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Needs analysis GEMTREX: AUSTRIA

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The Austrian needs analysis focuses on the following aspects regarding Gender Mainstreaming (GM) and the topic of quality, quality standards:

1. The demand side
2. The supply side
3. The offers regarding training courses for gender mainstreaming competencies with certification

Sources of information:

- EQUAL project "qe-gem": publications, website, documents, minutes, records...
- Various websites and documents
- Background knowledge of Austrian team due to strong involvement in the relevant Austrian networks, projects and activities

Preliminary remark: Information source EQUAL project “qe-gem”

From 2005 to 2007, the EQUAL development partnership “*Quality development Gender Mainstreaming: Concepts, Implementation, Evaluation*” (acronym: “qe-gm”) has been working in areas that partly are relevant in terms of the GeMTrEx needs analysis. Generally, the situation is described as follows:

“...there are no universally recognized quality standards on the Austrian market today for the implementation of equality measures. This development partnership therefore considers it as its essential task to work on the quality development of this strategy in order to improve the effectiveness of equality measures.”

<http://www.qe-gm.at/englisch/start.html> [21.2.2006]

The Austrian GeMTrEx members have been included into one of five “qe-gm”-sub-projects, namely “*Sub-project 5: Quality assurance in GM consulting and gender training*”, thus being able to follow the discussion and to summarize relevant aspects on the basis of an ongoing discussion of a heterogeneous national group of experts. The main task of this sub-network was, „*Development of quality criteria for GM consulting and gender training in different professional fields in a ‘discourse of consultants’*”(http://www.qe-gm.at/englisch/start.html [21.2.2006]).

The summary of important aspects within the discourse of consultants that were collected throughout one and a half years replaces the expert interviews within the Austrian GEMTREX needs analysis. The contacts and involvement in the discussion in the group of the 16 experts and some more representatives of the development partnership (7 workshops from Nov. 2005 to Dec. 2006; telephone conferences; discussions in e-mail-groups) is regarded as an excellent source of information for the Austrian needs analysis. Thus, the working time allocated to the needs analysis is transferred from “expert interviews” to the “analysis of relevant material”.

Despite relevant material from this EQUAL-development partnership will be released later in 2007 year and is not yet available, some important aspects for GEMTREX can already be derived.

Demand side

The following part is based on:

Schmid, Tom (2006, October). Die Angebotsseite des "Gender-Marktes". Präsentation beim BeraterInnen-Diskurs der EP "Qualitätsentwicklung Gender Mainstreaming". Wien.

[The demand side of the "gender market". Presentation at the discourse of consultants of the development partnership "Quality development Gender Mainstreaming". Vienna.]

...and on newsletters and minutes of qe:gm.

Basically, the gender market is seen as the market to trade gender trainings and gender consulting, either as products for themselves, as elements of complex products and services or as products/ services in which GM has been integrated. The main actors in this field are:

- supply side: Non Profit Organizations (NPOs), Pro Profit Organizations (PPOs)
- demand side: Public organizations, institutions
- demand side: some private companies with a certain kind of Corporate Social Responsibility strategy

Trading on the gender market is regulated by legal frameworks in the public sector (public procurement law), by public funding (e.g. some public institution funds some NPO), and by direct contracting (e.g. by big private companies).

Roughly speaking, the EU is interested in rolling back public funding and wants to enforce competition in the service sector. For the Austrian situation it can be observed that public funding, highly important for social economics and NPOs, is decreasing, while *public invitation to tender* are becoming more important, e.g. in terms of the Labour Market Service. Here, the crucial question is: How can *quality* be implemented into *public invitations to tender*?

The new version of the Austrian Public Procurement Law (2006) contains several relevant regulations and facilitations, e.g.:

- Non-priority services are named (legal advice, education, health, social); in this area, awarding of contracts is facilitated
- single tender action up to € 40.000,-- (formerly 20.000,--)
- The principle of „best tenderer“ may be applied, not only the „cheapest tenderer“; this means that more expensive but high-quality services and products may be favoured over cheaper ones.

(... but the effects of this legal framework are not clear yet.)

The gender market is seen as a complex market, as far as the "good" on this market (GM) is concerned; moreover, this market can be regarded as asymmetrical. It turns out that there are restricted possibilities for regulations on the demand side, e.g. because the qualifications of the demand side to define quality are often missing.

Thus, the role of the supply side to regulate quality becomes more important.

On the other hand:

In the public sector, which is the most important actor on the demand side, public procurement law defines the way how tenders are selected. Any feature, like GM, can be assessed in terms of a necessary condition (eligibility criterion) or as a feature that contributes to the quality of the tender in an additive way (addition criterion;

point-based system; the quality of GM in the proposal results in the amount of points).

Depending on which kind of product or service is needed (“pure” or “integrated”, see below), the demand side can regulate in different ways:

- If “**pure GM activities**” are offered (e.g. a gender training), GM must be the central feature (eligibility criterion), and the more of it, the better for the proposal/tender (addition criterion). Here, the demand side can implement quality-assured GM more easily. Both criteria are applied.
- If **GM is integrated** in some other measure (e.g. job training for youngsters), the tender must contain GM in some way (often, only the eligibility criterion is applied); in practice, it has turned out that this doesn’t work well (“only wording”).

Moreover, actors on the demand side have various things in mind when they talk about “equality”. Here is the question whether the various “meanings” are compatible, once it comes to actual services and products. Also, one should think about “hidden agendas” of organizations, such as “neutralizing GM”, “wording, but no action”...

“Quality-assured GM” is more expensive than “wording only”. More and more, it can be observed that actors on the demand side base their decision on the lowest price only, as this is the easiest way to deal with the public procurement law and to avoid lawsuits. (According to expert Tom Schmid, the Court of Audit admits claims if the difference in prices between tenders is 30 % or higher). Taking only the price as criterion for decisions is attractive for the public actors: The effort is the least, there is no risk for claims and lawsuits. (If there are any criteria lists to decide on the basis of quality, they are very simple, in order to avoid lawsuits.)

This has already started an inflationary spiral, e.g. in certain fields of the labour market policy the tender with the lowest price is selected. The quality definitions of the calls are criticized by many actors on the supply side: The argument is that the demand side has too little knowledge for appropriate quality definitions and only goes for the cheapest price, irrespective of quality. Smaller organizations with experience and high quality standards complain that they cannot compete against big organizations with a hire-and-fire approach.

All in all, the gender market can be regarded as a biased market:

- The supply side is relatively clear, demands are blurred
- Much GM-knowledge and know-how is concentrated on the supply side; deficits on the demand side
- Differences between GM-expertise (supply side) and thematic expertise (often: demand side)
- The demand side can dictate prices: Quasi-monopoly of the public sector as demanding actor
- On the other hand, the supply side could regulate the market by quality, as mainly the supply side knows about quality in GM; possibly, some “dominant GM-approach” (not necessarily the “best” one) could prevail on the market in future
- The actors within the demand side have learned about GM in courses etc. of the supply side; thus, the supply side shapes the demand

A new general problem of the social economy that can also be relevant in terms of NPOs (and small PPOs) that offer GM in connection with the liberalization of the service sector and the referring public procurement law is the following: GM-umbrella organizations or networks that regulate quality and that arrange on some kind of minimal prices could even be seen as *collusion among tenderers* (illegal, relevant in terms of criminal law).

Conclusions with regard to the most important player on the demand side, the public sector:

- In principal, an *external regulation of the market* in terms of quality could be a way to go, e.g. by law, by an interest group of consumers, by science that defines the state-of-the-art...
- Up to now, many smaller orders are handled by single tender action. But irrespective of the size of the orders, the demand side needs a possibility for a quick, clear decision whether a tender corresponds to certain quality criteria or not.
- “Meta-GM” is needed: Actors on the demand side need consultancy how to integrate quality-assured GM into their calls for tenders, and how to handle the decisions about the tenders.

Supply side

Source for this part of the text:

Buchinger, B. & Gschwandtner, U. (2006). Der Gender Markt. Eine qualitative Studie zu AnbieterInnen, Strukturen und Standards (Schriftenreihe der EQUAL-Entwicklungspartnerschaft Qualitätsentwicklung Gender Mainstreaming, Band 1). Wien: EQUAL-Entwicklungspartnerschaft Qualitätsentwicklung Gender Mainstreaming.

[The gender market. A qualitative study about suppliers, structures and standards (series of the EQUAL-development partnership Quality Development Gender Mainstreaming, vol. 1. Vienna: EQUAL-development partnership Quality Development Gender Mainstreaming.)

... and material (newsletters, minutes...) of the qe:gm development partnership.

The quality of training- and counselling-services in the field of Gender Mainstreaming in Austria can be described as strongly influenced by the perception of quality and competencies on the suppliers' side. Trainers and Gender Mainstreaming consultants have a certain perception of quality in the field of GeM which is connected to the fields where these experts work. The Austrian gender market is a very heterogeneous market. Obligatory quality standards do not exist.

In the year 2006, a market analysis on gender trainings and Gender Mainstreaming services in Austria has been carried out. The study focussed on the status quo of quality criteria, target groups of GeM, methodical instruments as well as on evaluation standards on the suppliers' side (methods: internet inquiry and qualitative interviews with gender experts).

Referring to quality standards on the suppliers' side, the following results (based on 19 gender experts' interviews) characterize the Austrian situation: All the experts agreed to the statement that quality criteria should be obligatory for all gender

experts. Although a common agreement was characterized as 'positive' and 'constructive', this question was discussed in an ambivalent way. Different quality fields were mentioned, such as gender specific knowledge, formal qualification, gender sensitive language, and others. There is no agreement among the experts on the question who should develop quality criteria for gender experts and in which context these standards will have to be developed.

GeM-suppliers have developed different quality standards according to their gender specific services. The minimum requirement can be summarized in the following way:

1. Technical and gender specific qualification

Technical qualification refers to training, counselling and research. Gender experts should have a certain main profession such as educationalist, technician, psychologist, sociologist, economist, and others. On top of that, a certain gender specific knowledge is required. That means basic knowledge in terms of Gender Mainstreaming as well as further knowledge in the field of gender theory (gender studies) and in the field of managing diversity.

2. Certain abilities and competencies

... connection with technical qualifications, such as the ability to manage a project, to handle resistance, to observe and acknowledge one's own limits (competencies), and to be able to work with certain gender specific methods and didactics.

3. Gender-equitable language

... means the ability to use a gender-equitable language, in oral presentations and in writing as well as the ability to train how to use a gender-equitable language.

The quality standard discussion in Austria

For a few years, a discussion among gender experts in Austria has focused the topic 'quality standards for gender experts'. Pros and cons in that discussion:

- + The development of obligatory quality standards is necessary in the process of further professionalization because it will clear the position of gender experts with respect to a certain reference system. Therefore, a certification system is necessary as well.
- Austria has a widespread and heterogeneous gender market, strongly characterized by the competition of all the different suppliers. Referring to the development of quality standards, the question is, "Who is going to develop these standards for whom?"
- The quality standards should not be concentrated on minimum requirements.
- Some experts point to the fact that further work has to be done: Some more experimental work and experience as well as more association experience in the international context, before obligatory quality standards should be developed.
- The complexity and diversity of the Austrian gender market makes it almost impossible to develop quality standards which can cover all these different suppliers' services.

Status quo of the discussion in the Austrian expert group regarding quality standards (Feb. 2007)

Three working groups for the thematic areas (1) gender training, (2) thematic consulting with gender focus and (3) GM counselling have been discussing during the last year. These activities (services) can be defined as follows:

- (1) **gender training, gender competency training:** communicates knowledge about gender and skills for working towards changing structures (e.g. as GM representative in an organization etc.)
- (2) **thematic consulting with gender focus:** transfers gender and GM-related aspects into some specific field (e.g. urban planning...)
- (3) **GM counselling:** Counselling/ consulting concerning the *process* of implementing GM; similar to organizational development

The working groups have tried to define competencies for each area, namely:

- core competencies (e.g. basic professions, such as group trainer; organizational developer; ...)
- gender and thematic competencies (e.g. knowledge about gender theories...)
- personal competencies (e.g. intercultural competencies...)
- methods (e.g. analysis instruments, moderation...)
- marketing competencies and entrepreneurial tasks (e.g. project management...).

The discussion is not finished yet. Some accordance with the other theoretical and practical modules of the development partnership is appearing:

- **Gender theories** are important; demand side and supply side in a given project should agree upon which theoretical approach is appropriate, respectively. Professionals in the area of gender and GM should know about all possible approaches.
- The **meaning and theoretical background of the term *gender*** in a given project must be unfolded and reflected, with regard to all actors, target groups, goals. This makes it possible to define and measure quality.

Furthermore, the expert group is still working on the following topics:

The discussion about an appropriate networking structure of persons working in the field of gender trainings and GM is continued, e.g. an “interest group GM” with the focus on quality.

As far as the *outside orientation* of the network is concerned, some goals were proposed, e.g.:

- to develop supporting material for actors on the demand side, for orientation
- to disseminate information about activities of GM-consultants:
 - gender training
 - thematic consulting with gender focus
 - GM counselling

Contents of the Austrian training courses for GM competencies

The following Austrian training courses with certification were found:

1. Gender Competency and Gender Mainstreaming (provider: GenderWerkstätte, www.genderwerkstaette.at)
2. Mainstreaming Gender and Diversity in organisations (provider: im Kontext, www.imkontext.at)
3. Feminist Science and Gender Studies at the University of Graz (as an example for curricula at universities, www.uni-graz.at/kffwww/curriculum.html)

Each of the three curricula has a different focus. The following table gives an overview of all subjects together, sorted by thematic fields.

1

Self-awareness in doing gender

Personal and biographical approaches and experiences

Sensitization for gender dynamics in society and teams

Gendering: to realize gender as a social concept and construction

2

Theories: Women's studies, gender studies, critical men's studies

Examination of normative, structural and institutional discrimination

Analysis of society with the focus on power and dominance relations

Analysis of gender structures and subtexts in organizations

3

Intersection and interdependence of gender with other dimensions of diversity like class, ethnicity, religion age, transgender etc

Models of equal opportunities for all individuals in systems (eg. adult education)

4

Implementation of equal opportunities and Gender Mainstreaming in organizations

Change management in organizations

Project management for implementation

Processes and instruments of implementation

Gender analyses of organisations (definition and tools)

5

Basic knowledge about the strategy of Gender Mainstreaming and Diversity

Management

(History, law, definitions, European demand, streams, best practices)

6

Personal role and tasks of actors of Gender Mainstreaming and equal opportunities

Personal profile of qualification and quality standards

Milestones - Gender Equality Measures on the Labour Market

Gender equality policy in Austria has always focussed on the marginal position of women in society. Therefore, gender equality measures and legal claims were directed to the improvement of women's education and their labour market participation.

In fact, women and men in Austria still don't have the same conditions and consequently not the same chances: there is a very strong gender relevant segregation on the labour market, a high gender wage gap, and reconciliation of family-work and economically active work is still regarded as a women's issue. The impact of an equal legal framework – as a result of women's emancipation over the last decades – is very low: it did not lead to "de facto" equalization in important parts of life, such as the distribution of societal influence and economical power.

Against Strong Segregation Lines on the Labour Market – Women's Supportive Measures

The gender relevant first steps on the Austrian labour market were done by certain independent women's projects. In the beginning of the eighties their main topics covered vocational orientation for women as well as women in untypical occupations. The results of these first steps were sobering: after a successful period of vocational training in untypical occupations, women got lots of troubles in their jobs: a remarkable part of the women could not find a job, another part of them could not get into an educational adequate work place (e.g. female mechanics worked as cleaners in technical companies).

In 1989 onwards, concerted actions of women's projects and the public employment service were realized on the labour market in Austria. These measures mainly were directed to rather less qualified women, registered at the public employment service, young women and/or women after a period of parental leave. Vocational trainings, further qualifications and education in untypical occupations were intended to reduce the strong labour market segregation. What was new about these measures? With the intention to avoid the common troubles of women's integration, the employment service supported new models of education, such as "dual education" (education outside and inside the company).

A backlash followed in the nineties: innovative vocational models were replaced by traditional women's education, such as hairdresser, secretary, sales assistant and others. Experts report a connection to the higher pressure on the Employment Service to be successful in placing unemployed persons with firms. Even in the rather new branch of information technology, this trend could be seen, as women were trained as users while men were trained to develop electronic data processing programmes. Men again seemed to occupy the more interesting and attractive fields of the new branch.

Referring to the status quo on the Austrian labour market, there is a strong movement of women's participation at the moment, mainly caused by women with child care duties. As a result the women's employment rate increased while the unemployment rate decreased. Labour market experts refer to the fact that this movement leads to quantitative results, because women mainly go for atypical employment,

where career perspectives, vocational demands and income are very low. On the other hand, the gender pay gap turns out to get higher, because of atypical employment! It is said to be a quantitative movement and qualitative stagnation.

In general, the segregation lines on the Austrian labour market are still very strong, so that the efforts of women towards better work positions can be described as fairly unsuccessful. Up to now the impact of gender equality measures on the labour market were directed towards the horizontal segregation, their influence on the vertical structure was rather low. One of the current gender equality targets of the Federal Employment Service of Styria is directed towards the vertical segregation: it does not just focus on placing persons with firms as an evaluation criterion, but furthermore on the educational adequacy of the work.

Men and Gender Equality Targets on the Labour Market

The gender related labour market policy of the last 20 years was characterized by women's support. Men were not seen as a relevant target group in terms of gender equality. Concerning Gender Mainstreaming, labour market experts points to the necessity that the focus on gender equality has to be extended towards men.

This includes

- Child care duties as a jurisdictional claim for men. Up to now, the connection between family work, care duties and men did not exist in the Austrian Employment Service – with reference to this topic, men were “discriminated” in Austria.
- Men in the so-called untypical occupations (e.g. nursing and care occupations).

Both topics are rather new fields within the Gender Mainstreaming discussion in Austria.

When Gender Mainstreaming started to influence the labour market policy in Austria (2001), men's function was discussed in a very different way:

- women were afraid about men's intrusion in gender equality issues, and of course about their interest in the public funding formerly assigned to women's politics, now to Gender Mainstreaming (Gender Mainstreaming was taken as a “new market” for experts, and – according to a political expert – this was the first attractive market for women in Austria)
- men were seen as potential partners for gender interests in leading positions
- men were seen as “losers”:

The last point is of special interest for the Austrian labour market policy. Gender Mainstreaming was discussed as a strategy that focuses gender relevant structures on the labour market with a certain intention: a new form of source distribution on the labour market. What was new about that? The former support of women's participation on the labour market did never affect men. Nowadays, redistribution claims equal opportunities for men and women. That means, women should get better jobs and positions, while men (who occupy these jobs) will have to share their positions. Referring to that topic, a discussion about men in untypical occupations (like trade, health and care occupations) ended with the notion of a male manager in the Employment Service that this would mean a “de-qualification for men”. In that way, they would “lose”.

In the ESF-Programme (European Social Fond) men were included in gender equality targets on the Austrian labour market. “Men in untypical occupations” is one

of the main gender equality targets. First steps on the practical level already took place.

Career and Family

“Part time work in leading position” is a new measure on the Austrian labour market. The Employment Service in Styria serves as an example for qualified part time work. Men take the opportunity for part time work in leading positions, but their motivation seems to be far away from family-work-balance reasons. The most common reasons for part time work for male employee are education, career and political work. At the same time, women in leading positions take the opportunity of part time work to look after their children. Men take the same opportunity to go for their career. Actually, the second way seems to be much more easier to go, because of the demands on people in leading positions, like high time flexibility (work on Saturdays and Sundays), a lot of travelling and a high speed of work. All these demands are compatible with career duties, but not with family duties.

Results of a current survey on career-women and career-men in Austria show¹:

- career-women in Austria mainly decide to live without children (50%), while career-men stay in rather traditional forms of living (breadwinner)
- 97% of men in leading positions live together with a partner, but only 72% of the women
- a process of redistribution of work and family duties between men and women is necessary to provide the best conditions for gender equality
- the participation of men and women in political and economical decision-making processes is an important condition to realize gender equality

The Pay Gap

Successful gender equality strategies focussing men need certain conditions, such as equal payment. According to one of the political experts, this condition is taken as the main condition for an equal division of family work and occupational work. As long as the gender pay gap is high (one of the highest among the European Countries), all the other equality measures on the labour market (like educational improvement) cannot be successful. The expert points to low graded women occupations, compared to high graded male occupations as a main reason for the high gender pay gap in Austria. There is a need for a new valuation of labour between men and women – the traditional argument of the heavy physical male work as a justification for the higher male income does not fit anymore.

The opportunity for an equal distribution of family-duties and economically active work between men and women needs certain conditions, such as security livelihood, even in case of part time work.

¹ Ziegler, Judith (2003). Zwischen Karriere und Familie. Eine Untersuchung über österreichische Führungskräfte. Wien: WUV Universitätsverlag.