

Gender equality in local development

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Anne Katrine Tholstrup Bertelsen
Department of Gender Equality, Denmark

Every other year, municipalities, regions and state agencies are obliged to enlighten their citizens and the minister for gender equality about the efforts being made to secure equality among the sexes at state, regional and local level. Upon receiving the reports in 2005 the minister said:

“It surprises me that men still are the ones getting the top positions in state, regional and local government authorities, when there are so many women to choose from. This situation is neither satisfactory for the highly skilled and ambitious women, who want’s a top position nor for the organisations, missing out on talent”.

18 pct. of management positions in the municipalities were held by women – 77 pct. of the numbers of employees in municipalities were women.

This year the municipalities and regions in Denmark will again report the status of their work on gender equality to their citizens and to the minister. I will get back to that later in my presentation.

I would like to start out by sharing the Danish approach to gender mainstreaming with you, talk you trough some of the results at national level and then get back to why we are here; the Danish activities in the European project;

1. video containing good practice examples of gender mainstreaming at local level,
2. recruitment of managers in the Municipality of Århus
3. the reports on gender equality at local and regional level
4. and finally I will give the floor to my colleague Rikke Drejer, who will tell you more about the development of a toolbox for local government authorities.

The Danish approach

Gender mainstreaming can upgrade and improve the activities of public organisations – as a technique, gender mainstreaming is guaranteed to produce results, paving the way for legally secure, democratic and efficient public services for both women and men.

In Denmark, there is broad agreement on gender equality policy in general and on the need for all central government activities to be informed by an equality perspective. This task is prescribed in the gender equality act and in to adopted action plans.

And it is not confined to the usual gender equality issues: that women and men should have the same chance to advance in their careers, that there should be no unjustified pay differentials, or that both sexes should be represented at all levels in an organisation ect. These relate to staff policy only.

Here the aim is to mainstream gender into core activities, which is a completely different matter. Gender mainstreaming is a strategy for achieving equality of the sexes. It means applying a gender equality perspective throughout the operation, wherever decisions are made and wherever activities are undertaken. The aim is to ensure that the services provided to the general public are equally accessible, of the same high quality and of the same benefit to citizens, whether women or men.

In practice this means opening your eyes and analysing the situation. How do we work? Are there questions and needs that we lose sight of when performing our duties? Do our decisions affect women and men differently?

Let me give you some examples from the Danish experiences at national level.

Pilot project

As a result of cooperation between the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs, the Danish Ministry of Finance and the

Department of Gender Equality we chose to gender equality evaluate the so-called rate adjustment pool funds distributed to the elderly.

(The rate adjustment pool is a pool used for transfer payment recipients, as well as for preventive measures etc. aimed at disadvantaged groups. Distribution of the rate adjustment pool funds is made in the Finance Act).

The evaluation showed that men were generally underrepresented in the initiatives implemented for the elderly. Social and sports activities were areas particularly showing a significant under representation of older men. The average distribution among participants in the activities turned out to be 75 pct. women and 25 pct. men, compared with a distribution in the target group (people age 65+) of 60 pct. women and 40 pct. men.

We asked several questions:

Was the proportion in how the funds were allocated to elderly women versus elderly men in line with the Danish social policy?

Was the way the money were spent on different groups of elderly women and men in agreement with the Danish policy on creating gender equality and equal opportunities for all?

The evaluation of the distribution of rate adjustment pool funds to the elderly was our point of departure and at the same time an area where some specific services and recipients could be studied, making such studies a suitable illustration of why resource allocation is evaluated or should be evaluated in terms of gender equality. Furthermore, prior to the project start, the old-age care sector was assumed to be an area with possible unintentional imbalance to men's disadvantage.

Tool for gender budgeting

This gender equality evaluation of resource allocation also formed the basis for developing a toolbox for budget staff in central administration.

The structure of the tools developed follows a kind of FAQ, where a typical question is first asked, then a solution to the problem is proposed, and finally the problem is illustrated with an example.

Until now we have created four tools – one of them being on gender budgeting. The other ones are 1) campaigns and information tasks, 2) gender segregated data and statistics, 3) gender equality assessments of bills and then 4) resource allocation.

To show how concrete they really are we produced a real, physical toolbox in 2004 containing real tools – like for example a hammer. The toolbox was warmly welcomed for its humour and its way of focusing on gender mainstreaming as being a professional aspect and tool in everyday work.

Test

So, a major process of implementing gender equality evaluations of resource allocation was launched.

All Danish ministries tested the toolbox to harvest experience and examples of good practice.

Across ministries there is variation in the efforts being made to gender mainstreaming.

At the top of the class we have the Ministry of Education

The Danish government has decided that by 2015, Denmark should be among the leading nations regarding the number of entrepreneurs.

The analysis carried out by the ministry showed that the majority of entrepreneurs are men and that the public funds spent on training, services for future entrepreneurs and so on went to men. To reach the government's goal it became

obvious that an increase in the number of entrepreneurs highly depended on a growth in the number of female entrepreneurs.

One of the results of the analysis is that services for entrepreneurs now are targeted both women and men to a larger extent.

So, the Ministry of Education did well. Other ministries faced some of the difficulties that I am sure you will recognise from your own work with gender budgeting.

The Danish Ministry of Environment carried out a survey among 1000 users of the state forests. The survey showed both similarities and differences between the preferred recreational activities of women and preferred recreational activities of men when visiting the forests.

But the lack of gender segregated data combining the resource allocation with the different recreational activities prevented a gender equality analysis of the allocated resources. This is an example of a general problem we are facing: gender equality evaluation of the actual distribution of funds can in many cases only be made to a very limited extent.

The need for data and statistics disaggregated by sex is one of the main conclusions made over and over again working with gender mainstreaming. We simply need gender disaggregated data in all areas with citizens involved if we shall succeed in grasping social phenomena.

By chance, the Ministry of Industry and Economic Affairs also focused on entrepreneurship in their analysis.

At the technical universities in Denmark facilities meant to encourage entrepreneurship among students were established. The analysis showed that 60 pct. of the students using the facilities were men, 40 pct. women. The ministry concluded that establishing these facilities had no gender equality impact.

If the ministry had had a gender equality goal like the Ministry of Education, the conclusion would have been another. What we learned was that the Danish Gender equality act is not sufficient – it is crucial that gender equality goals are implemented in all areas.

Scheme for implementation

These conclusions have been decisive for the Danish approach to implementation of gender mainstreaming at government level. As we speak, we are passing a new action plan for gender mainstreaming. The core elements are;

1. Every ministry must formulate concrete gender equality goals in their areas of responsibility, describe activities and how results of the efforts can be documented
2. Every ministry must have a mainstreaming strategy and choose a tool that they will focus on implementing
3. Every ministry must continue to develop gender segregated data

When we began working with gender mainstreaming we decided on a two-legged strategy – the one leg was a top down approach committing the permanent secretaries in the ministries to the strategy, the other way was to use good examples to promote gender mainstreaming among government officials.

This approach to gender mainstreaming is developed further in the new action plan – so I truly hope, that it will bring us further.

Until now the work on gender mainstreaming has been focusing at the national level, not at the local level.

With this project the Department for Gender Equality will in close corporation with representative from the municipalities develop the tools needed for local authorities to start the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy.

Video containing good practice examples of gender mainstreaming at local level

Examples

The video will be accessible from our website www.ligestillingidanmark.dk

Recruitment of managers in the Municipality of Århus

The Municipality of Århus will institute an inquiry on the recruitment practises when managers are recruited in the municipality' administration. On the basis of that the municipality of Århus will look into why fewer women become managers and what can be done to changes current situation. (Only 9% of the top mangers are women in administration in Århus)

Update

The reports on gender equality at local and regional level

Every second year all municipalities in Denmark report the status of their work on gender equality to the minister for gender equality. These reports are gathered electronically, analysed and the results are shown at the website www.ligestillingidanmark.dk (means: gender equality in Denmark). The reports show that some municipalities work professionally with gender equality. But the reports also show that many municipalities do very little on gender issues and have very little or no knowledge about the gender mainstreaming strategy and how to implement it. They need tools

An objective in this project is to promote the website and thereby the toolbox both at national level and at European level. This will be done by disseminating information about the website to all relevant partners through national media coverage on local examples from work done on gender mainstreaming.
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One of the major barriers in the work with gender mainstreaming is the lack of knowledge and the prejudice
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surrounding work on gender equality. The best way to deal with these barriers is to supply information and examples that show the benefit from working with gender mainstreaming .

In this project the toolbox will be integrated in to the already existing website www.ligestillingidanmark.dk (gender equality in Denmark). This website is already known by the municipalities from the work they have done with the status reports. The website contains valuable information about gender mainstreaming and the work done on gender equality in Denmark. The website is structured around a number of benchmarks in relation to the status in the municipalities. By linking the toolbox to the existing website the visibility of the toolbox and the examples on good practises will be bigger than on an independent website. In this way the municipalities have one place where they can obtain information about gender equality and gender mainstreaming. This will provide a synergy in the use and in the dissemination of the toolbox.

Before I leave the floor to Rikke,

The final conference will be attended by high level representatives form the Ministries and from the municipalities at both national and European level. One of the issues addressed at the conference will be dissemination of the tools at European level.