

Gender Mainstreaming in Sweden

A Gender Equality Perspective in all policy areas

The overall objective of gender equality policy is a society in which women and men have the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all major spheres of life. This means:

- The equal distribution of power and influence
- Equal opportunities for financial independence
- Equal conditions and opportunities with regard to setting up in business, working conditions and development at work
- Equal access to education and the opportunity to develop personal ambitions, interests and talents
- Shared responsibility for the home and children
- Freedom from gender-related violence.

The Government has collective responsibility for achieving the gender policy objectives, and each minister is responsible for promoting a gender equality perspective in his/her policy area. The Minister for Gender Equality co-ordinates the work and is responsible for the follow up and further development of gender policy.

Every year since 1994 the Government has declared in its annual Statement of Government Policy its political conviction that a gender equality perspective must permeate all aspects of government policy. This approach involves a shift of emphasis in gender equality work. From previously focusing on special measures to eradicate gender discrimination and counteract the existence of different conditions for women and men through legislation and active measures (including positive discrimination), gender equality work will now be a part of the day-to-day political and administrative work. The term "gender mainstreaming" is used internationally to describe this new approach.

Gender mainstreaming means that both political and administrative work shall be permeated by a gender perspective at all levels and in all areas, and that the development work is carried out by the regular staff. Top management is responsible for ensuring that this happens, in both administrative and development work.

Mainstreaming is a strategy, a method for achieving the gender equality objectives, and means that:

- different conditions and requirements for women and men should be identified
- every question which concerns individuals should be examined from a gender perspective
- the expected consequences of changes for women and men respectively should be analysed

This fact sheet describes what has been done so far to develop working methods for the application of a gender perspective at different national levels.

Measures at Central Government Level

Statistics disaggregated by sex

Making gender visible is one of the main purposes of mainstreaming. In order to satisfy the need for statistics disaggregated by sex, the Government decided in 1994 to issue an additional instruction to Statistics Sweden (the central statistics office). This states that all official statistics in Sweden shall be disaggregated by sex unless there are special reasons for not doing so. The Committee on Statistical Reform (dir 1998:17) has been instructed to include in its report a review of the measures that have been carried out as a result of this instruction.

Courses in gender equality

In order for a gender equality perspective to be incorporated into day-to-day routines, greater knowledge and awareness of gender issues are necessary among both top management and staff members.

Since autumn 1994 the Government has organised courses in gender equality studies for ministers, state secretaries, press secretaries and political advisers; heads of division and other personnel at ministries and other public administration authorities; and committee secretaries and commissioners.

The purpose of the training is to deepen awareness of women's and men's conditions in society, to spread information about gender equality policy objectives, and to increase officials' understanding of their own responsibility in the work to mainstream a gender perspective.

The courses are based on Statistics Sweden's *Women and men in Sweden, Facts and Figures*.

The courses are led by two experts and last for three hours. Lectures alternate with discussion and reflection on women's and men's conditions in society

Courses were started in the spring of 1998 to train more instructors.

Committee terms of reference

In order to highlight conditions for women and men in the committee reports that form the basis for Government proposals in different fields, the Government decided in November 1994 (dir 1994:124) to introduce special terms of reference for all Government committees of inquiry, directing them to include gender impact in their reports. Such reports and analyses are essential if the Government is to be able to judge the effects of reform proposals and other changes from a gender perspective. In order to facilitate and support the work, all new committee members, special

experts and principal committee secretaries can join courses on gender equality. The Government has conducted one follow-up study of the directive so far, and will continue to study the effects at regular intervals.

Analysis tool

In order to support the ministries in assessing whether a proposal or decision will have a gender impact, the Division for Gender Equality is drawing up a proposal for a simple method of gender equality analysis. It consists of four questions:

1. **Does the document affect one or more target group(s)?** When the answer is yes, a gender perspective should be applied and the analysis continue.
2. **What are the conditions for women and men respectively in the policy area in question?** This looks at the representativeness of different decision-making bodies; the division of/accessibility to resources; and rights, obligations and responsibility from a gender perspective.
3. **Explain the different/similar conditions for women and men in a particular area.** Structures, norms and organization are analysed.
4. **What assessable measures are planned in order to achieve the gender policy objectives?**

The analysis tool is currently being tested in different ministerial divisions.

Another analysis tool has been developed by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities through the JämKom project (see below). They have developed the **3R method** in order to facilitate the analysis of local government work from a gender perspective. 3R stands for Representation, Resources and Realia.

Representation: How are women and men represented in all the groups that contribute in one way or another to local government decision-making in a particular field?

Resources: The distribution of money, time and space between girls/women and boys/men. How are the resources localised and what priorities are made?

Realia: What norms, values and quality measures steer an organisation and who sets the standards? Whose needs does the organisation satisfy?

A 3R analysis should make it possible to answer questions about how power is distributed between women and men, how gender influences the formation of structures and organisational solutions, and how norms are set in terms of gender in the various local government activities.

Working group for methodological development in gender equality work

At the end of 1997 the Government appointed a working-group to speed up and facilitate the development of methods for gender equality work. The working group, which will sit for at least two years, is

headed by the State Secretary for Gender Equality Issues. Other members of the group are representatives of public authorities, public service agencies and companies at national, regional and local levels.

Follow-up and evaluation

Systematic follow-up of the efforts to mainstream a gender equality perspective in all policy fields is necessary in order to pool experience and evaluate the need for development measures.

Each ministry is responsible for following up and evaluating its gender equality efforts.

The Division for Gender Equality, which comes under the Minister for Gender Equality, has a proactive, co-ordinating and advisory role in relation to the ministries.

In its co-ordinating capacity the Division follows up the implementation of the committee terms of reference on gender impact, Government Bills, appropriation directions and annual financial reports.

Summaries and analysis are fed back to the respective ministries in dialogue form.

Regional Measures

Since 1995 an expert on gender equality issues has been attached to each county administrative board. The task of the expert is to support the board in its mandate to promote gender equality measures such as initiating projects, improving the knowledge base, and supporting and following up the various initiatives. The expert supports the different sections of the organisation in their efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in their activities.

All the county administrative boards have drawn up strategies for gender equality initiatives in their county. The strategies are important instruments for gender equality and will provide a sound basis for future analysis and assessment of measures carried out in the gender equality field.

Local Measures

In the autumn of 1995 the Government allocated SEK 2 million to the Swedish Association of Local Authorities for a project aimed at acquiring new knowledge, developing new methods for gender equality work, and permeating the work of the local authorities with a gender perspective. The project, the JämKom Project, has resulted in the 3R method (see above under Analysis Tools). The Swedish Association of Local Authorities has presented the work in seven reports. The main report, *Härifrån till jämställdheten* (From Here to Gender Equality) was presented in June 1998.

In the same month, the Government granted the Association a further allocation for a training course for project managers, aimed at spreading the experiences gained from the JämKom Project and the gender equality analysis method, the 3R method. The course consists of four seminars interspersed with projects carried out by the participants in their respective local authority areas. The courses are being held in the autumn 1998 and spring 1999.

