



SHAPING NEW REALITIES

GUIDE TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING

ABOUT THE SWEDISH INSTITUTE

The Swedish Institute (SI) is a public agency that encourages interest and trust in Sweden around the world. SI seeks to establish cooperation and lasting relations with other countries through strategic communication and exchange in the fields of culture, education, science and business. SI works closely with Swedish embassies and consulates.

ABOUT THE SWEDISH ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND REGIONS

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) represents the governmental, professional and employer-related interests of Sweden's 290 municipalities and 20 regions. SALAR is both an employers' organisation and an organisation that represents and advocates for local government in Sweden. The members are the employers of more than one million people, which make SALAR the largest employer organisation in Sweden.

Municipalities provide their inhabitants with social care, elderly care, preschools and schools, rescue services, waste management, urban planning, culture and leisure-support. The main responsibility for regions is to provide health care, but they also provide public transport and have a lead in regional development.



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WHY GENDER MAINSTREAMING?

MAINSTREAMING is a strategy for promoting gender equality in organisations. Thus, it is not an end in itself, but a means to achieve the goal of gender equality. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that a gender perspective is included in all activities in an organisation, such as policy development, research, advocacy, legislation, resource allocation, planning, implementation and monitoring. Central to gender mainstreaming is sex-disaggregated statistics and gender equality analyses.

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, and girls and boys. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration in the planning, decision-making, performing and following up of all operations¹.

Improving gender equality has a positive impact on many levels, both for individuals, for the quality of public services and society at large. It could mean higher growth rates, and a higher level of employment and productivity. It could also contribute to solving challenges related to an ageing population.²

1. Definitions: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>

2. See for example the study from The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE): <https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/economic-benefits-gender-equality-eu-ropean-union-overall-economic-impacts-gender-equality>

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WHY SWEDEN?

WHILE FACED WITH remaining challenges, Sweden is generally regarded as a country that has come a long way in making society gender equal. This progress would not have been possible without the commitment and hard work by the women's movement, citizens and policy-makers over several decades. The work to improve gender equality has also given Swedish local authorities extensive experience, including in gender mainstreaming, which became the official strategy for the government in 1994.

In 2015 the Swedish government commissioned a project where the Swedish association of local authorities and regions (SALAR) collected some of the best cases from Swedish municipalities. In that project, a Guide to Gender Mainstreaming was produced. It is promoted by SALAR as a blueprint for gender equality work in Swedish municipalities and regions, but can also be used in other kinds of organisations. This document is an adaptation of SALAR's guide, substituting the role of an elected council with top-level management, to make it applicable also in non-political organisations.

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AIM AND PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

THIS GUIDE HAS been developed in order to contribute to the implementation of gender mainstreaming in organisations outside Sweden. The aim is to be a practical introduction that can also serve as a development tool for organisations already working with gender mainstreaming. Another purpose of the guide is to serve as a source of inspiration. The methods and exercises in this guide have been used and tested in different settings, both Swedish and international.

If there is a gender focal point system in place, this guide contains a proposed model for promoting gender mainstreaming within that system. It aims to generate an organisational change process of which management is in the lead.

THE GUIDE CONSISTS OF

- > Checklist for assessment of gender mainstreaming
- > Introductions to each step of the checklist
- > Key recommendations for sustainable gender mainstreaming
- > Examples of gender mainstreaming in practice

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CHECKLIST FOR ASSESSMENT OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING

THE CHECKLIST CONSISTS of ten areas that are central to implementing gender mainstreaming to an organisation's operations and activities.

There are some important conditions that must be present if an organisation is to succeed with its implementation of gender mainstreaming:

- > The organisation must have a central function that works strategically with gender equality issues.
- > The organisation must have a functioning management system, and everyone involved must understand how this system affects their own work.
- > All employees need to be aware of the steering and management system and understand their individual role in reaching organisational goals.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CHECKLIST

The checklist for assessment of gender mainstreaming can be printed separately ([page 8](#)). It can be used by an individual or a workshop group to assess an organisation's current situation.

The idea is that you give every item on the list a score of 1 to 3. For each item in the checklist, there is a short explanation and a few guiding questions that will help you with the scoring. By totaling the individual scores, you can get an idea of how far you have come in your efforts, and you can compare your progress year by year. It will also help to clarify areas that need improvement. The results can be used to develop an action plan.

The items do not have to be checked off in a given order, except for the first one, as gender mainstreaming efforts – like any other development work – must start with top management adopting a decision.

CHECKLIST FOR ASSESSMENT OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Organisation:

Date:

ITEM	1	2	3	COMMENTS
1 A top-level decision mandating gender mainstreaming.				
2 A request from top-level management regarding results of gender mainstreaming efforts.				
3 Operational management ensures that gender mainstreaming is implemented throughout all functions and activities				
4 The competence and ability to apply an effective gender mainstreaming approach is well ensured in the organisation.				
5 The gender equality perspective is evident in goals, budgets and other governing documents.				
6 All individual-based statistics are reported, analysed and presented by gender.				
7 A gender impact assessment is included in all draft proposals.				
8 Outcomes and results of functions and activities for women and men, and girls and boys, are clearly evident in regular operational and budgetary monitoring.				
9 Gender mainstreaming has generated concrete and sustainable improvements in the organisation's areas of operation.				
10 The approach and methods used for gender mainstreaming can be put into system and applied to other functions and activities.				
SUM TOTAL				

1 = Not yet started/Not in place

2 = Needs development

3 = In place

STEP 1

MANAGERIAL MANDATE

Target group:

Top-level management

A decision by top-level management is a necessary precondition if efforts for change are to permeate the entire organisation and have a lasting effect.

The first step in the gender mainstreaming process is therefore for top-level management to adopt a comprehensive and long-term decision to implement gender mainstreaming in the organisation.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- > Has top-level management adopted:
 - a decision to implement gender mainstreaming in the organisation?
 - an action plan for gender mainstreaming?
 - gender mainstreaming operations as a budgetary objective?

STEP 2

REQUEST FOR RESULTS

Target group:

Top-level management

By requesting results, management makes it clear that their decision must be implemented and result in concrete actions. Giving a leading official the responsibility for gender equality issues can help ensure that these issues remain on the agenda.

You can also establish a special delegation, or a committee of leading officials, that will monitor gender mainstreaming efforts, for example by maintaining an ongoing dialogue with heads of departments and by reviewing policies and other governing documents.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- > Is there a clear mandate to include gender equality in the monitoring of the organisation's results?
- > Does the leadership require reports on gender equality in the monitoring of the organisation (for example in periodic reports or result seminars)?

STEP 3

THE ROLE OF MANAGEMENT

Target group:

Operational management

Operational management is responsible for ensuring that the decision to adopt gender mainstreaming is implemented throughout the organisation. Management can for example ensure that gender mainstreaming is a permanent item on the agenda at executive and steering committee meetings and conferences, and that leadership groups and other similar forums bring up gender equality efforts in dialogues with subordinates, performance reviews, and salary discussions.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- > Does management:
 - give mandate and delegate responsibility to work with gender mainstreaming?
 - create conditions in terms of areas such as time, resources and training?
 - request that the gender equality perspective is a part of the organisation's daily activities?
 - monitor whether the organisation's goals concerning gender equality are achieved?
 - request suggestions for corrective measures if analyses reveal flaws with regard to gender equality?

STEP 4

EXPERTISE AND TRAINING

Target group:

Management and Gender focal point

Gender mainstreaming requires expertise and skills in gender equality, gender equality analysis, management, leadership, monitoring, follow-up, and quality improvement.

The specific need for expertise and skills is based on the tasks and field of each employee or administrator. Official spokespersons, too, need to possess a fundamental knowledge of gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- > Does the administration have the right skills and expertise to fulfil the undertakings that arise from policy decisions?
- > Are there resources set aside for gender equality training?
- > Are both employees and management expected to take part of the educational programmes on gender equality?
- > Does the training take place during working hours?

STEP 5

GENDER IN OPERATIONAL GOALS

Target group:

Management and Gender focal point

The gender equality perspective can be made evident in goals, budgets and other governing documents in a number of ways:

- > Operational goals in action plans can be specified for women and men. For example, one goal may be that an equal percentage of men and women who participate in labour market programmes should find a job after the end of the intervention.
- > The expression 'gender equality' could be included in the formulation of the goals, for example that the municipality or organisation should offer gender-equal services and workplaces.
- > Guidelines for various activities can contain a description of how gender equality should be implemented in the activity in question, such as guidelines for gender equality in assessments for social assistance.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- > Is there a functioning management system in place and is it known by the employees?
- > Are gender mainstreaming operations adopted as a budgetary objective?
- > Do guidelines and instructions state that regulatory documents are required to have a gender equality perspective?

STEP 6

SEX-DISAGGREGATED STATISTICS

Target group:

Management and Gender focal point

Having sex-disaggregated statistics is a condition for clearly showing structural gender-based differences between women and men. In order to ensure services of equal value and an equal allocation of resources, it is paramount that the statistics are analysed in relation to gender equality.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- > Does the organisation have individual-based statistics?
- > Are the individual-based statistics sex-disaggregated?
- > Are the differences between women and men, and girls and boys in the statistics analysed in relation to organisational goals?
- > Are there analyses that show if the differences between women and men, and girls and boys imply the existence of gender inequality?

If individual-based or sex-disaggregated statistics are not available, the organisation should look at other ways to obtain knowledge about the target groups, for example by using relevant research or performing its own surveys.

In order to refine the analysis, the statistics should also include factors other than gender. How are statistics about various groups of women and men affected if we consider age, country of birth, level of education, and functional disability?

STEP 7

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Target group:

Management and Gender focal point

Draft proposals prepared by an administration to be used by top-level management as a basis for their decisions should contain a gender impact assessment. This could be done by ensuring that there are clear guidelines, tools and support for including gender impact assessments in draft proposals and other documentation for decisions, and that the employees are familiar with these.

A gender impact assessment is a description of the consequences of a decision for different target groups, depending on whether they are women or men, girls or boys. It can concern treatment and service, or how resources are distributed. By clarifying and analysing the consequences for women and men, the organisation can evaluate whether the consequences are consistent with the intentions, but also see whether they are in line with the goals for the organisation.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- > Does it appear in you draft proposals:
 - if and how target groups – women and men, and girls and boys – are affected (for example in terms of rights, participation or allocation of resources)?
 - what measures will be taken in the event of inequality?

STEP 8

MONITORING

Target group:

Management and Gender focal point

Gender mainstreaming means that monitoring activities from a gender equality perspective should not require a separate system but should be part of the regular operations and budget review.

To monitor activities as part of the regular operations and budget review means finding out what positive or negative effects your activity has on women and men, and girls and boys, in relation to the goals of the activity.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- > Is there a clear link between the organisation's objective, activities and indicators, and is the gender perspective integrated with these?
- > Are there any differences in results regarding women and men, for example based on gender-based statistics in relation to the organisation's goals?
- > Have the reasons for these differences been analysed?
- > Is it possible to draw conclusions and make changes based on these analyses?

STEP 9

SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENT

Target group:

Management and Gender focal point

Gender equality efforts are a part of the continuous work of raising and securing the organisation's quality of activities. Sustainable improvements mean both improvements of gender mainstreaming structures, and practical improvements in the services provided to women and men, and girls and boys.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- > Has the implementation of gender mainstreaming contributed to:
 - a changed approach that leads to a better fulfilment of the organisation's goals?
 - improvements concerning for example attitudes about, and services provided to, women and men, and girls and boys?
 - a better result that reaches both women and men and your target group as a whole?

STEP 10

SYSTEMATISED GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Target group:

Management and Gender focal point

Long-term sustainable quality improvement requires a systematic way of working. There must be clear statements as to who does what, who makes decisions, and how those decisions are to be implemented and followed up. Being able to describe gender mainstreaming in a manner that will enable it to be applied to other functions and activities, is a measure of how systematically you have been working.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- > Is your implementation of gender mainstreaming well documented and is it visible in terms of:
 - what decision concerning gender mainstreaming that has been adopted?
 - how the work has been organised and implemented based on, for example, the distribution of roles and resources?
 - what the results from gender mainstreaming are?
 - how the results and the work done has been communicated within in the organisation?

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KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE GENDER MAINSTREAMING

DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN OR GOALS FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING

As equality between women and men is created wherever ordinary decisions are taken, resources distributed, and standards created, the equality perspective must be present in the daily work. Therefore, gender equality must be a part of the organisation's management system. An action plan can be a good help in this.

THE ACTION PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE BOTH PROCESS GOALS AND PERFORMANCE GOALS

- > The process goals describe the factors and activities that are important for gender mainstreaming, for example that sex-disaggregated statistics are produced, that statistical data are analysed from a gender equality perspective, and that goals based on gender equality issues are adopted.
- > The performance goals describe the effects that you aim for. They should be linked to the core tasks of the organisation and based on the real gender equality issues that have been defined during the course of the work.

SECURE A CLEAR DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Managers at all levels should be responsible for implementing gender equality in their daily work. Each employee should be responsible for his/her involvement in the work with gender mainstreaming. The process requires that the organisation has a gender focal point job position that can support the efforts with gender mainstreaming. The gender focal point should have a clear mandate and resources. In a large organisation, the gender focal point can organise a network consisting of employees from different departments.

FOCUS ON KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE

Gender equality is based on knowledge. Top-level management and operational management are the prioritised target groups for educational programmes on gender equality. It is also important to consider which other target groups that are crucial to succeed with gender mainstreaming. The educational programmes should focus on sex-disaggregated statistics, gender analyses and gender budgeting. The overall purpose with the programmes should be to help the organisation discover inequalities and find solutions.

REQUEST RESULTS

The effects of gender mainstreaming should be monitored in the regular operations and budget reviews. As gender mainstreaming is a long-term process, the process itself should also be followed up.

COMMUNICATE AND DISSEMINATE

In order to gain knowledge about the results from gender mainstreaming in the organisation, it is important to communicate and disseminate the results. This can contribute to commitment and sustainability.

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EXAMPLES OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN PRACTICE

In order to visualise what gender mainstreaming can mean in practice, here are a few Swedish examples taken from city planning, labour market initiatives, and healthcare.

URBAN PLANNING

A Swedish municipality was planning to transform a parking lot into a more attractive and safe part of the neighbourhood. Initially, the idea was to turn it into an area for outdoor sports activities.

In a preparatory study, a gender impact assessment was performed, and the results showed that 80 per cent of active users of sports areas are boys. Girls are mainly there as spectators. Since the target group was the population as a whole, and not merely boys, the municipality decided to invite neighbourhood girls and boys to participate in planning the area.

This resulted in a new plan for the area, which eventually became a meeting place for a broader target group and offered a wider range of activities. The area – which now has ample seating, open areas and good lights, increasing the feeling of safety – includes a scene for performances and space for sporting activities.

By applying gender equality in the project, the area became a place for everyone living there. The value gained was an increased opportunity for civil society (girls and boys in this case) to take part in the development of public space. The method is now used as a blueprint for gender equality in urban planning.

LABOUR MARKET INITIATIVES

A Swedish municipality carried out a project with unemployed people with the aim to improve their abilities to enter the labour market. The project was followed up by sex-disaggregated statistics. This showed that there were as many women as men who participated in the project, but that fewer women participated in the part of the project that included activities to become self-supporting.

A gender analysis was made by using peer-review and examining each other's notes on how municipality employees handled cases. It showed that officials had different expectations depending on whether the client was a woman or a man. As a result they asked different questions to women and men. To address this, they developed a checklist consisting of gender neutral questions to be asked regardless of the client's gender, to ensure equal treatment.

As a result, more women participated in activities to achieve self-sufficiency. It has also contributed to more people being able to become self-sufficient – all in all, a more efficient organisation.

EQUAL TREATMENT IN HEALTHCARE

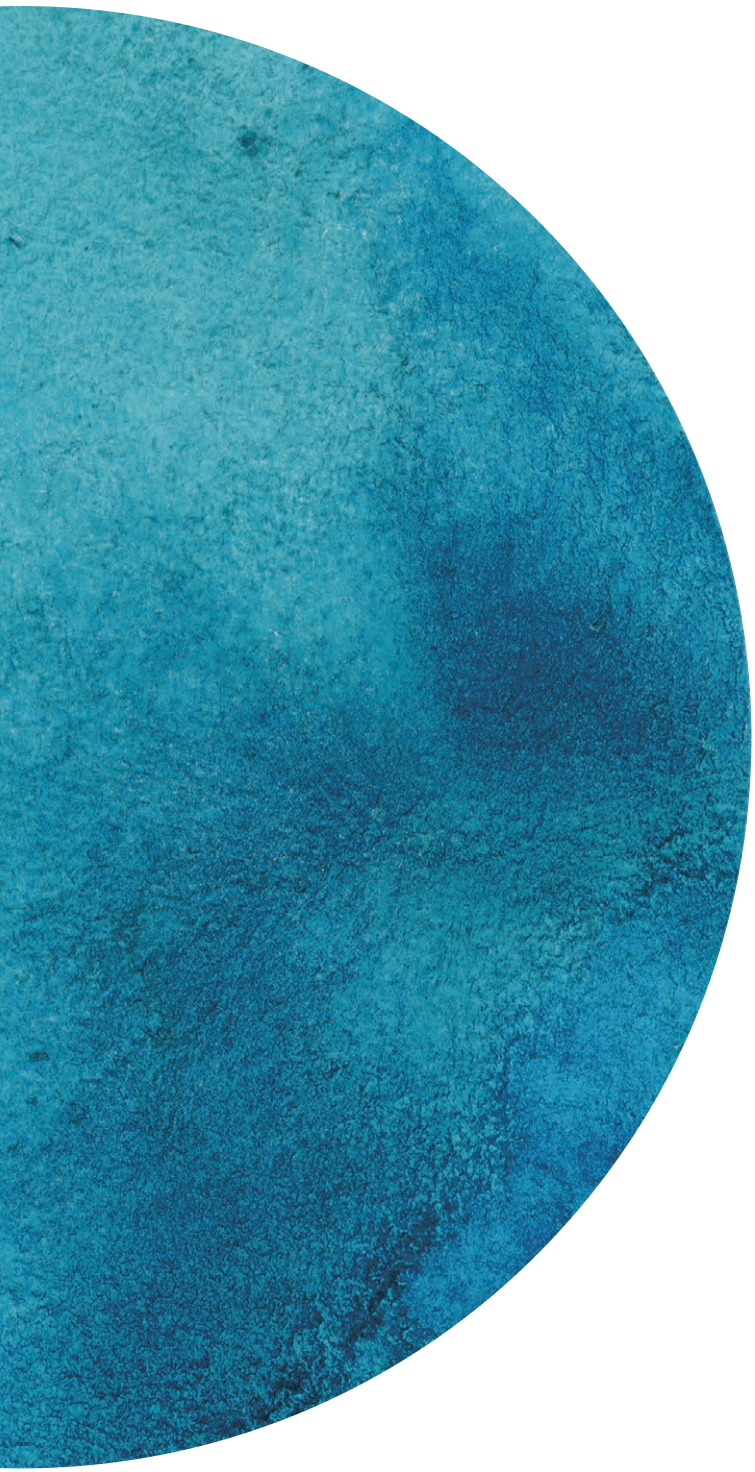
By examining medical records, the staff at a health clinic discovered that they did not ask women and men the same questions about their health.

The analysis showed for example:

That there was a focus on men's somatic diseases, which resulted in a risk that men's mental illness, such as depression, went untreated.

- > That men, more often than women, were remitted to specialist care.
- > That staff rarely asked women if they were subject to domestic threats and violence, even though this is a strong risk-factor for long-term sick leave.

To improve this, a tool was developed that enables health clinics to maintain gender-equal routines, so that doctors and nurses ask patients the same questions regardless of gender, and thus contribute to equal service and better healthcare.



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