

Gender mainstreaming in Finland

**Good practices, experiences
and lessons learned**

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- 1. Brief overview, concepts, understanding**
- 2. How we got here?**
- 3. Coordination structure**
- 4. Examples**
- 5. Projects and outcomes**
- 6. What next?**

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The Council of Europe definition as a basis

- The (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes,
- so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages,
- by the actors normally involved in policy-making

...gender equality perspective?

...all policies?

...actors normally involved?

Gender mainstreaming as a **strategy**

- Reorganisation, development and assessment of political and administrative processes
- Administrative strategy for changing practices so that the gender perspective will be automatically and systematically taken into account

Gender mainstreaming **goals**

- The goal is to overcome gender-neutral, sometimes even gender-blind, practices and procedures
- The administration as a whole is committed to promoting gender equality
- Public officials understand the gender relevance of their work and promote gender equality where needed

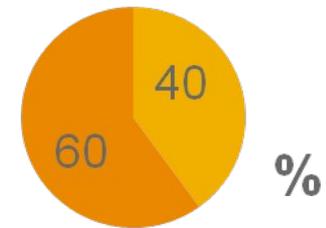
Government commitment

- Act on Equality between Women and Men 1987
- Government Report on Gender Equality 2010
- Government programme 2011
- Government Action Plan for Gender Equality (2012)

The Act on Equality between Women and Men (1987)

- The objectives of the Act
 - to prevent discrimination based on gender
 - to promote equality between women and men and
 - to improve the status of women, particularly in working life

- The Act includes provisions on
 - gender equality planning
 - gender quotas in Government committees, advisory boards and working groups and in local and inter-municipal bodies (with the exception of the municipal council)



Section 4: Duty of authorities to promote gender equality

- In all their activities, authorities must promote equality between women and men purposefully and systematically, and must create and consolidate administrative and operating practices that ensure the advancement of equality between women and men in the preparatory work undertaken on different matters and in decision-making.
- In particular, circumstances which prevent the attainment of gender equality must be changed.
- In the availability and supply of services, the promotion of equality between women and men must be taken into account in the manner referred to in subsections 1 and 2.

Government programme

Improvement of gender equality

- Gender equality is a significant societal goal. It must be taken into account in all aspects of public decision-making and activities. Both genders must have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities.
- An action plan for gender equality will be drawn up at the start of the parliamentary term. It will take into consideration the Government Report on Gender Equality, approved by Parliament on 21 October 2010. - -
- Mainstreaming of the gender perspective in legislative drafting, budget preparation and other activities with major implications for gender equality will continue.

Government Action Plan for Gender Equality 2011 - 2015

- *Work in progress*
- Fifth action plan
- Formulated jointly by the ministries
- Implements the objectives specified in the Government Programme
- Compiles and co-ordinates the Government measures for promoting gender equality

Gender mainstreaming in the latest action plan

Every ministry

1. mainstreams the gender perspective to
 - law drafting
 - budget procedures
 - at least one of its main projects
1. starts up a working group for implementing gender perspective in the ministry's actions
2. provides training for their staff

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What has been done in Finland?

- Planning and pilot projects since late 90's
- Action plans since 1997
- Gender mainstreaming in the Government programmes since 1999
- Developing government processes and guidelines and providing training since 2000
- Gender budgeting first time in the budget for 2007
- Gender mainstreaming projects 2008-2011
- Gender equality working groups in every ministry since 2008
- Newer focus:
 - developing gender perspective in the Government institutions and at the regional and local level
 - Developing tools for follow up

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The National Gender Equality Agencies

Council for Gender Equality (1972–)

- Permanent advisory body
- Brings up new topics on the political agenda
- Promotes cooperation between decision-makers, authorities and the civil society

Office of the Ombudsman for Equality (1986–)

- Supervises compliance with the Act on Equality between Women and Men
- Provides advice and guidance on the law

Gender Equality Unit (2001–)

Gender Equality Unit

- Established in 2001
- Prepares Government's gender equality policy in collaboration with other ministries
- preparation of national legislation
- tasks related to gender mainstreaming
- international activities: EU's gender equality legislation and policy, United Nations, Nordic cooperation, Council of Europe



Coordination and organisation of work

- Ministerial working group on public administration and regional development
 - follow-up / recommendations
- Meeting of Permanent Secretaries
 - ensuring implementation
- Interministerial steering group at the senior level
 - interministerial coordination structure
- Operational working groups in the ministries
 - coordination structure within the ministries
- Network for the working groups
 - support
- Gender equality unit
 - expertise, coordination and strategic planning

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Provisions

- **Bill Drafting Instructions (2004)**
 - Government proposals must explain the gender impact of proposed provisions
- **The general directives for formulating the Budget (2006)**
 - Ministries' budget proposals must present the operations that have a significant gender impact

Guidelines

- Guidelines on gender impact assessment (MSAH 2003)
- Impact assessment in legislative drafting (MJ 2008)
- Gender Glasses in Use – A handbook to support gender equality work at Finnish ministries (MSAH 2009)

Tools

- Advice points on statistics
- Test for gender relevance
- 12 advice points for GIA
- Checklists
 - GIA evaluation criteria
 - Project preparation and implementation
- **Annual clock** for gender equality working groups
- Outline of a gender equality plan

Training

- Gender impact assessment of legislation
- Statistical data disaggregated by sex
- Gender budgeting training for budget officials
- Briefing for Ministers and senior management
- Training provided by the ministries (e.g. induction training)

Gender perspective in data and statistics

- Data and statistics disaggregated by sex are an essential requirement in assessing the effects of decisions and measures from the gender perspective.
- Averages may, for example, conceal results of different directions of development in the situations of women and men.

Data and statistics disaggregated by sex:

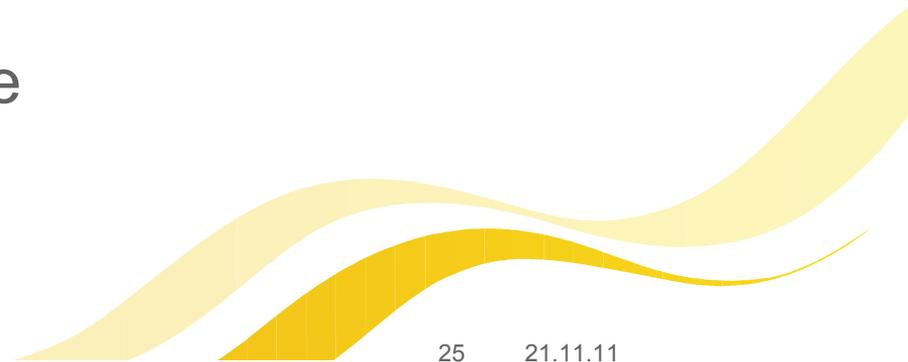
- obtain information about the real situation of women and men
- see beyond averages and preconceptions
- observe both differences and similarities.



Data and statistics

- Without sex-disaggregated statistics and monitoring data it is impossible to see how measures and decisions affect women and men.
- Statistics that are beneficial in investigating the gender perspective during preparatory work are:
 - statistics that represent the gender equality situation (e.g. wage comparisons)
 - gender-divided statistics relating to people (e.g. data on working life or health).

Define – Request – Execute
Analyse – Use – Report



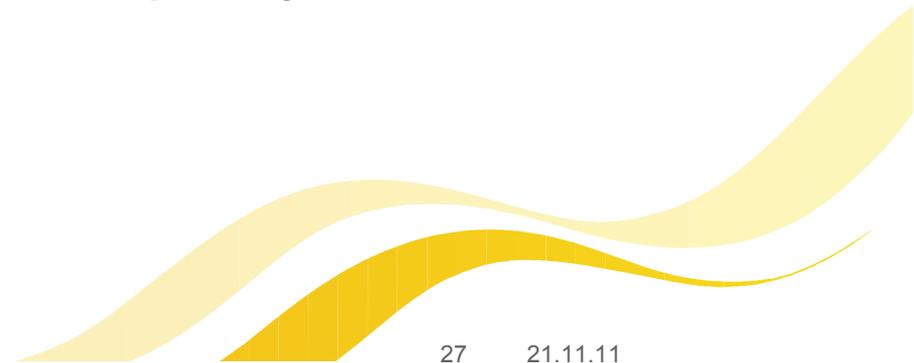
Projects and programmes

- Does the project have any gender impact?
- Does the project have a target group?
- Has the background information been broken down and analysed also by sex?
- Does the monitoring include gender equality indicators?
- Do the stated objectives include a gender perspective?
- Are both women and men represented among the actors?
- Is gender expertise included?
- Has a gender perspective been considered in the project management?

www.sukupuolisilmalasiit.fi > checklist

Gender perspective in the budget

- The budget is the Government's key tool for implementing financial and operational policy. The way in which public funds are distributed also directly influences the daily lives of women and men.
- Every ministry must include in its budget proposal a summary of any operations related to its administrative branch that have a significant gender impact. They can also name concrete objectives and measures to promote gender equality.



Gender Budgeting

- What could be a good way to include gender perspective into government budget?
- The question is linked to the goals of improving the efficiency, productivity and transparency of public financing and government
- Gender equality is not only something that is important in itself, it is also a tool for improving governance
- Two perspectives need to be included:
 - A) Planning → the budget
 - B) Follow-up monitoring → report of closing of the accounts

Finnish way of gender budgeting

- **In some countries evaluation** of ongoing actions is how gender budgeting is done
- **In Finland reporting ongoing action** is the focus
 - As a result the people responsible for gender budgeting are inside the budget machinery, thus gender budgeting is integrated.
- **The states controller-function**
 - It evaluates budget proposals overall usefulness for parliament
 - Includes evaluation on how well the ministries have included gender impact assesment in their proposals

The pilot project

- In 2004 we started a pilot project: the gender impact assessment for the budget of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
- The project made an assesment that says:
 - Sufficient background information is required for good impact assesment (gender segregated statistics, data production etc.)
 - No simple answer to how the gender impact assesment should be made

Five forums for gender impact assessment in the budget process (pilot project)

The strategic goals that ministries give in budget

- Is gender equality included?

The expenses cited in the budget

- How the expenses are divided between sexes (ex. pensions)

The attachments of the budget

- Analytical attachments could give deeper information on the situation in some fields

Law proposals given with the budget

- Gender impact assessment of proposals with economical impacts

Key documents for monitoring the administrative branch

- Ex. The publication "direction of social security"

Negotiations for new orders

- Co-operation between gender equality unit and the Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Finance's guideline for the ministries for preparing their budget proposals came to include the following:
 - Each ministry must include a summary of action that has significant gender impacts and is related to the budget

Monitoring the impact

- In the 2008 budget, each ministry mentioned gender equality in one way or the other
 - Only one third mentioned concrete actions and goals
 - Only one ministry (Social Affairs and Health) has its statistics disaggregated by sex
- Since 2010 every ministry has made a requested summary but the quality varies

Support and re-evaluation

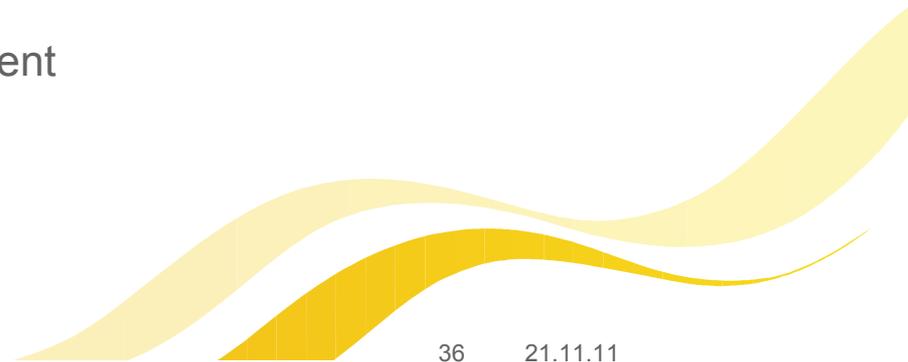
- Training for budget personnel in ministries
- Suggestions to each ministry about how to improve gender perspective
- The follow-up process of the budget cycle needs further improvement
- Improving gender impact assessment in other planning and preparatory work in ministries → gender perspective in budget proposals
- How to include gender equality in budgets that are focusing on changes

Some lessons learned

- Having good agents is vital
 - Our ministry's budget unit was very effective in finding the right place for implementation and the right people
- Budget is one link in a chain
 - To improve gender perspective in the budget it helps it is included in key planning and strategy work, and vice versa

Gender perspective is needed in all operational and financial planning

- The gender perspective (how matters affect women and men) will become a part of all operations when it is closely bound to operational and financial planning. It is an important perspective, for example, when surveying results and goals and various statistics and indicators.
- The aim is to have the gender perspective included into the performance guidelines of administrative sector offices and agencies of each ministry.
- It is also important to take note of the gender perspective in monitoring:
 - in annual reports
 - in the Annual Report of the Government
 - as part of internal monitoring.

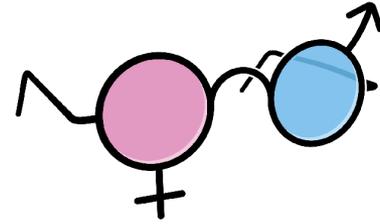


Gender impact assessment of drafting legislation

- Strong requirement
- Good guidelines and tools e.g. [checklist](#)
- Only about 10 % of Government proposals mention gender perspective (or women/men)
- Many of these only state that there is no impact
- Same problems apply than in other impact assessments
 - Other than economic impact is rarely assessed
 - Assessment is made at a later stage and has no impact on the content
- Very few good examples
 - Occupational safety and health act 2002
 - 2010: only 5 well made (total over 300)

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Project: Introducing Gender Glasses!

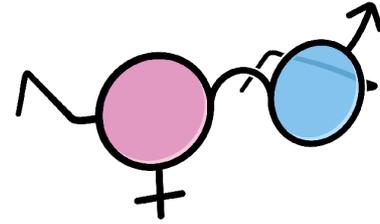


- Training functions for the management and other civil servants
- Website containing a compilation of basic tools
- Brochure

(With the support of EU Programme PROGRESS)

Project:

Gender Glasses in Use



- Training seminars for ministries' gender equality working groups
- Handbook on gender mainstreaming
- Wall poster

(With the support of EU Programme PROGRESS)

Project:

Good results with **Gender Glasses**

- Support and training for three volunteering ministries
- Distributing good practices and experiences to all in a closing seminar in December 2011

Experiences: Good Practices

- Learning the 'language' of different government processes (e.g. budgeting) and key policy areas
- Showing by concrete examples the significance of gender perspective (gender mainstreaming = good governance)
- Creating simple and practical tools – list of key questions
- Setting up operational working groups in the ministries with expertise on every key area: legislation, budget, statistics, training, policies and programmes etc.

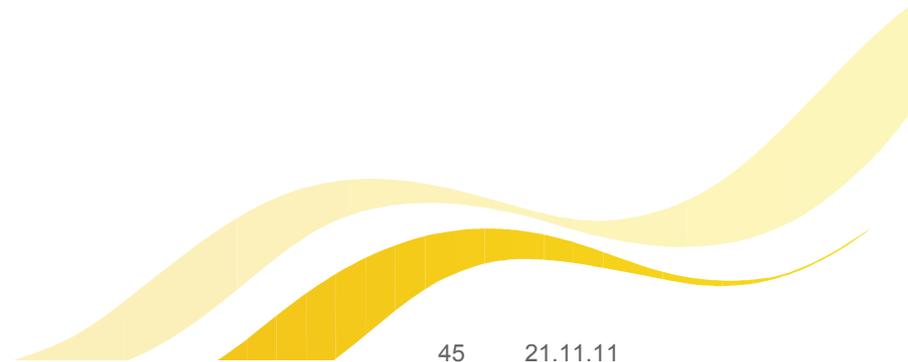
Experiences: Lessons learned

- Gender perspective must be present in the guiding documents as well as in the background material
- If it is implemented already at the preparatory stage it can have influence on the final output
- Processes – not the people – should be the guard dogs
- Ministers and senior management are in a key position – if they ask for gender perspective the officials will do it

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Government Report on Gender Equality

- Reinforcing gender mainstreaming regulation
- Gender mainstreaming in key processes in central government
- Strong steering structure
- Providing training and know-how



Continuing...

- The work of gender equality working groups within the ministries
- Broad approach
 - Gender perspective is not only women's perspective
 - In all actions by all

Developing...

- The obligation in the Gender Equality Act
- Follow up methods and tools for ministries
- Gender equality objectives
- Gender and intersectionality
- Resources within the ministries
- Training for trainers
- All levels

Thank you!

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