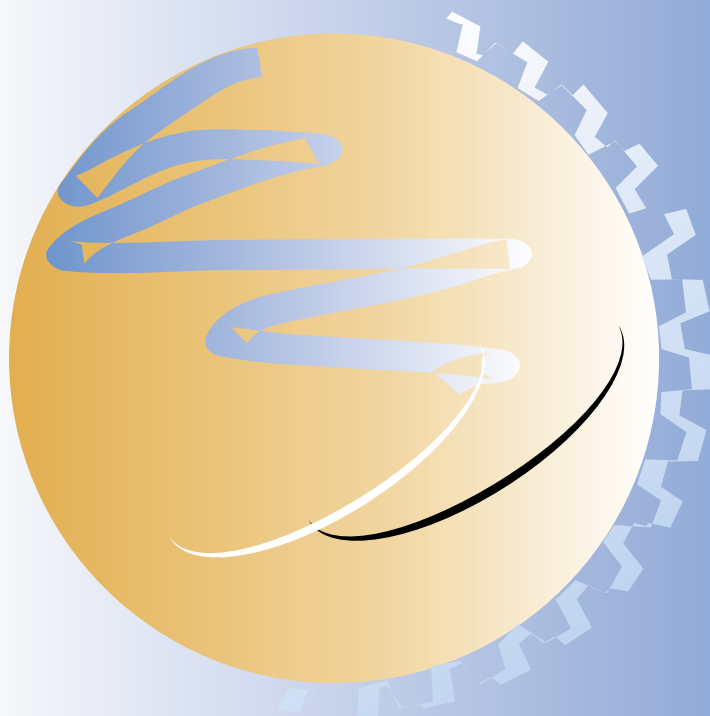




UNIVERSITY of OULL  
OULUN YLIOPISTO  
KAJANI UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM

# PUTTING EQUALITY INTO PRACTICE: A TOOLKIT



*Edited by*  
**Marja-Leena Haataja**  
**Johanna Matinmikko**





# PUTTING EQUALITY INTO PRACTICE

## *A Toolkit*

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## FOREWORD

Several years of experience in equality work have shown that project actors and government officials need a practical tool they can use to concretise gender equality. The idea of writing this book was born during a Finnish EQUAL project called WomenIT (2001–2006) and its publication was made possible by a training project implemented by the Adult Education Unit of the Kajaani University Consortium and the Finnish Ministry of Labour entitled “Promoting gender equality under the Objective 3 and EQUAL programmes 2006–2007”.

The themes and examples presented here came up during the training events and are key issues for gender equality. The articles are written by Finnish experts involved in equality work. Riitta Kangasharju writes about equality from the perspective of the current European Social Fund (ESF) programming period and related projects. In the second article Marja-Leena Haataja looks into the concept and practice of mainstreaming. In her contribution, Leena Teräs provides basic information about gender impact assessment (GIA) and presents the case of GIA on the Regional Strategic Programme of the Oulu Region. Workplace equality planning as a development tool is presented by Sinikka Mustakallio. Margita Lukkarinen’s article offers perspectives on how gender equality can be taken into consideration in regional development. In his contribution, Jussi Aaltonen points out that men are also needed in equality work as equality will not progress if it remains just a women’s issue. The final section of the book is an extensive toolkit for addressing gender throughout the different stages of a project. The toolkit is edited by Johanna Matinmikko.


We hope this guide will provide insights into equality and its concretisation. We will be happy to receive any comments or ideas for improvements and would like to thank all those participating in the different events, the authors of the articles as well as Eija Leinonen, Ritvaleena Leinonen, Sanna Kallioinen, Marjo Riitta Tervonen and Leena Teräs for ideas, discussions, comments and suggestions for improvements that we received, especially while compiling the toolkit.

Kajaani, 20 June 2007

**Marja-Leena Haataja**

Oulu, 20 June 2007

**Johanna Matinmikko**



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## **The new ESF programming period and its challenges for gender equality**

Finland tends to think of itself as a model country for equality, and quite a few other EU countries share this view of Finland. But is this really true? Does our gender pay gap not leave a lot of room for improvement? Are women still not underrepresented in executive positions and among entrepreneurs? Is responsibility for the home and children not still mainly carried by women? Does atypical employment not remain more common among young, educated women than men? So is there still not reason for the advancement of gender equality in Finland?

The UN Fourth World Conference of Women (Beijing 1995) found that equal treatment of women and men or positive action mainly targeted at women are not enough to achieve gender equality. After the Beijing conference, the EU adopted a dual strategy on the promotion of gender equality. Firstly, the promotion of gender equality should be integrated into all policies and measures, at all levels and at all stages by taking the gender perspective – the effects of actions on the respective situation of women and men – into account. This is called gender mainstreaming. In addition, specific (also called positive) actions towards the promotion of equality will still be needed. These can be targeted at women or men, depending on which gender is in a more disadvantaged position.

In the previous programming period this dual strategy was recorded in all European Social Fund (ESF) programming documents, which in itself was positive. Unfortunately the implementation was not a great success. At times it was even difficult to find specific equality projects. Applications received were not good enough or there were not enough of them. Not to mention how rare gender mainstreaming was. The gender perspective remained practically unseen in projects other than equality projects.

Therefore we can ask if gender equality is not found interesting or impor-

tant. We are often reminded that equality should be seen more widely. It certainly should, but we also ought to remember that the disabled, long-term unemployed, immigrants and those at risk of exclusion are at the same time women or men and that the gender equality issue is also present in this wider concept of equality. Therefore they are not mutually exclusive.

According to the results of an analysis of the Finnish operating environment carried out for the new programming period, the key gender equality challenges found were reducing the gender pay gap, achieving vertical and horizontal desegregation in employment, reaching a more equal division of family responsibilities between parents, and facilitating the reconciliation of work and family life through legislative actions and workplace practices.

The new programming document does not feature a separate measure on gender equality, but specific actions that can be targeted at both men and women may be implemented under all priorities. Such actions may include desegregation, promotion of women's entrepreneurship, reconciliation of work and family life and promotion of equal pay. In addition, the promotion of gender equality must be integrated into all actions at all levels and in all phases (mainstreaming).

Gender mainstreaming is bound to remain a major challenge in the new programming period. In Finland we are used to a gender-neutral approach that can also be called gender blindness. At its best this approach can only maintain the current situation, but it can even end up increasing disparities between those with different starting points. Gender mainstreaming has also been regarded as a concept that is very difficult to understand, but is it really?

To simplify we can say that if a programme or project is targeted at people – which is what ESF ultimately should be about – the situation should always be assessed from a gender perspective: are women and men affected differently in this respect and what should be done to eradicate any disparities?

Finland's national operating environment was analysed from the gender perspective and the challenges discovered were as listed above. Efforts have been made to achieve the same at the large area level. In programme implementation, gender equality should be adopted as one of the selection criteria, and external experts should be employed in the selection process if expertise cannot be found among those involved in the process. Gender mainstreaming also obviously calls for sufficient provision of support and training to projects throughout their lifecycles. Likewise, indicators are also important. After all, in practice you will do what

will be measured. It is essential that all data gathered is disaggregated by gender and that progress made towards equality is measured.

Even at project level, situations or problems should be analysed from a gender perspective. This will help better target any measures, and the project outcomes will be improved. Gender mainstreaming should be adopted as one of the project objectives, and the gender perspective should be taken into consideration throughout the project lifecycle. When measures are planned and members of the target group heard, both men and women should be listened to. This will ensure there is actual demand for the project and it will respond to actual needs. The project should seek access to equality expertise if it is not already found among staff. Once gender mainstreaming has been adopted as one of the project objectives, progress made towards reaching it naturally needs to be monitored and evaluated. And if the project is successful in promoting gender equality, these good practices should be disseminated and integrated into normal activity. Overall, the bridge between projects and mainstream policies should definitely be strengthened. The construction of this bridge is also one of the funders' responsibilities. Those involved should learn how to use the ESF programme as a product development instrument. This is all the more important now that appropriations have been cut and will be cut further in the future.

All of us must also have personal experiences of how easy it is to forget the gender perspective in our day-to-day work unless we make a point of paying constant attention to it. Bearing it in mind could, however, make the issues we deal with richer and more interesting and improve the outcomes of our work. Proof of this can be seen in the positive results gained from actions such as gender impact assessments in legislative projects. And even if the previous programming period was not a splendid success in the field of gender equality, we can fix this during the current period and do better this time.

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## **Day-to-day mainstreaming**

Gender mainstreaming was the overarching theme of a training project implemented by the Adult Education Unit of the Kajaani University Consortium and the Finnish Ministry of Labour entitled "Promoting gender equality under the Objective 3 and EQUAL programmes 2006–2007". This article presents the key concepts of mainstreaming and their practical implementation through the case of the WomenIT project<sup>1</sup>.

Gender mainstreaming means translating project outcomes and good practices into wider and more general practices and policies locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. These measures further the process towards gender equality, including equality in businesses and educational institutions and different levels of policy- and decision-making in society. It must be visible among officials and actors.

The European Union implements a dual strategy for the promotion of gender equality. The promotion of gender equality is integrated into all actions at all levels and in all phases by taking into consideration their impacts on women and men respectively. In addition, specific actions such as separate projects that can be targeted at either women or men are implemented.

Finland made a commitment to gender mainstreaming when it signed the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 and joined the European Union, with

the Treaty of the European Union requiring gender mainstreaming.<sup>1</sup> Under Finland's Equality Act, public authorities have the duty of promoting gender mainstreaming as part of their activities. Areas in which mainstreaming is applied include the preparation and implementation of ministerial functions such as programmes and projects. The Government Programme of Finland's Cabinet for 2003–2007 stated that the promotion of gender equality is the responsibility of the entire Government and that the Government will mainstream gender equality throughout public administration.

The promotion of gender equality cannot take place as a separate side-stream, through separate functions. Instead, it must be part of the mainstream: the promotion of gender equality must be integrated into all activities.

In addition to gender mainstreaming, the term 'mainstreaming' is also used as a broader concept for the strategy of disseminating good practices and results. Related concepts are 'dissemination' and 'rooting':

- The active distribution of results and good practices is called **dissemination**. It is an interactive process where the dissemination of results and good practices also aims to make the recipient understand the gist of the message.
- **Rooting** refers to efforts to make results and best practices take root primarily in actor organisations in cooperation with the actors. The rooting phase can be seen to begin at the start of project activity and end when the practice or activity created has become part of everyday life.

A good mainstreaming process is based on good planning that begins as soon as the project idea is born. A well-formulated plan and its constant assessment promote the success of the process<sup>3</sup>.

Essential in the success of mainstreaming work is not just using the correct terminology but actually understanding what mainstreaming is about and how it is linked with social activity.

## **The case of mainstreaming in the WomenIT project**

The Finnish WomenIT project (2001–2006) aimed to eradicate gender segregation in employment. Its goal was to affect structures and practices that maintain this segregation and at the same time cause inequality in

other areas in society. WomenIT project activity also focused on encouraging girls and women to enter the field technology where they are underrepresented.

In WomenIT, gender mainstreaming was seen as a strategy for change. Mainstreaming is a strategy that questions and changes everyday routines and consists of good methods and materials.

### **WomenIT is a good example of the three-phase nature of mainstreaming:**

1. WomenIT was a mainstreaming project.
2. Mainstreaming work during project implementation consisted of two parts:
  - a. mainstreaming spanning the entire project;
  - b. a phase with separate resourcing in accordance with the EQUAL programme.
3. Post-mainstreaming, i.e. the current phase.

WomenIT has a clear strategy and desired state (equality). The target was to advance the status of women and men and change a gender-blind culture. Mainstreaming was seen as societal activity. The project also utilised outcomes, knowledge and experiences from previous projects to reach its goal.

Also essential was that the project had a clear function: acting as an innovation environment and developer. Project work is goal-oriented activity, and it also creates resources and know-how for mainstreaming work.

WomenIT can at least to a certain extent be said to have reached its objective when it comes to affecting structures and practices. The project period strengthened the view that change in decision-making and preparation of issues will not take place if government officials and politicians are not aware of equality issues and the significance of gender. Alongside continuous corrective action, preventive work is needed. Training is a good tool for gender mainstreaming.

### **Several different methods and tools can be used in mainstreaming work:**

#### ■ **Statistics**

Making gender visible in statistics and government documents; there are women and men behind statistics and figures.

- **The Equality Act and equality plans**
- **Monitoring, follow-up, assessment**
- **Gender impact assessment (GIA); see article in this book**
- **Training**
- **Materials**
- **Proposals to government and politicians for action based on practices created**
- **Productisation**
- **Information provision; speeches, papers, articles.**

WomenIT employed several mainstreaming methods, with the most important of these being proposals for action aimed at politicians and government officials that described phenomena that had come up during the project and suggested measures to address them. Tours were made with actors to present the results. WomenIT also organised many equality-related training events.

The project found that strong participation and empowerment of actors is important in mainstreaming work. Project actors (not just leaders) took part in joint delegations to present the methods and results developed by WomenIT. This also facilitates the rooting of the functions.

A visible result of the mainstreaming and productisation carried out in the third phase of WomenIT is the equality training for Kainuu regional government officials provided by the *Moninainen Woima* project (2006–2007/ESF) and equality planning consultations for local government units and enterprises. Other results included courses in entrepreneurship and technology for girls studying at general upper secondary school (aged 16 to 18) and technology courses for women entrepreneurs.

## **Goal-oriented influencing**

Those involved in mainstreaming must be bold and seek to influence problems, particularly structural ones. Also needed is influencing at society level, and here, at its best, mainstreaming can also be preventive work. Mainstreaming is made easier by concretisation of results and message targeting in accordance with the recipient. For example, those introducing a project should focus on concrete results instead of presenting the general objectives of the project.

Mainstreaming work is social activity and influencing. It is also political influencing. When mainstreaming takes place at the horizontal level, good models and practices are transferred for use by other actors. Vertical mainstreaming aims to affect structures that create segregation, such as policies and decision-making.

An example of social influencing is the Equality Clinic for Project Work model, an advice service aimed at project actors and government officials productised during a project co-implemented with the Ministry of Labour. The service offers advice and guidance in how to take gender and equality into consideration in projects. For access to the service contact the editors of this book, Marja-Leena Haataja and Johanna Matinmikko.

- 1) WomenIT was an equality project administered by the Kajaani University Consortium and implemented in 2001–2006. For further information visit <http://www.kajaaninyliopistokeskus oulu.fi/proj/womenit/index.php>.
- 2) Hanna Onwen-Huma, Minna portal for gender equality and women's studies in Finland, 2004.
- 3) For more information about how to integrate the gender perspective into a project see the toolkit *Putting equality into practice* at the end of this book.



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## **Does gender matter in the Oulu Region?**

### **Gender impact assessment (GIA) on the Regional Strategic Programme – the case of GIA on the Regional Strategic Programme of the Oulu Region 2007–2010**

#### **Background**

The gender impact assessment (GIA)<sup>4</sup> on the Regional Strategic Programme of the Oulu Region 2 was performed as part of the process based on the Act on the Assessment of the Impacts of the Authorities' Plans, Programmes and Policies on the Environment<sup>5</sup>. The GIA was part of the assessment of sustainable development – or more precisely, social sustainability. The GIA process was initiated by the Council of Oulu Region. SINNI Women's Resource Centre<sup>6</sup> was asked to participate in the work of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) group, consisting of representatives of funders and environmental authorities. In spring 2006 the group assessed the Regional Strategic Programme specifically for each measure. SINNI Women's Resource Centre was responsible for the gender impact assessment. During the process the perspective was widened to also cover equality between different groups of people<sup>7</sup> and regional equality.

#### **Gender impact assessment – what is it?**

Gender impact assessment (GIA) is a gender mainstreaming tool that helps assess how a planned measure will affect women and men respectively. It is a tool for more efficient and transparent monitoring of resource allocation. Consequently, GIA is a cost-efficiency tool.

GIA can be used to:

- take a more diverse look at a problem that needs to be solved
- make objectives clearer and more concrete
- make measures more specific and therefore increase their effectiveness, and
- make results more specific and focused.

Gender impact assessment is specifically a decision-making tool. Not until the impacts of a planned measure have been assessed are there sufficient grounds for decision-making. Without an assessment a decision is made "blind", with those involved only able to assume that the measure will have positive impacts.

Gender impact assessment is also closely related to the Finnish Equality Act<sup>8</sup> which obliges particularly government officials but also private employers to promote gender equality purposefully and systematically. GIAs can help prevent the unconscious regeneration of an unequal situation and draw attention to practices and policies that need to be changed. This is particularly important when tax revenue is being spent. In Finland both genders participate in employment in the same proportion and therefore generate tax revenue for the state. Care should be taken to make sure that both women and men benefit equally from services and support measures funded from tax revenue.

The objectives of GIA include:<sup>9</sup>

- securing equal opportunities
- preventing indirect discrimination
- improving the quality of activities
- increasing government transparency
- creating transparency of the impacts of activities
- allocating financial and other resources efficiently, and
- implementing the Equality Act.

Gender impact assessments are specifically about equal opportunities. It is society's duty to create equal opportunities for individuals to realise their human potential<sup>10</sup>. It must be up to the individual whether and how they will utilise their opportunities.

GIA can also spot indirect discrimination, which is hard to detect without specific examination. Discriminatory practices are often subtle or conventional practices that simply have not been viewed from diverse perspectives. "Indirect discrimination occurs when an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would disadvantage people on the grounds of

racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation unless the practice can be objectively justified by a legitimate aim.”<sup>11</sup>

GIA can be used to evaluate, develop and reorganise political and administrative processes to ensure the mainstreaming of gender equality. In an ideal situation this takes place in all activities, at all levels and in every situation. The operational objective is that the assessment is performed by the actors who in any case carry out the functions. In a way GIA is a type of continuous self-assessment.

## **When is it time for gender impact assessment?**

Gender impact assessment can be used as a tool in all decision-making with the aim to make resource allocation and impacts more focused and effective. A GIA should always take place when a measure is targeted at groups of people. GIA is also needed when a measure is targeted at areas where there are major differences between women and men, such as:

- financial status
- parenthood, reconciliation of work and family life
- education and training
- access to employment
- occupational and career development
- opportunities for influencing and participation in society
- health and ill health and need for related services
- safety and threat of violence
- time use, leisure activities and need for recreation.<sup>12</sup>

From the perspective of resource distribution, the significance of indirect impacts can be as high as those of direct impacts. Apparently neutral resource allocation for road network improvement will under closer assessment prove to entail major differences in benefits gained regarding access to employment and profitability of livelihoods. When the labour market is highly segregated into traditional women’s and men’s jobs and sectors, road construction and road use for business purposes specifically supports employment and business profitability in male-dominated sectors.

## **Experiences from the GIA process on the Regional Strategic Programme**

The Oulu Region used GIA in the preparation of its Regional Strategic Programme for the first time in 2006. The GIA proper assessed the programme version available in April. After this, the Regional Strategic Programme underwent further formulation, and the final version was clearly influenced by the EIA group’s assessments.

The spring also saw the organisation of cross-sectoral forums for discussions about the equality and internationality contents of the Programme with those formulating it. Several equality actors and NGO representatives participated in the forums' work over a period of a few months<sup>13</sup>. In the autumn an open discussion event was organised for funding authorities and interested public under the theme "Does gender matter in the Oulu Region?" The subject was introduced for discussion with a presentation on the findings of the GIA on the Regional Strategic Programme under preparation.

The biggest practical challenges of the GIA process were the poor availability of statistical data and the style in which the Programme text is written. It appears to be a Finnish tradition to write programme and strategy texts at a general level. This also makes the text gender-neutral. This is probably based on the idea that when the gender is not mentioned, it is not significant and consequently equality is reached. But this practice is not applied when it comes to dividing people into groups on other grounds. Ethnicity, age and disability<sup>14</sup> are divisions that do appear in programmes and strategies. Gender equality is the only field where it is assumed that making gender invisible will result in equality. Even though programme texts are neutral, it is obvious that those writing them have thought of some prototype human when writing down the measures to be taken. Usually the gender of the prototype can also be defined.

Another challenge in the GIA process was the scarcity of relevant statistical data. There is not enough gender-disaggregated data at regional level in Finland to enable accurate and scientifically constructed analyses. Therefore the GIA process needed more resources so that the necessary statistical data could have been collected in this context. This is why this time the GIA was a "light" one, utilising existing material.

Gender and equality impacts were given in a table, breaking the direct and indirect gender impacts down by measure and detailing other equality impacts in a separate column. The criteria for these were illustrated with brief examples, and the written version provided a summary for each measure. The advantage of a table is that it is highly graphic and allows a quick examination of the assessment criteria of each measure. The downside is that the table needs to be read side by side with the actual programme text in order to obtain a more concrete idea of the programme contents, which are only presented as headlines in the table.

## **What did we learn? Objectives and needs**

For GIA to be fully utilised as a tool, follow-up on measures should re-

ceive more focus. This would also generate statistical data needed in decision-making and assessments alike. A gender-specific perspective on the compilation of statistics should be developed, based on gender-aware research data produced by different research sectors and organisations.

Gender impact assessments also call for resources. The smaller the amount of usable statistical data available, the larger the resource allocation to GIAs should be. A GIA process can also involve the collection of statistical data, enabling the development of related practices.

A GIA process is at its most effective and genuine when decision-makers or programme writers perform it on their own outputs, much like performing a self-assessment. On the other hand, an interactive assessment process with other actors tends to open up a diverse range of perspectives and therefore increases transparency.

The GIA tool used in government decisions can also be applied to all measures that call for decision-making. GIA would be a useful tool in sectors other than government too.

## **Equality challenges of project work**

The current European programming period has been set a new requirement whereby equality must be mainstreamed into all project work. Programme evaluations in the previous period assessed issues including the realisation of gender perspectives in programmes, resource allocation between the genders<sup>15</sup>, and the degree of planning in project activity and the effectiveness of measures taken<sup>16</sup>. Obvious room for improvement has been detected in all of these. Now a new challenge is to take gender equality into account from the very first steps of project design.


In project work GIA can be an efficient tool that helps increase the degree of planning and make resource use more efficient and equal. It is also the only way to implement the principle of gender mainstreaming in project work. The adoption of this tool calls for information and resources but – above all – the will to systematically promote equality.

### **What does GIA call for?**

- expertise, including research-based information about gender, the gender system, gender relations
- gender-specific statistics and monitoring
- management of assessment processes

- resources necessary for GIA
- the decision and will to fulfil the obligation set in the Equality Act.

- 4) Information about the Regional Strategic Programme of the Oulu Region 2007–2010 and its assessments can be found at <http://www.pohjois-pohjanmaa.fi/index.php?679>.
- 5) The Act on the Assessment of the Impacts of the Authorities' Plans, Programmes and Policies on the Environment: <http://www.environment.fi/download.asp?contentid=44490&lan=en>.
- 6) SINNI Women's Resource Centre is profiled as specialists in gender aware regional development, employment development, improvement of women's entrepreneurship, multiculturality, gender mainstreaming and networking. SINNI performs these duties through development projects and advice and consultation services. For further information visit [www.SINNI.fi](http://www.SINNI.fi).
- 7) The Non-Discrimination Act: <http://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/2004/en20040021.pdf>.
- 8) The Act on Equality between Women and Men: <http://www.tasa-arvo.fi/Resource.phx/tasa-arvo/english/authorities/legislation/actonequality.htm>
- 9) Onwen-Huma, Hanna 2006 Gender impact assessment of municipal and service structure reforms. Unpublished draft.
- 10) Holli, Anne-Maria, Saarikoski, Terhi and Sana, Elina (eds) in 2002 Tasa-arvopolitiikan haasteet (The Challenges of Equality Policies). The Council for Gender Equality, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. WSOY. n New Challenges for the Welfare Society, (ed.)
- 11) [http://stop-discrimination.info/46.0.html?&no\\_cache=1&sword\\_list\[\]=indirect&sword\\_list\[\]=discrimination](http://stop-discrimination.info/46.0.html?&no_cache=1&sword_list[]=indirect&sword_list[]=discrimination).
- 12) Onwen-Huma, Hanna 2006 Gender impact assessment of municipal and service structure reforms. Unpublished draft.
- 13) <http://www.sinni.fi/palvelut/naisfoorum.html>
- 14) Cf. the Non-Discrimination Act.
- 15) See the Ex-post evaluation of Western Finland's Target 2 Programme 2000–2006, p.171: [http://www.intermin.fi/intermin/images.nsf/files/358BCBF263C25CC3C2256E860037AC18/\\$file/lansisuomi\\_valiarviointi.pdf](http://www.intermin.fi/intermin/images.nsf/files/358BCBF263C25CC3C2256E860037AC18/$file/lansisuomi_valiarviointi.pdf)
- 16) See the Mid-term evaluation of Finland's Leader+ Programme 2003, p. 144 [http://wwwb.mmm.fi/julkaisut/julkaisusarja/MMMjulkaisu2004\\_2.pdf](http://wwwb.mmm.fi/julkaisut/julkaisusarja/MMMjulkaisu2004_2.pdf)



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## **Equality plans are tools for workplace development**

An equality plan is a tool for accomplishing equality in the everyday life of the workplace. It can be used to develop the day-to-day practices, policies and culture of the workplace towards increased equality in a sustained, goal-oriented and systematic manner. In equality planning the employer and employees work together for development. In most cases this also improves the cooperation relations and functioning of the workplace in areas other than equality issues.

### **Equality is beneficial**

Equality results in many benefits for the workplace. An equality plan can:

- improve atmosphere and job satisfaction
- increase motivation
- ensure the utilisation of everyone's competence
- increase innovation
- improve employer image
- increase employee diversity
- attract competent employees
- help implement corporate social responsibility.

According to the Finnish Equality Act, companies and organisations that regularly employ more than 30 people are legally obliged to draw up an equality plan. This plan must be formulated in cooperation between the employer and employee representatives.

"But we don't have any problems with equality," is the first thing you often hear when the issue is brought up in a workplace. Equality planning is also a process of examining and learning about equality issues in one's workplace. Those involved in a joint planning process often realise that there is room for improvement in equality in every workplace. In the project "Developing Equality in Technology Industries", human resource managers and members of equality working groups found that the formulation of

the company's equality plan introduced new perspectives and issues into their discussions.

## **A good plan looks like the workplace**

An equality plan is a concrete annual action plan. It can be a declaration or a general framework document. It must detail concrete actions for the realisation and promotion of equality in the workplace. A problem with many previous equality plans is that they have been too general. A good equality plan is concrete and looks like the workplace.

The implementation of the plan must be assessed and the plan must be updated every year. It is a good idea to appoint a responsible person(s) and set a schedule for each action and specify how monitoring will take place. These will help ensure the plan will be fully implemented.

The Equality Act specifies the minimum content of an equality plan.

### **An equality plan must contain**

- an assessment of the gender equality situation in the work place;
- necessary measures planned with the purpose of promoting gender equality and achieving equality of pay
- a review of the extent to which measures previously included in the gender equality plan have been implemented and of the results achieved.

A good practice is to prepare the equality plan in an equality working group led by a HR director/manager and consisting, as appropriate, of other employer representatives such as health and safety manager and/or quality manager/production manager and the shop stewards or local union representatives representing the different employee groups, the health and safety representative and, as appropriate for the workplace, other employee representatives.

The health and safety committee or the employer-employee cooperation committee can also act as the equality working group. In all cases it must be ensured that the group is diverse enough and that different views and experiences in the workplace are taken into consideration in its work. The group must consist of both men and women, people of different ages and working in different departments, etc. Experience has shown that for many companies a good size for the group is five to eight people. The main thing is that the group should reflect the situation in the workplace and function well.

## **An assessment will provide the foundation for the plan**

The creation of an equality plan begins with the assessment of the equality situation in the workplace. The aim is to gain basic information about the main areas where equality is in need of development. For this purpose, gender-disaggregated statistics and information about employee views on the realisation of equality should be collected.

According to the Equality Act, the minimum requirement for an assessment is to include details of the employment of women and men in different jobs and a survey of the grade of jobs performed by women and men, the pay for those jobs, and the gender differences in pay. The Equality Act aims to ensure as equal a distribution of women and men as possible in different duties. To reach this, information about the current gender division of tasks is needed. Statistics should also be compiled on recruitment, participation in training, career development and use of family leaves.

In the Equality Act, the principle of equality in pay means that pay for the performance of the same work or work of equal value must be the same. The purpose of the pay survey included in the equality plan is to make sure that there are not any unacceptable – i.e. gender-based – pay differences between women and men in the same work or work of equal value.

The assessment should also ensure there is no discrimination regarding any of the pay components. The basic pay component must be determined on the basis of the complexity of the tasks involved, regardless of gender. The grounds for any individual pay component must be free from gender discrimination, and the assessment of performance must in practice be gender neutral. If the pay survey brings up any unacceptable pay differences between women and men, the equality plan must specify the measures or scheduled plan aimed at rectifying the situation.

An equality survey among employees has been found to be a good tool in many workplaces. "The equality survey opened our eyes," many have said afterwards. Surveys have discovered differences in women's and men's experiences and shown what types of issues need to be included in the equality plan of the workplace.

## **Not everything needs to be done in one go**

There is no need to try and include everything possible in the equality plan in one go. It is a good idea to put things in the order of importance and adopt four to six development objectives for each year's plan. This is the best way to ensure that concrete results will be achieved. Section

6 of the Equality Act specifies how the employer must promote gender equality. On the basis of these instructions, the equality plan can cover the following areas:

- recruitment
- equal division of tasks between women and men
- equal access to training
- career advancement and diversification of tasks
- equal pay regardless of gender
- equal terms of employment (e.g. regarding fixed-term employment of women and men)
- management and division of tasks
- development of working conditions to ensure they are suitable for both women and men
- prevention and eradication of sexual and gender-based harassment
- reconciliation of work and family/non-working life
- prevention of gender discrimination.

This list can be employed when selecting areas to be included in the plan, but other issues can also be included as appropriate for the situation in the workplace and as necessary on the basis of the assessment. Clear objectives should be set and concrete measures specified for each area selected.

The formulation of an equality plan is a process where it pays to proceed one step at a time. At first most people feel confused and the task ahead seems vague and huge, but once the assessment is complete and the work proceeds step by step, things gradually become organised and discussions manage to get a grip of issues of importance in the workplace. In equality planning, both the joint process and the completed plan are important. An equality plan is a tool whose results become visible over time when the plan is being implemented. Putting effort into equality planning can help develop a better workplace for all.



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## **Regional development from the gender equality perspective**

Equality is a problematic concept in the sphere of regional development. The process of incorporating a gender perspective into regional development programmes has never been smooth. At first its lack of definition was found problematic, which resulted in monitoring and follow-up difficulties. In recent years equality between regions has become the centre of attention, further narrowing down the gender perspective. Nevertheless, gender equality is not an unimportant or insignificant issue in regional development.

Gender equality has been taken into account in national and European regional policies. Gender mainstreaming has been applied to make sure that at all levels of structural policies – in planning, implementation and evaluation alike – the effects of measures on the respective situations and opportunities of women and men are taken into account. Mainstreaming is complemented by specific (or positive) actions to support women or men who are in a more disadvantaged position or discriminated against. One would think that with such a dual strategy equality could be reached – at least to a reasonable extent – in regional development.

But, the grim reality is revealed by the mid-term evaluations of Finnish Objective 1 and 2 programmes. Although the monitoring and evaluation indicators developed for some programme areas are quite good and diverse and enable the monitoring of the equality dimension, it has been said that equality gets carried over into the measures taken less efficiently than anticipated. This is likely to be largely due to the fact that equality results created by projects are difficult to concretise. In addition, actors have very different views on the content and realisation of equality.

## **Interaction and networks – Northern and Eastern Finland**

In total 12.3% of projects initiated under the Northern Finland Objective 1 Programme during last programming period were equality projects (mid-term evaluation). These were strongly focused on the labour market but also on entrepreneurship and economic growth. According to the evaluators, equality projects were mainly of importance in the promotion of the activities of individual groups of women. The most important results were networking and increased interaction.

The mid-term evaluation on Eastern Finland showed that equality projects accounted for 28% of the total. The evaluation pays particular attention to the realisation of equality. According to regional actors, equality has been taken into consideration reasonably well in project preparation, implementation, objectives and effectiveness, but the evaluators report that it appears that although equality is one of the actors' values, a lot of case-specific interpretation still takes place.

## **Is equality realised? - Southern and Western Finland**

The mid-term evaluation of the Southern Finland Objective 2 Programme states that equality has been mainstreamed to a reasonable extent and that a strength of the Programme is in the manner in which equality objectives and strategy have been set. This can be seen in the implementation of the Programme's most important Priority (entrepreneurship, economic growth, labour market) as almost 90% of programme funding for equality measures is focused on entrepreneurship and economic growth.

According to the documents, a total of 15% of the projects created by the Southern Finland Objective 2 Programme are equality projects (based on boxes ticked). According to project leaders, however, equality is only ostensibly delivered and in reality there is a lot of room for improvement in how equality is taken into account in project objectives and activity. In the Programme, equality results have mostly proven qualitative and mainly focus on competence and entrepreneurship. Consequently, the quality results reached in Southern Finland are similar to those achieved in other Finnish regions.

It is interesting and exceptional that ERDF-funded<sup>17</sup> measures in the Southern Finland Objective 2 Programme have in terms of numbers produced a lot more equality projects than ESF-funded ones, although the ESF programme is regarded as the "home" of equality projects.

One of the focal areas of the Western Finland Objective 2 Programme is the promotion of equality. According to the mid-term evaluation, gender equality has not progressed in the region's labour markets, with rates of women's employment and women-run enterprises far behind the objectives. However, the situation has improved recently because special attention has been paid to the issue after the evaluation. According to the evaluators, the equality theme and the status of women should have been given a stronger role among the strategic focuses.

The monitoring system shows that the equality objective was achieved well by the Objective 2 Programme: 12.5% of EU funding was granted to equality-oriented projects while the objective was 6%. But, there is an obvious paradox in the results: according to the monitoring indicators, the objective was reached well while at the same time the programme's equality objectives regarding the gender division in jobs created and safeguarded and the number of women entrepreneurs were achieved poorly.

According to the evaluation report, representatives of cooperation groups responsible for programme implementation in the regions were of the opinion that the programme had succeeded poorly in the implementation of equality objectives. On the other hand, gender equality may have been achieved better than indicated as many regions have agreed on a division of tasks whereby equality projects are focused under the Objective 3 Programme.

## **From rhetorics to structures**

Women's presence and participation is still low in regional development in Finland. A factor behind this is the structure within which regions are developed. The hierarchical nature and top-down planning process of programme work is ill-matched with women's approaches. Women's voices are still not heard in objective-setting, planning, implementation and evaluation. The situation has changed very little since the evaluation of the previous programming period. Signs of this include the above-mentioned paradox, which is not necessarily a phenomenon exclusive to programme implementation in Western Finland. Interviews with project leaders reveal the real situation: there is still a long way from rhetoric to real equality.

Gender does matter in regional development. The operating environment has been created and methods selected in accordance with prevailing norms. In this world, 'gender sensitive', 'promoting equality' and 'equal opportunities' have different meanings for women and men. Women's experiences have become known through projects, networks and women's

resource centres. They report about difficulties in making women's voices heard, lack of forums for women's innovations and applicants having to run from pillar to post when seeking funding. Women's networks and projects and women's resource centres also convey information about how relevant women's differing knowledge and experiences are in the creation of new information, innovations and operating models. Taking the gender perspective into account at all levels would require taking the different roles of women and men, the resources available to them and their interests into account in practice and in strategies alike. And, above all, this calls for an appreciation of women's activities and projects – exactly because of their different objectives and practices.

Women have a different approach to development work. An action research study titled "Development on Women's Terms"<sup>18</sup> conducted under the Community initiative Employment NOW concluded that for women the process is more important than the result. Women's projects are often small in scale, based on everyday life and focus on hand skills. Structures must respect traditions and the environment. Women hope for flexibility and sensitivity in activities and call for openness and transparency. In addition, actors should be able to focus on spontaneity instead of formality.

Women's inclusion can be promoted through the creation of forums that take women's everyday lives and realities into consideration and operate on women's terms. Information can be distributed by inviting actors to join strategy processes, opinions of women's networks and organisations can be asked, and informal hearings can also be organised.

At the local level, women's resource centres are important regional development tools which can, at their best, promote women's entrepreneurship, employment and equality. They can also provide a channel for women's voices, generating new information and transferring new innovations and perspectives into regional development.

17) ERDF – European Regional Development Fund

18) University of Jyväskylä, Chydenius Institute.



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## **Equality is also a men's issue**

Gender equality is often seen as a race or zero-sum game where the benefit or equalisation gained by one is the loss of the other. Luckily things are not this black and white. Measures to advance the status of women do not rob men of anything as women's and men's interests are not opposite. Many "women's issues" related to equality also affect men. For example, when unjustified fixed-term employment contracts are made permanent, this is also beneficial for men with fixed-term contracts. Single fathers or men working in a female-dominated sector may, due to their life situation, even benefit particularly strongly from the improvement of women's status in society. Finland's Equality Act also protects men, and a significant and growing minority of contacts to the Ombudsman for Equality, the authority supervising compliance with the Act, come from men.

In Finnish society, man is still the norm of a neutral citizen that women are compared with. A good example of this is language used: positions such as ombudsman can be held by women but a man cannot be an ombuds'woman'. On the other hand, seemingly neutral titles such as 'member of parliament' have resulted in commonly used variants such as 'woman MP'.

In Finnish society the norm for a man and indeed for human has been a white, heterosexual, middle-class, non-disabled, employed man with a family. But men are not a unified group, and the above definition excludes the majority of men. Outside-the-norm ethnic origin, sexual orientation or even disability may in practice put men belonging to such a group in a very different position from men who meet the norm.

### **How does one learn to be a man?**

Male is also a gender. In this it is essential to separate biological sex and social gender. Biological sex is diverse and also contains other states than male and female, including intersexuality<sup>19</sup>. Social gender refers to the division into two official genders – man and woman – agreed in society.

What we perceive to be included in maleness and femaleness is culture- and time-dependent. The entire society is divided on the basis of social gender, and even in the smallest everyday chores an individual needs to take a stand as to which gender they identify with.

In our culture, social male or female gender is often presented as two opposing and mutually exclusive things. The focus on being opposite begins at birth, with boys being dressed in blue and girls in pink. Children as young as aged two can make the distinction between men and women, girls' and boys' games and toys and men's and women's jobs. Gender strongly defines the roles a child can adopt. Boys are encouraged to be competitive, break boundaries and be physical. But boys are not encouraged to develop sides that are regarded as feminine, such as expressing emotions, discussing feelings, caring or taking others into consideration. "Boys will be boys," but only when they behave in ways that are stereotypical for boys.

Expression of emotions is highly situation-specific among men. Physical contact or expressions of tenderness between men are generally more accepted in contexts such as team sports than during a class at school. In competitive sports it is also more acceptable for men to express feelings of disappointment than in other situations. Fear of being labelled as gay or calling someone gay as an offensive reference are common forms of behavioural control among men.

Gender roles and stereotypes are not, however, ready-made packages adopted by us. Instead, each individual makes their choices and shapes their identity in interaction with the expectations of their environment. Even if a boy or man wanted to act differently, it may in practice be difficult because the surrounding society strongly maintains gender role expectations. At times structural steering into gender roles is so strong that no opportunity for choice is allowed at all. For example, at school boys' physical education lessons may be held at the same time as textile crafts, which means that a decision has been made for boys that they will participate in technical crafts.

## **A Finnish soldier is worth ten cleaners**

Gender roles are also inseparable from the notion of the hierarchies between them. A recent Finnish army training video claimed that "a Finnish soldier is worth ten cleaners". A traditional "real man" may not be feminine or even interested in issues represented or choices made by women. Consequently, Leena Teräs hit the point when she wondered if it was finally time to stop constructing masculinity on the belittling of femininity.

Is it not men themselves who are the biggest losers in such construction of narrow masculinity that restricts freedom of choice?

## **A storm is brewing! Run!**

Masculinity is at the same time a taboo and a laughing matter. Attempts to discuss masculinity often turn into joking, and issues such as problems caused by men's actions are often silenced or the reason is laid elsewhere. For example, in acts of sexual violence men can be presented as unable to control themselves, transferring some of the blame on the victim. As if men were a force of nature than cannot be stopped. This kind of thinking underestimates men but, above all, it liberates them from responsibility. The myth of some external force guiding men and them not being able to control their actions makes men victims of circumstances. Alcohol makes you lose control of your actions, the deceitful woman's sexuality makes you cheat, the wife's nagging makes you hit her or the recession makes you stab anyone.

Such attitudes are detrimental to men too. For example, health policies may focus on women's health education and services aimed at women if the impression is that men or their behaviour cannot be affected. When the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health evaluated the impacts of Finland's alcohol policy programme by gender, it was found that alcohol policies are formulated with men in mind but prevention is targeted at women.

Social gender equality cannot progress through the juxtaposition of men and women. Equality is beneficial for both women and men if only we are willing and able to cooperate. It is also in men's interests that gender roles that prevent gender equality are questioned. The aim is not any make-them-all-the-same gender neutrality but gender sensitivity where gender can be taken into consideration – not as stereotypical role expectations but case by case and taking individuals into consideration. This also applies to men.

19) For more information about intersexuality visit <http://www.isna.org/>.

## Putting equality into practice toolkit





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**Contributing ideas and comments during the creation of the toolkit were Marja-Leena Haataja, Leena Teräs, Sanna Kallioinen and Marjo Riitta Tervonen.**

## **Putting equality into practice toolkit**

During the European Social Fund Programming Period 2007–2013, gender equality must be mainstreamed throughout all projects. Projects can no longer be gender-neutral or -blind. This means that gender equality must be visible in and incorporated into every stage of a project: planning, implementation, mainstreaming and evaluation. This will ensure progress in and realisation of the mainstreaming of gender equality.

Impacts can be direct or indirect. Projects must now be evaluated as resourcing and measures with direct and indirect impacts on the status of men and women.

In practice this means, for example, that project planners can no longer claim something like this: "We don't need to take gender equality into account because this project focuses on the promotion of intercultural equality." After all, gender is still a structuring principle in both project planning and activity as well as in currently prevailing cultures. We should note that project workers are men and women, immigrants are men and women, and measures promoting access to employment are targeted at female- or maledominated sectors, jobs or positions.

This change does not mean that the impacts of all projects must be divided 50-50 between women and men. Rather it is about making sure that if a project results in different amounts of resources and impacts, these must be justified. It is important that choices are made consciously and thoroughly. In projects – and more widely in the world of work – gender equality does not mean that there is the same number of women and men or that women and men should be the same and interested in same

things. Rather equality is about women and men having equal opportunities and everyone being able to do what they are interested in or what their needs are instead of doing what is assumed to be typical of their gender.

The Finnish Equality Act<sup>20</sup> requires that equality is taken into consideration in workplaces, and the Act also applies to projects. According to the Act, equality must be promoted systematically. This means that it is not enough that the Act is not violated (or that one does not get caught of doing so) or that, for example, discrimination does not take place. The Act requires that employers and public authorities promote equality systematically in their work.

In comparison with many other countries, equality situation in Finland is good and in some areas equality has even been achieved. Therefore comments like this are common: "Surely we'd welcome women (to participate in things like construction training), but they won't be interested..." Attitudes towards equality are also on average positive, with no major objections against it. But even though equality is accepted as a value, there are still fundamental inequalities in Finland. These include the segregation of the labour market into women's and men's sectors<sup>21</sup>, the gender pay gap and violence against women.

The mainstreaming of gender equality – taking gender into account and incorporating it throughout a project – is a new challenge that has not yet resulted in enough established practices. Some of these practices are presented in this toolkit. This article summarises the main points of an information campaign of a project commissioned by the Finnish Ministry of Labour from the Adult Education Unit of the Kajaani University Consortium ("Promoting gender equality under Target 3 and EQUAL programmes 2006–2007") and the Equality Clinic piloted during the project where project plans were examined in detail from the equality perspective.

The toolkit offers a list of questions on the basis of which equality issues can be analysed and practical examples, ideas and facts to help perform analyses. It presents viewpoints that you may not have thought of. The idea is to help you recognise your own gender- and equality-related ways of thinking and see them in a new way, like in the following example.

If a man spent a week as a woman (or a woman as a man), he would probably notice things that he had never paid any attention to. In the same way awareness of the gender perspective helps you pay attention to ordinary things that have existed

for a long time in your everyday life but that you have not really noticed. For example, people often think that girls and boys are treated in the same way and equally at school. But when you take a moment to look into this you will find that very often the expectations and requirements placed on girls differ from those placed on boys.

Most of the examples in this toolkit are related to women because in many areas of society women face more discrimination than men. For example, their pay is lower, and there are fewer women executives and entrepreneurs. Some of the examples presented in this toolkit come from the EQUAL Project WomenIT implemented in 2001–2006 and administered by the Adult Education Unit of the Kajaani University Consortium. For further information about the project, visit <http://www.kajaaninyliopistokeskus oulu.fi/proj/womenit/index.php>. The site also provides plenty of material related to equality in employment and education.

The content of this toolkit is divided into the following sections in accordance with the lifecycle<sup>22</sup> of a project:

- project planning
- the funding decision process
- project implementation
- project results and their mainstreaming
- project evaluation

It also includes project further development and follow-up.

## **1. Project planning and the funding decision process**

The gender equality perspective should already be taken into account in the project planning stage. In fact the equality perspective should be taken into consideration as early as the funding programme design stage, but this toolkit focuses on the lifecycle of a project.

This section contains questions that can be used to assess the equality of measures, practices and contents of the project planning stage. They deal with the starting points of planning from the equality perspective, gender perspectives in project measures and objectives, impacts of budgeting on women and men, and how the minority gender is taken into consideration in the sector or activity. In the end we will give an example of the project funding decision process and show how the equality perspective could be taken into account during the application and decision-making processes.

## Planning team

The ideal situation in project planning would be that the planning team consists of both women and men. For justified reasons this does not always have to be the case. For example, women can plan a women-specific project because they are the best experts in their gender's needs. Even the Finnish Equality Act allows positive discrimination<sup>23</sup>. Particular attention should be paid to including representatives of the underrepresented gender<sup>24</sup> in the planning team. It is good to have at least two representatives of the underrepresented gender in the team so that they can support each other.

- Could women and men plan the project together? If not, why? Which genuine benefits could be gained from this? What would be its disadvantages?
- Do all the project planners have equal resources for project planning? For example, are the workers able to use their working hours for project planning and will they get paid for it?
- How is work divided among the planning team?
- Who writes the plan? Who conducts funding negotiations? Who writes the memo? Who is the chair? And who makes the coffee?
- Could tasks be swapped or rotated?
- How do team members listen to each other's ideas?
- Do women and men's ideas end up in the project plan in different proportions?
- What is the response to a woman's comment in a meeting in comparison with that of a man's?

## Content planning

Content planning starts from a problem that needs to be solved or from a product development idea.

- What is the assumption of the necessity of the project and effectiveness of the measures based on? Does this process take gender impacts into account? Are equality experts involved in content planning? Is it possible to use experts such as equality consultants with extensive equality training to assess the needs of men and women within the project's sphere of activity?

Statistics are needed for the description of the present situation. All statistics should be specified in a way that phenomena are examined from the respective perspectives of women and men. A lot of statistics in Finland are already available disaggregated by gender, but they have not been

utilised enough. (Finnish statistics are available from sources including Statistics Finland and [www.tasa-arvotietopankki.fi](http://www.tasa-arvotietopankki.fi)). The reason behind this may be lack of awareness of the importance of gender-disaggregated data, inability to demand it or finding it laborious or unnecessary (“We’re already equal in Finland”). Sometimes the exclusion of details presenting the rate of women and men has been justified with “lack of space”.

When statistics are disaggregated by gender and this more in-depth data is actually used, it is easier to get to the core of the problem and gain more in-depth information.

Long-term unemployment is often stereotypically associated with men. At the national level, however, it should be noted that women’s long-term unemployment is increasing.

### **What is chosen as a statistics topic?<sup>25</sup>**

- There are men and women, girls and boys behind statistics and figures.
- Examples include the pay gap between women and men and ageing women: what impact does it have whether the basic or supplementary component of national pension is increased?
- What about the users of, say, ice-hockey arenas or indoor horseriding arenas? How is government support divided between these activities and what are the impacts of support given on women and men and girls and boys?

### **How are statistics compiled?**

- All statistics about people must be disaggregated by gender, separating men and women and girls and boys. (In household statistics this is not always sensible, but it is always necessary when statistics are about single parents or one-person households.)

### **What kind of determinant is gender?**

- This can be approached with the example of youth unemployment. Youth unemployment is a common regional development problem that is subjected to active monitoring and statistics compilation. But the necessary methods to eradicate youth unemployment have not been found. A gender-sensitive examination shows that unemployment means different things to young women and young men. Once the significance of gender is realised, a more detailed exploration of ways to address unemployment among young women and young men can take place.

## How do we understand equality?

- Project participants should discuss what is meant by equality and what kinds of views of equality they have. The project's own idea or definition of gender equality may change during the project. Therefore it is a good idea to continue discussing equality when the project progresses.
- People often think that if a workplace community or project only consists of women and men, equality issues do not apply to them while in fact equality issues apply to all projects.
- In a women-only project equality perspectives can include the development of women's expertise, women's entrepreneurship, division of responsibilities or increasing women's inclusion indecision-making.

## Target group

### Who is the project content designed for?

- What is the prototype of a member of the target group or the image of a person that is hoped will participate in the project?
- What will happen if you change the gender of the prototype? Is the change desirable, insignificant or something else? Ask the same questions regarding each project event and stage.
- How is the project target group selected? Who makes the decisions in the selection process? Who decides who will be included? What is the gender of the decision-makers?
- Who asks the questions if members of the target group are interviewed?
- What types of questions do female interviewers ask as opposed to those asked by male interviewers? How do men and women answer questions such as those about their own competences?
- What are the recruitment criteria like?

An example from the WomenIT project: The project involved girls from day-care centres (under the age of six), schoolchildren, students, enterprises and grandmothers of primary school pupils because in all these groups women are underrepresented in issues related to technology (technical and construction crafts, sciences, entrepreneurship, management, leadership). Here a women-specific approach was justified.

### Do project objectives and functions support participation of both men and women?

- Can people's images of sectors such as construction be changed? The sector offers varied duties and these are also suitable for women. There have been huge technological advances in the sector,

which can be seen in issues including a decrease in the physical requirements of construction jobs. Today's construction workers are more commonly assisted by machines in lifting tasks than nurses are in hospitals.

- How are project partners selected? Why are these particular partners wanted? Does the gender of the partners have any impact in this? Is it possible to select the partners so that both genders are equally represented? If not, why? What changes if the gender changes?
- When the project goal is reached, who will benefit from it? What is the gender of the people who will use the service/end product? What is the gender of the people who will produce the service/end product? Who owns and who gets the profit made by the organisations that will use the service/product when the project is completed?

## Measures

### **Have the impacts of measures (such as training or materials) on gender segregation been taken into account in their planning and implementation?**

- If training is planned for women, those involved should consider whether it would be possible to employ a female trainer. Sometimes in training targeted at women a good idea can be spoiled by a trainer who belittles women.
- The materials creation stage should include consideration of who the material is aimed at. If you are making a brochure for a boat construction course, could one of the pictures feature a woman constructing a boat?

### **Does the project promote women's/men's (the underrepresented gender's) access to employment? Does the project promote women's career development?**

- Can any differences between women and men's career advancement be seen?
- Is training available to both men and women, and have both participated in training? Are there any differences between women and men's participation?

For example, it is not enough that you write in the project plan that the project will support women's entrepreneurship. You need to look into the decisive factors affecting whether or not women become entrepreneurs and expand their business and whether the project will provide new solutions to these issues. Will the project produce substitutes for entrepre-

neers, or will women receive support in risk analysis and expansion? You need to detail how and with what methods you will support specifically women. In the same way if the project is about attracting men to the care sector, the situation must be analysed specifically from their perspective. Representatives of the target group should be included in project planning, or at least they should be consulted.

If unemployment among men is high in the area, any improvements necessary in men's computing skills should be checked. (Middle-aged men with a vocational qualification from many years ago are at the moment the group with the biggest shortages in computer skills in Finland – and perhaps also with the biggest difficulties in admitting this as computers are a highly masculine/technical area.)

An example from the WomenIT project: WomenIT featured functions supporting women's career development, such as a mentoring programme for girls in general upper secondary schools (aged 16–18). The girls were mentored by women students of science and technology. After the mentoring process, more of the participants began studies in the field of technology, so in this case role models did have an impact.

## Objective-setting and effects

### **Does the project affect the pay gap between women and men? How will the effects be seen?**

In Finnish local government (municipal) jobs men's monthly pay is €650 higher than women's, while in other sectors men earn approximately €530 more than women. Part of this difference can be explained by their different duties and occupations, but for some there is no explanation. This unexplained part is illegal. There are also factors related to different job titles and gradings that are unacceptable. Efforts have been made to address these through measures including the recommendations made by the Government's Equal Pay Programme.<sup>26</sup>

- Does the project encourage women to ask for pay rises? Women usually ask for a pay rise when they have been with the employer for five years while men do the same after three years. Women also ask for smaller pay rises than men.
- Do women/men receive the same/equal pay for the same work/work classified as on the same job grade?
- Are the job grades and performance levels for work carried out by women and men defined in a gender-sensitive manner?
- Are the job titles appropriate?

## **Does the project influence the reconciliation of work and family/non-working life (how and targeted at whom)?**

Women's sectors are used to long leaves, but men's return to work after a family leave requires further development. Men often hear unpleasant comments. For example, their manager may blurt out something like this: "When I hired a man I thought he'd stay with us and not take any parental leave."

- Does the single person always have to be more flexible than those with a family? I.e. does the single person have to work on public holidays and festivals so that those with a family can take time off?
- At the busiest periods of the project, how will you take care of the balancing of different areas of workers' lives and avoid burnout?

## **Does the project influence gender-segregated roles in the labour market?**

An example from the WomenIT project: In one of the subprojects of WomenIT, girls were familiarised in career guidance with technology sectors in a girls-only group, and female career guidance teachers also visited these sectors as part of their work placement and participated in equality training. The girls became more interested in technology and this could be seen in issues such as them opting for courses such as the advanced syllabus in mathematics.

## **Budgeting**

**Gender responsive budgeting<sup>27</sup>: In your project cost schedule, how much of the resources are actually targeted at the target group and, within the target group, at women and men?**

- What are the impacts of seemingly neutral decisions? If funding is mainly received by traditional industry and technology, impacts on women's employment and increased entrepreneurship may be minor.
- Who formulated the budget? Were both women and men involved?

## **2. Application and funding decision process**

The application and funding decision process is different from one region

to another. The following is a description of the process in the Oulu Region of Finland and points out how the gender equality perspective should be visible throughout the application and funding decision process.

During the decision process, an application goes through several decision-making bodies. In the Oulu Region, a project application is processed by a regional organisation which, depending of the programme, can be the Council of Oulu Region, the Employment and Economic Development Centre or the State Provincial Office, and by the Subregional Board and the Secretariat of the Regional Management Committee. Major projects (budget exceeding €400,000) must also be accepted by the Regional Management Committee, after which they are submitted to the Board of the Regional Council for approval.

Attention should be paid to the equality knowledge of these organs: for example, do they have access to an equality expert? Often it is also essential to check if the organs have been appointed in accordance with the Equality Act, i.e. if they include both women and men (at least 40% representing the other gender). Processes should also be examined from the perspective of whether statements and opinions on social and gender impacts are heard and how issues are presented. Do presentations include gender impact assessments for all projects and statistics about resourcing by gender of the projects funded<sup>28</sup>?

The decision-making process should include a gender impact assessment on the project. A suitable organ for this would be one similar to the environmental impact assessment (EIA) group that consults, supports and assesses the gender impacts of the project. Consultancy help could be obtained from an expert as early as the project planning stage. Government authorities should provide this type of service so that the various elements and measures of a project will be evaluated from equality and gender perspectives.

### **3. Implementation**

In the implementation stage it is important to take into consideration how the objectives set in the planning stage will be turned into concrete action and how equality will be visible among those implementing and participating in the project. If attention is no longer paid to equality issues at the implementation stage, they may be forgotten amid other issues and everyday work. To avoid equality issues being overlooked, project personnel should be offered equality training. In Finland equality training is provided by experts including equality consultants, universities and some training centres. Equality perspectives could also be brought up in the supervision

of project personnel or in the form of consultancy.

In implementation it should be taken into consideration that even with equality objectives being included in the project plans, in practical work careful attention must be paid to avoiding good plans becoming nullified by poor implementation.

For example, if a brochure is made for a metal industry/construction project that also wishes to attract women but the brochure only contains pictures of men in traditional "men's tasks", it may be difficult for women to perceive themselves in the project. Instead, the brochure could feature a few sentences like: "This training is also highly suitable for women" and/or "The field is very extensive and will provide access to a wide variety of jobs".

## **Realisation of equality objectives**

How can the equality objectives set in the planning stage be translated into visible action and how will they be realised?

How much effort will you put into issues such as ensuring that members of the underrepresented gender will be included in the participants? For example men at risk of exclusion or women representing cultural minorities?

If one of the objectives adopted was that the project will encourage women towards career advancement (e.g. through training and mentoring), you must make sure in the implementation stage that women actually are enabled to participate in these through measures including the organisation of their work. You must bear in mind that women often tend to underestimate their skills.

Modesty used to be a virtue in Finland and therefore, when filling in a job application, a woman may write "Competence in German language – fair" while a man with approximately the same skills will write: "Competence in German language – good". Positive consideration is also acceptable to ensure the inclusion of the gender that is usually underrepresented.

## **Activities of the project personnel**

The activities of the project personnel are fundamentally affected by the sufficiency of human resources. Women in particular should pay attention to appointing enough personnel for projects.

### **What kinds of operating models are there within the project?**

- How are working hours monitored within the project? Are tasks planned in advance? Have you made sure everyone's workload is reasonable? Whose working hours are monitored?
- Who get the most powerful computers? And what are the office chairs like? Who gets a communicator?
- How are opportunities to speak allocated in contexts such as meetings? Discussion is often dominated by men or by certain persons only.

### **What is the project team's and workplace community's attitude towards gender equality?**

- Does the same person always need to remind about and defend the importance of equality issues?
- Are equality issues belittled?

### **How are the requirements set by the Equality Act implemented?**

- Has the workplace community drawn up an equality plan?<sup>29</sup>

### **Who implements the project and what is their gender?**

#### **How does project decision-making take place? How are issues decided upon?**

- Who makes the decisions and what is their gender? If their gender was different, how would this influence decisionmaking?

#### **What is the gender division and task of the steering group and chairpersons?**

- When appointing a steering group for a development partnership, attention should be paid to the sufficient representation of both genders.

#### **How is the reconciliation of work and family/non-working life realised among the project personnel?**

- Is it possible to hold project meetings in the middle of the working day to avoid working days extending long into the evening?

#### **Do the project personnel receive equal pay within the project team and the workplace?**

- For example, do project personnel in technology projects receive more pay than project personnel in education projects?
- What is the workload in comparison with the pay? How is gender visible in these? Are women secretaries and men managers? What if women were managers and men secretaries? Would

anything change?

**How are tasks and job titles divided?**

- For example, is a woman a project planner and a man performing similar duties a project manager? (Also take the impact of the jobtitle on pay into consideration.)

**Are the project's working methods democratic and empowering?**

- Do women perform the "more boring" basic work because they do it so well?
- Are women employees assumed to clean and make coffee alongside their other duties?

**Are the project's good practices also visible in project implementation?**

An example from the WomenIT project: In WomenIT everyone, e.g. members of the steering group and the entire project personnel, including assistants and teachers, was provided with equality training (in addition to other training). This helped strengthen their perception of equality throughout the project, and project participants such as teachers began to observe their own practices more closely. Many noticed how practices they had regarded as equal actually reinforced traditional gender roles and views on what girls and boys should do and what they should be like. Boys, for example, were allowed to interrupt a discussion in the classroom more often than girls. In other words, girls were expected to listen and wait for their turn.

## **4. Mainstreaming and project results**

The mainstreaming strategy is usually formulated in the project planning and implementation stages. If equality issues are kept visible throughout these processes, the mainstreaming stage is clear. Government authorities should support the rooting of the results and the dissemination of products and models. Women's projects in particular are often local and small, and dissemination of good practices with low resources is challenging. In addition, funding often ends at the stage when the project has finally acquired enough experience of good practices and therefore would have the most to offer.

Equality should also be mainstreamed into the organisation administering the project. In organisations, equality should be part of a wider operating strategy, and organisations should have the statutory workplace equality plan, equality working group, training and equality know-how. Although everyone is obliged to promote equality, the performance of equality work also needs

people with part of their working hours allocated to equality work. Individual actions targeted at the underrepresented gender work efficiently here and now, but a genuine change in attitudes and the achievement of equality call for the mainstreaming of the gender perspective as a long-term strategy.

**Have the project's good practices been assessed from the gender equality perspective?**

- If an activity or good practice strengthens segregation or pay difference, it cannot be called a good practice.
- If the project results in the career advancement of men only, the project does not promote equality.

**Are the project actors involved in the implementation of the mainstreaming strategy?**

- Who will tell about the project results and achievements?
- Are both women and men involved in stages including result dissemination?

An example from the WomenIT project: in WomenIT, project actors such as schoolteachers – not just members of project team – took part in presentations of their functions and results to decisionmakers and government officials.

**How strong are the efforts put by equality projects into mainstreaming and dissemination of good practices?**

- Efforts should be made to productise and disseminate good practices. Good equality practices are needed everywhere. Many women-specific projects are too modest about their achievements.

**How will the results be rooted in the parent organisation?**

- Will the project personnel's work continue after the project? Note one of the problem areas of equality – women and short-term employment.
- Will the project website be maintained and can material be ordered after project completion?
- Will changes take place in the parent organisation and partner-organisations: in their policies and practices, recruitment, management methods?
- Is equality discussed in the parent organisation: during coffee breaks, when planning activities and strategies, in cooperation negotiations with other projects or organisations, in supervision, team meetings, customer service situations?
- Who talks about gender and equality? Is there someone who always needs to remind others about this?
- How is equality discussed? Is it a common subject of jokes or is it discussed as part of the employees' work?

- Has an equality working group been appointed and a functional equality plan drawn up in the workplace?

## 5. Evaluation

Equality should also be visible in evaluation. In both quantitative and qualitative evaluations women's and men's perspectives should be presented separately and the differences and similarities brought up.

### **How were the objectives set reached, and how are they evaluated?**

- The equality objectives and other objectives should be analysed separately.
- It should be noted that if statistics are compiled on the project, the data on women and men must be analysed separately.

### **How does the project affect equality?**

- For example, pay differences, career development, segregation.

### **Can you find an evaluator who can assess the realisation of equality?**

## 6. Further development

The evaluation should involve an exploration into how equality issues could be addressed in future projects. If it appears that equality has not been visible in projects, you should consider how it could be made visible. On the other hand, some problems related to equality will only be detected during the course of the project and can only be addressed by new projects. For example, during equality projects major changes take place in people's thoughts. Projects empower people and collect information and experiences about women's and men's ways of perceiving an organisation, its values and practices.

### **How can the project result be turned into a product and a good practice into a service concept or established policy? Are the results simple enough and generally applicable?**

- In women-specific projects, results may not necessarily be clearly transferable and measurable. As early as the planning stage the focus should be on the clarity and general applicability of the results and good practices.

### **Why productise equality?**

## **What will the implementing organisation gain from the equality project?**

The permanence of the impacts created by the project, the continuity of the practices and the productisation of the outcome is regarded as problematic by many. There are no clear operating models maintained by project administrators or financiers. The issue of continuity applies particularly to projects with their key activities focusing on education or the improvement of social networks and interaction, etc. Such projects are often women-specific. In most cases a project can only act as a pilot or an opening into the solving of a problem that applies to a region or sector on a wider scale. It functions as an experiment that presents one possible solution to a local, current problem.

Most equality work is performed on project funding. Equality workers are almost exclusively women who complete one project and then move on to the next one. Because in most cases projects do not continue from where the previous project ended, it is seldom possible to develop the outcome of a project into a product in the next project. Therefore project results remain unutilised and at the same an impression is created that there is no progress made in equality work. Furthermore, women's work remains quite invisible in a material form. This is a challenge the project funder should focus on.

Other equality challenges related to the further development of projects in Finland include unrealistic ideas about the realisation of equality in our country. Equality is marketed to international employees and tourists as an image of Finnishness. But, in reality equality has not been reached; the labour market is segregated and quota policies are also needed. Tools to address the status of equality have been developed, but they have not become crystallised as precision solutions or products that could be easily applied in different sectors or situations. So there is still a major practical workload ahead in the further development of projects, including negotiations with the funder on the rights to use products, ownership, patents and purchase agreements.

Luckily the current ESP Programming Period enables sustained development work towards the creation of products and service concepts. Hopefully equality will also be better rooted and visible from now on.

## **7. Follow-up**

Follow-up on project results is important but problematic for the project implemented because projects typically end when funding ends. It would be good to think at an early stage who will participate in the follow-up of

the project's results and with what interests. Results and impacts should be recorded separately regarding men and women.

While a project is being implemented, those involved should consider to which issues attention should be paid in follow-up. In projects such as those in the field of education and social sector, objectives and results are often different from the issues written down in follow-up reports.

For example, in projects aimed at desegregation in education (such as WomenIT) the objectives are partially preventive. Results can not be illustrated by the number of new business start-ups. Instead, the impacts should be monitored over a longer period of time. Follow-up could also cover choices made later on in life, such as courses selected at school or studies entered in adulthood.

Also essential is what the follow-up information is used for. If follow-up reveals new problems, will funds be allocated in a new way in the future? If a problem in a region is women's access to employment, and current measures have not managed to improve the situation, information collected in follow-up could help target measures and resources correctly.

## **8. Go for it!**

Addressing equality issues is a lot of work, but it is highly rewarding. At times equality issues fade into the background, but it is good to remember to bring them up every once in a while and challenge yourself into thinking about and changing your actions. Sometimes bringing equality issues up causes a counter-reaction in people, such as belittling or argumentativeness. In most cases keeping your composure and presenting facts and practical examples can help in such situations, as a knee-jerk reaction is often caused by lack of information. It is good to aim towards a situation where men also address equality issues, because equality is not just a women's issue.

We hope this toolkit will help you gain new perspectives. It is possible to start wearing "equality lenses" through which you will see how gender and equality are connected with different issues. The change in the thinking process begins with noticing little things. Thought processes and operating methods do not change at one blow. But it is likely that if you have read through this toolkit, your idea of how equality should be mainstreamed into projects has become a little clearer. Each project can contribute to the promotion of equality as long as equality is taken into consideration throughout its various stages.

- 20) The Act on Equality between Women and Men (609/1986): <http://www.tasa-arvo.fi/Resource.phx/tasa-arvo/english/authorities/legislation/actonequality.htx>.
- 21) Segregation: division of sectors, jobs and tasks into women's and men's sectors, jobs and tasks.
- 22) Underrepresented: for example, women are underrepresented in traditionally maledominated sectors such as construction and manufacturing industry while men are underrepresented in the care sector.
- 23) Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health: Significance of gender in statistics and data collection. Presentation by Tiina Palotie-Heino on 20 March 2007.
- 24) English summary of the Final Report of the Monitoring Group for the Equal Pay Programme (2006–2007): [http://www.stm.fi/Resource.phx/publishing/documents/11507/summary\\_sv.htx](http://www.stm.fi/Resource.phx/publishing/documents/11507/summary_sv.htx)
- 25) Gender responsive budgeting (GRB)/gender budgeting/gender sensitive budgeting: taking the impacts of gender into consideration in budgeting and budget evaluations. Further information is available from sources including <http://www.gender-budgets.org/>.
- 26) For examples see e.g. <http://www.gender-budgets.org/>.
- 27) See the article on equality planning above.

