

# **Gender Mainstreaming in OSCE Events**

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## Introduction

This guide is designated to support OSCE staff/mission members in mainstreaming gender in the planning, development and evaluation of events such as conferences, trainings, seminars and so on.

As stated in paragraph 37 of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the promotion of Gender Equality, the participating States, assisted by the Chairmanship, the Secretary General and heads of institutions, shall ensure that the planning of OSCE conferences and seminars across all three dimensions will take the gender aspect into account and, as appropriate, include related topics.

This guide is divided in three parts: 1) Identification, 2) Development and 3) Evaluation and reporting.

## PHASE I: IDENTIFICATION

### Step 1: Review OSCE gender priorities

#### ⇒ Why

Gender equality contributes to comprehensive security, which is a goal of OSCE activities in all three dimensions. The OSCE aims to achieve gender equality within its own operations, as well as in participating States. To that end, a gender perspective is to be taken into account in all the Organization's activities, projects and programmes.

Knowing the specific OSCE gender commitments and priorities gives you an important context and basis for integrating a gender perspective into your event. You want to be able to easily link the gender perspective of your event to an existing and direct commitment or priority.

#### ⇒ How

The 2004 Action Plan for the promotion of gender equality (GAP), supported by the Implementation Plans, is the strategic document for achieving gender equality.

When planning an event, keep in mind these key principles that are taken from the Gender Action Plan:

- Equality between women and men is to be promoted as an integral element of OSCE policies and practices
- OSCE conferences and seminars across all three dimensions must take a gender perspective into account and include related topics as appropriate
- Meetings, seminars, special events, reports, case stories and developments related to the implementation of the OSCE's commitments on gender equality should be highlighted.

### Step 2: Review the gender perspective of the event's theme

#### ⇒ Why

Relevant gender issues may not be easy to spot. Having a clear sense of the problems you need to address will make it easier to build a gender perspective into your event's design and implementation, evaluation, reporting and follow-up.

#### ⇒ How

There are some topics where it appears that gender is not an issue or it is irrelevant, e.g. transport or terrorism. A deeper look, however, challenges the assumption that everyone experiences and is affected by a policy, programme or action in the same way. An analysis of the gender perspective therefore aims to assess the different impact a proposed and/or existing policy, programme or action may have on men and women. A gender analysis allows you to look more deeply for 'hidden' inequalities.

Specifically, gender analysis is a tool that enables an appreciation of gender differences, of the nature of relationships between women and men and of their different social realities, life expectations and economic circumstances.

1. Collect information and data that is broken down by sex, where possible
2. Identify any existing inequalities, and how these are being addressed

3. Analyze the different experiences men and women may have in the context of the theme
4. Determine any specific practical and strategic needs and constraints
5. Analyze the different impact the event's overall goal may have on men and women
6. Determine how the event could have a positive impact on women's situation and gender equality, including any 'gender-specific' interventions that may be necessary as follow-up.

 You could involve gender experts in this process!

Example: You are organizing an event on small arms. Based on the framework above, you might ask yourself:

- Are women and men affected in the same ways from the use of small arms?
- What is the percentage of small arms in hands of women?
- Is data disaggregated by sex collected on victims of small arms?
- Is there a link between small arms and domestic violence?
- What is the involvement of women in risk-awareness and education activities?
- Are there different strategies to raise awareness among women, men, children?

## PHASE II: DEVELOPMENT

### Step 1: Ensure gender issues are reflected on the agenda

#### ⇒ Why

The 2004 Gender Action Plan (GAP) refers to the need to appropriately reflect a gender perspective in the activities conducted under the auspices of the OSCE. Specifically, mainstreaming a gender perspective into OSCE activities, policies, programmes and projects.

Reflecting these priorities and tasks on the agenda, while also incorporating the gender-related objectives, sends a clear signal that the integration of a gender perspective is important to your event, and that you are meeting your obligations in terms of gender mainstreaming.

#### ⇒ How

Gender issues may feature on the agenda either (i) as an *integrated perspective*, or (ii) as a *gender-specific intervention*.

As an *integrated perspective*, the gender issue(s) will be one perspective of a larger topic on the agenda.

As a *gender-specific intervention*, the gender issue(s) will be a specific topic on the agenda.

Example: If you are organizing a conference on economic development in the mission, you could either

- integrate issues of participation, opportunities and discrimination of women as a topic when talking about the labor force, unemployment, business community, micro-credits or
- have one or two sessions focusing exclusively on women in that country's economic development, and addressing all areas above.

When providing the participants with a list of reference materials for further or supportive information on the topic, you should also include gender-related resources.

Make it clear to speakers, panelists, moderators and rapporteurs that the OSCE has clear goals and commitments on gender mainstreaming, and gender is to be integrated into the event's discussion and reflected in their specific interventions, e.g. when they wrap-up a discussion or when they prepare a report from a working group.



Look carefully at the agenda and ask yourself:

- Are gender issues visible and how are they featured?
- Do background materials, handouts and facilitation materials/tools highlight gender issues, avoid gender bias, and value the experience of male and female participants?

One important aspect of organizing conferences is to facilitate networking among participants. The conference should therefore include a number of long enough breaks that allow participants to meet and interact with each other. Coffee breaks could be of 30 minutes and lunch break between 90 minutes and 2 hours.

If appropriate, you could organize a separate networking event with female participants. This might be useful in topics where female participation is still low.

Example: A separate networking event, such a side-meeting or working-lunch, could be organized in a Police Conference if participating countries have a very low representation of women in their national police forces.

### Step 2: Strive for gender balance on the panel and among participants

#### ⇒ Why

Gender balance, insofar as this is possible, on the panel and among participants of your event contributes to legitimacy of the event. It helps represent the diverse needs of women and men and helps ensure the

participation of women and men in the development of policies, programmes and activities that will affect them.

Equal participation among women and men is also an established OSCE commitment and priority.

⇒**How**

- Choose partner organizations that are committed to gender equality (through their organizational policy and activities)
- Ask the Gender Section to help you identify organizations or individuals with gender expertise on the theme
- Search for qualified women speakers on the theme
- Make sure there are women as chairs, moderators, note-takers, group-work facilitators, etc
- Identify channels that will effectively reach potential women participants – such as networks, women's NGOs
- When sending out your letter of invitation, encourage women to register and attend
- Don't just target women in junior positions – take steps to attract women in senior positions as well.

Note: Don't draw the line at just getting the numbers right. Try to find speakers and participants capable of contributing to the achievement of gender equality, and promote their *active participation*.

When inviting the Delegations of the participating States, you could include the following sentence in the invitation:

"The OSCE is committed to promoting gender equality. We therefore encourage you to select both women and men representatives to participate in this event".

 **Keep track of the numbers so you can monitor the gender balance of your event! Pay attention to the number of women, their position (junior or senior) and the level of their active participation!**

**Step 3: Ensure advocacy or communication strategy includes a gender perspective**

⇒**Why**

Your advocacy or communication strategy is a key strategic opportunity to highlight, raise awareness and increase visibility of the gender perspective of your event.

⇒**How**

Your communication strategy may have different elements, and a gender perspective can be integrated into each. Elements may include:

1. Press release: a press release could highlight the gender issues to be raised during the event.
2. Feature story: a feature story could highlight women's experiences and needs in the context of the theme.
3. Interviews: you can strive to include equal numbers of women and men interviewed, and possibly include gender-related questions in an interview.
4. Photographs: photographic documentation of the event should be gender balanced – i.e. include photos of women as well as men, and avoid the depiction of stereotypes.
5. Documents: documents distributed at the event and afterwards should include gender-related research and reports.

Avoid gender bias and stereotyping!

Example: If organizing a conference on human rights you could include in the Press Kit a summary of the main human rights violations that women suffer in that specific country, and what the government and civil society are doing to improve the situation.

## PHASE III: EVALUATION AND REPORTING

### Step 1: Evaluate your event from a gender perspective

#### ⇒ Why

After the event, you want to know whether you “hit the mark” or “missed the mark, and why. A good evaluation will help you identify positive and negative developments that took place, and point out areas for improvement.

#### ⇒ How

Through the evaluation you want to discover whether and to what extent you:

- Addressed the needs identified through the analysis of the gender perspective
- Met the gender-related objectives of your event
- Made a positive contribution to gender equality

The best way to gather feedback is through standardized evaluation forms – but be sure to give participants some “free” space to address any issues that may not have come up through the forms. Evaluation questions should not be too broad (“were the speakers good?”) – but rather clear, concise and unambiguous (“how would you rate the content of the speakers presentation:  poor  satisfactory  good or  excellent”)

If an evaluation form cannot be distributed, then you could ask for the opinion of a few persons (speakers and participants) using some guiding questions.



**Does the evaluation form ask for sex-disaggregated information in order to analyze if men's and women's needs and expectations have been met?**

Through the evaluation you should also be able to determine **lessons** that can be used to improve your event planning in the future.

Example: If your evaluation indicates that there was not a good understanding among participants of key gender terms, your “lesson learned” might be to ensure that participants at your next event are provided with a glossary of gender-related terms, so that they are aware of the common terminology and can refer to definitions when necessary.

### Step 2: Include gender into the final report

#### ⇒ Why

A well prepared final report gives a useful record of the event and allows for future reference and follow-up, which is particularly helpful in an environment where OSCE staff or Delegations staff change frequently. If one of your objectives is to include gender in the event, this should be also clearly reflected and evaluated in the final report.

#### ⇒ How

The report should contain an executive summary, summaries of all the presentations and discussions of the event. You can also incorporate a reference about the extent to which men and women participated in the conference, encouraging the participating states to promote the further participation of women if needed. As explained by the OSCE Style manual, you should use gender-sensitive language. The content should be revised to avoid words relating to either sex and subsequently modified in order to remove any sexist connotations. The terms used should equally apply to both sexes.

The final report has to include a list of concrete suggestions made by participants during the event. Particular emphasis should be placed on the list of concrete recommendations, as this is usually the most useful part of any post-conference final report. Make sure you include all gender-related discussions and suggestions in the final report.

Resources permitting, it is useful to complement the final report with a CD-Rom containing the full text of all presentations given at the conference, the PowerPoint presentations, the final version of the list of participants as well as all other useful conference materials, including a list of gender-related resources.