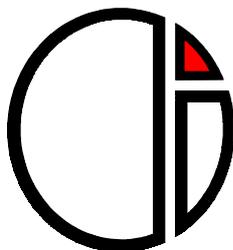


Final Report

**GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND THE
EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY**

Ulli Pastner

FORBA Research Report 4/00



**FORSCHUNGS- UND BERATUNGSSTELLE
ARBEITSWELT (FORBA)**

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Translated by Sabine Kirschenhofer

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Report for the EU-Group of Experts "Gender and Employment",
co-ordinated by Jill Rubery and the UMIST co-ordinating team for the
Equal Opportunities Unit, DG V, Commission of the European Union

FORBA - Forschungs- und Beratungsstelle Arbeitswelt

Working Life Research Center
Aspernbrückengasse 4/5, A-1020 Vienna
Tel: +43 1 21 24 700-75
Fax: +43 1 21 24 700-77
www.forba.at
pastner@forba.at

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1. An overview of the state of development of gender impact assessment (GIA)

1.1 (No) implemented ex-ante GIA in employment policy until now

First of all we must have a clear understanding of what is meant by the term "Gender Impact Assessment" (GIA) in connection with employment policy.

The definition, according to the EC's guide to GIA is "*to compare and assess, according to gender relevant criteria, the current situation and trend with the expected development resulting from the introduction of the proposed policy*". Four relevant criteria are suggested for assessing gender inequalities: participation by gender; access to resources by gender; gendered norms and values; gender differences in rights. (Rubery et al 1999)

For Austria it can generally be said that traditionally ex-post analyses and evaluations of measures in the employment policy have been far more usual than ex-ante instruments in the planning phase, which are supposed to assess the effects of planned measures. In particular this holds for the consideration of gender-specific aspects. If the definition given above is applied, it must be said that in the policy making process no systematic and unified GIA-procedures are implemented until now (although there is the beginning of such an implementation - see 1.3). Rudiments of this – like ex-post evaluations of individual measures and also a continuous diagnosis of the gender-specific labour market situation are being improved increasingly, which has to be regarded as a positive development.

The aims of the Austrian employment policy can be described largely by the explanations given in the National Action Plan (NAP). To what extent they have been realised in recent years can partly be looked up in the realisation reports but is also covered by additional evaluation studies.

The intentions of the European employment policy, which have led to the development of the Austrian NAP, definitely have additionally increased the sensitivity towards gender-specific differences and discriminations. A whole series of studies and evaluations were commissioned that were dealing with the problem of discrimination of women on the labour market and in labour market politics. Also the concept of gender mainstreaming (GM) is increasingly receiving attention by stakeholders in Austrian employment politics, although some protagonists like the Public Employment Service (PES) and ESF are showing a higher degree of development than others (see Pastner 2000).

In 1999 the Austrian PES commissioned a study in order to make the theoretical term of GM useable for concrete realisation work, especially in the area of ESF-promotion. Apart from a clarification of the definition, framework conditions and requirements, methodological approach, analytical instruments, specific technique and methods were also dealt with in this paper.

The authors point out that:

"Women must not just be objects but also participants and possess suitable resources and decision-making power in the course of all phases of programme planning so that their interests, needs and perspectives can be considered. (...) Persons in charge of programme planning and above all operational planning, administration and realisation should be provided with easily useable instruments and methods (checklist, catalogue with questions, frame for analysis) for planning and assessing from the aspect of equal opportunities of women and men." (Naylon/Weber 2000)

Applied to concrete existing instruments and methods, the Gender Impact Assessment (GIA), the SMART method, the 3R-methods and the guidelines of the International Labour Organisation are presented. New instruments in the narrow sense were not developed in this paper. But there are special references to the importance of information, consulting and consciousness-raising of the project representatives, and to information and application forms for the conception, implementation and monitoring of activities. Finally particular emphasis is put on the necessity of experience and know-how with regards to equal opportunities when devising measures and policies. In addition, women should be sufficiently involved in the realisation and management of projects. In their report the authors present two best practise examples, the objective 2 EU-structural policy in Northrhine-Westfalia and the European Equality Partnership in Wales.

Facing the Austrian situation the authors suggest the following links for the future shaping of labour market policy (Naylon/Weber 2000):

- Consideration of the female proportion in labour market policy committees and to put the topic "equal opportunities" on the agenda again and again
- Instructing and informing involved participants on the subject of equal opportunities in a proximity-to-practice manner, training and consciousness-raising
- Organising the support of experts and women's NGOs
- Guidelines and checklists for decision-makers; providing project managers with suitable references and application forms already at the phase of planning and establishing projects

- Breaking down the general target of promoting equal opportunities to operational aims
- Creating a sensitisation of companies via discussions and counselling; changing discriminatory company practices by training women
- Extension of women's counselling agencies, infrastructure for counselling, but also initiatives, associations and companies.

These claims are to be supported but are so far realised rather selectively in Austrian practice. Partly the development was influenced by the new political situation in Austria (see also Pastner 2000). Presently saving potentials (budget consolidation, expenditure cuts, personnel cuts in the Civil Service as well as in the PES etc.) are primarily under discussion in the area of politics. Present plans of the government (as drastic reductions of benefits for unemployed, fees for students etc.) don't show any considerations of gender aspects in the policy making process.

As already mentioned as best practice in my first report of this year (Pastner 2000), an Inter-departmental Working Group on GM in the former Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (FMHLS)¹ was founded. One of the key issues of the working group was the question how GM could be brought closer to the social partners, as in here there is a particularly great deficit. These considerations resulted in a letter, which was sent out together with an invitation to comment on the NAP 2000. This letter can be seen as a kind of guideline for GM and is also an attempt of practical implementation of the theoretical GM-concept.

In this letter there is reference to the existing structural discriminations of women on the labour market and also to the fact that the GM-approach was not fully realised in the NAP, particularly not in pillar III. This is followed by an explanation of the GM-concept; besides, the aims of such politics are given:

"The aim of 'mainstreaming' politics is an improvement of the quality of measures and the avoidance of unintended negative gender-specific consequences. Commitment on the top-levels of decision-making is an essential criteria for the success of mobilising the persons in charge for 'mainstreaming', the assignment of clear areas of competence and the utilisation of tools and instruments like the assessment of gender-specific consequences of different policies, procedures for examining gender-specific norms and the monitoring and evaluation of progress. The 'mainstreaming'-approach is an addition

¹ This working-group still exists but within different structures. It should also be mentioned that the new minister of the Social Ministry wants to establish a working group for the implementation of GM with representatives of all Ministries.

to specific measures of practical promotion, with which an extension of the scope and the influence of equal opportunities politics is intended." (letter of the FMLHS to the social partners, March 2000)

There is emphasis on the importance of ...

"...consciousness-raising campaigns, the construction of – if not yet existent – standardised gender-specific data analyses, training campaigns for the development of the necessary knowledge about gender-specific differences, a regular assessment of gender-specific consequences of policies and the evaluation of gender-specific norms to ensure the quality of legal norms and other political documents." (ibidem)

The following concrete suggestions are listed in order to better anchor GM in the NAP-areas or in institutions in charge of implementing NAP-relevant measures:

- Training, workshops, conferences on sensitising for and developing know-how about GM-strategies
- Appointment of gender-experts and implementation of suitable internal process-accompanying and -implementing structures
- Measures for gender-specific data collection, data analyses and reporting
- Further development of the "Train the Trainer"-seminars in vocational training institutions with the aim of consciousness-raising and the training of know-how in the area of equal opportunities
- Managing equality-seminars for consciousness-raising for executives/personnel managers
- Positive actions, mentoring-projects, quotas etc. for the equal opportunity based appointment of committees and filling of professional positions
- Incentives for the making and realisation of positive action plans, women's representatives etc. within collective bargaining and so on
- Participation at Total E-Quality-Proceedings.

Finally a paragraph can be found in which the employment policy decision makers of the social partners are asked to shape their report, which is supposed to be the basis for the NAP 2000, correspondingly:

"In accordance with the rules given in the employment policy guideline 19 it is therefore important that reporting about planned and implemented initiatives explicitly refers to

how measures were realised according to gender mainstreaming and what further steps are planned. In addition, all quantitative and qualitative figures should be given gender-specifically to enable an assessment of progress in the area of equal opportunities." (ibidem)

It was already described in full in the first report (Pastner 2000) that this very welcome stimulus was not taken up by all stakeholders and not in all areas of the NAP.

1.2 Identification of and discussion of evaluations/ gender impact assessments of employment policies

A general feature of the Austrian NAP is the fact that at large its implementation was accompanied by systematic evaluation studies.

As already mentioned in the first report for the network (see Pastner 2000) Austrian research institutes, above all the ERI – Economic Research Institute (WIFO – *Wirtschaftsforschungsinstitut*) and the IHS – Institute for Advanced Studies (*Institut für Höhere Studien*) were commissioned to analyse and evaluate individual measures and instruments of the NAP; to document their effects on employment as well as on unemployment; to enlist the use of effect-analysis for suggestions for the further development of measures and instruments of the programme and to identify efficiency and effectiveness of the NAP in the overall context of economic policies.

In the most recent, comprehensive report of the ERI (WIFO) and IHS on "Accompanying Assessment of the Implementation of the NAP in 1999" (finished in February 2000) the following central areas were analysed next to the "macroeconomic aspects and the general development on the labour market" (see WIFO/IHS 2000):

- Gender mainstreaming and equal opportunities for women and men
- Education of young persons
- Long-term unemployment and the activation of labour market politics
- Equal opportunities for disabled persons
- Further training and lifelong learning
- Territorial Employment Pacts (TEPs)
- New services
- Work organisation and contracts
- Progress and obstacles at the setting up of new businesses
- Measures for fighting clandestine work

It can be seen that gender mainstreaming (GM) is placed at the top of the list of central focus areas. A more detailed version of this chapter was also written as a separate paper (see Leitner/Wroblewski 2000). This report mainly focuses on the evaluation of qualification measures for unemployed women and improvements for childcare facilities. With regard to their relevance to women these are two areas of main emphasis of the Austrian NAP. Further chapters of the report deal with the methodology of evaluation and possible indicators regarding equal opportunities as well as a detailed analysis of the labour market situation of women, among others with wage gap and labour market segregation. Also one chapter is dedicated to the topic of GM within the NAP.

When assessing the consideration of GM in the individual main focus areas of the NAP, the authors came to the conclusion that:

"Due to the consideration of Gender Mainstreaming in the first two pillars in the NAP some success is already showing in some individual areas with regard to an improvement of the situation of women. In particular this affects the vocational training of young women and support for the long-term unemployed. In many areas, however, there are no effects visible yet and an estimation as to the effectiveness of the planned measures still is restricted to expectations." (WIFO/IHS 2000:90)

In the comprehensive general paper of ERI (WIFO) and IHS these findings of good consideration of the GM-concept in the first two NAP-pillars and neglect in the third pillar are - interestingly enough - mirrored as well. Gender-specific aspects are mentioned again and again in the first chapters about the vocational training of young people up to the evaluation of Territorial Employment Pacts and, above all, statistical foundations are worked out according to women and men². In the chapters "Social services" up to "Measures for fighting clandestine work" gender-specific analyses are more the exception, although they would be of significant importance.

Especially worth mentioning are the most recent activities within the framework of the *European Social Fund* (ESF). In 1999 a study of its own was published on "Equal opportunities for women and men" (see Armstroff et al 1999), in which there was on the one hand a gender specific evaluation of the realisation of the ESF labour market policy target for measures for unemployed people (objective 3) in Austria and on the other hand the consideration of equal opportunities between women and men was evaluated in the measures for employed persons (objective 4).

² Problems with the quality of statistical data for the analysis of gender-specific inequalities are primarily existent in the area of income, vocational training and further training (see Pastner 2000).

As a summarising result it can be recorded that the access of women to an objective 3 supportive measure in the period 1995 to 1997 corresponds to their proportion of the long-term unemployed, although this positive outcome was partly put down to the specific women's focus of the PES.

This contrasts with the fact that women were starkly underrepresented in the access to objective 4 supportive measures (further training within companies). The authors of the evaluation conclude that in the future the safeguarding of the target equal opportunities is urgently required in terms of content as well as operational procedures:

"Concerning the intended main focus equal opportunities, the vaguely formulated aims, undefined aim-attainment criteria and the fact that no specifically allocated funds were put aside for the promotion of equal opportunities for women and men within objective 4 were especially criticised. Merely not further defined and operationalised 'declarations of purpose' are existent. (...) The non-committal character of the aims as well as the thereof resulting implementation practice have negative effects on several levels." (Armstroff et al 2000:73)

Once again the lack of concrete implementation steps, instruments and methods is criticised.

The results of the evaluation was publicly discussed by the Ministry (see Buchinger/Gschwandtner 1999) and they had some influence on the development of labour market political measures of the new programme planning period. One consequence was the phrasing of two targets complementing one another for the promotion of equal opportunities of women and men on the labour market. That is on the one hand the implementation of the strategy of GM for all objectives and policies and secondly a main focus area of its own, in which targeted measures for the diminution of gender-specific discrimination are set. For the conception, realisation and evaluation of all policies the different conditions, situations, requirements and needs of women and men should be considered by all participants in labour market politics. Also, in the future, the proportion of women has to be at least 50% for all main focus areas. Under the heading "gender mainstreaming" measures for project co-ordinators, institutions offering information, consulting and qualification as well as studies, evaluations, and public relations work are entitled to funding. National ESF-administration bodies (PES, TEPs, etc.) should work towards a consideration of GM by the recipients of funds. Furthermore a separate women-specific main focus with measures towards the reduction of horizontal and vertical segregation on the labour market was planned. (see Naylor/Weber 2000)

The activities in this area serve as positive examples and have shown that by appropriate actions the aspect of equal opportunities of women can be considered within a short period of time. However the future will show how these aims fuelled with ambition are going to be realised. But essential criteria are met. Thus it was only recently commissioned to establish an external supporting infrastructure for the accompanying of the implementation GM within the ESF.

1.3 Planned measures for the implementation of GM and for the introduction of GIA in the field of employment policies

In the course of expert interviews conducted by me with representatives of the Public Employment Service (PES) and various institutions involved in employment policies (Ministries, consulting agencies, regional authorities etc.) it showed that at present there is a whole series of activities for the implementation of GM existent, which are, however, only in the planning phase or initial stage. Systematic procedures of GIA (according to the definition given above) are so far not in systematic use so that reports about practical experience cannot be given yet. Partly, guidelines and checklists are being developed within and outside of institutions – although highly diverse things are understood by that; partly, first procedures are being tested in a trial stage. Written, official documents of GIA-procedures that could be analysed are not existent yet. Some of the most important activities can be listed:

- The above-mentioned "federal co-ordination agency for the implementation of GM for ESF-funded measures" will take up its work in autumn 2000 and intends among other things to work on and establish a toolbox with supporting material (guidelines, criteria for deciding over projects etc.)
- Since last year a checklist is sent out by the regional authorities of the Federal Social Welfare Offices responsible for employment policies for disabled persons, with which the bodies of projects for employment, support and qualification of disabled persons are asked to examine their project with regard to gender-specific criteria. There are questions about the staff; the labour market political relevance of the measure for women; the composition of participants and perhaps steps to increase the participation of women and the consideration of care duties. In the comments to the paper the following target of this investigation is given with reference to the beginning of the implementation of GM: *"The checklist is primarily designed for the gathering of experience and sensitisation, with the aim of a more intensive consideration of the topic "equal opportunities between women and men in the integration into the labour market".*

- Within the framework of the Territorial Employment Pacts (TEP) there will be an event in autumn, where the application or implementation of GM will be discussed. Only recently a "GM representative" was established and is now working in one region, Lower Austria, who delivers resources for consulting for the TEP as well as for the Lower Austria Authorities. She had a paper - that was published by the EC (Mainstreaming of equal opportunities for women and men in the structural funds programmes and –projects, technical document 3, December 1999) - translated into German and wants to work with this in the future. The paper is characterised by clear relevance to practice and also contains concrete assistance for the realisation of GM.
- A few months ago the Employment Service Vienna commissioned a study on GM in the Labour Market Policy; additionally an working group on GM of all relevant bodies of employment policy in Vienna was established that is supposed to ensure the relevance to practice.
- This October there will be an international conference on GM in the context of the Milena network (with representatives of the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary) organised by the City of Vienna.
- Also the Women's representatives of the laender (provinces) have commissioned a foundation paper on GM which shall be adapted to the individual provinces.

The state of development of the labour-market political main protagonist, the *Public Employment Service (PES)*, is very interesting: this summer GM was decided as central future strategy on top executive level. Since the summer the internal equal opportunity unit is - in a kind of trial run - delivering structured comments to each new institutional guideline/instruction³ to the each department. This is carried out by following the criteria given by the EC definition (as mentioned above: participation by gender; access to resources by gender; gendered norms and values; gender differences in rights).

In autumn there will be first internal seminars, in which managers shall be provided with tools for implementing GM and an exchange of experiences will be possible. Information events for decision makers (especially for the administrative council with representatives of the social partners) and for PES-internal equal opportunity-representatives will also be held. For the next months the planned revision of the "instruction for the construction of guidelines", in which the consideration of gender-relevant criteria is supposed to be integrated, is of central importance for implementing GM. The realisation of this modification, however, is only just being prepared. Within the framework of quality management this central guideline ensures the revision of all

³ The first comments were referring to guidelines in the area of labour market promotion; the areas placement and consulting are to follow step by step.

existing guidelines/instructions of the PES dealing with labour market policy in the next years. Thus, for each guideline the question must be answered to what extent and by what kind of measures it contributes to the equality of women.

The consent of the management is an indispensable requirement for such positive development. In a recently given interview one of the principals of the executive board of the PES talks about GM in his institution:

"On top-management level - board of executives and regional executives - we have been working on the strategy of GM and are presently about to disseminate our understanding of GM to all our managers. On this level of the PES we understand GM as a method of reflecting what gender-specific effects one's actions have and what elements of discrimination against women are contained in them." (esf-news 11.00:8)

In the future GM will also have to be integrated in all planning processes and standards, he says. The strategy contains good types of approach "to discuss questions of effectiveness and efficiency on a rational basis". However, the PES is bumping into societal boundaries, like the segregation of the working world into women's and men's professions. The interviewee thinks that the decision-making bodies, filled with representatives from the social partners, are in principal supporting the GM-approach, although an interesting question could appear concerning the personnel structure of these bodies.

One has to know that these decision-making bodies – especially on the higher levels – are almost exclusively filled with men.

Summarising Austrian examples of (planned) GIA "guidelines"

| ORGANISATION RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVELOPING THE GUIDELINES | Ministry for Labour, Health and Social Affairs (former government) | Public Employment Service (PES) |
|---|---|---|
| Organisation (e.g. National ministry, local or regional government, social partners, other agency) | National ministry (initiated by an inter-departmental working group on GM) | national Employment Agency |
| Level of responsibility (e.g. national, federal, local, sector) | national | national |
| The broad responsibility of the organisation (e.g. national employment policy, assessment of ESF projects) | employment policy, NAP | labour market policy including administration of ESF-projects |
| THE GUIDELINES | | |
| Name or title of guidelines | no guideline in the narrow sense of meaning (letter to social partners titled "anchoring of GM in the different NAP areas") | no stand-alone paper (inclusion of GIA method in internal instructions of PES) |
| Date when the guidelines were issued or adopted | (March 2000) | planned |
| Aims and objectives of the guidelines | to motivate social partners to use GM approach in their NAP contributions | to consider gender relevant criteria in all processes and areas of PES activities |
| Summary of contents of the guidelines (attach in more detail in appendix if necessary) | explanation of the GM-concept with concrete examples of equal opportunity measures | consideration of the gender dimension according to the GIA scheme given by the EC (participation, resources, norms, rights) |
| Method of implementation | none | general inclusion of GIA method in basic internal instruction |
| Method of monitoring and evaluation | none | via the existing PES-quality management system |
| Obstacles which may limit the effectiveness of the policy (lack of statistics, institutional and political problems of co-ordination, etc.) | no implemented policy, just a single attempt to translate the EC-theoretical GM-concept into practise | can't be said now (because of current political problems stakeholders may have other priorities...) |

2. Selection of two employment policy measures for a gender impact assessment

The following evaluations are structured according to the guidelines of the co-ordinating team following the seven "steps in a gender impact assessment" (Rubery 1999).

2.1. Qualification and training measures for the unemployed

As a main focus in the Austrian NAP qualification measures constitute one of the most important instruments in active labour market politics. They are mentioned in the guidelines 1 to 3 and 6⁴, and – in accordance with gender mainstreaming (GM) – the consideration of women is explicitly stated. Besides, qualification measures are also referred to in the guidelines 19 to 21⁵ as a means to reach equal opportunities of women and men.

For about three years the Public Employment Service (PES) has been formulating its target indicators gender-specifically, which – compared to the procedure applied before – can be assessed as a very positive development. Thereby gender-specific monitoring and with that evaluation possibilities have also improved significantly, although improvements are still called for. The detailed ex-post evaluations of the Austrian NAP, which - inter alia - contains GM as main focus area, have already worked out valuable foundations for this. (see ERI/IHS 2000 and Leitner/Wroblewski 2000)

Step 1. Identify the position of men and women prior to policy development with respect to participation, resources, norms and values and rights.

In spite of an improvement of the labour market situation the unemployed rate for women also in 1999, with 6.9% (EUROSTAT: 4.5%), lay above men's 6.5% (EUROSTAT: 3.1%). Here a clear correlation between educational level and unemployment exists: the lower the education the higher the risk of unemployment⁶. An general inferior starting position of women is mirrored in the educational structure of the unemployed: despite major improvements also today young women are less qualified than young men. (see Papouschek/Pastner 1999)

⁴ New start for young people; Fresh start for long-term unemployed adults; Increasing the number of people benefiting from active labour market measures; Lifelong learning

⁵ Tackling gender gaps in the labour market; Providing care services, parental leave schemes and family-friendly working hours, alleviating return to working life

⁶ 41% of the unemployed (women: 44%, men: 38%) have - as their highest level of education/training - finished compulsory/secondary school, 40% (women: 31%, men: 47%) an apprenticeship and 6,5% (women: 11%, men: 3%) taken GCSEs. (see Leitner/Wroblewski 2000)

Participation: In recent years the PES has reacted on the discrimination of women on the labour market and increasingly included women in active labour market measures. Parallel to the participation rate⁷ also the participation at training measures has significantly risen between 1996 and 1999. The target of achieving at least a 50% participation rate of women in training measures, which had been set in the NAP 1999, was actually reached: the proportion of women (subsidy cases) in training programmes was 52.7% in 1999; on an annual average around 26,600 people, 13,900 women and 12,700 men participated in training measures. (see table below)

Participation in PES measures 1996-1999

| | women | | | | men | | | |
|--|---------|---------|---------|----------------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 |
| Unemployed | 102,482 | 104,768 | 108,365 | 100,224 | 128,025 | 128,580 | 129,429 | 121,518 |
| Unemployment rate (EU) | 5.20 | 5.40 | 5.40 | 4.50 | 3.70 | 3.70 | 3.80 | 3.10 |
| Participation rate | 11.41 | 15.59 | 15.59 | 20.59 | 8.98 | 11.95 | 11.98 | 15.05 |
| Participants in active measures | 13,622 | 19,979 | 20,525 | 26,525 | 12,859 | 17,785 | 17,877 | 21,830 |
| Thereof: participants in training measures | 8,848 | 11,418 | 10,706 | 13,916 | 9,125 | 10,793 | 10,224 | 12,692 |

Source: PES; implementation report 2000

Resources: Only recently it has become possible to make statements on the gender-specific allocation of financial means of the labour market policy budget. This not only is an effective indicator for the distribution of resources but also roughly an indirect standard for the quality of measures. In 1999 female participation in skills training was nearly 53%; measured in subsidy spending, the share for women was about 50%. (see implementation report 2000) Thus the measures for women were somewhat cheaper. As will be seen below, the structure of the measures is also very different.

Norms and values: In accordance with the existing segregation lines in the educational system, gender-specific differences can also be found in the qualification of the unemployed. Even though the PES is legally bound to take steps against labour market segregation, the activities are relatively modest and the outcome small. Due to the

⁷ The participation rate provides the proportion of unemployed people in active labour market measures (training measures, subsidised jobs and apprenticeships, employability measures, childcare benefit etc.) In the context of the NAP the target for the participation rate has been fixed to reach at least 20% by 2002. In compliance with the equal opportunities objective, this participation rate is to be higher for women (22.8%) than for men (18%). The target value for 1999 was 15.7% and, at an actual participation rate of 17.7%, was exceeded by far. A particularly encouraging fact is that, at 20.6%, the rate of female participants could be greatly increased and rose much more than that of men, which was 15.5%. (see implementation report 2000)

structure of vocational training segregation boundaries are continued - if not enforced. Partly, the organisation is indeed encountering societal boundaries (existing education levels and occupational biographies; job placement wishes of unemployed persons and employers etc.); partly, there are also people within the PES that share the very stable gendered norms and values and act correspondingly. Not least, norms and values determine ideas about whether women want or shall pursue gainful employment and how they (should) set priorities between work and family. These value judgements again correspond to the quality of consulting or sending women to training measures.

Rights: Rights do play an indirect role in qualification measures. This is about who gets access to the training measures of the PES. Hidden unemployment, which is not registered by the PES, is exceptionally high among women. When a person is long-term unemployed and receiving unemployment assistance benefit, the spouse's income is included, which bears the consequence that many women drop out of benefits and don't register at the PES anymore. The job returner initiative, which was established a couple of years ago, was a first step to qualify women also without any benefit claims.

Step 2. Assess the trends in men's and women's position independently of the effects of the policies proposed.

As argued before, the risk of unemployment is strongly connected with the educational and qualification level. If an improvement of qualifications is neglected and the deficits of women are not compensated, their disadvantageous situation is continued. In comparison men have better starting conditions than women (higher qualification level, continuous occupational biographies, no care duties etc.) and they also have better chances to get further training within the company. (see Papouschek/Pastner 1999)

Yet it has to be stated that the general economic situation certainly has a stronger influence on the demand for labour than the qualification measures of the PES. Besides – and this circumstance is frequently ignored – further qualification is not a universal remedy for unemployment. Thus 46% (!) of unemployed women (24% of the men) are registered as hard to place, 62% of that due to mobility restrictions⁸ (mostly because of child care responsibilities). Here deficits in public child care facilities have to be eliminated. But also work organisation and HRM of companies exert influence on the usability of qualifications. On the one hand women are in many areas employed below their qualification level (for example in part-time work). Secondly, further training for some of the female workplaces is of little use because the job requirements are too low or women will not get paid better due to higher qualification. These arguments do not

⁸ Data from I-III/1999 (see IHS/ERI 2000:28)

speaking against efficient qualification of women within labour market policy. But they should make transparent that training alone without additional measures will not be sufficient to eliminate the problems of women.

Step 3. Determine the priority to be attached to adopting policies which actively promote equality (as opposed to policies which are simply gender neutral).

Women have to be actively supported in qualification measures because they are more strongly affected by unemployment than men. When pseudo-gender-neutral policies are carried out, women will be additionally discriminated at the access to training measures. When no gender-specific target quotas are fixed and no corresponding attention is directed towards women, training participation rates are bound to go down (just like before the introduction of gender specific indicators). With that the probability to get a job and to take up stable employment diminishes. Men will thereby be able to extend their relative advantage. The unequal distribution of income and societal influence is increasing further.

Concerning women's participation in training described above, the positive picture is somewhat fading when the level of aggregated data is left behind. Thus the evaluation of the training system of one province of 1993 and 1995 showed that, although the number of participating women has increased relatively and absolutely, there has been at the same time a change in the structure of training. Skills qualifications have decreased, activation groups increased. Women were more strongly affected by this than men: in 1993 every second woman participated in a skills qualification measure, in 1995 only every fourth (men 1993: 70% in skills qualification, 1995: 54%) (Lassnigg/Wroblewski 1998 quoted in: Leitner/Wroblewski 2000).

Also in recent years a very large part of training measures consisted of activation groups that are not aimed at further vocational training. The Job Coaching initiative, for example, launched in April 1999, uses early intervention to enable people to return to the labour market soon. Training in job search techniques and assistance with individual application strategies are the focus of this programme. Between April 1999 and December 1999 32,400 people enrolled in this programme; 49.4% of them were women. It is important, however, that women are not only attending job finding courses but that they get the chance of further vocational qualification. The special problem constellation women frequently encounter demands not only corresponding representation in existing vocational qualification and training measures. Furthermore it is necessary to offer training especially tailored for women. This approach is already realised in initial stages, but most often it does not leave the stage of individual measures or pilot projects.

Step 4. Assess the potential impact of policy, paying attention not only to easily quantified impacts.

In the implementation report 2000 – as already mentioned – the number of participants in the totality of training measures, the female quota in individual new qualification measures and the distribution of financial resources are dealt with. Besides, two further, very interesting indicators are ascertained:

"To ensure and verify both the quantity and the quality of measures targeted on women a special target value has been defined by the PES, namely the 'flow of women into employment following skills training'. The PES set a target value of 15,742 women, which was clearly exceeded by the actual number (25,821) of women integrated into the labour market. The same applies to another indicator, namely that of 'training courses lasting more than 3 months'. The average duration of training courses totalled 72 days; men, on average, were trained 5 days longer than women." (implementation report 2000:22)

These indicators are of great relevance. But they describe the picture inadequately and require monitoring and review-procedures with more differentiated methods. This necessity is also made apparent by the outcome of the evaluation of the Austrian ESF-measures: within the framework of ESF-objective 3 equal opportunities was realised insofar as women (in comparison with their share of all unemployed) were over-proportionally frequently included in qualification and training measures. Also after the measures women showed better employment effects than men. However, it was – only indirectly - brought to light that they attained lower income than men. (Armstroff et al 1999)

With the data and indicators available so far it is not possible to find out what direct effects a completed training has on the ensuing occupational career and its quality (stability, income, working conditions etc.). Least of all effects on resources outside the employment system (like time and quality of both home and work life needs) can be evaluated.

On the level of norms and values an interesting influence could be established: due to the job returner initiative the gender specific awareness of the PES consultants has increased. Women are now more consciously perceived as target groups for measures. (Lassnigg et al 1999)

Step 5. Assess the impact of the policy on particular groups of women and men.

So far qualitative evaluation studies of individual measures have shown that some groups of people actually benefit from qualification and training measures and some groups are to a large extent excluded from them. Training of unemployed people used to focus on the further qualification of male skilled workers. In the last couple of years this exclusive focus was left behind and in training measures of active labour market policy the PES now proceeds according to defined target groups which are deduced from the structure of unemployment (young persons, long-term unemployed, older persons, women etc). But deficits still exist.

The above mentioned evaluation of the PES job returner initiative revealed that individual groups of women returners are difficult to reach by measures of active labour market policy, that is: women without basic vocational education, women with long breaks in gainful employment as well as women from rural areas with poor transport connections. (Lassnigg et al 1999) In particular women with low basic qualifications, who in fact have the highest qualification needs, are included by training measures below average. These findings are also confirmed by the evaluation of the ESF-objective 3 measures. Besides, women without finished vocational training are mainly sent to job finding courses; this does not apply to unqualified men to the same extent. Men are far more often included in skills training. (Armstroff et al 1999)

Most of the skills training measures require specific basic qualifications. Measures that are especially designed for persons without vocational training are already offered, but their extent is not sufficient.⁹

Step 6. Assess the indirect impacts of both the current state of gender inequalities and the proposed policies, paying particular attention to the indirect impact on children.

A lot of things could be said about the indirect consequences of discrimination of women on the labour market. Women suffer from this discrimination individually, and furthermore society at large loses an inconceivable amount of resources of knowledge and creativity. In comparison the training of unemployed persons can only gain modest

⁹ In the NAP 1999 the target of raising the percentage of women with only compulsory schooling (or less) in PES skills training measures is mentioned. The proportion of women with a compulsory school background within all female training participants was 44.5% in 1999 and thus 0.6 percentage points above last year's value (43.9%). Within the framework of "lifelong learning" one can find the target of raising the proportion of low-skilled workers in skills training and continuing training programmes per year to that of participants with medium-level qualifications (in 1997, their share was roughly 8%). Participation-boosting policies increasingly have women and older workers as target group. (see implementation report 2000)

compensation. But the effect should not be underestimated. After all unemployed women not only acquire new knowledge and the nowadays very important social skills in these courses, they are also provided with new self-confidence and occupational identity. These are also valuable requirements for returning to work, a continuous occupational career and economic independence. Eventually also the children of these women can gain from this. In particular daughters still lack positive role models with regard to a satisfactory compatibility of work and family.

Step 7. For policies which, in the initial GIA, are assessed either to have a negative impact on gender equality or to be broadly gender neutral, identify ways in which the policy could be redesigned or re-specified to promote gender equality.

By and large the increasing consideration of the gender aspect in Austrian labour market policies in recent years can be described as positive¹⁰. The quantified gender-specific indicators in the PES are a first step towards the right direction. But the development is only in its initial stage. Now monitoring, the shaping of politics and evaluation has to be further differentiated and elaborated gender-specifically in order to enable the measuring and comparison of actual gender-specific effects of the measures on occupational careers (see also the recommendations in Leitner/Wroblewski 2000 and ERI/IHS 2000). Thus the measures have to be offered according to the fine structure of the unemployed and tuned to the respective regional and economic conditions. Thereby one must be careful to really reach all subgroups (women with low educational level, from ethnic groups, from rural areas, with care responsibilities, etc.) and not to exclude any groups. Because of their heterogeneity, training measures must be evaluated according to differentiated categories – like main focus as regards content (skills/non-skills), length, costs, framework conditions etc, so that meaningful effect analyses can be carried out. So far it is also difficult to assess combinations of measures with regard to their effectiveness. Also the quality of data collecting procedures has to be included in evaluations.

The present plan of the PES to increasingly influence training institutions to consider gender-specific aspects has to be very much appreciated. Besides, the composition of the participants should be ascertained in detail to be able to analyse how far the representation of diverse groups of people (ethnic minorities, parents, single-parent mothers, etc.) is ensured.

¹⁰ In recent years conditions for unemployed persons have been deteriorating but this cannot be further dealt with here. Thus, the participation in training measures (above all job coaching) has become compulsory and the refusal to participate in training measures is linked to sanctions.

The success of training measures would have to be measured with regard to their ability to remove the problem constellations of all subgroups effectively and in a lasting way. This, however, can only be assessed on the level of individual occupational careers and by including qualitative indicators like occupational length, income, promotion prospects, job satisfaction and the compatibility with private needs/duties.

Finally it must be criticised that the existing training measures are too much connected with the administrative logic of the PES. Successful employment policies should be set out more broadly and reach *all* persons who have problems with the employment system, independent of their being registered as unemployed or not. This approach would support women especially.

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2.2. Fully exploiting the employment potential of the services sector (focussing on the IT-sector)

The measures regarding this subject are included in pillar 2, guideline 13. They are "aimed at improving the development opportunities of the services sector and, in so doing, fully exploiting its employment and innovation potential. Within the business- and industry-related services, the focus will mainly be on technological and innovative fields of activity" (implementation report 2000:18) Gender aspects are not mentioned in this guideline. Concrete measures that are mentioned are the enforced liberalisation of the telecommunications sector, the extension of telecommunication networks, supporting measures in the multimedia sector as well as research promotion in biotechnology and environmental technology. Additionally, innovative employment and qualification measures in the field of IT and data processing (e.g. "new start" or "tele.soft"), carried out by the PES (Public Employment Service), can be listed here.

At present everybody is talking about new information and communication technologies and the media frequently complain about the shortage of skilled workers in this area. The numbers given on the missing IT-workforce vary considerably and at times reach enormous proportions. The introduction of "green cards" is frequently discussed by employers and politicians – these cards are supposed to enable the recruitment of skilled workers from abroad. The fact that the (re-)training of women for the new professions could be enforced sometimes is a topic on the agenda of events organised by equal opportunity departments of specific institutions (PES, Trade Unions, Chamber of Labour etc.), but mostly there is no wider public debate about this. Also in scientific studies of this problem a gender-neutral perspective is dominating - *de facto* this means that an exclusively male focus is being applied. Thus the situation of women in this field is difficult to assess.

Step 1. Identify the position of men and women prior to policy development with respect to participation, resources, norms and values and rights.

Participation: The expansion of total employment, which could be witnessed in the last couple of years, can be put down to the growth of the service sector to an extent of two thirds. Taking a general perspective women profit from this trend above-average. Business services show the highest annual average rates of increase; this includes all business- and industry-related services (telecommunication, EDP, R&D, legal, tax and company consulting, architecture and engineering offices etc.) as well as data processing. About 50 % of the approximately 233,000 employees in business services

are female. In the whole service sector the female proportion varies according to the respective areas. Gender-specific segregation is existent and consists in women dominating personal and social services and men dominating business- and industry-related services.

A recent study on "labour and qualification demand in the telecommunications and media sector" (see Leo 2000) counts about 150,000 employees - in Austria in the year 1999 - in the IT-sector (defined as NACE 30-33, 64 and 72), which corresponds to approximately 5% of the total employment¹¹. Especially in the areas "data processing and database" (NACE 72) employment has increased by nearly 50% in the last two years. In the latter female employees are underrepresented.

In this study a personnel demand of 13,000 workers up to the year 2003 is given – no differentiation according to gender was made.¹² The actual demand for IT-workers is far greater because - due to the extension of IT-technologies - skilled workers are required in all economic areas.

The segregation in the employment system corresponds to a strong segregation in the educational system and this has increased in recent years. For example, the share of female students in computer science even has decreased: From 1980 until the early 90s it was 15%, whereas in the academic year of 1998/1999 it was only about 10%. Best-practise programmes like "F.I.T", that attempt to motivate girls already in school to go for technical disciplines at university, are heading into the right direction but they start too late or are too small-scale to break up these trends.¹³

The female quota in newly established apprenticeship training for the IT-sector is also low. Thus only 11% of 690 apprentices in the new apprenticed trade computer-technician and only 9% of 400 apprentices for communications-technician are female.

Resources: Due to the strong segregation the resources for the IT-field are unfairly distributed and "gender-neutral" measures are mainly beneficial to men. Employment effects of structural measures like for instance the liberalisation or the extension of infrastructure are difficult to assess. Because of gender-blindness in this area there are

¹¹ In this study the employment development is not given gender-specifically. In general, data on female employment are hard to find in this area, which is aggravated by the respective differing statistical distinguishing of the IT-sector.

¹² The estimation of the demand is based on a survey in which 87 companies participated. On the problem of quantifying the demand see Leo 2000.

¹³ "F.I.T." (German acronym for "women in technology") is a several-day information event aimed at making female pupils familiar with atypical university courses (electrical engineering, civil engineering, telematics) and giving them some insight into these courses. Beginning in the academic year 1999/2000 *F.I.T.* projects have been introduced at universities with technical and natural science subjects and have so far been attended by 722 young women. (see implementation report 2000)

no attempts whatsoever to seize the gender-specific dimension.¹⁴ There are only numbers on the measures initiated by the PES within the framework of the NAP, e.g. it.basics and tele.soft.

The "it.basics" programme was aimed at beginners: it provides basic IT know-how and knowledge for users based on tried and tested training measures for IT users (office packages, Internet/e-mail, SAP, etc.). In this programme about 3,500 people enrolled between April and October 1999; 71% of the participants were women. The "tele.soft" programme is intended to qualify registered unemployed for new vacancies in such areas as telecommunications, software development and multimedia/Internet. In the period from April to September 1999 training measures already existing within "tele.soft 1" were adapted and conducted at regional levels. The "tele.soft 2" training programme was launched in October 1999; it focuses on concrete personnel and skills requirements worked out in co-operation with 52 IT companies (see ÖSB 1999). A special screening process was applied for selecting the participants. Approximately 900 participants are trained in 50 training modules, the average training period is longer than 5 months. Between April and December 1999 about 2,700 persons participated in tele.soft training courses. The female share was 52% (see implementation report 2000), this means it was considerably lower than in it.basics. In autumn 2000 "tele.soft 3" is starting in Vienna; this measure is special because it is exclusively accessible for women.

Norms and values: Very specific working conditions are associated with the new professions in the IT-sector. Very long working hours, temporal and spatial flexibility, full personal commitment or a difficult separation of private and working life and thereby incompatibility with the family can be listed as examples. Besides, the "technique-taboo" for women (with all the corresponding stereotypes) works effectively. Logical thinking, mathematical talent, which are regarded as technical prerequisites, are still seen as typically male characteristics.

Rights: Trends of eliminating traditional labour law can be identified in some areas. On the one hand atypical employment (part-time or marginally employment, temporary contracts) is growing massively, on the other hand employment contracts (with social insurance) are no longer taken out and capacity bottlenecks of companies are directly passed on to the workforce. Also the keeping of working hours regulations is difficult in some parts of the sector. Putting through labour law is aggravated by the fact that also on the part of many employees a kind of "on-the-move mood" and "pioneer spirit" prevails and individualistic views can be found. The often young and highly qualified

¹⁴ One example for this is: Serentschy 1999. Also in the large evaluation accompanying the NAP gender is not an analytical criterion when dealing with the area of "new services" (see WIFO/IHS 1999 and 2000).

employees don't have a lot of working experience and no family responsibilities. How widespread these opinions really are cannot be assessed. Last but not least many spontaneous attributions and myths are created because of the strong media interest in the new IT-areas.

Step 2. Assess the trends in men's and women's position independently of the effects of the policies proposed.

In the study cited above (see Leo 2000) trends concerning the required qualification levels were also investigated. These trends show a clear tendency towards highly qualified workers. Especially graduates from special Technical Training Colleges ("Höhere technische Lehranstalten"), Colleges of Higher Professional Training ("Fachhochschulen") and universities are asked for. But exactly in those schools and training institutions girls and women are underrepresented because of the strong segregation in the educational sector. As already argued above, the under-representation of women in the core segments of data processing is increasing.

Besides, new segregational boundaries are being drawn. Women will be an exception in the highly-paid expert professions, but then they will be found in large numbers in the less attractive areas, like for instance in the enormously growing call centres. Therefore the paradox situation might emerge that on the one hand there is a shortage of skilled workers and on the other hand the existing resources of women are not being used. With this the hypothesis that companies are prepared to pay for the discrimination of women appears to be verifiable.

Step 3. Determine the priority to be attached to adopting policies which actively promote equality (as opposed to policies which are simply gender neutral).

The explanations so far make it clear that it is of utmost importance to integrate the gender aspect into existing politics. The stable "technique boundary" for women, for instance, has to be overcome. In the IT-sector today the course for the labour market of tomorrow is set. Today there still are major possibilities of influencing the newly emerging sector. In this early stage the future distribution of employment and income and thereby the equality of women and men can be influenced. Since the sector is relatively young and greatly expanding, the prerequisites are favourable like in no other area. In this political field the government has the chance to prove its seriousness concerning the NAP declarations to establish effective Gender Mainstreaming concepts.

Step 4. Assess the potential impact of policy, paying attention not only to easily quantified impacts.

Finally it must be a target to increase the employment of women in well-paid IT work areas and open up qualitatively valuable working areas for women. How can this be reached? On the one hand access barriers have to be eliminated, on the other hand framework conditions in the IT-occupations have to be improved. Therefore the general starting point must be on the level of norms and values and girls have to get acquainted with the technical field already at an early age. Only then the segregation in the educational system can be reduced. According to research findings the co-educational system negatively effects the development of technique-interests of girls; consequently, new didactical paths have to be taken in the schools.

Furthermore, the working conditions in some of the IT-professions have to be improved. It can hardly be in the interest of (especially older) male workers (and their spouses and families) to work day and night and to live without a clear boundary between the working and the private sphere. Even though the technological development pushes forward at an enormous velocity, it must be possible to establish some kind of de-speeding. At last it is a target that men and women can be continuously active in legally secure employment conditions and under satisfactory working conditions *and* to be able to follow their non-occupational care duties. In the long run this goal also has to be in the interest of companies and the economy at large to guarantee the quality of products and services in this central key sector.

Step 5. Assess the impact of the policy on particular groups of women and men.

Let's get to the point: IT-companies state that they are primarily looking for young, excellently trained, temporally and spatially flexible workers in urban areas (see also Leo 2000). The fact that these workers should be male is not always explicitly said but can be deduced when looking at the demanded job profile. Since present policies operate gender-neutrally, these conditions are not going to change.

Employment in the IT-sector is largely concentrated in urban areas and therefore is beneficial to the women and men living there. 60 % of the workforce employed in the Austrian media and telecoms sector are concentrated in Vienna.

Companies face a shortage of workers particularly in the sectors of network infrastructure, IT functions and software, in concrete terms on database managers, database developers, network managers, network technicians and webmasters. The growth of the telecoms and media sector creates a demand for mostly high-quality jobs. Companies look for graduates of colleges of higher professional training, colleges and

universities, whereas the demand will stagnate for graduates of vocational and secondary schools. For apprentices and graduates of compulsory schools companies even expect a decline in the next years. (see Leo 2000) As already mentioned women are underrepresented in higher technical training (Colleges of Higher Professional Training, special Technical Training Colleges) and thus don't match the search profile from the beginning.

A further problem about the high-level requirement profiles concerns the qualification of unemployed persons: the majority of them has an educational level which is to be found on the lower educational spectrum. Here it will be interesting to see to what extent the shortage in the companies leads to adaptations and then maybe also persons who don't correspond to the ideal prototype are trained and employed.

As a matter of fact, working with computers already has become a kind of "basic qualification" in nearly all professional fields and labour market politics has to react to that. Particularly older women and women with longer breaks in gainful employment have to catch up and eliminate their deficits.

Step 6. Assess the indirect impacts of both the current state of gender inequalities and the proposed policies, paying particular attention to the indirect impact on children.

Not only are the resources being unequally distributed, it can also be assumed that the far-reaching absence of women in the shaping of technology is having massive societal consequences. The kind of technology realised has an impact on the shaping of social processes and determines, how and by who communication is led, who is in charge of technical infrastructure and the power of definition, how and by who knowledge is accessible, how organisational company processes are structured, etc. These indirect consequences and influences are so far entirely left out of the picture. What kind of effect does technology promotion indirectly take on women and men, what kind of influence does the shaping of the new professions have? It is obvious that all these questions have a gender-specific dimension (men create technology, women are the users). But an interest in this knowledge is not particularly wide-spread.

Step 7. For policies which, in the initial GIA, are assessed either to have a negative impact on gender equality or to be broadly gender neutral, identify ways in which the policy could be redesigned or re-specified to promote gender equality.

Gender-specific segregation – women are over-proportionally represented in personal and social services, men in business- and industry-related services – is enforced by the largely gender-neutral treatment of the measures of guideline 12 (Creating new jobs in the social, health and cultural sectors and at local level) and 13 (Fully exploiting the employment potential of the services sector). The disadvantages of atypical employment, which is in particular heavily increasing in areas dominated by women (see Leitner/Wroblewski 2000), are ignored. Forms of work that don't enable to secure one's living are expanding vastly and are an indicator for the quality of the newly created jobs in this areas.

Since gender aspects are left aside in politics but also in scientific studies and evaluations, the situation of women cannot be accurately assessed. However, the danger is imminent that women don't get a firm footing in the promising future of the IT-sector and thereby miss interesting and well-paid working areas. Especially within the momentary development (shortage of skilled workers in IT-areas) political measures for the active promotion of women would hit fertile ground. But here not only adequate consideration in training has to be paid attention to, also the framework conditions (work hours, employment forms, "male work culture") have to be considered.

Since changes in the educational sector and in norms and values can only be brought about in the long run, employment politics must concentrate on innovative, that means also gender-sensitive measures. Besides, the system of further vocational training (for unemployed *and* employed persons) would have to get enlarged by special programmes for older women, women from rural areas and those with low basic qualifications. Retraining opportunities for interested employees from other professional areas could be created and be supported by far-reaching information and services.

And we should not forget that also in the associated fields of IT-professions new employment opportunities are emerging, for example in the area of organisation, training and administration, but also graphic and creative design. If it is not or hardly possible to get women into the core areas of technology, then employment politics should give more consideration to these related areas.

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