

ETG 4: EQUAL AS A DRIVING FORCE FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING SUMMARY

1. ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document is presenting the main results the work of the [European Thematic Group on Equal Opportunities](#) (ETG 4), undertaken in 2004 and focusing on the theme of gender mainstreaming. The text is covering the key components of policies and practices that can – implemented as a comprehensive strategy – enable progress in making gender equality a reality in the lives of women and men. The full report covering all activities of the working group is contained in the [Living Document on Gender Mainstreaming](#).

2. THE CHALLENGE

Despite an outstanding European legal framework and almost three decades of specific action to make gender equality a reality in the daily lives of women and men, disparities in the labour market and spheres of society persist¹, as indicated by the facts below:

- Although female employment rates have increased (from less than 50% during the first half of the 1990s to 55.6% in 2003), the gender gaps are still significant. Women's employment is 17.2% below the male rate in EU-15 and 16.3% is the equivalent figure for EU-25;
- In most Member States, the unemployment rate remains higher for women than for men (1.8% higher than male unemployment in the EU-15 and 1.9 % in the EU-25);
- The gender pay gap persists. On average, women in the EU earn only 84% of men's wages – 89% in the public sector and 76% in the private sector;
- Part-time work continues to be a female domain. In EU-15, 34% of women work part-time compared with 30% in the EU-25. Only 7% of men are part-timers;
- Women make up 77% of the EU's lowest paid workers. The risk of poverty is 3% higher for women compared to men;
- Women still take the brunt of all unpaid work at home, which severely hampers their employment and career opportunities;
- Parenthood has a different impact on female and male employment: the presence of children (aged 0-6 years) in the household decreases female employment rates by 12.7 percentage points, whilst an increase of 9.5 percentage points can be observed for fathers.
- Lack of easily accessible, affordable and good quality childcare remains one of the biggest obstacles to women's employment and career development. Whilst a number of Member States have already met the EU target for 2010 of childcare being available for 90% of school children, the provision for babies and toddlers is far below the target of 30 %. In most cases, the existing services cover less than 10% of the demand;
- Women are better educated than men. They are outperforming men in secondary level attainments by 6 percentage points in EU-15 and 5 percentage points in EU-25. They represent the majority of graduates in the EU (55%) although their study choices still tend to demonstrate traditional patterns and career choices. However, visible inroads have been

¹ Source: Report on equality between women and men, 2004. European Commission. http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equ_opp/com_04_115_en.pdf

made: in 2001, 36% of graduates in sciences, mathematics and informatics and 21% in engineering were female;

- Those educational achievements are not reflected in women's positions in the labour market. Occupational and sectoral gender segregation remains high. Women are clustered in health care and social services, education, public administration and retailing, while a disproportionate number of men work as technicians, engineers, finance professionals and managers. Although more women are entering high level jobs, men are still twice as likely to hold managerial positions and over three times as likely to be senior managers.

3. THE POLICY CONTEXT

Since the ratification of the Amsterdam Treaty² in 1999, the Member States and European Institutions have been obliged to undertake gender mainstreaming. The relevant Communication³ describes it as "not restricting efforts to promote equality to the implementation of specific measures to help women, but mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality by actively and openly taking into account at the planning stage their possible effects on the respective situation of men and women (gender perspective). This means systematically examining measures and policies and taking into account such possible effects when defining and implementing them."

The European Employment Strategy (EES) incorporates the principle of gender mainstreaming. In the face of persisting inequalities, the EES is also applying the so-called Dual Approach adopted by the Commission, which combines gender mainstreaming and specific actions for women. EQUAL, being a laboratory for new ideas to the EES is following the same approach. Gender mainstreaming is one of the transversal principles that should be integrated at both programme and project level, but specific actions favouring women are encouraged in areas or sectors with particularly large gender gaps.

4. GOOD PRACTICE FROM EQUAL

In the framework of its 2004 work programme, the European Thematic Group on Equal Opportunities (ETG 4) has assembled DPs that are working to integrate a gender dimension into education and training systems, municipalities and regions, large corporations and SMEs, and also groupings of enterprises and economic sectors. Whilst most of those DPs apply gender mainstreaming as an underlying principle in their activities related to either reconciliation or desegregation⁴, a smaller cluster of projects is dedicating all its efforts to introducing a gender perspective into mainstream policies and practices at national, regional or local level. It is important to note that the DPs in this cluster are targeting predominantly public authorities and institutions. The examples of good practice presented in this document are drawn from this small cluster and include:

- The Danish DP "[Youth, gender and career](#)" that is aiming to make gender mainstreaming an integral part of the national system of educational and vocational guidance;
- The Austrian DP "[Just GEM](#)" that is targeting employment policies and practices in the region of Styria. It involves institutions and organisations with high political visibility and impact, including the Social Services Department, regional employment offices, Chambers of Commerce, the Municipality of Graz (the capital of Styria), several district governments, a

² Article 2 of the EC Treaty: The promotion of equality between men and women is a task of the European Community; Article 3 of the EC Treaty: In all its activities the Community shall aim to eliminate inequalities and to promote equality between men and women. Article 23 (1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union: "Equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay."

³ "Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities" (COM(96) 67final)

⁴ See Living Document 2004: Gender Mainstreaming (Draft)

regional development agency, the Association of Styrian Innovation Centres, a major trade union and a large charity;

- Working with three universities, the Dutch DP [“Bridging the gender gap at Universities”](#) is introducing gender mainstreaming into these institutions of higher education;
- The Swedish [“Gender Equality Developers \(GED\)”](#) project that aims to increase knowledge about, and commitment to, gender equality in regional public authorities, the armed forces and the police, particularly through the work of change agents.

Although operating in different fields, these DPs share many components that, taken together, form the mile stones in a developmental process, aimed at structural and cultural change. These milestones include:

- [Securing the commitment and support of the top-level decision-makers;](#)
- [Establishing gender disaggregated statistics as the basis for on-going monitoring and evaluation;](#)
- [Carrying out a gender impact assessment of both the current mainstream provision and/or of the intended actions;](#)
- [Identifying gender objectives in the chosen policy field or organisation;](#)
- [Building gender competences in mainstream institutions;](#)
- [Implementing pilot programmes;](#)
- [Developing strategies for mainstreaming and sustainability.](#)

4.1. SECURING COMMITMENT AT THE TOP

Gender mainstreaming requires a top-down approach, i.e. the top level decision-makers in any institution or organisation must be committed to the principle and must also accept the implementation of the appropriate measures as a major priority. Securing this kind of commitment is not easy. Even in public authorities and institutions where the obligation to take account of the gender dimension has a stronger legal basis than in the private sector, the message from the top is often not as strong or as convincing, as it should be.

4.1.1. Pleading the case

Emphasising legal obligations or existing national commitments to gender mainstreaming was an important element in the DP’s outreach strategies that aimed to influence top level players. Yet, highlighting the advantages to be gained through gender mainstreaming in terms of the public image and the overall performance of the relevant institutions proved to be more crucial.

4.1.1.1. *Enhancing the competitiveness of universities*

The Dutch DP Bridging the Gender Gap at Universities built a chain of arguments related to the challenges of global competition for institutions of higher education and the skill requirements of the Knowledge Society. The need to attract the most promising students and outstanding members of staff and to introduce new teaching methods and learning approaches requires openness and flexibility and puts pressure on the traditional university system. In this context, gender mainstreaming can become an engine for innovation, since it is widening the pool of human resources of both students and staff. The DP’s “business case” convinced the boards of three universities, two of which are preparing to merge and are now applying gender mainstreaming to this process.

4.1.1.2. *Improving the delivery of employment policies*

Taking advantage of the existing public debate on problems in the delivery and effectiveness of active labour market policies, the Austrian DP [Just GeM](#) organised an event targeting those decision-makers who controlled employment policies in the Region of Styria. The message that was reiterated during the event was concise and to the point - those institutions or agencies responsible for the delivery of training and employment measures should adopt strategies, which take account of the diversity of their female and male “customers” instead of pushing them to adapt to the organisations’ procedures and cultures. The launch was extremely successful and all the decision-makers publicly announced that gender mainstreaming would be binding principle in

the areas for which they were responsible. These decision-makers were also urged to go beyond such a general statement and, at the event, they also agreed to run gender mainstreaming pilot projects and to nominate a man or a woman from a senior position in their organisations to participate in the DP's training course for "Gender Agents".

4.1.1.3. *Moving from legal obligation to personal commitment*

The DP Gender Developers (GED) set out to overcome the perception of many top level decision-makers that Sweden's longstanding gender equality policies had created a situation where women and men were more or less on an equal footing in working and private life. By stressing that all the members of the National Government, including the Prime Minister, had undergone training in gender mainstreaming, the DP succeeded in convincing the leaders of regional public authorities, the armed forces and the police to follow suit. These representatives participated in a short modular programme that had a strong emphasis on attitudinal change. Participants were offered a combination of lectures and in-depth discussions about facts, values, attitudes and behaviour. Some participants found it difficult to accept the degrees of inequality which existed in their institutions, in working life in general and in most spheres of society. For them, the experience was a real "eye-opener" and eventually generated individual processes of change. Participants began to understand for the first time the nature of the consequences that their decisions had on individual women and men. In their everyday jobs, these senior managers gradually started to include a gender dimension into their decisions, and also to recognise that inequality in sharing family tasks has an inevitable impact on equal opportunities in public life and in the workplace.

4.1.2. *Incorporating gender mainstreaming in processes of change*

Linking the introduction of gender mainstreaming to current policy priorities and developments proved to be a very strategic gambit. Two DPs focussed on change processes that were just emerging or underway in their respective countries. In both cases, the projects provided valuable support to the key players who were in charge of those processes.

4.1.2.1. *Targeting a legislative process*

The Danish project Unge, køn og karriere (Youth Gender and Career) managed to influence new legislation on educational and vocational counselling and, consequently, future training for career advisors. The policy debate about changes in this field was an ideal opportunity to introduce gender mainstreaming. With the obligations of the Amsterdam Treaty, the Ministry of Education had a keen interest in putting the spotlight on gender stereotypes and on non-traditional career choices for both young women and men. In 2003, the Ministry created a Dialog Forum to inspire and then to monitor the development and implementation of the new Act on Vocational Counselling, in which the EQUAL DP played a crucial role. The DP's mid-term conference in February 2003 "When dreams become true - about young people's educational and vocational choices in the gender segregated labour market" attracted 250 participants and another unlucky 200 were placed on the waiting list. Career counsellors and politicians also flocked to the awareness raising seminars held by the DP. As a result, the project was able to join forces with key players in careers advice. Eventually a critical mass of stakeholders and decision-makers came to recognise that gender mainstreaming, targeting both girls and boys, was the best avenue through which horizontal desegregation could be explored.

4.1.2.2. *Helping institutions of higher education to meet the challenge of change*

The Dutch DP Bridging the Gender Gap at Universities was involved in supporting the merger of two of the three universities with which it is working. It assisted the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU) and the Christelijke Hogeschool Windesheim in apply gender mainstreaming during the challenging process of merging two educational institutions. The DP saw the merger as a unique opportunity to redress the vertical and ethnic segregation that had existed in the previous institutions and to disseminate the message that gender mainstreaming brings benefits within the wider system of higher education in the Netherlands. At Dutch universities, only 6% to 8 % of the professors are female, whilst more than half of the students are women. At both the VU and Windesheim only a small number of women and people from ethnic minorities had been employed in senior positions. Senior management and deans of faculties at the VU backed the

approach of the DP, which had a crucial influence on the decision of the Joint Executive Board gender mainstream the merger. This body, which consists of the Executive Boards of both institutions, is leading the merger.

4.2. ESTABLISHING A STATISTICAL BASE AND MONITORING PROCEDURES

Gender mainstreaming is a long-term process which requires procedures and tools to measure and monitor change at regular intervals. Thus, it is always necessary to gather data that will give an accurate picture of the situation at the starting point. Whilst national or regional and even local statistical offices are increasingly producing gender-disaggregated data, such a statistical breakdown is not always available within individual organisations.

4.2.1.1. Mapping gender gaps as a regular management tool

The Dutch DP set out to collect exact figures that would show the numbers of men and women in the student body as a whole, in the different job positions and in the various levels of hierarchy within the universities. This had never been done before, and the exercise revealed that some of the information to be used as an important basis for decision-making was really quite patchy. For instance, whilst figures on students from ethnic minorities could be obtained from Statistics Netherlands, the ethnic background of staff members was not recorded and the DP had to start from scratch. In the end, the DP produced a detailed picture of women and men in the different occupational groups by:

- faculty/department;
- permanent and temporary appointments;
- age groupings ;
- full-time and part-time appointments;
- years of service.

This data is now being used to calculate the Glass Ceiling Index for the different faculties at the universities and these scores can be used to benchmark the performance of the faculties in terms of gender mainstreaming. Besides using the assembled data as the basis for future monitoring, the DP is using the striking gender gaps revealed in the higher level positions as a powerful argument for gender mainstreaming. The universities have adopted the data collecting approach that had been developed thanks to EQUAL and the collection exercise will be repeated at regular intervals.

4.2.1.2. Establishing a benchmarking system

The Just GeM DP could rely on existing gender-disaggregated data concerning population, the economy, education and training, employment and unemployment, and also concerning participation in political-decision-making for the whole region of Styria. Based on this initial input, the DP constructed gender equality indicators that are being used in a monitoring and benchmarking system called [Gender Radar](#). This tool presents the levels of gender equality achieved in the crucial areas mentioned above in all the districts of Styria. Scores are between “0” = absolute inequality and “1”= gender balance. The distance between an achieved score and 1 represents the gender gap that must be bridged, whereas the distance from 0 stands for the degree of equality reached so far. Moreover, an indicator of the overall gender equality performance of districts can be calculated and visualised. Through comparing the performance indicators over several years, it is possible to indicate progress and/or failure in both crucial areas and general performance. In addition, Just GeM provides permanently up-dated [gender equality profiles](#) for all Austrian districts and regions and also for the country as a whole.

4.3. CARRYING OUT GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

DPs in ETG 4’s Working Group on Gender Mainstreaming used various methods of scientific research to assess the gender gaps they aimed to tackle. This involved looking at:

Representation and participation:

- How many women and men participate in decision-making concerning the policies and practices that are to be assessed?

- How many women and men are in the groups targeted by the services and measures in question (including a gendered break-down of groups defined by age, disability, ethnic origin etc.)?

Access to resources:

How are the relevant resources being distributed between women and men? Resources include not only money, but also:

- Time devoted to work and non-work activities;
- Access to education and training;
- Access to work and career, broken down by function, job hierarchy level, type of employment (fixed term contract, part-time, full-time, self-employed);
- Access to social services including health care, housing, childcare, care of the elderly and other family support services;
- Mobility in terms of access to public transport, private cars, etc.
- Pay and other sources of income;
- Access to information about all the above (including access to ICT and the Internet).

How much of the relevant public or private budget is being spent to benefit women and men in different policy areas (education and training, active labour market policies, childcare and care of the elderly, support to business creation and SMEs, research etc.)?

Societal Rules:

- What is the impact of legislation, social norms and values on the policies and practices addressed?

4.3.1.1. Unmasking gender stereotyping as a pre-condition for change

When carrying out their assessments, ETG 4 DPs were looking at the state-of-the-art in their field and this was certainly the case for the Danish project Youth Gender and Career. The DP carried out qualitative interviews with 30 school-based career advisors, and these were then analysed. This showed the influence of societal rules and traditional role patterns on the concept and practice of vocational counselling and guidance and, in addition, three different approaches to counselling were identified:

- Gender blindness, i.e. gender is "invisible" and not considered to be a significant factor. Counsellors do not address how gender influences the possibilities and limitations that confront the individual. A gender-blind counsellor often acts rashly in a way that reflects traditional cultural perceptions of women and men;
- Gender consciousness, i.e. gender aspects are taken into account and this provides a base for enhancing the options available to boys or girls. Thus, the prevailing perceptions of what is masculine and feminine can be challenged.
- Gender neutrality means that a procedure believed to be neutral is applied, which is intrinsically reflecting gender stereotypes and thus failing to help young women and men to make the maximum of their potential.

According to the DP's assessment, most of the Danish counsellors regard themselves as being gender neutral, but in reality gender stereotypes are just below the surface. The advisors are not "neutral", as they tend to give advice that is in line with traditional male and female occupations. Thus, DP considers them to be "gender blind".

The gender conscious counsellors fall into two categories. The first category reproduces gender stereotypes because the counsellors tend to perceive girls and boys as being so different (especially if they come from ethnic minority backgrounds) that gender-related occupational choices seem natural and unproblematic. By contrast, those in the second category view the gender equality perspective as a significant part of their work and are very much aware of gender barriers to young people's occupational choices. They do not view the gender-segregated labour market as unchangeable and adhere to the idea that gender-conscious counselling may influence the choices of young people towards non- traditional options.

Similarly, the analysis of some of the early stages in the merger of the two Dutch institutions of higher education, revealed a clear discriminatory pattern. The assessment focused on a Business Studies programme, which was already part of the VU curriculum and has, from September 2003, also been taught at Windesheim Hogeschool by teachers from both institutions. The DP collected quantitative data on the staff involved and also figures on the working hours of female and male teachers. In addition, qualitative data was obtained through 25 interviews, in which the central question to both decision-makers and teaching staff was whether the merger had influenced the promotion prospects of male, female, ethnic and non-ethnic employees.

The interviews indicated that teaching the course at Windesheim, which before the merger had not offered graduate programmes, was considered to be an important career move by the staff of the Hogeschool, since it implied teaching at university level. By contrast, it was perceived as an undesirable, time-consuming task with no career prospects by the VU staff. The gender impact assessment showed that in both institutions, men were clearly the winners at this stage of the merger. Only a few male teachers and a disproportionately high number of women teachers from the VU were engaged in teaching at Windesheim. Most of those women do not yet have a doctorate and many are working part-time. Not a single woman from the original Windesheim staff complement was given the opportunity to teach in the new programme.

4.4. SETTING GENDER EQUALITY OBJECTIVES IN THE CHOSEN POLICY FIELD OR ORGANISATION

The different contexts and policy fields of the DPs required different mechanisms to identify concrete gender equality objectives. In this process, the overall objective of reaching a gender balance was broken down into viable intermediate targets. The following examples show that in some cases further fine-tuning was still necessary to define the final goals whilst in others the goals were so obvious that they can be immediately be addressed.

4.4.1.1. In higher education

To achieve the ultimate objective of dismantling vertical segregation at Dutch universities and colleges, the DP sought to improve the gender equality performance of a small number of departments within the three partner institutions and thus, to create peer pressure that would act on other departments and possibly on other universities outside the DP. The alarming outcomes of the gender impact assessment of the merger between the VU and Windesheim, forced decision-makers to formulate equality goals. At the VU, the directors and staff of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration proposed several measures to remedy the situation:

- Introduction of the Tenure Track System which would entail the faculty deciding every six years whether an existing member of staff would be reappointed or promoted. Compared to the current procedure with its indirect discrimination, this system was considered to be more transparent and would also require that personnel decisions would be based on more objective criteria;
- Positive action to improve career prospects for the female assistant professors who are teaching at Windesheim. They would be given priority access to a one year academic exchange programme with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It was expected that this opportunity would boost female career prospects.
- Creating possibilities within the faculty to reduce the under-representation of female scientists.

4.4.1.2. In vocational counselling and guidance

In the Danish case, the gender equality objective included the integration of the gender dimension into the new law on vocational counselling and guidance and consequently, into the new national training programme for careers counsellors. Formulating a viable intermediary goal had to take account of the training needs identified through the gender impact assessment. The findings had revealed that career counsellors lacked adequate knowledge about the gender aspects of the labour market, and in particular, about the mechanisms that reproduce gender segregation. Based on these results, the DP designed an educational programme for future

counsellors that could serve as a blueprint for the Government's intended scheme. It also set itself a target of piloting the training with a critical mass of counsellors.

4.4.1.3. In regional employment policies and practices

In Styria, the EQUAL DP adopted gender equality objectives at three different levels:

- The first committed the DP itself to building a capacity for gender mainstreaming into 30 organisations that were the most important in developing and implementing labour market policies;
- The second level involved the training of 30 gender agents so that they could formulate organisation-specific equality goals and take a leading role in the implementing the measures to attain these goals;
- The third level was related to the organisations that were being used as sub contractors by the regional employment office or municipalities and districts. These organisations were operating training and/or employment schemes and the DP trained those members of their staff who were responsible for the design and monitoring of such programmes.

4.5. BUILDING GENDER COMPETENCES IN MAINSTREAM INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS

Given the long-term perspective and also the complexity of gender mainstreaming, it is vital that organisations have the capacity to implement and adapt this process on an on-going basis. To instil the necessary resource and knowledge, DPs set up carefully monitored pilot projects and trained men and women as change agents.

4.5.1. Training change agents

Within the thematic work of ETG 4, different concepts of training for "gender agents" or "change agents" emerged. The first drew on the experience of existing gender equality infrastructures, offering training to their staff members and supporting them in moving from positive action for women to gender mainstreaming. This involved converting bodies that had mainly been focusing on the situation of women, into resource centres that could take account of the needs of both women and men. At the same time, desegregation or reconciliation DPs also provided external gender expertise to public and private institutions and enterprises in their territory⁵.

By contrast, the projects whose good practices are presented in this paper have opted for change agents to be recruited from within the organisations they are targeting directly, rather than existing gender equality bodies. Their concepts are founded on the importance of middle management in processes of organisational change.

4.5.1.1. Creating a new profile for in-house experts

The Just GeM DP is a good example of this approach. Participants nominated by the 30 institutions had either to be middle managers or advisors working directly with senior management. The training course designed by the DP enabled them to coordinate the implementation of gender mainstreaming as in-house experts and to support the relevant senior decision-makers in optimising both the female and male potential in the organisation. The programme was organised in six steps and, whilst undergoing training, the participants had to create and run pilot projects in their own organisations. Besides studying the historical development of gender equality policies and exploring their personal and institutional approaches to gender equality, the future change agents acquired project management skills and learned to look at their professional context in a "gender perspective". The course helped them:

⁵ More details of this concept can be found in the Living Document on Gender Mainstreaming.

- To identify areas and needs for change through a gender impact analysis and to propose and negotiate gender equality goals;
- To analyse the barriers, i.e. what can hamper the achievement of the goal and which steps must be taken to move from an existing discriminatory situation to a situation of gender balance;
- To develop options for dismantling the obstacles;
- To assess the options with the aim of finding the most realistic and viable in terms of costs and benefits, available time and organisational context;
- To implement the selected option(s), the gender dimension must be integrated into the management and control system of the organisation. Only if this is achieved, can stumbling blocks and deviations be detected and action taken to readjust the implementation strategy to the needs of both the organisation and its female and male “customers”;
- To design monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to measure progress between the situation of departure and the equality targets that had been formulated.

The training for providers of training and employment measures is very similar. While 16 change agents have so far been trained, another 66 are on the waiting list. The demand is still growing as the Regional Employment Office, which is the major client of these organisations, requires all its contractors to apply gender mainstreaming.

Upon successful completion of both their training course and their pilot project, the participants in the two programmes received an officially recognised certificate.

4.5.1.2. *Emphasising the link between gender skills and attitudinal changes*

Through its training programme for “gender equality developers” (GEDs), the Swedish GED DP aims to overturn the usual logic behind the development of equality plans namely that they have to be produced to comply with a legal obligation. According to the DP, this logic only leads to superficial amendments and not the systemic and cultural change that is needed. GED is convinced that a more egalitarian world of work requires new attitudinal and behavioural patterns and not only the accumulation of relevant knowledge. Therefore, the training offered to 35 middle managers from chosen organisations was process-oriented and conceived as an in-depth personal experience for each individual participant. It was structured in four phases (modules) of four days each, over a period of six months. This phased timing was important as it gave trainees ample opportunity to reflect on, and to find their own way of handling, the complex questions about gender and the gender impact of decisions on individuals, groups such as work teams, families and, last, but not least, the organisation. The training sessions were held in a conference centre far away from the participants’ workplaces and homes. Between the different training phases, the participants had to complete homework assignments, which also stimulated their individual processes of reflection.

While the first three seminars concentrated on the three levels mentioned above, the fourth focused on methods and tools that could help participants to disseminate and further develop their acquired knowledge and skills in order to start-up gender equality projects in their own organisations. The GEDs worked in fixed groups of a minimum of eight and a maximum of twelve members. The process and development of the group was facilitated by two tutors, one woman and one man, both of whom had special skills in group dynamics and gender issues.

The DP believes that the result of the training was “enlightening and inspiring” for all participants. Many things that they had been taken for granted and many preconceived views about women and men were shattered during the programme. The GEDs recognised these as myths that had been constructed by society and therefore they could be changed. The training convinced them of the fact that gender did matter and they were motivated to apply their new competences and insights within the organisations in which they worked.

4.5.2. Implementing pilot programmes

Testing the value of change agents was an integral part of the DP's strategy to build gender capacity in organisations and institutions. Since most of these pilot projects are not yet completed, it is too early to assess the results. However, the rules and avenues established for making the maximum of those model schemes indicate that the principle of gender mainstreaming is becoming embedded in a number of institutions and/or policy fields.

4.5.2.1. *Integrating a gender dimension in male and female domains*

The GED DP required all the participants in its training seminars to sign an "agreement for change", together with their employer. This included a commitment to start a local gender project addressing the specific needs of their organisation in terms of equality.

In the Swedish police force, examples of these actions included the introduction of "friendlier" police uniforms for women and men, a survey on the absenteeism and sick leave rates of women and men and a training programme helping people who are working with victims of crime to integrate a gender perspective into their activities. In the armed forces, the new GEDs were able to launch an analysis of the gender implications of international operations. As a result of this initiative, a new partnership was formed that has now submitted a project proposal for the second round of EQUAL.

Other pilots are addressing gender issues in institutions from the typical female domains of the public sector. One is testing awareness raising and training schemes for fathers and mothers of new born children. Another is working with local schools and involving students, teachers and parents in introducing gender equality into class rooms. New teaching materials and tools are also being produced that will be disseminated widely.

4.5.2.2. *Pilots throughout the region*

The Austrian pilot actions are taking place in public authorities and organisations that have the decision-making power to fund and out-source training and active labour market policy measures. A total of 31 organisations⁶ from throughout the region applied for a pilot project and 11 were chosen by the steering group of JUST GeM. Given the huge demand, the DP was in a position to apply strict selection criteria.

On the base of the following five criteria the steering group selected the final, eleven pilot projects:

- Commitment of the organisation in terms of resource allocation;
- Impact on all fields of activity covered by the organisation, i.e. a commitment to extend gender mainstreaming to all departments;
- Sustainability of the project in the organisation;
- Impact on employment policy;
- Dissemination strategies and mainstreaming potential.

The examples below include pilots run by the City Government of Graz, which have already shown that they have considerable potential for mainstreaming:

- A gender impact analysis of all products and services delivered by the Department for Sport and Physical Education and by the Department for Youth and Family;
- Introducing gender budgeting and an analysis of all subsidies paid to external services providers within these two policy fields;
- Development of tools and guidelines for the implementation of gender mainstreaming in all municipal authorities;

⁶ Trade Union; Chamber of Commerce & Industries; Municipality of Graz; Styrian Labour Market Services; District of Eastern Styria; Regional Development Agency of the District of Liezen; County Government of Graz Umgebung; Welfare Organisation; Social Services Department of Styria; Association of Innovation Centers; the District of Saggautal.

- Development of specific qualifications for those employees who are responsible for planning and delivering the services offered by the municipality;
- Production of a Manual to assist municipalities in the introduction of gender mainstreaming into local policies and practices.

Another string of gender initiatives are being carried out by the regional chapter of the Austrian Trade Union Federation on topics such as:

- Gender impact analysis of company level collective agreements, using a sample of SMEs and large enterprises;
- Awareness raising and training for members of work councils;
- Setting up a commission to develop guidelines for the integration of gender mainstreaming into collective agreements, with a particular focus on work-life-balance and discrimination based on gender and ethnicity;
- Development of tools to enable works councils to analyse and eliminate gender-specific career obstacles;
- Negotiating model collective agreements focused on gender equality with a group of enterprises.

5. TOWARDS MAINSTREAMING AND SUSTAINABILITY – FIRST RESULTS

5.1. HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL MAINSTREAMING

Except for the Danish DP Youth, gender and career, which has clearly reached its mainstreaming objective of integrating the gender perspective into new legislation and training, the gender mainstreaming DPs are not yet in position to present their final results. However, a number of achievements have shown how the conception and implementation of mainstreaming strategies is beginning to make an impact on public policies and practices.

Three of the four gender mainstreaming DPs presented in this document have a significant potential for both vertical and horizontal mainstreaming:

- The Youth, Gender and Career DP reached its goal of vertical mainstreaming and succeeded in influencing the reform of vocational counselling and guidance in Denmark. EQUAL has clearly contributed to the integration of a gender perspective at the relevant political, regulatory and administrative levels. Horizontal mainstreaming is still underway. The training programme developed for careers counsellors will be offered until the end of year and, at the same time, it is being disseminated to other institutions of higher education;
- The same is true of the Austrian DP, which succeeded in committing the political decision-makers to the introduction of its approach into regional employment policies and practices. Both the training programme for gender developers and the pilot projects in the organisations in which they are employed are already demonstrating the positive effects of horizontal mainstreaming;
- The Dutch DP appears to be succeeding in horizontal mainstreaming. Whilst EQUAL approaches are being transferred to more departments and faculties in the universities involved in the DP, its dissemination strategy has raised the interest of other institutions of higher education. It is too early to tell, if and how the gender mainstreaming tools will impact on relevant national policies.

5.2. PUSH AND PULL DIMENSIONS

From the beginning, the gender mainstreaming DPs have been striving to create greater visibility for both their activities and results. This has included working with the media, convening meetings and events with high level players and representatives of ultimate and intermediate target groups, and also producing and disseminating products and tools. A striking feature in all of these activities has been the emphasis on the synergies that these efforts for gender equality could produce to benefit other policy areas such as local and regional development or strategies to mitigate the consequences of demographic changes.

As the DPs were targeting hot issues and real policy priorities, they were in a good position to work with the pull-effect. The strategies described above that involved top level decision-makers and other important players proved to be successful in contributing to the achievement of the different policy objectives like for instance the improvement of the delivery of services provided by public authorities or employment offices.

5.3. MEETING MAINSTREAMING REQUIREMENTS

5.3.1. Innovation

Even if certain methods and tools for gender mainstreaming were available when the DPs were designing their work programmes, they have clearly generated a number of innovative solutions to applying the concept of gender mainstreaming to their own contexts and organisational cultures.

- This is clearly the case for the Austrian Just GeM DP that had to address different levels of decision-making. The cascade approach developed thanks to EQUAL created inter-agency cooperation on employment and gender equality, which was new and unheard of in Styria. Starting with a gender impact assessment for the whole region and the formulation of equality goals for this “macro” level, the project transferred this methodology to the “midi” level or, in other words, the major authorities and institutions that are responsible for employment policies. More components of gender mainstreaming were added including the training of gender agents and establishing of the pilot projects within their employing bodies. The third wave of activities targeted the “micro” level and involved the service providers that are sub-contracted to implement active labour market policy measures.

5.3.2. Effectiveness and efficiency

Gender mainstreaming DPs proved to be effective in their contributions to the desegregation of the labour market and also to improving the reconciliation of work and family life for women and men. It is far too early to assess the impact on the ultimate target groups, but the commitment of intermediate target groups and their acquisition of gender skills can help to make gender equality a reality. Key factors in the DPs’ performance were:

- *Building on prior experiences such as those from EMPLOYMENT-NOW by mobilising existing networks to support their activities.* In Austria, an employers’ network and the regional network of gender equality counsellors helped to bring on board the relevant key actors from employment offices, municipalities and regional districts and also from social partner organisations. In Denmark and in the Netherlands, the DPs tapped into the expertise of gender studies units and research units at universities, and the Swedish DP used the experience of the so-called “flying” gender experts, who have been travelling up and down the country and training key players, including members of the national government;
- *Taking account of the special needs and interests of their (intermediate) target groups, emphasising and creating win-win situations for both individuals and organisations.* The Dutch DP, for instance, helped the universities involved to recognise the advantages to be gained from gender mainstreaming in terms of becoming more attractive to promising students and staff. Realising that legal obligations are not enough to achieve real equality, the GED project in Sweden developed an approach that led decision-makers and middle managers on a journey of cultural change that affected them as individuals and ultimately the work groups, the work environment and the work ethos of their employing organisations;
- *Working with multi-disciplinary and multi-skilled teams.* In the Netherlands, the coordinator of the EQUAL activities at the three universities is a business consultant with a special expertise in change management. The DP had rightly assumed that she might be more easily accepted by the (male) key people at the different levels of the hierarchy than a person with a background in gender studies. The coordinator is working with three teams that have been established in each of the participating institutions and which comprise experts in personnel policies, the subjects of the studies programmes to be addressed and, obviously, gender questions;

- *Achieving cost-benefit efficiency.* For instance, the Austrian DP required all organisations that volunteered for pilot projects to make a financial commitment. EQUAL funding was more than matched by their contributions, thus increasing the value delivered.

5.3.3. Sustainability

The gender mainstreaming efforts of the DPs are generating an impact that will endure beyond the life-span of the EQUAL Initiative:

- The monitoring approach of the Dutch DP is now an exercise that is part of the normal system and data collection takes place at regular intervals in the three universities. In Styria, the Gender Radar system, created by Just GeM, will be continued by the regional government after the completion of the project;
- The decision of the regional employment office of Styria to introduce gender mainstreaming in its head office and local agencies and as a pre-condition to contracting training and employment measures will clearly have a sustainable impact on employment policies and practices in the region. This decision was a direct result of the involvement of regional employment office in the activities of the DP;
- In Denmark, the fact that the new law on vocational counselling and guidance as well as the revised training curriculum for careers counsellors contain a clear gender dimension provides for the sustainability of the DP's strategy.

5.3.4. Reproducibility

Good practices presented in this document appear most likely to be reproduced in similar contexts:

- The Dutch experience of introducing gender mainstreaming as a tool to improve not only the gender equality situation, but also the general performance of universities could be reproduced by other institutions of higher education. The DP is pushing in that direction by disseminating its guides and tools to such institutions and by persuading key-players from the partner organisations to act as ambassadors, marketing the concept to their peers;
- The same applies to the Austrian DP, which has triggered a huge demand, particularly for the training of gender agents, from stakeholders and players that have so far not participated in its activities. Besides encouraging the trained gender agents to use their experience and skills to create a snow-ball effect, Just GeM will also disseminate a variety of products that are being developed in the framework of the DP's pilot projects. Outputs include a manual for gender mainstreaming in municipalities, guidelines to integrating a gender dimension into collective bargaining and training packages for members of work councils.

5.3.5. Transferability

Those approaches to gender mainstreaming that have been tested successfully are now being transferred through the DPS' transnational partnerships:

- The Swedish programme for the training of "gender equality developers" was exported to Italy and adapted to the needs of the partner DP, which is supporting gender equality bodies at local and regional level in moving their central focus from specific actions for women to gender mainstreaming;
- Both the Swedish and the Danish DPs are aiming to make their good practices applicable to other target groups. This will take place through second round EQUAL partnerships. In Denmark, the idea is to adapt the new gender inclusive approach to the needs of young people from ethnic minority backgrounds. The GED DP plans to carry out gender mainstreaming in a special department of the Armed Forces that is responsible for international operations.

5.3.6. Policy relevance

The ETG 4 gender mainstreaming DPs have addressed real issues and responded to the needs of policy makers. Besides providing valuable input to National Action Plans for Employment

(NAPs), they have succeeded in feeding their good practices into important processes of change in their respective countries.

- The Danish DP phased its work programme to coincide with different stages in the drafting and adoption of the new law on vocational guidance. The commitment of the National Government to enforcing this legislation in 2003 and the consequent reform of the training of career counsellors in 2004, created a strong pull-effect, which optimised the project's chances of influencing the political and public debate;
- In Styria, the Just GeM DP used the on-going public discussion of the problems in the delivery and the impact of active labour market policies as a magnet to draw the attention of policy makers to the gender dimension of the debate. The gender mainstreaming strategies and tools produced by the DP have also made the institutions and service providers more user-friendly and have improved their performance through the introduction of new methods for planning and the management of change.

6. PAVING THE WAY FOR FURTHER ACTION

The EQUAL good practices presented in this document have generated significant changes whose full impact will only be visible at a later stage. However, in the local areas and regions as well as in the public and private organisations involved, EQUAL has successfully launched a process which incorporates the gender dimension in employment related policies and practices. EQUAL DPs have demonstrated that it is possible to win over top level decision-makers and to get their lasting commitment to cultural change. The experience of those DPs also shows that "gender equality experts" can play a crucial role in stimulating and maintaining that commitment and also in ensuring that knowledge and skills related to gender mainstreaming are disseminated and used as widely as possible.

The EQUAL achievements are including a wealth of curricula, methodologies and tools that can support governments at national, regional and local level, but also public and private organisations, to integrate a gender dimension in all their policies and practices. These products, which can in most cases be accessed via the DPs' websites, may also provide relevant information for DPs intending to focus on gender mainstreaming in the second round of EQUAL.

Moreover, in EQUAL, gender mainstreaming is not optional, but a guiding principle for all partners in a Development Partnership, irrespective of the thematic priority they have chosen. To help them meet this requirement, the European Commission's Gender Mainstreaming Working Group has produced a guide⁷. It has been written primarily for all who are involved in EQUAL, but it can be useful to others, individuals or organisations.

⁷ The guide is the result of the work of the European Commission's Gender Mainstreaming Working Group comprising Managing Authority and National Support Structure representatives from the EU Member States. A learning seminar held in Budapest in July 2004, organised by the European Commission, the Gender mainstreaming Working Group and hosted by the Hungarian Managing Authority, also provided rich material for the guide. It was compiled and written by Rebecca Franceskides.