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**GENDER EQUALITY COMMISSION  
(GEC)**

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**FINAL REPORT ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

**WORKSHOPS I AND II  
(MAY AND JUNE 2012)  
PROJECTS**

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## FINAL REPORT ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING : WORKSHOP I AND II (MAY AND JUNE 2012) – PROJECTS

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*Report and evaluation of the Gender mainstreaming workshops Group II (May and June 2012)*

*Hanna Onwen-Huma : expert on GM*

*Vincent Peiffert : facilitator*

*Participants:*

*They were from the various co-operation projects/committees (see the list of participants from HR)*

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### WORKSHOP I

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As in the previous workshops, the Secretary General's home office representative opened the session. A representative from the human resources opened the first workshop.

The aim of the workshop was to give enough knowledge to the participants so that:

- They can understand the relevance of gender equality in their specific policy area
- They have the resources to convince their committees of the relevance of gender equality and defend gender equality mainstreaming within the context of their committee's own working methods/practice.

Programme:

1. The workshop started with a short film produced by the Danish government on Gender Mainstreaming.
2. They were asked to introduce themselves (name, committee or co-operation projects, answers to the following questions:
  - "Is gender mainstreaming familiar to you?"
  - "Have you already done gender mainstreaming?"
  - "How was it done?"
  - "What was your role?"
3. Then, participants brainstormed on a definition of GM by using keywords:
  - Combating de jure and de facto discrimination
  - Combating gender stereotypes
  - Both gender perspectives
  - Similarities and differences
  - Equal participation
  - Equal representation
  - Equal opportunities
  - Dialogue between genders
  - Education
  - Values
  - Revisiting structures that are considered equal
  - No discrimination on account of sex
  - Harmony in the workplace
  - Harmony in decision making
4. Theory was given by the expert
5. Exercise: "Where does gender/sex exist?", each participant went to the group that was appropriate and they worked on the reasons of their choice:
  - In the body:
    - o Different bodies
    - o Different hormones
      - Testosterone – aggression

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- Oestrogen – empathy
- According to Simon Baron-Cohen, professor in psychology of Cambridge university:
  - E- S theory = different human brains
  - They are a "male" brain (women and male) and a "female" brain (women and men) that is not especially linked to the gender
- In the mind:
  - Because body is too restrictive (context – gender identity is not only in our body)
    - it's a learning process
    - it is influenced by family, education, society, professional
    - it is a question of values = evolving process
- "you are what you do":
  - more inclusive
  - not too much gender criteria
- somewhere else:
  - it is a concept
  - the environment influences: people, places, language, culture, religion, media, law, etc.
- Group reflection on "where is a gender perspective needed?"
  - What people are affected by my work?
  - Have things been sufficiently examined from a GM?
  - How could my organization benefit from a gender perspective?
  - Is people's everyday life affected by the project/activities?

The groups identified the target groups and people affected of their work: Lawyers, judges, policy makers, students, doctors, citizens of Europe, drug users, organizations, governments. They talked about the work of the equality rapporteurs in the committee. Court judgements were talked about as being something to look into. Performance indicators have to have a gender perspective. The importance of statistics was discussed. Local democracy is very gender sensitive. Conventions that were drawn long time ago with no gender perspective should be looked at and discussed from a gender perspective.

The goals that were set before the workshop were met. Basic notion of gender mainstreaming was established through theory given by the expert and group practice led by the facilitator.

The participants' experience on gender mainstreaming was reviewed:

- What they have tried with gender mainstreaming.
- How to identify gender relevance in their own field

Participants were given an assignment for the next workshops.

1. They are supposed to go through their committee's program of action with the following questions:
  - a. Are people's lives and everyday activities affected?
  - b. Are there significant differences between women and men in this sphere of activities?

Those two questions are used to find out which are the gender-relevant parts of their committee's work.

2. They were also asked to think about possible obstacles that they might meet in gender mainstreaming within their own work.

It is worthwhile to examine the need for gender impact assessment at the very beginning of the preparatory work. This need is assessed by answering questions that test gender relevance and by reviewing existing background information and statistics.

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By reviewing existing information and statistics, it can be determined whether conclusions about the possible gender impact may be drawn on the basis of that information. It is also advisable to inquire about the gender expertise of the working party. A suitable next step is to draw up a plan for obtaining missing information and ensuring expertise. For all practical purposes, it needs to be clarified at the very beginning of preparatory work:

- how the issue at hand affects women and men, girls and boys, respectively
- what is already known about the circumstances and needs of women and men
- what additional information is needed.

## Evaluation of the first workshop

What they liked most:

- the atmosphere and the practice/exercises of the workshop
- the variety and content of the exercises, explanations and material (cf handbook on gender mainstreaming sent to them prior to the workshop)
- the time to discuss among themselves as well as the exchange of information in groups
- the amount of participants in each session
- the relevance of the information on gender mainstreaming
- finding out how much/little other colleagues knew about gender mainstreaming
- getting an opportunity to meet other colleagues
- having open discussion
- discovering about the notions of gender specific actions being products of gender mainstreaming
- discovering the concept of gender neutrality which was new to many
- better understanding gender mainstreaming through drawing or illustration: gender mainstreaming being the process to obtain gender equality which is the goal. Gender perspective is a way of seeing thing)
- getting answers to their questions especially about the gender equality rapporteur
- what they learned and having practical tool such as the gender relevance testing
- having the possibility to think in a new way
- clear definitions which was important to them

What they liked least:

- some of them felt that the discussion was not concrete enough

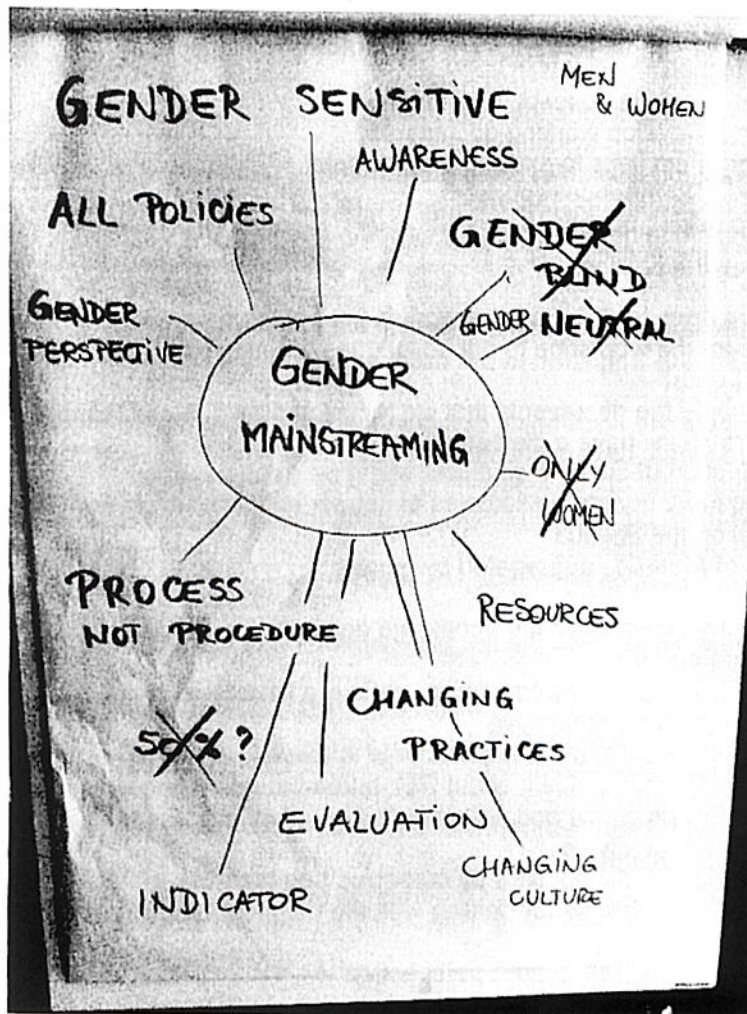
At the end of the workshop they showed enthusiasm about gender mainstreaming. They felt ready to start a more thorough reflection.

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## WORKSHOP II

### Programme

1. Cloud of keywords: mindmap of the keywords about GM (used as a quick reminder of the key concepts given in workshop I))



2. Question: is there an appropriate time to deal with GM:
  - All the time was an answer that was given.
3. Feedback on the 2 questions (relevance of a gender perspective)  
In turn, the participants shared their reflection and experience on gender relevance in their committee.
4. List of obstacles:
  - Lack of training
  - Lack of experience
  - How to reach the right people
  - Cultural obstacles
  - Financial obstacles
  - Lack of interest
  - Lack of knowledge

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5. Brainstorm questions in group:
  - What is one simple step you could take when you go back to your office that would have a positive impact in this area for your organization?
    - o Develop indicators, population surveys
    - o Spread good practices
    - o Work on raising awareness
    - o Explain to the stakeholders (ie target countries) why it is important to change practices
    - o Need for simple sentences to use, pragmatic steps, tips
    - o Start small:
      - Include concept, CoE priority
      - Develop working documents
      - Find links to existing programmes
      - Conference reports
    - o Keep asking questions
    - o Check the political will
  - What will you have to do to make it work in your environment?
    - o Present the workshop to our colleagues, training of our own division (why's and how's)
    - o Distribute the documents that we received during the workshops
    - o Share ideas, have a dialogue
    - o Evaluation of our own situation, see if we need experts
    - o Have more concrete examples of gender mainstreaming from the CoE
    - o Put it on the agenda
    - o Use of Statistics aggregated by gender
  - How do we ensure we have the people we need on board? What action can we take to get them on board?
    - o Donors like gender perspective, get more financing by making a project plan with a gender perspective
    - o Encourage colleagues to participate in these workshops
    - o Find more time to think about GM: bureau meeting, meeting alert
    - o (Gender) presence and reflection in CoE work processes
    - o Get external advice
    - o Develop specific analysis by ourselves and then ask an expert to comment
    - o Need for guidelines for dealing with the neighbourhood policies, Arab countries
    - o Project plans with gender perspective
    - o Gender equality rapporteur
    - o Ask for gender experts, local adds in the paper in order to make it more visible
    - o Evaluation to get practical recommendation
    - o Think of applied solutions
    - o Name an office person responsible for GM
    - o Get the whole staff on board and reflection between staff
6. Examples from the EU/handbook
  - How to's (see project checklist of the document gender glasses page 24-26)

Based on an interview of Jan Malinowski: some of his comments and tips

The first reactions in respect of gender equality typically involve that:

- we shouldn't do anything specific - human rights are gender neutral, gender is therefore not an issue

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- more specifically, freedom of expression should be the overriding consideration we cannot / we are not equipped to engage with this dimension someone else should deal with gender equality aspects we will not anyway have an impact

Instrumental to the above results was

- Identifying persons within the committee to lead discussions and front proposals (alliances). This allowed the committee to develop ownership on the matter. There were tangible results, with gender aspects being included in various documents (on internet profiling, public service media governance, etc.).
- Recognition is important. Motivation has increased due to acknowledgement of the committee's initiative to designate a gender equality rapporteur, a measure that has been mandatory for all Council of Europe intergovernmental committees.

Through his experience, some key steps or elements to implement GM

Find allies (other committees or countries who already implemented gender equality and can be a good example or source of ideas) to show you a different approach or angle

Look at the past to check the gender relevance: screen what could be GM relevant and how to change it

Bring a gender perspective or look at the situations under a different angle.

## 7. Commenting on do's and do not's

These should be sent to all staff. Some people felt that the "Why" of the document was missing from the paper. The participants stressed that each member of the secretariat is already an expert in their own field. There is just a need to combine a gender perspective into that expertise. We have not reached gender equality.

## Evaluation of the second workshop

They realised the importance of the exercise.

What they liked most:

- The many hands-on exercises (brainstorm, mindmap) which are practical and easy to understand
- Having more material and knowledge to work on the GM issue
- The exchange of information in groups and the time to discuss with peers
- The gender glasses handbook that they found very interesting and practical. They also appreciated the sharing of the handbook prior to the workshop
- The focus on GM
- Concrete documents, use of the handbook's checklist to use at the start of a project
- Dedication and passion from the colleagues
- The awareness about GM, making the difference between GM and gender equality
- Getting to know that other colleagues have the same issues
- The ability to collaborate

What they liked less:

- Some of them asked to have more material (documents, real life situations) from the COE to work with
- The lack of time to prepare (for some participants, the workshops were back to back)

Some participants mentioned their interest in a third session to continue the reflection and have more practice on GM.

Main comments:

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- To continue and do co-operation
- To take time to think about the topic in a useful way
- Need more ammunition to apply GM at work
- Get more colleagues to attend the workshop and to get them on board
- Get more convincing examples in order to show how GM can bring concrete positive results
- Get the questions previously to the workshop
- Have the document do's and do not's to be circulated several time as a reminder
- How to keep gender on the agenda.
- Pressure is needed from others.
- Making an analysis of an action in the future and then go through it together. Doing an exercise internally and then sharing it with the whole team.
- The importance of Networking
- Support needed in the future
- Every participant identified the relevance of GM in his/her work.
- GM needs more visibility in the CoE

## Overall evaluation by the trainers

- Material from the COE: a request was made to have more documents from the COE with which to work as practical exercises. The request was also sent to the Gender committee to inform the participants to bring their material. This did not happen.
- A certain lack of information or last minute information (list of participants): enough time would have allowed a better preparation especially in the examples used by the expert during the workshop. If there would have been more knowledge there could have been a chance to find more appropriate examples of gender mainstreaming.
- More preparatory time prior to the workshop. We got less time to prepare the first workshop as the expert arrived in the evening. For the second workshop, we had a full afternoon to review the programme, work on our exercises and to choose examples adapted to the audience.
- We both really enjoyed our collaboration that went very well and we are looking to working together on the next set of workshops in June.

Participation showed a range of commitment/interest, which was good, as it enabled those with negative views and/or little experience to learn from others/realise that their views are not universally held and that there is scope for progress. This is a process that needs to be supported:

- There is a need for continued exposure to ideas and opportunities for exchange between participants.
- One workshop of 2 half-days is not sufficient to develop a coherent and fully internalised knowledge with appropriate personal strategies to meet differing day-to-day needs. Often the difficulties only become apparent in practice.
- Proposals would be to organise continuing sessions (with or without trainers) at regular times during the year.
- Simple and easy to use materials could usefully be developed
  - o there was request for this – adapting the Finnish handbook to the CoE and a shorter leaflet based on the 5 do's and don't.
  - o Also, there was a request for a common CoE wide strategy/advice of dealing with difficult issues arising from culture conflicts and the position/treatment of women (particularly in the context of co-operation projects in, but not exclusively, neighbouring countries (eg North Africa). This would need another training all together.
- Initial sessions also need to be organised for staff working on monitoring and conventional committees; as well as for new staff and others who have so far not been



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able to attend. Perhaps, it might now be time to include the workshops within the regular CoE training programme.

- Should the current format of 2 half-days spaced out over a month be maintained or adapted
- However, even the limited time commitment could not prevent several participants dropping out altogether or for the second half-day session citing pressing work obligations - and this applied to both those with positive and negative attitudes.
- Some services were very well represented (local government, social cohesion to name two in particular) reflecting the commitment of the head of service. However, although some heads of service (division heads) attended (social cohesion, legal co-operation, combating drug abuse, for example) only 2 heads of department took part
  - o Could it be possible to get statistics from HR in order for the trainers to better adapt appropriate examples for future trainings?
- More worryingly, some participants seem to have been sent as "representatives", and one was even replaced between the 2 half-days. Whilst reporting back and generalising the information is to be encouraged, the notion of a representative suggests a misconception of the learning process and/or lack of real interest.
- For the above reasons and for others (timetabling, etc) the groups between the 2 half-days of each workshop were often different creating some problems of coherence in the learning dynamic.
- The workshops carried out in April, May and June were no more than initial opportunities for introducing some basic concepts, raising awareness and giving an idea of how to go about gender mainstreaming. But they cannot by themselves achieve a lasting and effective change of behaviour.