. All the examples are primarily concerned with gender equality, although some also include a ‘diversity’ perspective.

In most of the case studies, work on mainstreaming is at a preliminary stage involving awareness-raising, establishing the need for mainstreaming, building support and alliances, and sharing ideas and good practice. In many cases there has also been the need to establish baseline data, such as gender disaggregated statistics; or carry out auditing of services, policies and departments. In some instances, positive action has been used in creating enabling conditions for successful mainstreaming. For example, to increase the number of women in decision-making positions or, as a tool for awareness-raising and evaluation. An example of the latter are the planning projects carried out in Madrid and Vienna which raised awareness of the specific needs of women in this area amongst the mainstream policy-makers.

The case studies demonstrate much imagination and innovation at all levels, with the development of collaborative working, the establishment of networks, the development of new tools and an emphasis upon lesson learning and lesson sharing. The following strengths can be drawn from the case studies:

- **Political will** is crucial to progress in most of the case studies. Slovenia provides an instructive case of a country with no track record in equalities work and lacking most of the commonly accepted prerequisites to mainstreaming. The Slovenian government has started from scratch but, with high level political will, a committed ‘driver’ as co-ordinator and the proactive support of the UN has already effected some change. Local authorities in Spain and France provided political leadership which drove collaborative working.

- **Collaborative working**: there are examples of collaborative working across public, private and voluntary sector in Spain, France and Italy bringing equality debates to the heart of sometimes small rural communities. These include networks of regional institutions, including government departments, regional councils, trade unions, politicians, voluntary organisations, professions and training bodies which are committed to integrating equal opportunities into their daily practices.

- **Awareness raising and training**: much innovative work has taken place to establish the need for mainstreaming. The Fundacio Maria Aurelia Capmany, in Barcelona demonstrates the effectiveness of a small NGO in working as a catalyst to mainstream discussion and debate on reconciliation of work and family life. International training modules have been adapted for use by Sicilian municipalities along with other ‘recipes’ for mainstreaming.
- **Tools**: examples include, the New Zealand guidelines for gender-based policy appraisal which are seen internationally as a model, although they have rarely been used by policy makers at home. The CERES -Transfaire project has produced a manual for local and regional government. The New South Wales equity scorecard works as an important ‘eye opener’. Work is on-going in Ireland to develop gender and generic equality-proofing tools.

- **Participatory approach**: participation and consultation are, of course, regarded as important mainstreaming tools. A range of internal and external actors have been involved in case study initiatives. For example, women’s groups have played a key role in promoting mainstreaming in Ireland; In San Francisco a CEDAW Task Force comprises of elected officials, trade unions, government employees, and community advocates with expertise in economic justice, human rights, violence against women, and health. Ownership of initiatives is promoted by involvement, for example, the Italian principle of partire da se (starting from oneself) informs all training work in Sicily; in San Francisco, departments carried out their own self-analysis as part of an audit process.

- **UN and European contexts.** We see the importance of UN and European contexts in a number of the case studies. For example, San Francisco has built its mainstreaming programme around the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the UN has played a proactive role in supporting mainstreaming in Slovenia. All the European case studies are informed by work carried out by the Council of Europe (see Sections 1 and 2) and many of the projects have been funded or otherwise supported by the European Commission.

A number of common difficulties have been experienced in most or all of the case studies. These relate to: shortfalls in political will and bureaucratic support; lack of gender balance in decision making; lack of gender data, specialist knowledge and tools; lack of resources; ineffective structures; and vulnerability to change. These weaknesses make it difficult, in some cases, to move beyond mainstreaming as a mere ‘tick and dash’ paper exercise.

- **Lack of, or faltering, political will.** For example, mainstreaming tools may be developed but seldom or never used (e.g. New Zealand and Flanders). In Ireland progress is viewed as being undermined by lack of political will to commit resources to support mainstreaming and policy proofing work.

- **Bureaucratic resistance** was encountered to some degree in most of the case studies. For example, in Flanders, it was hard to persuading staff of the relevance of gender to their work and many officials were happy with a policy as ‘window dressing’; In Slovenia resistance resulted in the replacement of the Ministry of Finance by that of Education and Sports in the project.

- **Lack of gender balance in decision-making** is seen to constrain the development and promotion of mainstreaming in many of the country examples. In Slovenia a national strategy to promote the participation of women in politics is being developed.

- **Lack of expertise, information and tools.** The need for improved gender disaggregated statistics and other data was identified in many cases. Tools for monitoring and evaluation were seen as a common weakness.

- **Lack of resources.**
• **Lack of effective structures.** The need to embed mainstreaming strategies in effective structures was identified. The preliminary stage - and temporary nature - of many of the projects made it difficult to establish such structures.

• **Vulnerability to political and organisational change.** In several cases, political changes or organisational restructuring have resulted in the dilution or stalling of mainstreaming.

There are few examples of holistic or strategic mainstreaming in the cases discussed; San Francisco would probably be the clearest case (see Section 2). Much of the experience is of piecemeal developments and one-off or pilot projects. The development of training and tools has sometimes taken place in the absence of more systematic structures and therefore should be seen as preliminary initiatives rather than as evidence of mainstreaming in action. The conceptual confusion about mainstreaming - is it a strategy? is it a method? is it just a buzz word we use to relabel what we are already doing? - is also evident in some the materials. The examples here also reinforce the findings of other research that, whilst, advances have been made in developing tools, there has been less progress in developing overall strategies and in deepening understanding of the conceptual issues underpinning mainstreaming.
The Nordic Council of Ministers provides a striking example of an inter-governmental institution which has taken active steps to incorporate gender equality issues into all areas of policy through its Programme for Nordic Co-operation on Gender Equality 1995-2000, adopted in March 1995.142

A three-year pilot Nordic Mainstreaming Project was launched in 1997, with the intention of developing methods and tools for mainstreaming. The Project runs both at the Nordic level, where common activities such as seminars, working groups, study visits and various programmes are arranged; and at the national level, with the development of specific sub-projects. The aim of the project at the Nordic level is to create a manual for a Nordic Model of Mainstreaming produced by the Group of Reference and Methodology.143 A training programme on mainstreaming methods has been developed in close co-operation with the Nordic Folk Academy. The ‘umbrella’ design of the Nordic project facilitates the sharing of experiences between the countries involved, while the co-ordination of activities through the Nordic Council of Ministers which commissions projects and reports, ensures that a range of different areas and approaches are addressed and provides a further level of monitoring and evaluation. The pattern of close, constructive co-operation which has emerged is founded on the strong cultural, historical and linguistic ties and firmly rooted democratic traditions which the Nordic countries share.144

Mainstreaming in the Nordic countries is aided by national machineries for equality work, the participation of women in public life and decision-making processes and political will to support the strategy. Results of the projects so far demonstrate that support from politicians and top-level management is essential, and that time must be allowed for the establishment of the projects. It has taken time for some of the national projects to get started due to difficulty in securing the active co-operation, rather than just the verbal agreement, of various managers and public officials. Mainstreaming project organisers have found that without this support it is not possible to identify and make visible the mechanisms which steer mainstreaming work. Problems have also arisen when ‘champions’ such as supportive managers have left their posts in the sector or organisation concerned. A need for more systemic collection and use of disaggregated data has also been identified, despite excellent practice in some areas; especially Sweden.

Tools and techniques used for mainstreaming differ between projects, many of which have involved developing new and innovative tools, for example the ‘3Rs method’ for analysis and awareness raising developed by Swedish local government.145 Mainstreaming project co-ordinators, however, stress there is an ongoing need to develop new tools.

Training underpins the mainstreaming strategy: administrators in Sweden have had special training in equality issues and a training programme for politicians and top level managers is planned in Iceland. In Norway, there is a course for public officials on the gender perspective of labour market policies. Resources and training programmes for different target groups

142 Nordic countries involved in co-operation include: Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Iceland, and the autonomous territories of the Faeroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands.
143 This group contains representatives from the participating countries and the Project Manager.
145 For details see Section 2 of this report.
have been necessary to enable project leaders to carry out their projects, and knowledge of equality issues in general and in using the mainstreaming strategy in particular is seen as highly important.

Examples of national projects carried out under the Nordic Mainstreaming Project umbrella are given below.

**MAINTREAMING IN SWEDEN**

Sweden has been identified as one of the most advanced examples of an integrated approach to equalities. Mainstreaming is proposed as a strategy to advance informal gender equality through its potential to challenge dominant norms and to change societal structures. In this way, mainstreaming may overcome continuing barriers to full equality, for example the ‘gender neutrality’ of Swedish equality law, the strong role of the male-dominated labour movement, and the tendency for the consensus, or corporatist model of governance to limit the access of non-traditional bodies to the policy-making and decision-making processes.

Minna Gillberg distinguishes mainstreaming as the ‘integration of a gender perspective’ from the ‘integration of women’ approach which often views women rather than existing structures as the problem. She suggests that Swedish mainstreaming can be understood as being an umbrella term for various strategies and methods for achieving gender equality objectives.

The Swedish government at national level works in partnership with regional administrative structures and with local government. In 1994, County Administrative Boards were given increased responsibility for equality and since 1995 they must have an equality expert who will co-operate with national authorities, unions, companies and other organisations and citizens. A medium-term strategic plan (1997-2000) for work promoting equality has been designed by each board and submitted to the Government. In common with other Nordic countries and the Netherlands, Sweden has a long history of state intervention in pursuit of gender equality and work is well advanced. Social attitudes are supportive and the policy environment is generally sympathetic. Sweden can be said to meet many of the conditions of an enabling environment including the existence of political will, strong national equality machinery with the ability to exert influence on the policy making process, research and training on gender issues, widely disseminated gender statistics, and high levels of participation of women in political and public life and in decision-making processes.

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149 Women are 42.7% of Swedish parliamentarians (1998 elections). Women are also represent around 40% of members of public bodies, boards and commissions. The proportion of women increased from around 16% to 40% in ten years, partly as a result of the “Every Other Seat For A Woman” campaign, initiated by the government to ‘persuade’ social partners such as employers’ organisations, trade unions and other interest groups to improve the levels of women they nominated to serve on such bodies. See USGS *Citizen Participation and Social Partnerships*, Edinburgh, Scottish Office Constitution Group, 1998, pp.59-60.
**Political Leadership**

The Swedish approach involves high profile and long term political support and the use of a co-ordinated range of analytical, educational, organisational, and consultative strategies. Political commitment to mainstreaming at the highest level is restated each year in Prime Ministerial statements and progress is measured against specified national targets for gender equality. In 1994, the Swedish Government introduced a policy directive whereby gender equality perspectives must be taken into account in the preparatory proceedings of all decisions by the Cabinet. All ministers are responsible for gender impact analysis and work on promoting equality within their fields of responsibility.

Terms of reference have been introduced which state that all government committees of inquiry should analyse and discuss their proposals from a gender perspective. The gender impact - whether direct or indirect - of proposed changes in the labour market, in the economy, in the welfare system, in education, and so on, should be described. If the committee or the special commissioner considers it impossible or unnecessary to do so, the reason must be stated. Organisational and budgetary programmes also have to be analysed from a gender perspective.

Despite this high level political will, an evaluation by the Equality Affairs Division in 1997 found that only a third of reports to Cabinet has included a thorough gender perspective. The Government has initiated a project to identify ways of enhancing compliance and thus strengthening the Directive. The need for the development and systematic use of Gender Impact Assessment has been stressed and the Equality Affairs Division has proposed a simple Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) model which is currently being tested in different ministerial divisions.150

The responsibility for co-ordinating equality initiatives and for developing the mainstreaming strategy lies with the Minister of Equality Affairs. The responsibility for the promotion and enhancement of an equality and gender perspective in any specific policy area lies with the relevant Minister and all members of the government bear responsibility for achieving established gender policy objectives. The Minister of Equality Affairs is assisted by the State Secretary, Political Advisors and the Equality Affairs Division.

The Equal Opportunities Ombudsman is charged with the duty of ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Equal Opportunities Act and initiating, directing and supervising efforts to promote equality. The Ombudsman has control of the existence of equality plans, and conducts random check-ups within different sectors and counties. The Ombudsman further has an educational role as a liaison between the Government and the public sphere and is head of the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman, which has independent status.

**Gender disaggregated statistics**

Gender disaggregated statistics are seen as a central plank of ‘mainstreaming’ to raise awareness, inform policy making and to monitor and evaluate the impact of policies and programmes. Statistics Sweden, the official statistics services in Sweden first set up a special unit for the production and promotion of gender statistics in 1983. Since 1992 all statistics

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collected on individuals in Sweden have been disaggregated by sex in an annual publication: *Men and Women in Sweden*.\(^{151}\) In 1996 - as part of the overall gender mainstreaming strategy - work was carried out in the Ministry of Labour to present labour market gender statistics (see Section 2).

**Organisation of ‘mainstreaming’**

Mainstreaming is co-ordinated by the Equality Affairs Division of the Ministry of Labour Law, Working Hours and Equality Affairs. The Division’s responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that the terms of reference for government committees and commissions require them to analyse the gender perspective in their work and the gender impact of any proposals made;
- Scrutiny of (from an equal opportunities perspective) all proposals for government bills and other government decisions emanating from various ministries prior to discussion by cabinet, for example in planning processes and budgeting;
- Approval of public appointments to public boards and committees, including an evaluation of a particular recommended appointment against the targets and timetable to achieve equality on that body. The Swedish Government set the target that the official committees and government boards should have an equal representation of women and men by 1998;
- Co-ordination and the monitoring process. The Division arranges regular meetings with the State Secretaries of all Ministries on the development of mainstreaming;
- Initiation of promotional activities on equality and co-ordination of publicity; and
- Training: training courses on equality issues are offered to all Ministers, Commissioners (of government appointed committees) and their officials.

Although the responsibility for the development of mainstreaming tools and procedures to ensure that the gender impact of policy making is considered lies with the State Secretary of each ministry, the Equality Affairs Division has overall responsibility for developing tools and mechanisms for mainstreaming.

In 1995, the Government allocated funds to the Swedish Association of Local Authorities in order to stimulate the development of mainstreaming a gender perspective in local policy processes. A two-year programme was launched, JAMKOM, with the aim of examining how a committee or board can work systematically for gender equality in its own field of operation. The JAMKOM project led to the development of the ‘3Rs Method’ for putting mainstreaming into operation which is used for initial identification and analysis of the problem.\(^{152}\)

**Methods: training seminars, gender experts**

Awareness-raising and training seminars for top-level management were first organised in 1994 and are still high on the agenda. The Equality Affairs Division has developed a three-

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\(^{152}\) The ‘3Rs method’ is discussed in more detail in Section 2.
hour training course/seminar on equality issues for Ministers, senior civil servants, political advisors, special commissioners and the top management of public authorities. The main aim of the seminars is to provide information on the situation of women and men in Swedish society - using gender statistics and gender sensitive research. Other important topics raised at the seminars are how to implement the national goals for equality policy and what tools and mechanisms could be used in a mainstreaming strategy. To meet the need for gender training in the Government and the public administration, the Equality Affairs Division employs ten gender trainers, together with a gender expert and a representative from Statistics Sweden. The Swedish Government has made use of an academic adviser to assist in developing training programmes since 1995. Dr Agneta Stark has organised a series of seminars to which have been invited all Ministers, all press spokespersons, top officials in the civil service, the Swedish Bishops, vice-chancellors of all universities, the top regional state officers and all persons serving as director general of large state organisations. She notes that, ‘as the Prime Minister attended the first seminar, it became impossible for anyone to claim that they could not spare the time!’

In the Ministries, the seminars are followed up by regular meetings with the senior civil servant responsible for equality policy and the head of the Equality Affairs Division. Points discussed at these meetings include active measures to promote equality, gender impact analyses, the gender perspective of the budget and the representation of women on government boards and committees.

The Equality Affairs Division is piloting an analytical tool to assess the different effects of policy proposals on women and men. However, the government acknowledges that there is still a lack of experience on the use of gender impact assessment tools, both in the Government and in public administration. A mainstreaming working group of ministers, civil servants and local government politicians and practitioners has been set up which will sponsor seminars, hearings, research and pilot projects.

Swedish commentators note that the success of mainstreaming relies, in part, upon its legitimation and upon the ability of experts to demonstrate to other policy makers that a gender perspective adds knowledge to all kinds of work; ‘flying experts’ (see inset) have proved valuable in this respect. ‘Flying experts’ are temporarily seconded to various ministries and departments in order to help develop methods and routines which ensure a gender perspective in policy processes. The ‘flying experts’ are usually specialists from the Equality Affairs Division, but could also be outside experts.

Dr Agneta Stark, an academic who has advised the Swedish government on mainstreaming since 1995, argues that ‘flying experts’ need to adopt a listening approach and draw out the ideas that ordinary policy makers may have.

My tools are my ears. I sit down and listen. This initially surprises many of the civil servants and political officers I have worked with. They expected ‘Gender Inspectors’ rushing to tear them to pieces. And then their own thoughts, ideas and proposals emerge, slowly at first then at a faster rate from people who perhaps never presented such ideas before. Many women and men have great assets of gender awareness, and are mines of new and good ideas. Eventually, I have helped them to spread to others their new ways of working, the thing they have tried which failed and the actions that

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succeeded. It will be their responsibilities and their successes, not mine. That is, as I see it, the only way to safeguard lasting change.\textsuperscript{154}

**Figure 5.1 Sweden’s ‘Flying Experts’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An educational tool: flying experts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Swedish government has pioneered the use of ‘flying experts’ who are temporarily seconded to various ministries and departments in order to help develop methods and routines which ensure a gender perspective in policy processes. The ‘flying experts’ are usually specialists from the Equality Affairs Division, but can also be outside experts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In 1995, the ‘flying gender expert’ joined the division for youth policy at the Ministry of the Interior. Later the same year, she turned to the Ministry of Labour and later on, in 1996, she worked as an expert at the Ministry of Justice. When the ‘flying gender expert’ started her work in a ministry she made agreements with the heads of a few divisions to attend meetings and to help officials integrate a gender perspective in their normal work. With a little help from the gender expert it was possible for many of the officials to see what kind of information they needed in order to be able to take the gender perspective into account. Swedish commentators note that the success of ‘mainstreaming’ relies, in part, upon its legitimisation and upon the ability of experts to demonstrate to other policy makers that a gender perspective adds knowledge to all kinds of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since 1997, the Ministry for Health and Social Affairs has employed a ‘flying expert’ to provide training and guidance to staff to mainstream a gender perspective in their normal work, such as the preparation of bills for Parliament and the budget dialogue with public authorities. The gender expert in the Ministry for Health and Social Affairs has collaborated with the State Secretary of the ministry and a working group and developed a Gender Programme for Social Welfare. The first phase of the programme finished on 30 June 1999. The target is that all divisions in the ministry and all public authorities, connected to the ministry, will have developed action plans for ‘mainstreaming’ and started to put those plans into action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The gender expert presented an action programme for 1998 in order to support the development of the ‘mainstreaming’ work in the ministry and the authorities. Key elements included:</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Training</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Introductory training of leaders, officials, committees of inquiry</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Further training of the officials</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Seminars on different subjects</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Identification of the need for training in a long-term perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2. Information</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Newsletter</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Seminars in order to exchange experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Networks</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3. The development of methods</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Analytical tools</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Evaluation systems</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. Follow-up</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5. Support to public authorities and public companies</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Monitoring and follow-up

The Equality Affairs Division scrutinises budget documents which are crucial for progress towards equality between women and men. A gender perspective must also be taken into account in the budget dialogue between the Government and public authorities. In order to monitor the development of the mainstreaming process in government from 1994 to 1996, all ministries had to review the equality work in their own ministry and present a report to the Minister for Equality Affairs. The reports were compiled and presented to Parliament. In 1997 the ministries were asked to assess the effects of the special terms of reference (1994), stating that all government committees of inquiry should analyse and discuss their proposals from a gender perspective.

Some examples of mainstreaming projects are given below.

Youth project in Skelleftea

The Leisure and Recreation Department of Skelleftea municipality is conducting this project which aims to develop methods and procedures for guaranteeing a gender equality perspective in work with young people. The project was started in part in response to the migration of young people, and especially young women, from the area. A survey of men and women’s cultural and leisure activities and interests carried out in 1998 found that young women had fewer possibilities to follow their interests than did young men. By incorporating a gender perspective into planning and delivery of leisure activities, the project aims to improve the facilities of the local authority and to better meet the needs of both young men and women.

The project participants, two youth centres, a youth activity “house”, the Youth Council and four sports associations used the ‘3Rs method’ to analyse their activities (see Section 2). Some examples of measures taken are:

- equal gender division in planning groups;
- mixed teams at competitions;
- bands with a majority of girls having priority at rehearsal halls;
- meetings where everyone is encouraged to talk;
- thinking before making decisions - what will be the consequences and who will be affected?

The project participants have reported that they are more aware of equality issues and think in a more gender-conscious way as a result of taking part in the project. According to the project organisers, although the project has had political support from the leaders of the participating organisations, some covert resistance was encountered, especially at the start of the project. Evaluations so far have stressed the ‘giant step’ between theory and practice in designing programmes and procedures aiming at effecting change. It is also noted that ‘integrating a mainstreaming strategy demands knowledge, increased awareness and understanding and that this is a process and therefore will take time.’

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155 Examples from the Liegestilling Norden Mainstreaming Newsletter No. 3/4, 1999
Committee for Gender Equality in a County in the North of Sweden:

The County Administrative Board of the County of Vasterbotten has taken the initiative to form a Committee for Gender Equality. The Committee, which is made up of leading officials and representatives from the public sector and trade-union organisations, sets the standards for the county’s gender equality work. It also provides a forum for discussion on gender equality and space for the presentation of progress reports. The project aims to implement the regional strategy on gender equality 1996-2000 and to develop mainstreaming work within the respective authorities and organisations in the county. It aims to increase the representation of women on county boards, committees and working parties.

MAINSTREAMING IN NORWAY

Norwegian policy on equal opportunities has been influenced, as elsewhere, by global contexts, particularly the work of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and global conferences on women.

The Norwegian Government’s Action Programmes (1986-1995) aimed to mainstream a gender perspective into the everyday work of all ministries. Since 1977 all Ministries have been responsible in principle for taking gender equality into account in their areas. Initially work was mainly concentrated in the fields of education and the labour market, development co-operation and the representation of women. With the increased representation of women in Parliament and Government in the mid 1980s, policies to promote better reconciliation of work and family responsibilities moved up the political agenda. At the same time, the Mainstreaming Action Programmes began to make this responsibility a reality in all Ministries by requiring them to take positive action measures to address inequality. The thrust of mainstreaming later turned to institutionalising this approach.

The first Action Programme to incorporate gender equality in the central administration ran from 1986-1990. Initially, ‘integration’ (mainstreaming) was seen as a way of initiating positive action measures in areas where equality issues were not previously considered. This definition evolved and, in the follow up programme 1991-1994, the government proposed that gender equality considerations be incorporated into all political decisions, including Bills to Parliament, all policy proposals and management tools, including the planning process and budgetary work. The programme was initiated by the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs and responsibility for implementation lay with the Ministry and the Unit of Gender Equality. In 1995 a brochure setting out the Government’s commitment to gender mainstreaming was published and distributed to all employees of central government. The brochure was adapted and reproduced in English for the 1995 UN Fourth Global Conference on Women in Beijing. The guidelines outlined the Prime Minister’s commitment to mainstreaming and set out the aims, objectives and requirements of mainstreaming. The then Prime Minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland, set out her vision of mainstreaming:

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To ensure gender equality, we must incorporate a gender perspective into all levels of public administration. This calls for an integrated approach, special measures and earmarked resources. ... Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all public activities is a more active policy of gender equality. Instead of having to introduce supplementary measures in order to make up for deficiencies, the gender concern must be incorporated from the very beginning. ... The long-term objective is that the gender perspective shall be an automatic reflex and influence all important decisions.\textsuperscript{159}

In the Second Action Programme (1991-1994) the ministries were asked to incorporate gender-relevant objectives and measures into the newly introduced system of ‘government by objectives.’ The final monitoring exercise asked for results both in terms of gender sensitive political decisions and in terms of institutionalisation into administrative routines and practices. The two action programmes both involved regular reporting, placing of responsibility at both the decision-making and executive levels, bi-lateral meetings with each ministry with the co-ordinating ministry (national equality machinery), information/training seminars involving both external expertise and exchange of best practice among the ministries.

\textbf{Follow-up action}

In 1996 in a follow-up to the second Action Programme the Government agreed to:

- Organise a follow-up conference involving all the ministries, in the framework of follow-up to the Beijing Conference (April 1996);
- Continue monitoring of progress, and produce regular reports (at least every four years) to the Storting (Norwegian Parliament);
- Make State Secretaries (Deputy Ministers) responsible for ensuring gender equality is taken into account in the decision-making process in all ministries;
- Place responsibility also at the administrative level with named persons or specific positions;
- Develop guidelines to the implementation of a provision that all proposals are to be assessed for gender equality impact, and wherever major impact is identified, the proposal will be presented to the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs/national equality machinery for consultation and eventual further analysis; and
- Develop a training concept on gender equality to be made available to all the ministries, political and administrative decision-makers and other key persons.

Guidelines on gender impact assessment were published in March 1999. A seminar on gender equality based on one held in 1996 was held in February 2000. A seminar for politicians is planned for later in 2000.\textsuperscript{160}

A report on gender equality was presented to the Storting in 1997 and 1999. A Committee of State Secretaries responsible for gender equality was set up in January 1998 and meets every six weeks. Regular members include the state secretaries, representatives of the


\textsuperscript{160} Norwegian Ministry of Children and Family Affairs email questionnaire response, 1999.
Administration, of the Ministries for Employment and Administration, Business, Municipal and Regional Policy, Foreign Affairs, and Children and the Family. Other ministries are involved on an ad hoc basis. The committee is chaired by the representative of the Prime Minister’s Office and the Secretariat is with the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs. The committee discusses all policy and legislative proposals before they are presented to the Storting, with a view to ensuring that all relevant proposals incorporate a gender equality perspective.

A network of key persons for gender equality, involving both politicians and civil servants, has been set up and meets a minimum of once a year involving all the Ministries. In 1998, a seminar was organised to present the results of a three year evaluation of the Second Programme of Action and to present the challenges with a view to promoting gender equality in the fields of action of all ministries. While there is no current Action Programme, the mechanisms described above form the main instruments of the present strategy.  

**Assessment**

The evaluation of the Action programmes are not available in English. According to the mainstreaming co-ordinators, while the programme was relevant to most policy areas, those of education, health, agriculture, trade and industry, violence and decision-making were particularly successful. The ‘prerequisites’ of political will, statistics and gender research were seen to have been met, but financial and human resources were argued to be lacking.

Consultative techniques were used as well as monitoring by reports, regular meetings, and networks. The participation of the ministries in developing their own policies with a gender perspective was viewed as essential. The actors involved in the project were the Government, State Secretaries, and the Administration. The regular meetings functioned as training which was needed to demonstrate the relevance of gender to the policy field.

The mainstreaming team encountered several problems. In particular, a sense in which gender equality issues were seen as no longer relevant had resulted in the exclusion of gender equality from the political agenda. A key issue for the programme was to enable participants to see the relevance of gender to their work, and this was not easy. Political will was found to be crucial in overcoming these problems, a guide to gender analysis has also been developed to raise awareness. This ‘equality paradox’ the sense in which equality was seen to have already been achieved - and therefore nothing else needed to be done - was identified as a barrier to mainstreaming in many of the Nordic countries.

Several examples of mainstreaming projects outside central government in Norway follow.

**It is fun to be nice**

*Reinforcement Of Positive Behaviour - It Is Fun To Be Nice* is a project designed to change the attitudes and working methods of teachers and other education workers, to make parents more conscious of the gendered ways they may treat their children, and so to help

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boys and girls to better develop and interact together. Through raising awareness and challenging the assumptions of teachers, parents and pupils, the project aims to open opportunities for boys and girls to resist the constraining effects of gendered stereotypes. In particular, the project aims to encourage girls to articulate their own needs, set limits, have their say, raise their voices and take the lead. Boys have been encouraged to develop empathy and caring, practice intimate conversation, put feelings into words, solve conflicts without the use of violence and learn to take social responsibility.

The project is concerned with the policy areas of the labour market, education, social/family and research. It involves both national and local government and has been carried out by staff at a pilot school in co-operation with the Equality section in the Ministry of Education. The project is based on a belief that change should be practised at all levels of the system.

The project used a range of educational, consultative and participatory tools. At the time of the report, there were plans to develop an evaluation model with researchers at the University of Tromso to assess the impact of the project. Training was given to the staff of the school in the form of courses, filming of child-adult interaction, direct guidance, discussions and exchange of opinions. While the staff have come a long way in understanding their own reactions and attitudes, the need for more training has been recognised.

According to the project team, results so far appear positive: both staff and parents have discussed gender roles and have become more aware of their own attitudes and are to a certain extent able to alter their behaviour. Girls and boys at the school appear to have more respect for each other, to have learnt to express emotions, and become more able to handle insecurity and anger without taking it out on others. The working methods have made girls more visible due to the fact that they have practised voicing their own needs to fellow pupils and adults. They have learnt to a larger degree to draw up limits for themselves in addition to being systematically encouraged to take the lead. The project has given the boys the possibility to develop their caring behaviour. They have become better at expressing their emotions verbally and they have been taught how to resolve disputes and disagreements through discussion.

A number of problems were encountered during the project. They include difficulties in finding time to supervise staff sufficiently, the need to promote the project to parents, and the existence of other sources of influence on children’s behaviour (e.g. television) which often conflict with the aims of the project. Motivating members of staff was sometimes difficult: some staff found working with attitudes that are related to ‘private’ and political issues frustrating, and the team noted that to work professionally with equality between the sexes makes people aware of the way they themselves have arranged their lives privately.

**Mainstreaming requires reorganisation! The Ministry of Education, Research, and Church Affairs is rethinking organisation.**

As a result of the Action Programmes on Mainstreaming, The Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs decided to reorganise its gender equality machinery to ensure that gender concerns were integrated more effectively into everyday work. The Ministry’s Secretariat for Gender Equality, which had existed since 1981 was reorganised so that gender expertise was mainstreamed across all policy dimensions within the Ministry. The functions of the Secretariat had been to disseminate information on gender equality, organise lectures,
conferences, and carry out the gender-proofing of text books; it had also conducted joint measures in co-operation with other agencies, particularly in the field of education. Resources were reallocated to provide a gender equality officer in each of the seven divisions of the Ministry with one-tenth of their time to devote to equality issues. A senior officer remains in charge of the Secretariat and co-ordinates the work and training of the gender equality officers. Each officer reports to the management of their division as well as to weekly joint equality officers meetings, and the co-ordinator has regular meetings with all heads of division. Responsibility for gender equality is organised both centrally, in the Secretariat, and in the daily routines of all divisions by these new structures.

FINLAND

Gender mainstreaming in Finland is being promoted through an extensive Equality Programme which was launched in 1997 to monitor the implementation of the National Action Plan agreed at the Fourth UN Conference on Women in Beijing(1995). The ambitious programme has plans for the implementation of around a hundred projects across a range of policy sectors and government departments. Mainstreaming is defined as the ‘promotion of the equality of women and men in all policies and practices, irrespective of level or sector.’

Every Ministry has contributed sector-specific mainstreaming projects to the programme, and programme implementation is monitored by a special committee which reports annually.

Developing Mainstreaming Methodology (DMM) is part of the wider Equality Programme and forms one of its main target areas. DMM has also been selected as the Finnish contribution to the Nordic Mainstreaming Project (see above).

Funded by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (1998-2000), six Ministries are involved in the DMM project. Each runs its own pilot project which may vary in scope and focus but has a common goal of developing tools and methodologies which may be more broadly applied. The aim of DMM is ‘to create a methodological package and an approach which can enhance the mainstreaming of equality in administrative activities and procedures as well as in staff development and training.’ The project is guided by the following questions:

- How should mainstreaming be defined and operationalised in different areas?
- What kind of techniques should be applied in the enhancement of equality in different areas?
- What kind of mainstreaming models can be constructed in different areas, and what is the impact of ethnic and socio-cultural factors?
- What is the added value of mainstreaming in current administrative culture?
- What are the characteristics of a Nordic mainstreaming methodology?

A Steering Board has been established comprising leaders of participating projects together with the overall project co-ordinator and the Secretary General of the Equality Office, who is also a member of the Equality Council. The Steering Board works in co-operation with the

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Monitoring Committee of the *Equality Programme* and with a group representing NGOs. The project co-ordinator is also a member of the Nordic Mainstreaming Project Group.

The following example of Mainstreaming in the Ministry of Labour is one of two projects selected as the Finnish contributions to the overall Nordic Mainstreaming Project. It is also one of the three case studies examined by the Sheffield Hallam team in their *Criteria for the Success of a Mainstreaming Approach to Gender Equality* project.165

**Mainstreaming in the Ministry of Labour: Engendering Reorganisation.**

An Equality Group, consisting of representatives of each of the seven departments of the Ministry of Labour was first created in 1980. This group decided to use the opportunity of large-scale structural change in 1997 to ‘Engender the Reorganisation of the Ministry of Labour’, and use this as their DMM project.166 The emphasis of the project is on promoting equality in the workforce.

The project was divided into three phases: firstly, an internal exercise aimed at assessing the position of men and women within the Ministry with reference to position and job content, and further using the process of reorganisation to secure a gender balance in these areas; secondly, involvement of several Ministries, led by the Ministry of Labour, in developing a National Action Strategy (NAP) to find new ways of breaking the sex segregated labour market; thirdly, discussion of findings with management in regional and local employment offices in order to raise existing gender consciousness and engender the provision of employment guidance and training.

While there were seen to be many desired outcomes of the project, the main aim was to test mainstreaming methodologies and tools and to identify those factors which may facilitate or impede implementation. The project team found that translating principles into practice was made difficult due to lack of ‘gender know-how’ and resources. The findings reinforce experience from elsewhere about the importance of high level support and political will, resources, and the need for understanding of equality issues for successful implementation. In practice, it has proved difficult to mainstream this work and progress has been achieved as a result of the commitment and will of the Equality Group and an informal women’s network rather as a result of high level commitment.167

**Highlighting the process**

Looking at the process in more detail highlights the effect of these factors on mainstreaming. The first stage of the Labour project was to be the ‘engendering of reorganisation’, however, in the event gender mainstreaming was sidelined in this process. While reorganisation was

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carried out in a ‘top-down’ approach by two senior men, beginning in Autumn 1997, the task of highlighting the gendered implications was left to the Equality Group who decided to conduct a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) in the Spring of 1998. At this point the ‘engendering’ part of reorganisation was still without a project co-ordinator or leader. The GIA involved collecting data on the position/rank and job content of male and female employees within the department. The data was used to design a questionnaire to assess the status and experience of equality within the Ministry. This stage was based on Levy’s ‘web of institutionalisation’, a complex tool for gender mainstreaming which requires a high level of understanding of gender equality, relations and power structures. The Ministry’s web consisted of eleven elements describing external conditions for successful engendering and seven desired results. The questionnaire was used in three departments to assess the extent to which these criteria and outcomes had been met. The findings were that ‘the conditions needed for engendering equality were not widely understood’.

An instrument for assessing the gender balance as part of annual human resources accounting procedures was created in autumn 1998, and the tool highlighted areas for improvement. This will be used again in 1999 and 2000 to assess the consequences of reorganisation.

The original intention for the second phase was that the Ministries would be responsible for the mainstreaming of their own contributions to the National Action Plan. Due to the lack of understanding and expertise of equality issues within the Ministries this was not possible. The mainstreaming specialist of the Labour Ministry was assisted by the personnel of the National Equality Office in gender proofing the texts. This process was combined with the ‘nurturing of a creative dialogue’ with the members of the NAP group such that this stage became a ‘mutual learning process’.

The third phase has not yet been implemented. While it has not been possible to implement the stages of this project as had originally been planned, the process has raised awareness within the Ministry of gender issues. Importantly it has demonstrated how much work there is still to be done, and the areas in which action is needed. The barriers experienced to mainstreaming, namely, the gender neutral organisational culture, weak managerial and political commitment, lack of resources, of gender knowledge and statistics, and of monitoring and evaluation, confirm previous findings on the necessary facilitating conditions for implementation.

ICELAND

The Icelandic plan for gender equality for 1998-2002 includes a commitment to integrating a gender perspective into all aspects of policy formulation, decision-making and outcomes by the state. Each minister undertakes to work on certain projects under the umbrella of his/her ministry, as well as working on joint projects decided by the government. A short description of the projects worked on under the government’s umbrella is reproduced below.

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168 For a more detailed discussion of this tool see Section 2 of this report.
171 Iceland Office for Gender Equality questionnaire response, 1999.
Making all statistics gender specific: this project will be carried out by the Statistical Bureau of Iceland in collaboration with state institutions. Progress will be evaluated after two years by the Office for Gender Equality.

Evaluation of the extent to which policy formulation is based on gender equality: to be carried out by a government appointed committee.

Gender equality in state institutions: this project involves writing equal opportunities criteria into job descriptions for managers of state institutions and making particular reference to Article 6 of the Act on the Rights and Duties of Civil Servants in the Management Achievement Agreement. Article 6 addresses gender equality.

Women and economic affairs - women and economic power: a committee will be appointed to present a research proposal for a project regarding the economic power of women and men, and on where such power is embedded in Icelandic society. A recent publication by the Office for Gender Equality entitled Women and Power in Iceland demonstrates the need for such an analysis.

The Nordic mainstreaming project in Iceland: Sports and recreational activities of young people

The following project based in the City of Reykjavik and the town of Akureyri centres on the gender implications of sport and recreation in these two areas. The project aims to raise awareness and to train both elected representatives and officials (employees) who are responsible for policy formulation and implementation in the field of sports and recreational activities of young people. There are two main focal points to the project: the relations between the sports clubs and the municipal councils; and the organisation and activities of youth centres. There is political support for the project in the two municipalities, together with a special budget and designated project managers. The municipalities were chosen because of their established reputations for gender equality work.

The project began in Autumn 1997 and the first stage concentrated on the collection of disaggregated data on the sports clubs and youth centres. This led to the publication of a report in February 1998 of existing information on the status of young women and men at the sports clubs and youth centres. The report raised more detailed questions which formed the basis of the next stage of the project. The project runs until December 1999 and will concentrate on awareness-raising and changing attitudes and practices in the organisations involved. A final report will be prepared which will address the development of the project and include an evaluation of any change that has taken place and of the methods used for achieving this. There is also a second goal of evaluating and comparing the annual budget discussions of 1999 with 2000. It is hoped such comparisons will demonstrate an increasing awareness of gender issues amongst elected council members and the mainstreaming of equalities perspectives in spending and service plans.

Analytical, educational and consultative tools have been deployed in the project. These have included gathering and analysing existing information and data from a gender perspective, providing information and seminars for elected representatives and employees at all levels of activities, and consultation between the project managers, the staff at the Office for Gender Equality, and the equal status representatives of the municipalities.
Awareness-raising training has been carried out for elected council members - with assistance from a Swedish mainstreaming specialist. A more comprehensive course on mainstreaming is planned for elected municipal council members and top-level officials in the fields of sports and recreation.

The project is a joint initiative by the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Office for Gender Equality in Iceland, and the Equal Status representatives of the two municipalities involved. The project managers and the two municipalities are in charge of implementation. Responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the project lies with the Nordic mainstreaming project, a special group of Nordic advisors/specialists, the Nordic project manager, and the Icelandic project managers and the Office for Gender Equality. The methods for monitoring are under discussion.

The actors involved in the project were the elected representatives, employees at the sports clubs and youth centres, and the two project managers. The employees of the sports clubs and youth centres were involved in the collection of data and information and received training on gender equality to enable them to do this.

The project team report that resistance was encountered in the form of lack of interest, even passivity, towards the project from the representatives of the NGOs responsible for the sports clubs, independent organisations which were usually managed/run by men.\textsuperscript{172}

**EVALUATIONS OF NORDIC MAINSTREAMING**

Definitive evaluations of mainstreaming are probably premature - even in those countries, such as Sweden, Norway and Finland, which have considerable experience and expertise. Nordic experts stress that implementing a mainstreaming strategy is a long-term process with the need for ongoing investment and training. Mainstreaming is seen to promise much both in taking forward gender equality work and in improving the capacity of governments to deliver effective policy solutions to the complex socio-economic challenges facing the region. The Nordic mainstreaming strategy has attracted much international attention and the region continues to be viewed as one of the world leaders in gender equality. Mainstreaming has already effected changes in working practices and policy-making in some sectors, although implementation has been uneven. There is greater awareness of the connections between mainstreaming and effective governance:

Gender awareness and analysis are not supposed to ensure that all decisions will be ‘good for women’ - whatever that could mean. They instead form an essential basis for decision-making, ensuring that the relevant facts concerning women and men of all ages, classes and ethnic backgrounds are presented before decisions are made, not after. This is a question of efficiency.\textsuperscript{173}

\textsuperscript{172} Liisa Horelli ‘Mainstreaming in local and regional development’ in Council of Europe, *Gender Mainstreaming: a step into the 21st Century*, report of conference held in Athens, 16-18 September, 1999 (EG/ATH(99)3).

The following factors can be identified as contributing to the relative success of the Nordic mainstreaming project:

- **Top level political support of mainstreaming.** For example, in Sweden and Norway commitment to mainstreaming is regularly restated in prime ministerial statements; in Norway equality goals have been built into government Action Plans. The importance of specific resources for equality work is also recognised;

- **High levels of women’s representation in political and public decision-making;**

- **Integrated mainstreaming systems.** For example, a strong co-ordinating structure exists at Nordic Council level including a Nordic Project Manager responsible for implementation and monitoring. Within individual countries, Sweden and Norway have particularly well developed systems with specialist co-ordinating structures, inter-departmental working and collaboration at different levels of government;

- **Development of innovative tools and methodologies.** There has been considerable investment in developing and testing tools and methodologies. For example, the use of ‘flying experts’ has been piloted in Sweden. Swedish local government has developed the ‘3Rs method’ of awareness raising and analysis which has been adopted elsewhere. In Norway, Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines have been developed; and packages of mainstreaming methodologies and tools have been compiled in a number of participating countries including Finland. All countries are contributing to a Nordic Mainstreaming Manual;

- **Gender disaggregated statistics** are recognised to form a central plank of mainstreaming work. Sweden is well advanced in the collection and production of gender disaggregated statistics (see annual *Men and Women in Sweden*); Iceland’s Statistical Bureau is also committed to produce gender disaggregated statistics.

- **Sharing experiences and good practice.** Collaboration between the Nordic countries has provided a supportive environment through which progress can be made in all countries. The Nordic Mainstreaming Newsletter provides a forum for dissemination of ideas and lessons as do common activities including seminars, working groups, and study visits. For example, mainstreaming training in Iceland has been facilitated through the assistance of Swedish expertise.

Mainstreaming experts in Sweden, Norway and Finland identify a number of key issues and difficulties which contribute towards the uneven development - and in some cases to the stalling - of mainstreaming initiatives. They include:

- **A lack of knowledge.** Shortfalls in knowledge of gender issues are reported amongst both politicians and officials. For example, The Swedish Equality Affairs Division reports that many do not understand what is expected of them or what it means (in a concrete way) to take a gender perspective into account in their everyday work. A common misunderstanding is that work on promoting equality only deals with personnel issues, for example, by setting targets for the recruitment of women or the promotion of women as managers. In Norway, many public officials are still unclear at to ‘what mainstreaming is.’
• **Insufficient resources.** For example, external evaluation of Norway’s two action plans (1986-1990 and 1991-1994) highlighted that insufficient human resources were allocated by the co-ordinating body to the co-ordination and day-to-day follow-up with the Ministries.174

• **Risk to specialist units and projects.** There have been instances where mainstreaming in the public sector in Nordic countries has been interpreted as the dismantling of specific equalities machinery. This version of mainstreaming is viewed as an excuse to stop gender equality work.175

• **A lack of tools and techniques.** Monitoring and evaluation are seen as common weaknesses in implementation strategies. For example, in Norway, the emphasis on integrating gender issues into management tools has not been entirely successful. The general guidelines for policy proposals are seen as too weak and lacking any decisive effect until there is active monitoring of implementation. The policy processes and day to day work in many ministries is not much influenced by the formally adopted plan of action or other formal management tools. The Swedish government acknowledges that it lacks experience in monitoring and impact assessment methods.

• **The ‘Nordic equality paradox’.** Formal equality legislation in Nordic countries is well advanced. This has led to complacency in certain quarters and the assertion that mainstreaming and other equalities work is no longer necessary. The paradox176 exists in that while pride in status with respect to equality is projected outwardly, advances already achieved are used as an excuse for not continuing and strengthening equalities work.

• **Covert and overt resistance.** Negative attitudes remain a problem in some instances: gender equality may be considered outdated and politically not interesting. Nordic mainstreaming experts argue that the recognition and understanding of gender relevance in any given policy area relates to the level of enthusiasm with which the mainstreaming approach is met.

• **Reliance upon individual champions/ vulnerability to political and organisational change.** Changes in political leadership can lead to a dilution of support for mainstreaming. Lack of continuity at the executive level in many ministries has resulted in loss of knowledge and lack of sustained expertise. Gender equality remains in many instances dependent on individual commitment, with the danger that committed individuals experience ‘burn out’ from the overload of work. A self-sustaining process has not yet been established and ongoing training and awareness-raising is seen as necessary for the foreseeable future.177

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Canada provides a case of a well established and integrated strategy for mainstreaming gender equality at Federal, Provincial and Territorial levels. There is apparent high level political will, strong legislation concerning gender equality and a long standing commitment to integrating gender equalities considerations into the policy making process. The Canadian government has had a long-standing formal commitment to the analysis of policy impacts on women. As early as 1976, all federal initiatives and decisions had to be assessed for their impact on women.

The legal foundation for gender equality was strengthened when the equality provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms came into force in 1985. Sections 15 and 28 of the Charter outline a minimum standard of gender equality with which all governments in Canada (federal, provincial, and territorial) must comply in their legislation and programmes. It is argued that the equality provisions of the Charter have provided momentum for the application of gender-based analysis in the development of legislation. Champions of mainstreaming point out that gender-based analysis can prevent costly legal challenges under the Charter, while at the same time promote sound and effective public policies.178

In 1995, a systematic approach to gender mainstreaming was formally articulated in the Federal Plan for Gender Equality (see Fig. 6.1 below) which was presented to the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. This approach was stated as a commitment to implementing gender-based analysis in the development of policies, programmes and legislation. Further commitments were made to develop analytic tools, training approaches and data for undertaking gender-based analysis.

The Federal government and the Provincial government of British Columbia are regarded as pioneers of mainstreaming tools in much of the emerging literature about mainstreaming. The Canadian Gender-based Analysis and the British Columbia Gender Lens frameworks have been widely used elsewhere; and inform the Commonwealth Secretariat Office’s Gender Management System (see section 2 of this report).

Canadians use the term ‘gender-based analysis’ to describe gender mainstreaming activity, analysis and research. Gender-based analysis (GBA) is defined by Status of Women Canada as:

- A process that assesses the differential impact of proposed and/or existing policies, programmes and legislation on women and men. GBA makes it possible for policy to be undertaken with an appreciation of gender differences, of the nature of relationships

178 Judicial decisions and policy debates under the Charter have contributed to a recognition that treating women and men identically will not ensure equal outcomes, and to an increasing acceptance of the concept of substantive equality (equality as equality of results or outcomes). The equality provisions of the Charter provide the basis for challenging laws that result in unequal outcomes for women. Such arguments have been made in relation to employment opportunities and pay, spousal support, sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual orientation, pregnancy, pensions and violence against women. The ability of Canadian women to challenge legislation through the court system is assisted by the Court Challenges Program, which provides financial assistance for test cases of national significance put forward on behalf of or by groups or individuals that will clarify language and equality rights under the Canadian constitution. Status of Women Canada (SWC) questionnaire response, 1999, p.16.
between women and men and of their different social realities, life expectations and economic circumstances.

- A tool for understanding social processes and for responding with informed and equitable options. Gender-based analysis compares how and why women and men are affected by policy issues, and challenges the assumption that everyone is affected by policies, programmes and legislation in the same way regardless of gender.

Figure 6.1 Federal Plan for Gender Equality

| Setting the Stage for the Next Century: |

Commitment to gender-based analysis:
“The federal government is committed through the Federal Plan to ensuring that all future legislation and policies include, where appropriate, an analysis of the potential for different impacts on women and men. Individual departments will be responsible for determining which legislation or policies have the potential to affect women differentially and are, therefore, appropriate for a consistent application of a gender lens.”

The Federal government is committed to:
- the development and application of tools and methodologies for carrying out gender-based analysis;
- training on gender-based analysis of legislation and policies;
- the development of indicators to assess progress made toward gender equality;
- the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data as appropriate;
- the use of gender-sensitive language throughout the federal government;
- the evaluation of the effectiveness of the gender-based analysis process.

source: Status of Women Canada, 1999

Canada has a federal system in which the federal government has responsibility for policy and programmes in certain sectors, the provinces in others and some responsibilities are shared. Some policy areas of particular concern to women are largely the responsibility of provincial governments, these include: employment standards and benefits; social services; education; and marital property. Federal government responsibilities include: monetary and fiscal policy; trade; national health standards; and unemployment insurance.

Since important gender equality issues are often affected by actions of more than one level of government, intergovernmental collaboration is seen as crucial to promote coherence between federal and provincial/territorial approaches. Since 1982, partnership and collaboration have existed among the federal, provincial and territorial governments to advance women’s equality through the efforts of the Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women. Meeting on an annual basis, Ministers have, among other things, worked together on policy issues and raised public awareness on areas of concern to women. For example, a joint initiative of Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers responsible for the Status of Women resulted in the 1997 publication entitled Economic Gender Equality Indicators.
FEDERAL LEVEL

The following section draws upon the questionnaire response of the Status of Women Canada/Condition Féminine Canada (SWC). SWC is a department of the federal government reporting to the Secretary of State (Status of Women). It provides expertise and strategic advice on gender equality to the Secretary of State, and also advises Ministers, Departments and Agencies on issues affecting women. SWC currently has a staff of around a hundred and takes a leadership role in gender mainstreaming/gender-based analysis activities.

The Canadian case for mainstreaming

According to SWC, the aim of the gender-based analysis process is to integrate a gender perspective into policy analysis and development. The gender-based analysis process:

- is intended to be one aspect of a comprehensive approach to policy development and to enhance the quality of current analysis;
- integrates gender into each step of the policy development process; is easy to use;
- is not a check-list: the questions and examples are meant to stimulate reflection and further inquiry;
- relies on the existing expertise and abilities of those involved in policy development and analysis; and,
- assumes that those responsible for policy development and analysis will adapt the method to their own style and circumstances.

Co-ordination of Mainstreaming

SWC is the key co-ordinating mechanism for mainstreaming in terms of both fostering partnerships between departments and jurisdictions, and amongst other stakeholders and NGOs; and in terms of co-ordinating policies and programmes and developing tools and techniques. A Director of Gender Based Analysis has been appointed for two years to promote greater understanding and use of gender-based analysis across government departments and agencies. The role of the Director is to encourage and assist other federal departments and agencies to set up their own processes to ensure that gender-based analysis is incorporated into all of their policy and programme development activities. Specific actions that will be pursued include:

- working with departments to create action plans to integrate gender-based analysis in their work;
- developing training modules for departments and other interested parties;
- establishing accountability and evaluative processes to assess progress made;
• building a resource library, developing further reference materials and tools for the use of departments, and encouraging them to develop and use their own sectoral tools; and

• establishing appropriate interdepartmental mechanisms to advance implementation.

The Director chairs an Interdepartmental Committee on Gender-Based Analysis (IDC on GBA), a focal point for co-ordination, facilitation and support of gender-based analysis activities across federal government departments and agencies. Comprised of gender specialist representatives from a variety of federal departments, including Justice, Health, Citizenship and Immigration, Human Resources Development, Indian and Northern Affairs, Canadian Heritage and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the committee is active in identifying and sharing GBA information and resources, including best practices on implementing GBA and gender-based analysis training tools.

SWC also promotes debate and understanding of gender-based analysis through policy discussion at roundtables and workshops with both government and non-government actors.

Although SWC has a leadership role, all other government ministries are responsible for implementing the government’s commitment to gender-based policy analysis within their own departments. Several ministries had established an office or unit on women’s issues before 1995, and the 1995 commitment to gender-based analysis has encouraged others to take a similar step. Examples include:

• The Women’s Health Bureau of Health Canada promotes gender-based analysis of policies and programmes within Health Canada by developing health sector-specific tools and training, and by providing advice and resource materials. It has 15 staff. Its work is strengthened by inputs from five Centres of Excellence for Women’s Health (see below).

• Human Resources Development Canada has a Women’s Bureau that was initially established in 1954, in what was then the Department of Labour. The staff of the Women’s Bureau work as policy and programme advisors to departmental officials on the practice of gender-based analysis.

• The Department of Justice established the Office of the Senior Advisor on Gender Equality in 1996. The Office consists of a Senior Advisor plus two gender equality analysts. Major activities include: designing analytical tools to conduct gender equality analysis in the areas of litigation, legal opinion, legislative drafting, policy and programme development, and management practices and policies; developing and offering training modules on the application of gender equality analysis in law; designing awareness mechanisms; and contributing to the analysis of all substantive issues arising in the Department to ensure that they are examined from a gender equality perspective.

• The Office of the Senior Advisor on Aboriginal Women’s Issues and Gender Equality was established by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in 1998 and is assisted by a department-wide Advisory Committee on Gender Equality (ACGE), including representatives from both regional offices and headquarters.

• The International Women’s Equality Section of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade functions as the focal point on issues of gender equality and women’s human rights within the Department. It also serves to integrate these issues into
foreign policy development, Canada’s input into world conferences and the work of multilateral organisations.

- **The Gender Equality Division of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)** is the agency’s focal point for gender equality. Its activities include the development of mechanisms to mainstream gender perspectives into CIDA’s management, planning and performance assessment systems; contributing to the Agency’s knowledge base on gender equality; participation in conferences and international policy dialogue on gender equality; and the management of information on gender equality issues, particularly lessons drawn from gender equality policy implementation in developing countries.

These offices and advisors have been instrumental in assisting departments to formulate their own specific strategies for gender-based analysis and gender-equitable policies. Two specific examples which illustrate gender mainstreaming strategies at the sectoral level are described below:

**Health Canada**

On March 8, 1999, the Minister of Health launched Health Canada’s *Women’s Health Strategy*, a framework to guide Health Canada in addressing biases and inequities in the health system. The strategy’s main objectives are:

- To ensure that Health Canada’s policies and programmes are responsive to sex and gender differences, and to women’s health needs;
- To increase the knowledge and understanding of women’s health, and women’s health needs;
- To support the provision of effective health services to women; and
- To promote good health through preventive measures and the reduction of risk factors that most imperil the health of women.

The strategy provides for the development of tools, methods and training materials appropriate to the health sector to assist in implementing gender-impact assessments. Health Canada is assisted by the Centres of Excellence for Women’s Health, several of which have undertaken projects to survey and analyse existing tools and curricula, upon which health sector-specific tools and programmes will be developed.

**Justice Canada**

The Department of Justice established its Gender Equality Initiative in 1996 with the goal of preventing and eliminating systemic gender discrimination in the Canadian Justice system, and in the policies and practices of the Department of Justice. Since then, Justice Canada has:

- Adopted the *policy of the department of justice on gender equality analysis*;
- Established a network of over 55 gender equality specialists to act as resource persons for their colleagues on the application of a gender-equality analysis in their area of responsibility; and
• Pre pared *diversity and justice: gender perspectives*, a manual of “*critical questions to be asked at each step of policy development, litigation, prosecutions, legal advice and legislative and regulatory drafting processes to ensure that gender is taken into account, inequality is identified and remedies are developed.*”

**Mainstreaming day to day**

A range of different actors are involved in mainstreaming on a day to day basis. They include policy makers and people (often from Human Resources division of departments) who act as gender equality focal points in a select number of departments. Most departments have also used experts to assist analysis, most often academics coming from sector disciplines.

Timely, policy relevant research is seen as a crucial component of the Canadian mainstreaming strategy.

All stages of the gender-based analysis process – from the development and analysis of policy options and recommendations to the indicators used in the policy evaluation – depend on the availability and accessibility of timely, policy-relevant research. There are many individuals, agencies and institutions participating in the development of research which addresses the impact of gender on women and men’s status in diverse sectors of Canadian life.179

Key contributors at the federal level in this area of policy research include:

- **Policy Research Fund:** SWC’s Policy Research Fund (PRF), launched in 1996, aims to support forward-thinking, independent, and nationally-relevant policy research on gender equality issues and by so doing ‘improve the quality of public debate and policy deliberations on gender equality.’ Approximately $1.2 million annually is available for research, translation, publication and report distribution. The research is funded on a competitive, call-for-proposal process. A small, non-governmental external committee (nominated by constituents) plays a key role in identifying priorities and research themes, choosing research proposals to be funded and exercising quality control over the final research products.

- **Statistics Canada:** Statistics Canada’s role in compiling and disseminating gender-disaggregated data is a crucial component in the development of relevant policy research for gender-based analysis. In partnership with the Policy Research Fund at SWC (see above), Statistics Canada published *Finding Data on Women: A Guide to Major Sources at Statistics Canada*, a document which provides information on gender-disaggregated data sources that can be used in carrying out gender-based analysis.

- **Centres of Excellence for Women’s Health:** In 1996, in response to the lack of research in the area of women’s health, Health Canada’s Women’s Health Bureau established five Centres of Excellence for Women’s Health across Canada. The Centres of Excellence have been provided with six-year federal funding to conduct policy-based research on women’s health and to facilitate collaboration on women’s health policy.

research among academics, community agencies, health professionals, service providers and women themselves.


- **The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)**: is Canada’s federal funding agency for university-based research and graduate training in the social sciences and humanities. SSHRC plays a key role in sponsoring research which informs gender-based analysis work.

**Consultation**

Consultation and the participation of groups and individuals in the policy making process have been identified as an important plank of any mainstreaming strategy. Consultation with external organisations was not new to Canadian policy making but expanding the range of groups with which officials consult, including women’s groups, has been a new feature.

Canada has a well developed network of over 1,500 women’s organisations, which plays a significant role in gender mainstreaming and setting local, regional and national agendas for gender equality. As CSW state:

> The importance of violence against women on the public policy agenda is an excellent example of how women’s voices and experiences have shaped legislation, policies and programmes in recent years. This contribution could not have occurred without thousands of individuals in communities donating their time and expertise to improve the lives of women.  

SWC run a network of regional representatives who maintain regular contact with women’s organisations across Canada. SWC’s *Women’s Program* also provides financial and administrative support to a wide range of community, regional, provincial and national organisations: in 1997-98, a total of 348 projects and organisations were funded with grants totalling $8.165 million. Further, non-monetary support for groups and individuals includes assistance with identifying alternative funding sources, information-sharing on best practices, direction on organisational development and institutional change, and direct involvement in the development and implementation of projects.

Consultation provides the government with information about the ideas and concerns of Canadian women on public policy issues affecting them. For example, as part of consultations on proposed changes to Canada’s pension system, SWC organised a policy roundtable focused on gender implications. The roundtable brought together departmental representatives, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and provincial governments. Women’s organisations also participate in the public consultations on the annual federal budget held by the Department of Finance, or meet with the Minister of Finance and other

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180 Status of Women Canada questionnaire response, 1999, p.11.
key Cabinet Ministers, including the Secretary of State (Status of Women), to provide their input.

In 1996, SWC undertook a series of consultation meetings with groups across Canada, seeking advice on various aspects of its work. One outcome of that process was the production of a Discussion Paper on types of formal and informal consultation approaches, their frequency and their resource implications. The Discussion Paper was circulated to women’s organisations and other equality-seeking organisations, and their comments have been taken into consideration for the Consultation Policy that SWC will soon be launching.

Consultations on policy issues and options with women’s and other equality-seeking organisations, as well as civil society, is an important part of gender-based analysis. Such consultations complement the technical aspects of analysis with qualitative means of ensuring that conclusions and proposals reflect women’s views. Perceptions of the value of such consultations among NGOs are influenced by the extent to which they believe that their views are heard and responded to, particularly given that consultations can be a time and resource-consuming process for all parties involved.181

**Training needs and methodologies**

The development of tools and methodologies – particularly tools and methodologies specific to particular ministries and policy sectors – is widely recognised as a major requirement for effective mainstreaming around the world.

According to mainstreaming co-ordinators in Canada a gender mainstreaming/gender-based analysis strategy differs from previous equalities strategies in a number of respects: firstly, it is systematic rather than ad hoc; secondly, it does not start solely from an inequality situation but aims at all policy sectors, including those which may appear gender neutral on the surface (for instance, tax policy); thirdly, it is a process and not an end on to itself and may result in women specific measures and/or integrative type results; fourthly, it involves not only equalities specialists but also a wider group of policy actors, including those ‘ordinary’ folks involved in day-to-day policy analysis and development. SWC caution that although this involvement can be seen as a strength of mainstreaming it can also sometimes be a weakness, ‘if training is not provided to these actors they may not be able to detect discrimination or develop policies in support of equality’.182

The Canadian response has been to provide intensive and ongoing training and to devise a general framework for the implementation of gender-based analysis upon which specific departments could build. SWC prepared a manual entitled *Gender-Based Analysis: A guide for policy-making* (see Section 2 of this report for more details). Since then several sector-specific manuals have been produced. They include:

- **Human Resources and Employment:** the Women’s Bureau has undertaken resource and research initiatives, such as the development of a *Gender-Based Analysis Guide* (1997) and a *Gender-Based Analysis Backgrounder* (1997);


• **Legal Analysis:** A Department of Justice manual entitled *Diversity and Justice: Gender Perspectives*, provides guidance in taking up gender equality issues in policy development, litigation, prosecutions, legal advice, and legislative and regulatory drafting processes;

• **International Development Co-operation:** the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) which has considerable experience of implementing an agency-wide approach to gender analysis, has recently produced a *Guide to Gender-Sensitive Indicators*, with an accompanying project level handbook;

• **Aboriginal Affairs:** Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has developed a Gender Equality Policy, a manual for the application of gender equality analysis, and modules for training within the department.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

Robust systems of monitoring and evaluation have been highlighted by experts, such as the Council of Europe Expert Group, as crucial components of an effective mainstreaming strategy. Canada has devoted attention to gender equality indicators which are seen as important for measuring progress toward gender equality, and for identifying differences between women and men in factors that influence well-being. A joint federal-provincial/territorial initiative resulted in the 1997 publication of *Economic Gender Equality Indicators* (EGEIs), a set of benchmarks to assess the relative status of women and men, and to measure change over time. Indices included make comparisons between women and men in such areas as earnings, income from all sources, paid and unpaid work, education and training. According to SWC, the indicators work best, for policy purposes, when taken as a set because the interaction of income, work and learning is usually more complex for women than it is for men. The indicators deliberately challenge traditional assumptions and male norms, in favour of a more inclusive standard, and find new ways of using existing data to highlight realities that are often obscured.

For example, until recently, there has been little data to describe the organisation of work and its implications. Public debate and public policy tended to be based on untested and often faulty assumptions. The picture provided by the set of indicators reflects the overall gendered structure of our society – that is, women work longer hours than men, they are pursuing training and higher education to a greater extent than men, but their earnings and income are still far lower than men’s. The major factor in this disparity has been shown to be the social and economic organisation of the care of children and other dependants.183

**Provincial and Territorial Governments**

Provincial and Territorial governments have also developed policies and established mechanisms to promote consideration of gender equality issues in policy formulation. Some Provincial and Territorial governments have created action plans to implement the Beijing *Platform for Action* within their jurisdictions. Many have made a formal political commitment to integrate gender-based analysis in their policies and programmes. Some of

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the approaches taken by other governments are discussed below. The Provincial Government of British Columbia is of particular note.

**BRITISH COLUMBIA**

The information in this section is largely derived from the questionnaire responses from the Ministry of Women’s Equality, British Columbia; the Ministry’s website; and the questionnaire response from Status of Women Canada.

British Columbia has developed an integrated programme for gender equality in government. In 1993, it introduced gender-based analysis across government - into all legislation, policy and programme development - by formalising a process for the inclusion of a gender impact analysis in all Cabinet submissions. This has meant that across government, each new policy, programme and legislative proposal for Cabinet consideration must include an analysis of the differential impacts on women and men and of whether the policy recommendation supports equality for women: an **equity impact assessment**. **Equity impact assessments** refer to an analysis of implications not only in the area of gender but also sustainable development, social, regional and community issues, other equity groups, and health. This reflects the international UN recommendation of ‘an active and visible’ policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes which was endorsed in the Platform for Action at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing in 1995.

Government-wide efforts to achieve gender equality are co-ordinated by a number of central agencies and the Ministry of Women’s Equality (see below), but work is initiated and implemented in all ministries. The Ministry of Women’s Equality was established in British Columbia in 1991 and is Canada’s first and only free-standing ministry dedicated to equality for women.

The primary mainstreaming instrument is **Gender Lens: A Guide to Gender-Inclusive Policy and Program Development** (revised 1997) to support policy and programme makers to recognise the potential impacts of public policy and to design policies and programmes that recognise the experiences of women and effectively meet the needs of women and men. It aims to achieve equal outcomes for women and men by recognising that equal treatment may not necessarily produce equitable results because women and men have different life experiences. The Ministry also provides expert advice and conducts training sessions. A fuller discussion of the Gender Lens tool can be found in Section 2 of this report. A **Disability Lens** and an **Aboriginal Lens** have also been developed.

**Co-ordination**

British Columbia’s strategy for integrating gender-inclusive analysis into policy and programme development was endorsed by the Cabinet (elected ministers) and is supported by Government Caucus (elected ministers and officials) and senior officials. Overall responsibility is held by Cabinet Operations, which provides policy, operational and administrative support services to the Premier and Cabinet. The Co-ordination of Agencies, Boards and Commissions Branch, responsible for liaison and administrative support for independent public agencies, boards and commissions and the government’s commissions of
inquiry, is responsible for ensuring that gender balance is considered in all public appointments.

The strategy is co-ordinated through the Government Policy and Communications Office (GPCO), the office which provides strategic planning and policy advice and operational support to Cabinet and Cabinet committees. It receives the ongoing support of the Ministry of Women’s Equality in assisting GPCO and ministries to conduct gender-inclusive analysis.

The Ministry of Women’s Equality (MWE), the GPCO and Cabinet Operations are involved on a day to day basis, as well as any line ministry preparing a Cabinet submission. The Co-ordination of Agencies, Boards and Commissions Branch is involved whenever public appointment recruitment and appointment processes are underway.

Some of the people working in these areas would have been involved in equalities work prior to the introduction of mainstreaming. However, according to the MWE, work is now more ‘co-ordinated, integrative and consistent’. Gender-inclusive analysis was certainly new to some of the line ministry staff.

MWE provides advice to ministries and the Government Policy and Communications Office. It conducts training sessions on gender-inclusive analysis to strengthen government’s ability to work from a gendered perspective. It has also developed tools such as *Gender Lens: A Guide to Gender-Inclusive Policy and Program Development* to support policy makers in understanding the concept of gender equality; in recognising the potential impacts of public policy; and in designing policies and programmes which incorporate the experiences and perspectives of women.

MWE worked in consultation with, or relied on, the work of academics and other organisations and jurisdictions in developing the *Gender Lens* training tool (i.e. organisations such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the United Nations and other governments across Canada and the world, particularly Status of Women Canada, New Zealand and Australia, and Scandinavian countries).

*Training*

British Columbia invested in a comprehensive programme of training in recognition that policy and programme developers needed help to integrate a gender-inclusive analysis into their work. For example, in 1994, MWE undertook a series of 14 training sessions across government involving 150 policy and programme developers. Training continues, as requested or required, and has been expanded to include professional schools such as university social work classes. MWE staff also give individual assistance to policy and programme developers working on specific projects.

According to MWE mainstreaming has effected certain changes in terms of the way that people think about their work and the way that policy is formulated.

Implementing gender-inclusive analysis is an ongoing process. It has raised awareness of the differences in women’s and men’s lives, particularly those that lead to social and economic inequality for women, and of the need to examine our own values, biases and experiences that influence our work. It has increased the sensitivity
to the differential impact of policies on women and men and demonstrated how a consideration of these differential impacts can lead to more informed decision-making, increased efficiency and effectiveness, and the removal of barriers to women’s full participation in society, to the benefit of all.

Gender mainstreaming (through the process of integrating gender-inclusive analysis in all phases of policy/programme development cycle) has also clearly strengthened the policy development process overall. An assessment of differential factors affecting women and men are considered in the identification of an issue; the defining of goals and outcomes; the identification of information and consultation needs; the research - including cross-departmental work and consultation with external agencies; the development and analysis of options and recommendations; the communications strategy; and policy/programme evaluation.184

Concrete examples

Some concrete examples and outcomes using gender-inclusive analysis in policy/programme development in British Columbia are outlined below.

1. THE JUSTICE GENDER EQUALITY INITIATIVE

An example of mainstreaming in operation can be seen in the Ministry of the Attorney General’s Gender Equality Initiative aimed at securing equality for women in law and the administration of justice. It works with the Ministry for Women’s Equality and with other ministries, including Skills, Training and Labour; Social Services; Health; Education; Aboriginal Affairs; and the ministry responsible for immigration and multiculturalism, who develop policy and provide related services that have a direct effect on women’s experience of the justice system in BC. In addition to the provincial government, other justice system partners - the police, the judiciary, the legal community and numerous non-governmental organisations - are recognised to play key roles that affect women’s experiences of the justice system and are involved in the initiative.

The Ministry produces an annual report of its progress which also serves as a basis for annual consultation with those individuals and groups interested in the priorities and proposed activities that comprise the Gender Equality Plan. Key areas of work since 1994 have included domestic violence, child abuse and sexual abuse, and community safety. Changes have also been made to the British Columbia benefits legislation (in respect of income assistance and poverty reduction initiatives) and Family Maintenance Enforcement Programme (a provincial programme permitting the enforcement of wage garnishing orders) as a result of consultation and Gender Lens analysis. For example, new regulations have made it easier for the courts to obtain information about assets of the absent parents, and overdue payments are subject to interest charges. The changes ease the ordeal of pursuing support and help provide financial stability for children whose parents separate. In 1997/98, the programme collected more than $86 million in child support payments. In addition, British Columbia has led the way in addressing the problem of enforcing orders beyond provincial boundaries. To assist in locating persons in default on child support payments,

they negotiated an agreement on behalf of all jurisdictions across Canada that provides access to motor vehicle information through the Inter provincial Records Exchange database.185

2. Highway Constructors Limited:

An equity component was built into large infrastructure projects such as the Vancouver Island Highway Project to ensure that women and other equity groups received their share of employment and training opportunities. Equity initiatives on the highway project included active recruitment from the communities along the highway; provision of education and awareness-raising regarding equity, diversity and harassment; training for equity groups and welfare recipients for jobs on the project in the areas of labouring, heavy equipment operations and truck driving; training support such as upgrading or life skills and workplace training and support.

At the time of the project onset, it was estimated that women comprised less than one per cent of those working in construction occupations. Monitoring reports for the Vancouver Island Highway Project indicate that between July 1994 and March 1999, 15 per cent of total workers hired were from one of the equity groups (women - 6 per cent; First Nations people 7 per cent; visible minorities - 2 per cent; and people with a disability - 1 per cent).

When this same model was applied to another infrastructure project, the High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes Construction Project, ‘equity hires’ between July 1997 and March 1999 represented 23 per cent of all hires (women, 11 per cent; First Nations people, 5 per cent; visible minorities, 8 per cent; and people with a disability 0 per cent).

3. Industry, Training and Apprenticeship Commission (ITAC)

In 1997, the government of British Columbia established the Industrial Training and Apprenticeship Commission (ITAC) to create:

> An industry driven training and apprenticeship system that is accessible and responsive; assesses the needs of the British Columbia labour market; increases the number of skilled persons in designated trades and occupations; and increases the proportion of under-represented groups in designated trades and occupations.186

To help achieve these aims, the Deputy Minister of Women’s Equality sits as a member of the commission’s board; an Equity in Apprenticeship Committee was formed; and a gender-inclusive lens has been applied both to the development of strategies and to joint initiatives between ITAC, business, labour and education.

According to the Ministry of Women’s Equality, the results have been positive: in 1998, 24 per cent of new apprentices in British Columbia were female (118/506) as compared with only 8 per cent in the previous year (26/326).

Joint projects have been run, such as one between the British Columbia Institute of Technology, the Ministry of Women’s Equality and ITAC which helped to fund training for women in aluminium ship welding. When twelve women graduated from the programme in

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185 Updated from USGS, 1998. For further information see http://www.gov.bc.ca and http://www.weq.gov.bc.ca/
1998, they became the second group of women trained with the skills to construct the new fast ferries at Vancouver Shipyards.

4. AGENCIES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

The Co-ordination of Agencies, Boards and Commissions Branch is responsible for ensuring that gender balance is considered in all public appointments. In March 1999, 1,377 women out of 3,258 appointees held positions on community agencies, boards and commissions; of the 380 chairs or vice-chairs, 119 are women.

MAINSTREAMING IN OTHER CANADIAN PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES

The following section gives brief information on mainstreaming strategies in other Canadian provinces and territories:

Alberta

Conducts gender-based analysis on an informal basis with other departments, primarily through involvement on interdepartmental committees.

Saskatchewan

The province has produced a gender-inclusive analysis guide. It also holds workshops on gender-inclusive analysis. GBA also incorporates the diversity of aboriginal and non-aboriginal perspectives.

Manitoba

The Manitoba Women’s Directorate has taken a pivotal role in facilitating the incorporation of gender analysis in the development of government policy and programmes, through the development of a ‘hands on’ guide to assist in the implementation of gender-inclusive analysis in all departments, along with a training workshop to accompany the guide. A pilot workshop was held in June of 1999 for Senior Policy staff from government departments and received an overwhelming response. A second workshop was sponsored in October 1999.

Ontario

The Secretary of Cabinet issued a directive to departments to consult the Ontario Women’s Directorate when a substantial impact on women is anticipated in relation to a submission to Cabinet. Consultations with departments and analysis of gender impacts occur through the involvement of the Ontario Women’s Directorate on inter ministerial committees or through established links with other departments; at other times it is done on an informal basis (for example, through work with analysts in other departments).

Québec

The Ministère du Conseil Exécutif (executive council), the Secrétariat du Conseil du Trésor (Treasury Board Secretariat) and the Secrétariat à la Condition Féminine (Status of Women
Secretariat) are jointly responsible for the work of the interdepartmental committee for the integration of gender-differentiated analysis (GDA) into the public policy process of the Government of Quebec. A steering committee composed of deputy ministers ensures the involvement of senior officials, the taking of decisions on proposed recommendations, the adoption of necessary instruments, the implementation of strategies and the dissemination of selected approaches. In addition to consulting with academics and non-governmental organisations, the working group reviewed the literature and examined experiences in Europe, Oceania and North America. It also reviewed governmental and departmental mechanisms governing the adoption of legislation, policies, programmes and other measures. Two pilot projects are underway.

The Quebec Ministère des Finances (finance department) is developing a statistical tool to analyse the impact of fiscal policies on women and on men. The pilot project run in 1999 examined the impact of certain personal taxation policies on women and men, respectively. Taxpayers have been classified according to sex, type of household and other socio-economic variables, these fiscal statistics have then been used to assess the effect of various tax concessions. The final phase of the project was concerned with developing examples of how to make use of such statistics throughout the Department of Finance.

Mainstreaming the needs of elderly persons: The Quebec Ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux (Health and Social Services Department) is integrating GBA into the Guidelines for dependent elderly persons. The project involves the Quebec government together with regional health and social services boards and will feed into the reorganisation of all long-term services for the elderly. The project’s main aim has been to map the position of elderly women and elderly men in respect of factors such as income, isolation, longevity, type of incapacity and level of dependency in order to devise the appropriate strategy for each group. The project recognises that care of elderly people is also a gendered issue, therefore the needs of carers - predominantly women - are also being taken into account. Health and social service professionals, elderly people, groups of women and academic gender experts have all been consulted in the drafting of the guidelines.

Another aim of the project is to devise a gender analysis approach which is suitable for politicians and public officials in the Department of Health and Social Services and its network. Monitoring will be carried out in the year following implementation to find out to what extent the network is using the guidelines. Training and awareness raising courses will then be devised to meet identified needs. According to the project organisers, whilst mapping work has been successful and there is high level political will, resistance is anticipated at implementation stage in some of the regional and local authorities and boards in Quebec, especially if the implications are to redistribute resources. ‘It is a question of changing people’s mentalities.’

New Brunswick

The Executive Council Office has prepared a guide on gender-based analysis and a statistical profile on New Brunswick women that have been sent to all departments for use in evaluating the gender impact of policies and programmes.

Nova Scotia

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women undertakes policy analysis and information-sharing with other departments. It is establishing an interdepartmental working group to examine resource and training needs to develop a more formal approach to gender-based analysis as part of the policy process within the government.

Prince Edward Island

An interdepartmental policy forum, with representatives from each department of the provincial government, was established in 1996. In its first year of operations the policy forum examined and evaluated a number of tools to improve the integration of gender considerations in policy and programme making directions, which had been developed in other jurisdictions and sectors. It has not as yet developed or adopted any one tool.

Newfoundland

The Women’s Policy Office has developed gender analysis guidelines. It has offered assistance to other departments on the use of these guidelines, through workshops. A preliminary analysis of follow-up surveys conducted with workshop participants indicates that 28.5 per cent of respondents reported that they are using the gender inclusive analysis guidelines, and another 32 per cent are applying some aspects of the knowledge and skills they gained from the workshops in their policy and programme work. The Women’s Policy Office is also involved in assisting other departments with gender based analysis through involvement on interdepartmental committees.

Yukon

The government is committed to carrying out an awareness of gender considerations. The Cabinet has emphasised the need to consider impact on women and aboriginal populations in the preparation of Cabinet submissions and in public consultations. This has been encouraged through the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Social Issues and the strong support of their Minister, whose responsibility for several portfolios, including Justice and Education, has made collaboration easier. Gender-based analysis is carried out on an informal basis with assistance from the Women’s Directorate.

Northwest Territories

The Women’s Advisory Office works on an informal basis with policy analysts in other departments to ensure the integration of gender considerations in their work.

Nunavut

The new territory of Nunavut, formed in April, 1999, is exploring gender-based analysis resources, tools and training through the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth.
CANADIAN LESSONS

In our experience, we’ve found that the process of implementing effective gender-based analysis depends on: high level support within government to implement and hold line ministries accountable; capacity to do gender-based analysis (ongoing training; training tools such as Gender Lens and A Facilitator’s Guide for Workshops on Gender Lens; collection of gender disaggregated data); managing the process (ongoing liaison and co-ordination between the Government Policy and Communications Office and the Ministry of Women’s Equality; reporting of policy/programme outcomes; management of emerging issues; and, in a broader context, development of indicators to assess progress made toward gender equality.  

Lessons can be drawn from both the Canadian and the British Columbian case about the criteria for successful mainstreaming. They include:

- **Political commitment** to the principles and goals of mainstreaming (a social justice strategy to create a fairer society; respect for diversity). For example, the Canadian Government has endorsed mainstreaming in the *Federal Plan for Gender Equality*; Ministers and politicians in British Columbia have maintained and supported the strategy since 1993;

- **High level support** within government to implement and hold line ministries accountable. For example, in British Columbia each new policy, programme and legislative proposal for Cabinet consideration must include an *Equity impact assessment*, this refers to an analysis of implications not only in the area of gender but also sustainable development, social, regional and community issues, other equity groups, and health. The Ministry for Women’s Equality In British Columbia, is clear that the introduction of a Cabinet requirement for gender-inclusive analysis to be done has been critical for ensuring that this analysis be done well, on a consistent basis, and with some accountability measures in place;

- **Building capacity** to do gender-based analysis (ongoing training; development of tools; support for departments to develop their own sectoral tools; collection of gender disaggregated data; timely policy relevant research; expert support). For example, the Canadian Justice Department has established a network of 55 gender equality specialists to assist their colleagues in mainstreaming. Canada has also established research centres of excellence for Women’s Health established to meet policy information needs in this area;

- **Realistic resources.** For example, the Status of Women Canada currently has 100 staff;

- **Managing the process** (ongoing liaison and co-ordination between relevant departments and at different levels of government; sharing of resources and good practice). In both cases, women’s policy machinery, plays a vital co-ordinating role. At Federal level, a Director of Gender Based Analysis has been appointed to co-ordinate the strategy and maintain momentum;

- **Communication and consultation** with women’s groups and equity groups; For example, women’s organisations are consulted on the annual federal budget. Both

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governments consult widely with women and maintain extensive contact with women’s organisations;

- **Systems of reporting, monitoring and evaluating outcomes.** For example, a joint federal-provincial/territorial initiative resulted in the 1997 publication of *Economic Gender Equality Indicators* (EGEIs), a set of benchmarks to assess the relative status of women and men, and to measure change over time. Indices include comparisons between women and men in such areas as earnings, income from all sources, paid and unpaid work, and education and training; and

- **Management of emerging issues.** This has included adapting to changing political and economic circumstances. For example, greater devolution to provincial/territorial government level has meant that several key policy areas are no longer within the jurisdiction of the federal government and there is variability in the degree to which gender based analysis is implemented. In addition, government at all levels in Canada - in line with governmental trends in much of Northern and Western Europe - has been undergoing restructuring and ‘downsizing’ which can, without care, lead to a deprioritising of equalities work.

Significant progress has been made in both governments towards establishing a ‘positive environment’ for implementing the policy commitment to gender-based analysis, and in increasing understanding and debate both within and outside government on a broader range of policy options; however both report difficulties and outstanding concerns. Despite much progress in developing data that reflects women’s experiences, initiatives in gender-based analysis have revealed major gaps that inhibit assessments of issues and policy options. Although there is commitment, implementation has, in practice, been uneven both within sectors and across sectors. Resistance has been encountered within the various departments, offices and ministries, which is attributed to three common reasons: policy/programme developers do not understand the need for gender analysis; or they raise issues of resources in terms of time, budgets, shortage of data and lack of expertise; or officials have the will but lack the requisite skill. The following ongoing challenges have been identified:

- **Progressing with the development of analytic resources for gender-based analysis.** For example, SWC continues to work closely with Statistics Canada and other departments on data development and dissemination, in order to improve data information on women and men in Canada. Further work is also seen as required to refine indicators, and to develop indicators that reflect the social diversity of the population and recognise that factors such as Aboriginal status, disability, race, age, family status, and rural or urban location, can interact with gender in different ways. There is a concern that the Economic Gender Equality Indicators discussed earlier over-represent progress by not sufficiently addressing the situation of less disadvantaged women who are experiencing deterioration in their economic circumstances.

- **Accomplishing systematic application of gender-based analysis.** In both governments, there is an emphasis upon ongoing training and capacity building, enhanced gender statistics and gender-based research and sector specific tools (see above) in order to

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190 “This has resulted in increasing concern among women about the need for a policy knowledge base that better reflects women’s situations and interests, and greater comparability and accountability for gender equality across the country.” Status of Women Canada questionnaire response, 1999, p.12.
reduce resistance and improve implementation. Working towards clear definitions and shared meanings amongst the diverse actors involved in mainstreaming is seen as another means of building ‘ownership’.

- **Making effective use of limited resources for stimulating gender-based analysis.** While SWC and MWE argue that they can and do influence other departments, they seldom possess the direct authority to lead policy development. The sheer number and complexity of policy issues associated with gender equality means that gender expertise has to be ‘home grown’ within departments.

- **Promoting further policy links and mutual respect between governments and NGOs.**

- **Maintaining commitment during political change.** The successful implementation of this approach depends on the political commitment of the party in power. In the Canadian case, commentators note that support has in reality been varied. Canada used to have a Parliamentary Committee on the status of women and persons with disabilities. This was disbanded in the eighties. In many instances parliamentarians are seen as more supportive than party or governmental leaders. Therefore, the demise of the committee was viewed by critics as slippage on the gender equality front. Some advocates have called for a direct yearly reporting to Parliament on the status of Canadian women. Other institutional mechanisms have been abandoned or changed at the federal level – for example, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, an arms length women’s issues research body, was shut down in the mid-nineties and its research funding transferred to the (internal governmental) Status of Women Canada. Status of Women Canada now reports to a Secretary of State, instead of a Cabinet Minister, which is seen as further evidence of downgrading. However there is also evidence that commitment to gender based analysis is firm. For example, as noted earlier, *The Federal Plan for Gender Equality* (1995-2000), represents a very public statement of commitments and a framework for the future. This plan can be used as leverage to ensure that the political and organisational momentum for mainstreaming is maintained.

- **Maintaining Momentum:** Other challenges identified relate to maintaining momentum, that is the need to continue to increase understanding across all departments of the need and benefits of gender-inclusive analysis on an ongoing basis as staff and priorities change; and keeping up with the demand or need for training on gender-inclusive analysis; and ensuring the collection of gender-disaggregated data.

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SECTION 7 MAINTREAMING AND PARLIAMENTS

A recent report\textsuperscript{192} noted the striking lack of information on the work of parliaments in mainstreaming equalities. This absence of focus was seen as all the more surprising given that political will is seen as a crucial variable for the success or failure of such initiatives. The figure below summarises the committees with responsibility for equal opportunities in the national parliaments of the member states of the European Union. The arrangements for European and transnational institutions are also included. As can be seen in Fig. 7.1, specialist equalities committees (often combined with other functions) are the norm at national parliament level in EU member states and within European-level institutions.

At devolved/regional parliament level the picture is more uneven although, in the case of Germany, 13 out of the 16 Länder have specialist committees with a wide range of functions. Figure 7.3 summarises details of parliamentary committees with responsibility for gender equality/equal opportunities in the devolved parliaments of European Union member states. There are specialist committees in two out of 9 Austrian Landtag; two out of 6 Belgian regions/communities; 13 out of 16 German Landtag; and two out of 17 Spanish autonomous regions. Post-devolution, both the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly have established equal opportunities committees.

Committees are highly heterogeneous but have some or all of the following roles and functions:

- Call evidence / require attendance from ministers and civil servants;
- Hold public hearings and public enquiries;
- Call evidence from outside experts;
- Consult and receive submissions from groups and individuals;
- Commission research;
- Publish reports and minutes of evidence;
- Scrutinise government legislative proposals;
- Propose amendments to government legislative proposals;
- Discuss and draft proposals for legislative change;
- Call debates in parliament;
- Monitor and evaluate government policies and their implementation;
- Monitor and evaluate government performance.

**Figure 7.1** Equal Opportunities Committees in National Parliaments, 1997.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Parliamentary House</th>
<th>Title of Committee</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Nationalrat</td>
<td>Gleichbehandlungsausschuss (equal treatment)</td>
<td>sub committees: 1. women’s participation in Public Life 2. Women’s referendums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Chambre</td>
<td>Comité d’avis pour l’émancipation sociale (social emancipation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Eduskunta</td>
<td>Committee for Labour Affairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Sénat</td>
<td>Mission commune d’information sur la place et le rôle des femmes dans la vie publique</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Bundestag</td>
<td>Ausschuss für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (families, older people, women and youth)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Congreso de los Diputados Senado</td>
<td>Comision mixta para los derechos de la mujer (women’s rights)</td>
<td>Joint committee of both Houses. 1 sub committee dealing with international traffic in women and children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Dail Eireann en Seanad Eireann</td>
<td>Joint Committee on women’s rights</td>
<td>Joint Committee of both Houses prior to ’97 elections, now replaced by Joint Committee on Justice, equality and women’s rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Senato della Republica</td>
<td>Comissione Lavaro e Previdenza sociale (work and social welfare)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>Chambre de Députés</td>
<td>Commission spécial Égalité des chances entre femmes et hommes (equal opportunities)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Tweede kamer der Staten-Generaal</td>
<td>Vaste Commissie voor Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid (social affairs and employment)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Assembleia da Republica</td>
<td>Commisao para a Paridade, Igualdade de Opportunidades e Familia (parity, equal opportunities and the family)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Sveriges Riksdag</td>
<td>Arbetmarknadsutkotted (Labour Market)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>House of Commons</td>
<td>Education and Employment Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>European and transnational Institutions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Parliament</td>
<td></td>
<td>Women’s Rights Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interparliamentary Union</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Meeting of Women MPs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council of Europe</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ad Hoc Committee on the equality of the sexes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Figure 5, USGS, 1998.p.32
Preliminary comparative mapping research was carried out in 1997 by CCEO\textsuperscript{193} the network of parliamentary committees responsible for equal opportunities for women and men in the member states of the European Union and in the European parliament. An initial typology divides the countries into three main categories: those with a specialist committee; those where equal opportunities is subsumed within functional remits, most usually social affairs, employment and labour committees; and those countries with no committee structure for dealing with equalities issues.

\textbf{Figure 7.2 Types of Equal Opportunities Committees}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee type</th>
<th>Country examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specialist committees (may also include responsibility for the family, youth and older people)</td>
<td>Austria, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Ireland, Luxembourg and Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committees whose remit includes equal opportunities (primary function most usually relates to social affairs, employment and labour)</td>
<td>Denmark, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No committee structure</td>
<td>Greece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>France limited to a mission of information which is currently shelved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The integration of equal opportunities into the work of functional committees in Scandinavia was seen by the CCEO as an indication of the advanced stage of these parliaments in terms of equalities work.\textsuperscript{194} However, it must be noted that there is less compelling evidence that this is the case in other countries which have eschewed specialist committees such as the United Kingdom and Italy.

\textsuperscript{193} CCEO, CCEO Bulletin No. 1, December 1997.

\textsuperscript{194} Reported in CCEO Bulletin No. 1, December 1997, p.3.
### Figure 7.3 Equal Opportunities Committees in Regional Parliaments (EU)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Parliament</th>
<th>Committee Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Steiermark</td>
<td>Youth, Family and Women’s Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wien</td>
<td>Integration, Women’s Issues, Consumer Protection and Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Walloon</td>
<td>Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities between Men and Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flanders</td>
<td>Working Group on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Berlin</td>
<td>Employment, employment education and women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brandenburg</td>
<td>Work, Social Affairs, Health and Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bremen</td>
<td>Equal Opportunities for Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hamburg</td>
<td>Equal Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hesse</td>
<td>Women, Employment and Social Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Saxony</td>
<td>Equal Opportunities and Women’s Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania</td>
<td>Employment, Health, Social Policy, Family and Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North Rhine Westphalia</td>
<td>Women’s Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rhineland- Palatinate</td>
<td>Women’s Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saarland</td>
<td>Women, Employment, Health and Social Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saxony</td>
<td>Social Affairs, Health, Family and Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thuringia</td>
<td>Equality of Opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Madrid</td>
<td>Women’s Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valencia</td>
<td>Women’s Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>Equal Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>Equal Opportunities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


From the limited examples available, it appeared that most committees drew upon the expertise of academic advisers and, where they exist, statutory equalities agencies. In a
number of cases close working relationships existed between committees and the equalities office in the Executive.\textsuperscript{195} Many of the parliamentary initiatives reported in the literature concern the commissioning of research on the status of women in general (economic and social position, role in public life) or on the specific issues facing women and men in equity groups (for example, male and female migrant workers). In this respect, parliaments have played a very significant role in establishing baseline data. Parliaments and parliamentary committees have also been active in promoting greater representation of women in decision making (within parliaments, executives and ministerially appointed public bodies and advisory committees) and in putting issues such as domestic violence and the international trafficking of women and children on the political agenda. Despite the paucity of systematic data, the report argued that it was possible to identify a number of areas where specialist parliamentary committees could potentially play a key role in mainstreaming strategies.

- Information gathering and research commissioning;
- Educative and awareness raising;
- Alternative/ additional point of contact/ access for individuals and equality groups;
- Scrutiny of legislation and policy makers;
- Initiation of specific equality legislation;
- Monitoring and the development of analytical tools;
- Monitoring gender balance in public and political decision making bodies within the parliament, the government and public bodies;
- Monitoring equality impact of policies and programmes;
- Monitoring overall performance of government in achieving equality objectives;
- As a symbolic and public expression of parliamentary will.

We found little new available information on the work of parliaments in mainstreaming in the current research although the need for political champions was highlighted time and time again in the country examples. Explicit reference to parliaments were made in the case of Canada, where parliamentarians were considered to be important advocates for the strategy at federal level. A Parliamentary Gender Caucus is seen as a crucial component of the Gender Management System devised for promoting mainstreaming in Commonwealth countries (see Section 2). Comprised of committed members of legislature, the role of the groups are to champion mainstreaming by raising awareness, lobbying, promoting equal participation of women and men; and by scrutinising parliamentary structures, procedures and matters under debate. It is clear that further systematic research is needed in this area to allow parliaments and parliamentary committees to learn from each other.

\textsuperscript{195} USGS, \textit{Mainstreaming Equal Opportunities}, 1998, pp.31-38
Mainstreaming in the UK is at an early stage, although much expertise and knowledge already exists at local authority level. Constitutional change and the government’s modernisation agenda are seen as important enabling contexts within which equalities work can develop both collaboratively and distinctively at different levels. Concrete examples are crucial for governments and other public bodies seeking to 'learn' mainstreaming.

In this section we draw upon the experience of different levels of government in Europe and elsewhere to discuss what can be learnt about the opportunities and pitfalls of mainstreaming equalities in practice. The study reviewed mainstreaming developments in a number of countries: Australia (including New South Wales), Austria, Belgium (Flanders), Canada (including British Columbia), Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United States (San Francisco). The study also drew upon a small number of examples of mainstreaming in UK local government.

Benefits of Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming promises much: it is a social justice-led approach to policy making in which equal opportunities principles, strategies and practices are integrated into the every day work of government and other public bodies; it aims to transform the organisational cultures of governments and public bodies and to improve the quality of public policy and of governance itself. It builds upon and complements the work of specialist equality units. Explicit links are made between ‘mainstreaming’ and wider issues of participation and consultation. Gender balance in political, social and economic decision making is seen as both a central plank for the promotion of mainstreaming, and also an important goal. Mainstreaming also requires the close involvement of ordinary women and men, and communities of interest in the policy making process.

Mainstreaming in practice is at a relatively early stage of development and, in most of the countries reviewed, work on mainstreaming is at a preliminary stage involving awareness-raising, establishing the need for mainstreaming, building support and alliances, and sharing ideas and good practice. There has also been the need to establish baseline data, such as gender disaggregated statistics; or carry out auditing of services, policies and departments. In some instances, positive action has been used in creating enabling conditions for successful mainstreaming.

Experiments in mainstreaming have produced tangible benefits including new and innovative ways of thinking and working, new or reinforced collaborative arrangements and cross-cutting working, and the development of new tools. Mainstreaming has provided the impetus for partnership working, amongst different levels of government and amongst public, private and voluntary sectors. There has been an emphasis upon lesson learning and lesson sharing.

For policy leaders, government experience of mainstreaming has been seen to increase problem-solving capacity and to enhance sound evidence-based policy-making. The Canadians sum up this new approach to policy-making as ‘asking new questions and hearing unexpected answers.’ In some instances, policy proposals with unintended and discriminatory implications have been exposed and modified before implementation. For example, analysis
of transport policy in Sweden revealed that while women were the main users of public transport, provision followed male patterns of travel, therefore, ‘public transport answered to the needs of those who do not use it’.  

According to Canadian mainstreaming experts:

Implementing gender-inclusive analysis is an ongoing process. It has raised awareness of the differences in women’s and men’s lives, particularly those that lead to social and economic inequality for women, and of the need to examine our own values, biases and experiences that influence our work. It has increased the sensitivity to the differential impact of policies on women and men and demonstrated how a consideration of these differential impacts can lead to more informed decision-making, increased efficiency and effectiveness, and the removal of barriers to women’s full participation in society, to the benefit of all.

Challenges

The research found that while there has been much innovation in developing mainstreaming strategies, progress has been uneven. A number of common difficulties have been experienced in most or all of the examples reviewed. They include: lack or loss of political will and bureaucratic support; resistance from public officials; lack of gender balance in decision-making; poor understanding; inadequate resources including information, budgets, personnel, tools and expertise; ineffective structures; a lack of systematic and strategic planning and implementation; and vulnerability to change. Embedding mainstreaming in organisational practices has proved problematic due to a lack of ownership by middle managers and staff. A ‘blame culture’ existed in some cases, where staff felt they were more likely to be penalised if they attempted equalities work and got it wrong, than if they did nothing at all. These weaknesses make it difficult, in some cases, to move beyond mainstreaming as a mere ‘tick and dash’ paper exercise.

Mainstreaming is a strategy that can, without care, degenerate into tokenism where public commitment is given in principle but where in practice little is achieved. There is consensus in the literature, reinforced in this current review, that explicit, high profile and sustained political support is perhaps the single most important variable in the success or failure of mainstreaming. Equality policies both mainstream and specific depend upon clear political commitment and the recognition that the state can act as a site of social justice. We see this demonstrated most clearly in the Nordic countries and in Canada, where it has contributed to an integrated approach to mainstreaming. Slovenia provides an instructive case of a country with no track record in equalities work and lacking most of the commonly accepted prerequisites to mainstreaming which, with high level political will, a committed ‘driver’ as co-ordinator and the proactive support of the UN has already effected some change. Conversely, the case of New Zealand underscores the fact that well devised strategies will not get off the starting block without political and organisational will. The case of New South Wales demonstrates that a change of political leadership can lead to the stalling of equalities work.

Mainstreaming has been viewed by some as a political ‘quick fix’ and potentially a cheaper alternative to existing equalities structures and machinery. In some places, policies have been constructed as highly visible ‘political monuments’ rather than as concrete measures.

**Mainstreaming and specialist units**

In a number of cases mainstreaming has resulted in the dismantling of equality units and the loss of specialist projects. Whilst a mainstream approach is essential if equality issues are to be embedded within policy making structures, it operates most effectively when coupled with a powerful specialist co-ordinating body and ongoing specialist equality work. Without co-ordinating structures and lines of accountability, mainstreaming can become ‘everyone’s responsibility and no-one’s job’; in other words, mainstreaming becomes an excuse to do nothing.

The following roles have been identified for equality policy machinery in complementing and supporting mainstreaming:

- Tackling specific issues of inequality with specialist policies and initiatives;
- Acting as a think tank for developing analyses of inequality;
- Development of techniques and tools for ‘mainstreaming’;
- Providing expertise and specialist knowledge;
- Disseminating knowledge;
- Publicising government commitment to equality and its achievements;
- Training and awareness raising;
- Acting as an internal lobby;
- Acting as co-ordinator for ‘mainstreaming’ initiatives and point of contact;
- Monitoring overall government performance in achieving equality goals and targets.

**Public sector change**

A number of case studies also illustrated the opportunities and dangers presented by rapid change in the public sector. Governments and public bodies in Europe, North America and Australia/New Zealand have undergone massive restructuring in search of leaner, more efficient and, in some cases, ‘entrepreneurial’ government in the 1980s and 1990s. On the one hand, mainstreaming can be seen as an integral part of the drive for modern ‘joined up’ and responsive government; on the other hand in circumstances of internal upheaval, policy continuity is hard to maintain and cross-agency working disrupted. The emphasis on smaller government often leads to a focus on ‘core work’ which makes it difficult to achieve and maintain gender inclusiveness and a focus on wider equalities on political agendas. There are also issues of accountability, influence and control for central policy making in devolved or privatised agencies.

There are explicit resource implications for mainstreaming and experience from a number of our case studies suggests explicit budget lines may facilitate its successful operation. These must be contrasted with the hidden costs of not ‘mainstreaming’.
Mainstreaming in principle and practice

The commonly recognised prerequisites or enabling conditions for successful mainstreaming include: specific equality legislation, structures and policy; statistics disaggregated by gender, race, disability and the like; comprehensive knowledge of gender relations and patterns of social division; knowledge of government organisations and administration; necessary funds and human resources; and the equal participation of women and men (and the fair participation of equality groups) in political and public life and in decision-making processes. The review however shows that not all these conditions need to be in place before mainstreaming initiatives are launched. Some commentators also note that resistance to mainstreaming can take the form of stating that mainstreaming cannot start until various enabling conditions are in place, such as attitudinal change.

Policy leaders such as the Nordic countries and Canada are the clearest examples of holistic or integrated approaches to mainstreaming. Both adopt a multi-level partnership approach which involves high profile and long term political support, effective structures and networks, and the use of a co-ordinated range of analytical, educational, organisational, and consultative strategies. There is a commitment to mainstreaming at national, regional and local level and action research has been funded to develop and systemise gender equality analysis. Mainstreaming takes place against an established record in specific equalities work, and is supported and co-ordinated by specialist structures.

Practice is evolving elsewhere, and sometimes consists of piecemeal developments and one-off or pilot projects. The development of training and tools has sometimes taken place in the absence of more systematic structures and therefore should be seen as preliminary initiatives rather than as evidence of mainstreaming in action. In some examples, mainstreaming developments are underway in countries with little or no background in equalities work; in other examples, countries with long-established records have been slower to adopt formal or explicit mainstreaming strategies, although much of their work ‘retrofits.’ In some cases there is reluctance to label integrated gender-based analysis as ‘mainstreaming’ because of experiences of mainstreaming being used as an excuse to disband specialist structures.

Mainstreaming is a term which is increasingly used, but is less well understood. There is misunderstanding and confusion over the meaning of ‘mainstreaming’ and related concepts. Mainstreaming is sometimes referred to as a tool, sometimes a process or method, and sometimes as a strategy. The conceptual confusion about mainstreaming - is it a strategy? is it a method? is it just a buzz word we use to relabel what we are already doing? - was evident in some of the country examples. The cases reviewed also reinforce other findings which suggest that, whilst, advances have been made in developing tools, there has been less progress in developing overall systems and strategies, and in deepening understanding of the conceptual issues underpinning mainstreaming.

Principles, systems and tools

It is useful to think of mainstreaming in terms of principles, systems, framework tools and discrete tools and techniques. Mainstreaming is supported by principles which set out commitment to, and conceptions of, equality, and systems consisting of strategies, policies, structures, mechanisms and tools through which these principles can be put into practice.
The Gender Management System (GMS) is a good example of a mainstreaming system. GMS has three main components; structures, mechanisms and processes, which need to be developed within an enabling environment. Structures to drive, co-ordinate and scrutinise include: a lead agency, usually the national women’s policy machinery; a gender management team; gender focal points comprising designated senior staff members in each ministry or department; an inter-ministerial steering committee; a parliamentary gender caucus; and a gender equality commission or council made up of representatives of civil society. Within these systematic structures various tools or mechanisms are employed to implement mainstreaming. Examples of strong co-ordinating structures, inter departmental working and collaboration at different levels of government, include the Nordic Council, Sweden, Norway, Canada and the Canadian Province of British Columbia.

**Tools** are diverse (see below) and can be used separately or as part of a framework or package. For example, ‘The 3Rs’ method involves both quantitative and qualitative methods which may include gender statistics, customer surveys, site visits, observation and interviews. Mainstreaming is an active process combining different elements. The Dutch EER creator, Mieke Verloo, makes this point when she insists that mainstreaming cannot be reduced to the use of a technical instrument, such as Gender Impact Assessment or equality proofing; although such instruments play an important role they do so within wider strategies and systems.

There are three broad categories of tools: analytical, educational and consultative and participatory. Analytical tools are designed to 'expose' the problem. Tools include: disaggregated statistics; surveys and forecasts; research; check lists; guidelines and terms of reference; gender impact assessment and differential impact analysis models; indicators; and monitoring tools. Educational tools are designed to raise awareness, to transfer knowledge, and to support training. Tools include: awareness-raising and training courses; follow-up action; mobile or flying experts; manuals and handbooks; booklets and leaflets; educational material for use in schools. Consultative and participatory tools are designed to improve the quality of policy-making and deepen democracy. For example, working or steering groups and think tanks; directories; databases and organisational charts; participation of both sexes - and all social groups - in decision-making; conferences and seminars; hearings and consultative fora (see Section 2).

**Understandings of equality**

Some of the conceptual confusion surrounding mainstreaming relates to differing ideas and approaches to equality (see Section 1).

- **Equal treatment approaches** work on the assumption that treating men and women as if they were the same guarantees equal opportunities. There is increasing recognition that ‘gender-neutral’ approaches may not necessarily produce equitable results because women and men have different life experiences which must be considered.

- **Positive action** or the women’s perspective takes into account the differences between women and men. Women are viewed as a disadvantaged social group and the approach aims to redress some of the historical and structural inequalities which result from the differences between men and women.
- *The Gender perspective* focuses on both women and men, and recognises differences amongst groups of women and groups of men. It seeks to reorganise government and policy making to more fairly distribute resources and human responsibilities; this involves changes to men’s roles as well as those of women.

All three strands should be seen as complementary and are crucial to successful mainstreaming. Mainstreaming is seen as a ‘three-legged stool’ with each approach representing a support.

**Mainstreaming issues, problems and correctives**

The following table summarises some of the main issues raised by mainstreaming as a strategy, together with potential correctives. Potential issues can be divided into four main categories: issues relating to understanding; procedural and structural issues; resources; and political and organisational commitment. The summary is based upon issues highlighted in previous research, the findings from the current review and also, given the limited experience of mainstreaming in operation, it draws upon Council of Europe Group of Experts’ reflection or prediction of the likely difficulties in mainstreaming effectively.

**Figure 8.1 Summary of mainstreaming issues, problems and correctives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Potential Correctives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Misunderstanding the concept of mainstreaming by assuming that it replaces specific equalities initiatives</td>
<td>Dilution or cessation of specific equalities policy machinery and work. Equalities issues might disappear or become over fragmented.</td>
<td>Retention of specific equalities policy machinery and specific equalities policy work.</td>
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<td>Conceptual Issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limited concept of equality</td>
<td>Focus on anti discrimination or <em>de jure</em> equality will stall mainstreaming initiatives - women and other equity groups will continue to be seen as the ‘problem.’</td>
<td>Introduction of broader definitions of equality, involving human rights, diversity and difference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confusing mainstreaming</td>
<td>Conducting a gender impact assessment may be interpreted as mainstreaming, but GIA is only a tool.</td>
<td>Clarify concepts and goals. Emphasise the holistic and long term nature of mainstreaming.</td>
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<tr>
<td>as a strategy with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>mainstreaming tools or techniques.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementation Issues</td>
<td>While commitment to mainstreaming may be in place, knowledge of how to translate this into practice is lacking.</td>
<td>No understanding of ‘what mainstreaming is’ in a concrete sense.</td>
<td>Use of hypothetical cases in training exercises, 'flying experts' development of tools for policy impact appraisal, development of structures.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Procedural and Structural Issues</strong></td>
<td><strong>Limitations in traditional policy making processes and organisational procedures.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mainstreaming involves the introduction of gender and/or equalities perspectives into functional areas. This can be frustrated by departmental territorialism; by the rigidities of old ways of doing things; and by reluctance to involve non traditional social partners in consultation.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Changes in policy making procedure to involve greater cross departmental co operation and the creation of new channels for the consultation and involvement of new external political actors e.g. community groups, NGOs and ordinary citizens.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vulnerability to restructuring / loss of committed individuals</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mainstreaming which relies on the support of particular individuals or 'champions' is very vulnerable to organisational changes and to individual career patterns and political fortunes.</strong></td>
<td><strong>'Embed' mainstreaming in the organisations structures by creating new systems and structures. Create and develop support and ownership in all departments and at all levels.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lack of adequate tools and techniques.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Existing policy tools and techniques might not be adequate - this may lead to badly implemented mainstreaming - or a lack of implementation at all.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Need to develop new tools, e.g. gender impact assessment and adapt existing ones, e.g. the integration of gender, race and (dis) ability into statistical data collection and analysis.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lack of sufficient knowledge about gender equality and other equality issues</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mainstreaming means that equality matters will no longer be (only) in the hands of specific equality machineries. Casual assumptions that professionalism and officer neutrality is a guarantor of equal treatment; nay mean that non specialist actors fail to identify gender interests or to implement good gender equality policies. They might also neglect other equalities dimensions and fail to appreciate the complex interplay amongst them.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Need to build up gender and other equalities-related expertise amongst all policy actors through training etc. Use of specialist expertise, for example ‘flying experts.’ Attention paid to under representation of women in general, and women and men in other equity groups in decision making and consultative roles.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lack of human and financial resources</strong></td>
<td><strong>Because mainstreaming involves ‘ordinary’ actors and policies, financial and human resources need to be found from generic budgets. Failure to provide enough resources will undermine the effectiveness and credibility of mainstreaming as a strategy.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Political will. Specific budget lines. For example, The European Women’s Lobby has given particular emphasis to the need for effective monitoring and the need to include special budget lines for equal opportunities within the European Union’s budget. For example, equalities considerations have to be mainstreamed into All Structural Fund applications.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>'Burn out' of committed individuals due to lack of human resources and lack of support within the organisation</strong></td>
<td><strong>If mainstreaming work is left to committed individuals without proper resources or support, these individuals may experience 'burn out' as the load is too heavy, both physically and psychologically. Further 'committed people' are often those who are marginalised in structures due to their gender, and/or race/ethnic origin, age, sexuality etc.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Put in place structures which ensure that all people will be involved in mainstreaming. Delegate responsibilities and create posts with sufficient time for the work. Create support networks and opportunities to discuss difficulties / resistance for those involved.</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Political and Organisational Commitment</td>
<td>Mainstreaming as ‘fashion statement’ rather than concrete policy.</td>
<td>Mainstreaming is currently a fashionable concept. Governments may state that equality is to be integrated into all policies but do nothing to put commitments into practice or only superficially support mainstreaming initiatives</td>
<td>Political will and commitment - visible champions. Gender balance in decision making and consultative bodies and fair representation of equity groups. Robust systems of monitoring and evaluation. Compulsory reporting of progress, for example all public bodies in Wales will have to place an annual report before the Welsh Assembly detailing the progress they have made in respect of equalities. Equality targets built into performance appraisal systems. Scrutiny of performance by equality policy machinery and specialist parliamentary committees. Building commitment through education and training internally; and externally through making the public case and disseminating achievements and success; and through meaningful consultation and participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waning of commitment over time</td>
<td>Mainstreaming is a long-term strategy, after the initial launch, commitment and momentum can slacken; this can lead to disillusionment and ‘weariness’ among those involved.</td>
<td>Reiterate commitments from top levels in official statements and documents. Use monitoring and evaluation to reward good practices, provide ongoing training and awareness-raising.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy</td>
<td>Mainstreaming fails to provide a more democratic element to governance</td>
<td>Mainstream policy is not sufficiently based in the needs of those it affects. It is technocratic and inward-looking. It does not increase access for the community in the decision-making and policy-making processes.</td>
<td>Development of methods for consultation and participation. Collection and analysis of data disaggregated by gender and cross-tabulated by race/ethnicity, age, disability, class, etc. Methods for improving representation of women and of equality groups in decision-making and policy-making processes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abridged and adapted from Council of Europe, 1998, USGS, 1998 with additional materials from country reviews.

**The needs of successful mainstreaming**

Shortfalls in knowledge, awareness and techniques are common to the experience of mainstreaming in most countries. In many of the examples, much of the innovative practice is
dependent on the commitment and experience of a surprisingly small number of politicians and specialist officers, who understand equality issues very well. Despite increasing public statements of commitment to mainstreaming equalities principles by governments, public bodies and councils, there is as yet little evidence that the majority of politicians or public officials really understand how this might be applied to specific issues. In a number of cases, resistance has been linked to lack of understanding and, conversely, support for mainstreaming has grown as awareness has risen. In those places where mainstreaming has had a longer history there are other issues related to maintaining momentum and meeting the challenge of political and organisational change. This suggests that mainstreaming is a long term strategy requiring substantial investment in training and specialist support, the production of gender and equalities disaggregated statistics and other ‘mapping’ data, the employment of multiple strategies and tools, and the involvement of a wide range of internal and external actors including specialist practitioners, statutory equality agencies, academics, social partners and ‘ordinary’ women and men. The need for awareness raising and equalities policy appraisal training cannot be over emphasised and must be seen as an on going process rather than a ‘one-off.’

To summarise, this review of developments in mainstreaming underlines the following needs for successful implementation:

- **The need for political will and leadership which is unambiguous, consistent and regularly restated in public.**
  - public commitment to the principles and goals of mainstreaming

- **The need for managerial drive and commitment at top level.**

- **The need for political and bureaucratic accountability including the duty to demonstrate by, for example:**
  - Action Plans and progress reports
  - equality impact statements
  - performance appraisal systems

- **The need for integrated systems for the co-ordination, monitoring and championing of mainstreaming, for instance:**
  - ministerial, organisational and parliamentary champions
  - a mainstreaming director or co-ordinator to progress and maintain momentum
  - mainstreaming management team
  - specialist equality units
  - equality focal points in ministries and departments
  - inter departmental and intergovernmental working groups
  - communication and dissemination strategies
  - management information systems

- **The need to embed equalities in a permanent and sustainable way, for example, through:**
ongoing training and awareness raising
building understanding of gender and equalities issues
developing sector specific policy case studies and analyses
robust systems of monitoring and evaluation
communication
fostering a sense of ownership - by policy makers, service providers, equality groups and citizens.
a move away from a blame culture
effective incentives (and sanctions)

The need for a statistics and research strategy to support sound evidence-based policy making, including:

- gender disaggregated statistics - cross tabulated by race, age and disability
- annual compendium of equality statistics
- timely research which is gender and diversity sensitive
- equality indicators

The need for the adaptation and development of appropriate methodologies, tools and mechanisms for policy appraisal.

The need for equalities expertise (and the recognition of equalities expertise), for example:

- recognition of ‘gender know how’ and skill
- role of specialist units in co-ordinating and supporting mainstreaming
- specialist staff and ‘flying experts’
- input from statutory equality agencies and academics

The need for gender balance in decision making and the fair representation of members of equality groups; and for a socially representative workforce.

- the need for ordinary voices to be heard through:
  - consultative fora
  - development of innovative tools to involve women and men in general, and members of equality groups in policy development

The need for secure and realistic resources for change.

The need for collaborative learning and exchange of good practice.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has addressed the issue of how mainstreaming equal opportunities can be instigated and sustained in the work of government and public bodies by drawing upon lessons from elsewhere. It has considered, analysed and reported upon developments in mainstreaming practice and research in the 1990s and has drawn upon concrete case examples of innovative practice of mainstreaming at various government levels in Europe
and beyond. This review develops understanding of mainstreaming, identifies gaps in knowledge and highlights the strategies, structures and tools needed for successful mainstreaming. Practice is evolving, therefore the Scottish parliament has the opportunity to develop its own model of best practice. Future systematic research is needed to draw lessons from the experiences of policy leaders in the Nordic countries and Canada and from UK local government. Research is also needed in the area of parliaments and mainstreaming to allow parliaments and parliamentary committees to learn from each other.

**Developing a Generic Equalities Approach**

Gender equality has been the primary focus of mainstreaming in theory and practice, although more advanced models tend to incorporate a diversity perspective; in other words they take into account the realities of women’s and men’s lives in respect of race, disability and other dimensions of discrimination and disadvantage, including class, sexuality and religion. Some commentators have argued that mainstreaming - developed around gender equality - may not be able to be ‘stretched’ to fit other sorts of equalities. We would agree with others, such as Teresa Rees, that mainstreaming *as a principle* is applicable across-the-board although how mainstreaming operates in practice, by what tools, and with what outcomes may differ.

The logic of mainstreaming equality within the UK - and, increasingly the EU - context implies that a generic approach should be developed. Examples of mainstreaming from other equalities perspectives remain rare but, when they do occur, they tend to be less sensitive to gender. Extensive work is needed to find practical lessons in mainstreaming other sorts of equalities for example race, disability, age and sexual orientation and to chart the connections amongst them. Such work needs to be gender-sensitive. UK local government and various levels of government in Canada are two useful starting points.

Easy assumptions cannot be made that concepts, systems and tools developed for gender mainstreaming can be automatically utilised for other equality groups, although it is undoubtedly the case that some are amenable for wider use. Work is therefore needed to develop understanding of the requirements of a generic equalities approach which works with commonalities but also recognises that different dimensions of inequality may require different sorts of analyses and specific solutions. Mainstreaming must also be underpinned by an understanding of the complex interaction amongst different dimensions of difference and discrimination which tend to be undertheorised in equal opportunities programmes and initiatives. Dilution and blandness are the very real potential dangers of a generic approach. A generic mainstreaming equalities approach would need, as a starting point, to combine the following approaches:

- **Equal treatment approaches** and anti discrimination policies and legislation (there must also be recognition that some equalities groups do not have legal protection and full civil rights).

- **Positive action - or group perspective - approaches** which recognise the historic and current impact of discriminating structures and practices on different social groups, including women as a social group.
• **Gender/diversity approaches** which recognise the impact of gender, the differences amongst women and amongst men, and the existence of multiple discrimination.

Defining mainstreaming as a strategy which draws upon legislative, social group and diversity analyses has various benefits. It enables the development of policy tools and decisions which are sensitive to the different legislative contexts within the UK; which take into account the significance of gender as it affects all women and all men; acknowledges the impact of social group disadvantage (based on for example race/ethnicity, age, disability and sexual orientation); and exposes the existence of multiple discrimination and the realities for those often made invisible by an approach which does not recognise the existence of gender as a division within equality groups (for example black women). Mainstreaming may result in positive action for certain groups of women and certain groups of men.

There is a need to draw upon, and apply, existing theoretical work which has charted and explored the different mechanisms and rationales which underpin and perpetuate different structural inequalities. Further theoretical work is also needed to move beyond simplistic understandings of ‘double jeopardy’ and to draw, for example, upon the insights of black feminists and disability theorists, to construct more sophisticated understanding of the impact of ‘simultaneous’ experience of different dimensions of difference and disadvantage.
SECTION 9   BIBLIOGRAPHY


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SELECTED WEB-SITES

**Europe**
CERES http://www.empleored.com/ceres/imarcomanumain.htm
Trans-faire http://perso.wanadoo.fr/elq/drdf
Europa SCAD database: http://www.europa.eu.int/scadplus/
Council of Europe: http://www.coe.fr/

**UK**
Commonwealth Secretariat: http://www.thecommonwealth.org/gender
Equal Opportunities Commission :http://www.eoc.org.uk/
Liverpool Feminist Legal Research Unit: http://www.liv.ac.uk/~scooper/pip.html
Women’s Unit, PAET: http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/womens-unit/1999/equal.htm
Welsh Assembly: http://www.wales.gov.uk/
Scottish Parliament: http://www.scottish.parliament.uk
Engender: http://www.engender.org.uk
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland: http://www.equalityni.org/

**Australia**
Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women, Australia http://www.dpmc.gov.au
New South Wales Department for Women: http://www.dfa.nsw.gov.au
Equal Opportunities Commission Victoria, Australia: http://www.eoc.vicnet.net.au

**Canada**
Canadian Indian Affairs and Northern Development: http://www.inac.gc.ca
Ministry of Women’s Equality, British Columbia: http://www.weq.gov.bc.ca
Status of Women Canada: http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca
Women’s Bureau Human Resources Development Canada: http://www.hrde-drhc.gc.ca/stratpol/women/home.shtml

**New Zealand**
New Zealand Ministry for Women’s Affairs: http://www.mwa.govt.nz
State Services Commission in New Zealand: http://www.ssc.govt.nz

**Nordic Countries**
Danish Centre for Information on Women and Gender: http://www.kvinfo.dk
Denmark Ministry of Social Affairs: http://www.sm.dk.
Equalities Unit, Ministry of Labour, Sweden: http://www.regeringen.se
Ministry of Children and Family Affairs, Norway: http://www.odin.dep.no/bfd/eng/
Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finland: http://www.vn.fi/stm/english/index.htm
Office of Gender Equality in Iceland: http://www.jafnretti.is
Office for the Ombudsman of Equality, Finland: http://www.tasa-arvo.fi/english.html
US
Commission on the Status of Women US: http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/cose
San Francisco Commission on the Status of women: http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/cosw/

World
Interparliamentary Union: www.ipu.org/wnn-e/world.htm
UN Women watch: http://www.un.org/womenwatch
UN Gender in development programme: http://www.undp.org/undp/gender
APPENDIX 1

Learning from experience: Lessons in Mainstreaming Equal Opportunities

Basic question schedule.

- What definition of mainstreaming was used?
- What were the aims of introducing a mainstreaming strategy?
- How was mainstreaming put into operation?

Could you please give details about:

- which department or section was involved?
- which particular policy areas was mainstreaming applied?
- why were these areas chosen?
- the type and duration of project (for instance are they ongoing/open-ended or time limited, if so how long?)
- How was the mainstreaming strategy co-ordinated? Who held responsibility?
- who was involved on a day to day level with mainstreaming?
- would these people have been involved in equal opportunities policy previously?
- were experts brought in from outside the department? If so, where did they come from?
- Did mainstreaming change the way people thought about their work?
- Did mainstreaming change the policy-making process? If so, in what ways? (for example has mainstreaming involved cross-departmental working, tackling cross-cutting issues, consultation with external organisations etc?)
- What are the key differences between the mainstreaming strategy and previous equalities strategies?
- What are the main strengths of the mainstreaming approach?
- What problems have been encountered? (for example, has it been made possible for those who previously had not worked with or had experience of equality issues to define relevant questions (problems and to know who to consult?)
- What needs were experienced in terms of training? How were these met?
• How has mainstreaming been monitored and evaluated. Did this depend on the specific project?

• Where has support for implementing a mainstreaming strategy come from? (e.g. ministers, officials, elected officials etc.)

• Does the Parliament have an Equal Opportunities Committee or other equivalent?

• What role does the Parliament / Parliamentary Committee play in Mainstreaming?

• What resistance, if any, was encountered?

Have you any other comments?