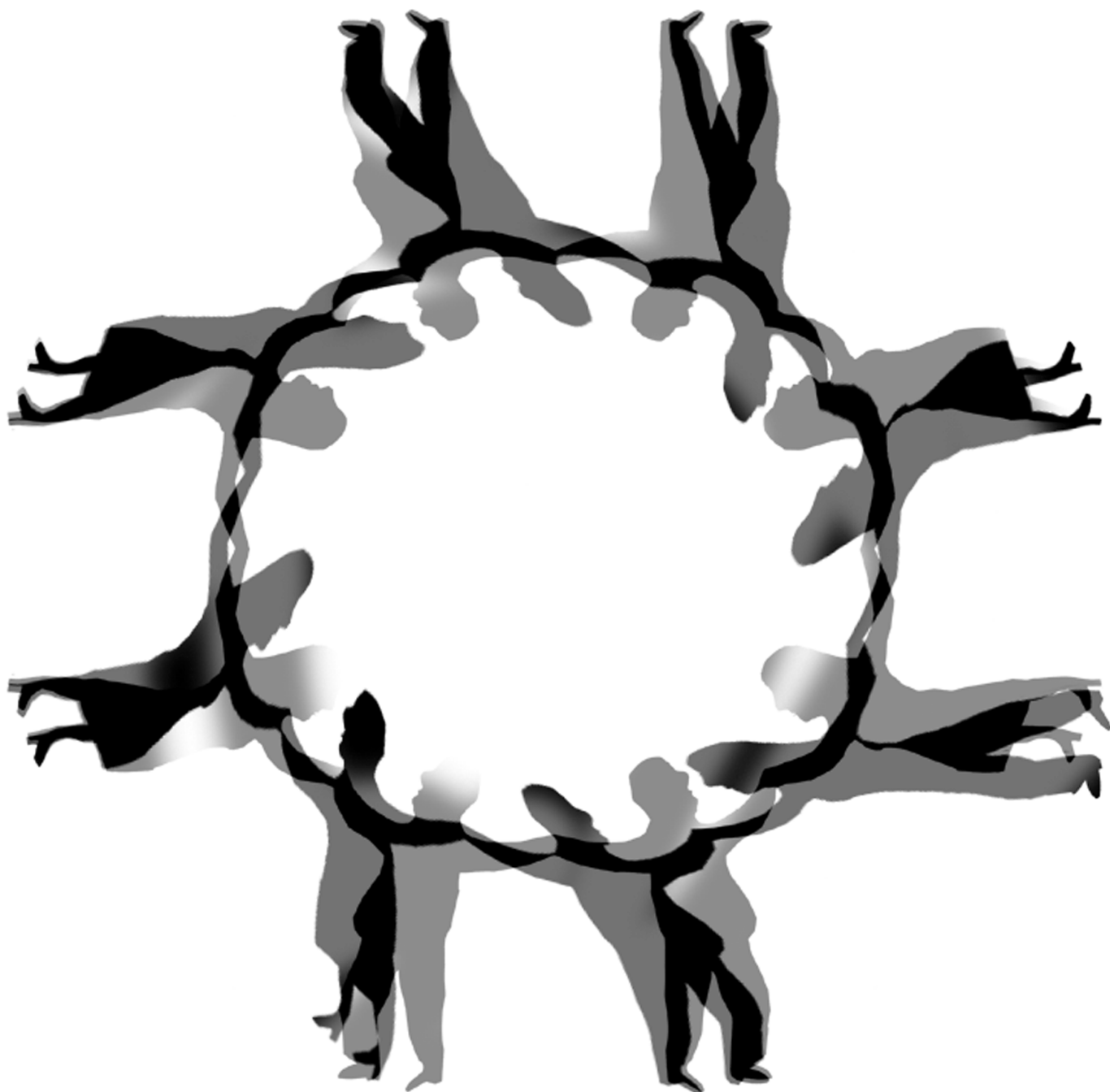


Active work for Gender equality



**Gender mainstreaming
and the 3R-method in local government**

Gender mainstreaming

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities has since 1997 been spreading experience and information on the work of the political committee of inquiry “Municipalities and equality“. The main mission of the committee was to develop and test concrete methods of how the strategy of *gender mainstreaming* could be applied in the work of municipalities. Gender mainstreaming is a strategy for the integration of a gender equality perspective in all parts of the decision-making process, from the initial assessment phase to formal decisions and implementation. In Sweden a new term, *jämtegrering*, was devised for the process. This word is a combination of the Swedish words for equality and integration.

The 3R method

One result of the committee’s work was the *3R method* (3R). 3R is a method that can be used to make surveys. In the method a quantitative investigation of the first two Rs, representation and resources, forms the basis of the third R, realia, which is more of a qualitative component. With the aid of a simple survey and analysis, it is possible to generate concrete local discussions on equality, based on the work actually being done.

Working actively with gender equality

We live our lives in the municipalities. The success of the municipalities in meeting the daily needs of welfare services of both women and men is of great importance for our prospects of having equality in our lives. Achieving equality at municipal level can therefore be a question of making tangible and concrete changes in the living conditions of people.

Today equality is a common concept in municipal plans, policy documents and descriptions of the objectives that shall be achieved. It indicates both commitment and interest. However, transforming gender equality into practice requires more than the general formulation of objectives and good intentions. This booklet provides a presentation of how some municipalities have transformed words and plans into action in order to improve equality in widely different municipal activities. These activities include a multi-storey car park, a pre-school, a recreation centre and a nursing home.

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The political will to increase equality

In 1995 the Swedish Association of Local Authorities appointed a political committee of inquiry “Municipalities and Equality”. The committee was given two assignments. The first was to investigate the fields in which the municipalities could take action to improve equality. The other was to develop methods for work on equality, in cooperation with some municipalities. On the initiative of the committee, the “JämKom” project was started. This project provided concrete descriptions of how the strategy of gender mainstreaming could be applied in different municipal activities.

The objectives of gender equality policies at municipal level are often based on the national objectives that women and men should have the same rights, opportunities and obligations in all the important fields in life. These important areas are: to have a job and income of one’s own, to be able to exert an influence in society, to be able to take care of one’s home and children, and freedom of sexual harassment and violence. In other words, the objectives of the gender equality policies include more fields than those regulated in the Gender Equality Act, which only regulates working life conditions.

Gender mainstreaming is a question of making re-allocations in regular activities in order to achieve specific equality objectives. Those persons who normally make decisions in respect of operations also make decisions on the objectives of gender equality. Therefore explicit political determination to increase equality is an important prerequisite for gender-mainstreaming. In order to transform this determination to increase equality into action, practical methods are needed for both politicians and personnel in the municipal administration and municipal operations. 3R, which was devised by Getrud Åström in cooperation with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities, is a method of this type.

The 3R method

3R has the aim of analysing the mainstream in order to bring the norms and values which govern attitudes to light. The 3Rs stand for representation, resources and realia. The 3Rs can be described as a systematic response to the question “Who gets what on which terms?”

Experience gained from the use of 3R shows that it is successful in making gender patterns visible in an activity. It facilitates objective discussions among politicians and local government officers on the changes that are required to increase equality. 3R should be applied to a relevant problem relating to conditions and opportunities for women and men in municipal activities. The scope of the problem should be well defined, but there must also be a will to change the situation. It is an advantage if the problem can be placed in relation to the objectives of activities.

Information about this problem is collected through a survey of representation and resources. The result of this quantitative survey is then analysed in the third R, realia. A constructive analysis consists of addressing a number of

questions that make change possible to the material that has been collected. There is both knowledge and research on equality available that can contribute to the analysis.

Participation and commitment increase motivation and the possibility of creating change to improve equality. 3R should therefore be used in such a way that members of staff and those responsible for activities investigate their own work. Their everyday contacts and knowledge will then be of use and the experience gained will remain in operations.

Representation

Under R1, the focus is on the decision-makers, the executives and the users who exert an influence on, and are influenced by, the problem. R1 answers the question: how many women and how many men? The answers can give a picture of the gender breakdown at all levels in the decision-making process and in activities among both personnel and users.

Resources

Under R2, information is collected on relevant resources related to the problem. These can include money, time, space or information. How are these resources distributed between men and women?

Realia

Under realia, the survey of R1 and R2 shall be analysed to make the norms and values that govern activities visible. These norms and values are often taken for granted as “common” and “natural” and they can therefore be difficult to describe. How can the gender patterns revealed under representation and resources be explained? Are they in line with the policy of gender equality?

Work with change

The results that emerge from the survey are then compared with the gender equality objectives for the activity. Sometimes the objectives are too general and abstract and therefore difficult to compare with the results of 3R. This might have the effect that new concrete objectives must be formulated. Equality objectives should be measurable, concrete and possible to follow up.

The gap between the results of the 3R analysis and the gender equality objectives constitutes the basis for further discussions on what must be changed in order to better reach the stipulated objectives. These changes should be formulated in a plan of action. Among other things it may be a question of designing new routines, modifying production of statistics to ensure that they are always gender disaggregated, producing checklists or easy reference guides.

In the following pages examples of how some municipalities have been working with gender mainstreaming as a strategy and the 3R method are given.

Shared power, shared responsibilities

Conceptions of how a normal gender order are created and maintained can be found at all political and private levels of society. Therefore power and influence means much more than mere representation in political assemblies. It is also a question of power in one's daily life, to be in control of one's own body and life situation. To enable women and men to participate in political life on equal terms, questions such as who fetches the children from the kindergarten, who has control over the money etc are questions of importance.

We continually learn the norms and values in the so-called socialisation process. Girls' interests are given a lower value than boys' and this, in turn, results in a situation where girls grow up with less self-esteem. One example is that girls learn to speak less than boys. This socialisation process is often referred to as the gender power order. The gender patterns are often invisible to us since there are of such an everyday character and so normal that they are taken for granted. When changes are made in order to increase equality, which often is a matter of redistributing resources, it becomes quite clear that it is a question of power.

Power in the everyday work can be a question of who has the right to authorise payments, who participates in meetings and different development groups, who has informal contacts, who has a bad conscience for collecting the children late from pre-school and who plays power games by withholding information, ridiculing other people or totally ignoring other people.

Below there are some suggestions for 3R questions on power and influence.

Representation

How are women and men represented at different levels, in the municipal council, in the executive committee, in committees, among chairmen, in development groups, contact groups, operations?

Resources

How long do women and men respectively speak at meetings and conferences? Have women and men access to the same information? What positions do traditional female or male items have on the agenda?

Realia

Why are different items given different priorities and different amounts of time at meetings? How is the knowledge of women and men valued? Can women and men participate on equal terms?

Power and influence in an upper secondary school

In the municipality of Karlstad, a 3R study was made at an upper secondary school, Sundsta-Älvkulle upper secondary school. The focus of the survey was on whether women and men had equal opportunities to exert an influence in the discussions on objectives, methods and educational development.

At the school women and men were, in general, fairly equal represented among the teachers. However women more often taught in the humanities and social sciences, and men in natural sciences and technology. At the school there was an educational development group consisting of eleven representatives of teachers in the different subject groups. The group consisted of one woman and ten men. In addition, the subject groups in which the majority of the teachers were women had fewer representatives in the development group than the subject groups in which the majority of the teachers were men. The humanities and social science groups had one representative each, while natural science, mathematics and physics, engineering and computers had two. The other representatives consisted of three men from the field of arts and one man from media.

Men also had a dominating position concerning the financial issues. There was not a single woman with the right to authorise payments in the core activities. This division of power was also reflected in the division of resources between the different educational programmes.

There were almost just as many men as women working at Sundsta-Älvkulla upper secondary school. At a first glance this can seem like equality. The question is how equal the school really was, when it was mainly the men who were in the groups with power and influence?

The school's management group was informed about the report and, on the basis of its results, made some changes. The focus was placed primarily on getting more women represented in management groups and on a review of the right to authorise payments. Other activities were also initiated. These had the aim of breaking gender segregation in the students' choice of educational programmes.

School and child care

It is important that children, regardless of their sex, are given the knowledge, skills and attitudes that they need as adults to be able to assume responsibility, see opportunities and cope with challenges. Here the school has an important task.

However, studies show that the conditions and opportunities experienced by girls and boys are different. They encounter somewhat different expectations and demands in their surroundings. Even as infants, boys and girls are given different characteristics and are treated differently by adults. Boys are encouraged to move their legs and arms, while the girls are kept still and held secure in the arms of the adults.

The general conception of how boys and girls are, and should be, can obscure the individual child's real needs, interests and potential. Girls are often described as quiet, cautious, relations-oriented or interested in languages, while boys are noisy, naughty, performance-oriented or interested in technology. But is this really the case, or is it rather a question of gender-stereotyped conceptions and expectations? Can awareness of the importance of one's sex lead to a situation in which girls and boys are encouraged to develop different sides of themselves and be seen as the individuals they are, beyond the stereotypes?

What is it like at the pre-school, the recreation centre or the school close to you? Are traditional gender patterns counteracted or consolidated? Are pupils stimulated to develop and prove their capacity and interests regardless of their sex?

Below some 3R-questions are given for school and child care.

Representation

How is the gender representation of the staff and children at different levels, in different areas, subjects, duties, games and activities? How often do the personnel have contact with mothers and fathers?

Resources

How much space do boys and girls use in the classroom, playground, in the pupils room, the recreation centre? How long do girls and boys respectively speak at assemblies and lessons? What is the gender breakdown of the children who receive support and special teaching? How are the costs allocated for different programmes, activities, purchases of games and materials?

Realia

Why may some activities and programmes cost money and others not? Is it reasonable that boys are given more time and attention? Is it at the expense of the girls? Do the staff mainly contact mothers or fathers? Is there a standard for how a parent is expected to be and does this standard have a sex?

Breakdown of resources between upper secondary school programmes

The Education Committee in Köping made a 3R analysis of the upper secondary school's programme. The committee investigated the gender breakdown in different programmes. Those programmes that were most dominated by boys were the vehicle engineering, industrial engineering, and electrical engineering programmes. Those mostly dominated by girls were the children recreation programme and the business and administration programme.

In the survey of the second R, resources, the cost of a place in the programmes that were predominantly boys' or girls' programmes was compared. Considerable differences emerged. The programmes predominantly attended by boys cost SEK 81,000 to SEK 114,000, while the programmes predominantly attended by girls cost SEK 48,000 to SEK 67,000.

This gave rise to a discussion in the committee why the programmes attended predominantly by boys cost more than those attended predominantly by girls. One simple answer was that certain programmes were more expensive since they required more expensive premises and equipment. The chairman was of the opinion that this was not enough to explain the difference, since the programmes dominated by boys actually had been allowed to cost more. If the resources had been divided more equally between the programmes, how many computers and computer programmes would, for example, the business and administration have been able to offer its pupils?

The division of costs between the upper secondary school programmes might have been reasonable, but how deliberate were the priorities between the different programmes? Would a different distribution of expenses also contribute to reducing gender segregation in the upper secondary school?

Attention at morning assembly

At seven pre-schools and programmes for six-year olds in Gävle, the way in which teachers treated girls and boys at morning assemblies was studied with the aid of 3R. Some morning assemblies were video-filmed in order to draw attention to the teachers' attitudes to the children. R2, resources, included the way the teachers addressed the children, the encouragement given to the children, as well as any sanctions.

It emerged from the survey that girls and boys were treated in different ways. On average, the girls were addressed half as many times as the boys. On average, the boys heard their names spoken by the teacher seven times and the girls twice. Can it be the case that boys are given more attention in order to make them calmer and quieter at morning assembly? Was the boys' inclination to stand out from the crowd strengthened when they were given attention?

Boys also received more follow-up questions. Only every second girl received a follow-up question, while boys received, on average, 2.5 follow-up questions at each morning assembly. Therefore, many girls did not receive any follow-up

questions at all. What impact does this have on the self-esteem and feeling of importance of the girls?

The boys received more reprimands and were more often forbidden to do certain things: 3.5 times per boy. Only every tenth girl was given a reprimand. Another thing of significance was that the boys received attention for qualities such as speed, strength and things that are measurable. On average, the boys received two such remarks each, while all in all no such remarks at all were given to the girls. Instead, they were commented on as being neat and nice and being good at relations.

Questions that can be discussed on the basis of this survey are whether gender stereotype patterns are strengthened or questioned during the morning assemblies? Are children given the opportunity to develop and train sides that they are not already good at? Does the teacher's approach affect the children's views of themselves and our views of children?

Culture and leisure – for whom?

Women and men have approximately the same amount of spare time. The spare time, when paid and unpaid work, education, food and sleep have been deducted, amounts to some 35 hours a week. Men have, on average, two hours more spare time per week. On the other hand, there is a difference between the spare time of women and men. Men's spare time tends to be unbroken, women's to be fragmented. Men and women also use different parts of the municipal recreation and culture facilities. One commonly held idea is that women are mainly interested in culture, men mainly in sport. Work on gender equality should challenge ideas of this type. One way of challenging such ideas is to survey activities and ask questions based on the 3R.

Representation

What is the gender representation of visitors to the municipal library and cultural events? How many men and women use the municipalities' different sport facilities?

Resources

How much money is invested in facilities that are mainly used by men and women respectively? How much time is allocated to girls and boys respectively on the municipal ice-skating rink or on the municipal playing fields? How much money is allocated for purchase of works of art?

Realia

Have men and women the same opportunities to take advantage of the municipal sport facilities? Why is it that so many cultural events are mainly visited by women? Why do men borrow so few works of fiction at the library?

Jernvallen – an equal leisure facility?

The objectives of the municipality of Sandviken stipulate that support should promote equality between the sexes. In order to see if this was actually the case, a 3R survey was made of two municipal sports halls, Jernvallen's A and B halls.

In the survey of R1, representation, it emerged that women were in minority in the boards of societies using Jernvallen were concerned. The proportions of men and women on the boards were 83% and 17% respectively. All the chairmen of the societies were men. Several societies thought it was unfortunate that women were so poorly represented. However, they were of the opinion that women participated in other ways than as decision-makers in the boards of societies. One of the representatives of the societies expressed this in the following way: "as lending a hand, making the coffee or selling lottery tickets". The issue is whether this type of participation provides equal opportunities to exert power and influence in the operations and planning of the societies.

Women were also in minority as users of Jernvallen's A and B halls, only some 25%. Of the total time, R2 resources, available in the halls, women used some 20%. How could this be the case? Were women not interested in sport? From a survey made of local cultural and spare-time activities, it emerged that interest in the sports played at Jernvallen was just as great on the part of women as of men. Why then did men dominate the actual use of Jernvallen's A and B halls?

Jernvallen's A hall is larger and more expensive to operate than the B hall. This hall was used by men for both training and matches, while women used it only for matches. Since men used the A hall, which was more expensive in operations, to a greater extent than women, a larger proportion of the municipal resources were allocated to the sport activities of men. How well does this correspond with the municipality's objective of its support to societies?

Women's and men's art – of equal value?

The culture and leisure committee in Växjö made a 3R survey of the purchases of art made by the municipality of Växjö between 1992 to 1996. When they looked at representation, it proved to be equal: 20 works of art by men and 17 by women had been purchased. On the other hand there was a relatively large difference in how much they had paid for the works of art of women and men. For works of art by men the municipality paid on average SEK 5.875 and for those by women SEK 4.240. One interesting question is why the municipality puts a higher value on works of art by men than those by women?

The physical environment

A good physical environment creates good conditions for everyday life. One important aspect is that the functional- and social planning are linked together. But how does the physical environment satisfy the ways of life, interests and needs of women and men? Studies show that it is most often women who assume the greatest responsibility for ensuring that their daily life functions effectively in terms of time and space. It is important to women that the bus line passes the child day-care centre, the shopping centre and the workplace. Public space also creates opportunities for meetings between people, makes it possible for people to participate in the public debate. Are housing areas and shopping centres designed in such a way that people feel happy, feel at home and are given the opportunity to meet?

Another aspect is whether space conveys feelings of security. Women often experience a feeling of fear in the public spaces in towns and therefore avoid being in certain places after dark. An awareness in community planning of the fears of women is essential in order to reduce this feeling of insecurity.

In Gothenburg an inventory was made of unsafe paths and places with the aid of the 3R. One result of the survey was that the lighting at Bergsjön public subway was improved to increase the feeling of security. Another example of creating security is to place laundry-rooms at ground level with windows. Laundry-rooms at ground level can make the life of women easier. The question is whether they will get men to start doing the washing.

Examples of 3R questions in community planning

Representation

What is the gender representation of those that work with community planning? What is the gender breakdown amongst those in the municipality who populate public spaces, for example drivers, cyclists, pedestrians and persons using public transport?

Resources

To what extent are the different parts of the public spaces used by women and men? What resources are invested in places used mainly by men or women? What value is a reduction of one hour in travelling time per car considered to have as opposed to a reduction in travelling time with public transport?

Realia

What criteria are given more importance than others in the overall plan? Whose needs are placed in focus when public spaces are being planned?

Nanna – a gender mainstreamed multistorey car park

Nanna, a multi-storey car park in Umeå, had problems due to a low degree of utilisation. In an attempt to try and find new ways to increase its use and thereby improve its finances, it was decided to use the 3R method. The survey of the first R showed that the persons who used the car park mostly were men. This meant, in turn, that R2, the resources, mainly benefited men. But why did so few women park in the car park?

Local government officers and politicians made a tour of the car park. During this visit they adopted different roles. One represented a mother with two children and a bag full of food in each hand. Another person came to the parking house with his old father who walked with the aid of a zimmerframe. The third was a young woman in her twenties. How did these fictitious persons experience the car park? There were problems when it was found out that the lift only served every other level and that it was not properly signposted. Those who parked on the “wrong” level had to use the staircase or walk via the car ramp to reach the lift. What does it feel like to walk on a sloping car ramp with children or with an old relative with a zimmer frame? The staircase of the parking house gave a feeling of confinement and discomfort. The walls of the staircase were of concrete and people experienced a feeling of being shut in.

As a consequence of this survey, the car park was renovated. Signs showing the way to the lift were put up and the staircase was rebuilt. Two of three staircase walls were replaced by glass walls and the doors were reconstructed. Better lighting was installed and the flaking walls were repainted. After a short time, these investments had paid through themselves since women, as well as more men, started to use the Nanna multi-storey car park.

Health and medical care

The social services shall be based on the needs of individuals. However, research shows that stereotyped conceptions of how women and men are, and are expected to be, influence the way in which women and men are treated and the help they are given. Old women receive less assistance from the home help service. They are more often expected to take care of their sick and frail husbands than men in the corresponding situation. Furthermore women are expected to be more economic and have other demands than men, which can be a reason why men receive higher social allowances than women.

Below some examples are given of 3R questions in the field of health and medical care. They can contribute to increasing awareness and to a discussion on approaches and courses of action.

Representation

What is the gender representation of those who receive social allowances and home help? How many women and how many men benefit from the municipalities programme to counteract substance abuse?

Resources

How much money do women and men respectively receive in social allowances? How many hours do women and men respectively have home help? What resources are invested in programmes to counteract substance abuse by women and men respectively?

Realia

What conceptions of men and women form the basis of the allocation of social allowances? Are women and men's needs given equal attention?

Care on the same terms in the social services

Kanalen, a treatment centre with residential facilities in the municipality of Sandviken, works with adult drug addicts, both men and women. A 3R survey showed that there were differences between the treatment of men and women. Men received more resources (R2) than women. All nine men were residents on a full-time basis compared to only one of six women. Furthermore, the men were being equipped for an independent life. All the men were given occupational training of one kind or another, while only one woman received training of this type. The occupational training improved the person's prospects of obtaining a job and thereby of becoming financially independent.

The survey described a clear pattern. Could it be the case that the drug abuse of men was taken more seriously than that of women since the treatment of men was more comprehensive and was allowed to cost more? Was the need of care assessed on the basis of individual needs or could it be the case that gender stereotype conceptions had a more or less deliberate effect on the assessments being made? These are important questions that are now being discussed at the treatment centre in Sandviken.

Grants to voluntary organisations from a gender perspective

The administration of Lundby district in Gothenburg has investigated the extent to which the grants made to voluntary organisations in the social sectors were allocated to organisations that focused on adult women and men respectively. If 56% or more of the participants in an organisation were of one sex, it was defined as a women-oriented or men-oriented organisation.

From the survey it emerged that women-oriented organisations that did not provide any forms of care and treatment received on average SEK 196 per participant, gender-neutral organisations SEK 784, and men-oriented organisations SEK 1099. In other words, women-oriented organisations received less than a fifth of the funds received by men-oriented organisations in the form of grants per participant. Why were men's needs permitted to cost five times more than women's needs?

Grants to organisations that provided forms of care and treatment were also compared. The women-oriented organisations mostly consisted of special women's centres, open 24 hours a day, where the grant for each woman amounted to SEK 3,658. Where the grants for women were concerned, only women were registered, not any accompanying children. The men-oriented organisations, which were most often Link Societies (Alcoholics Anonymous), received SEK 2,982 per participant. Women-oriented organisations providing care and treatment received almost 20% more than the corresponding men-oriented organisations. However, when these sums are compared it should be borne in mind that the grants to the women-oriented organisations consisted not only of support for activities for adult women, but also often for accompanying children.

The results of the 3R analysis show that the sex of recipients is of importance in the allocation of grants to voluntary organisations in the social sector. Can it be the case that, in order to benefit fully from an organisation grant, it seems to be an advantage being a man.

As a result of the survey, a certain redistribution of grants has been made. The grants to women-oriented organisations grants increased by 30% between 1999 and 2000. During the same period the grants to men-oriented organisations decreased by some 6%.

Genderbased analysis

Under the third R, realia, the quantitative survey of representation and resources shall be analysed. The aim of the analysis is to be able to say something about the gender-related norms and values that govern operations. The first two Rs answer the question who receives what and how much? The analysis shall describe the terms on which this takes place. To understand and make an analysis on the basis of gender is not a simple task. It is often a case of phenomena and patterns, which we take for granted as normal and everyday occurrences, that shall be questioned. Questions about what is unfair or stereotype today are also often controversial and extremely sensitive. It is therefore important to give realia the scope and commitment necessary to make a proper analysis. If enough time is allowed for reflection and consideration, the risk of drawing hasty conclusions is diminished.

Sometimes the quantitative foundation, the survey of representation and resources, is not enough to permit the implementation of a credible and constructive analysis. The quantitative survey can then be supplemented with other methods and studies. Examples of qualitative studies are to observe a meeting or a specific situation and to interview decision-makers, personnel or users.

Where realia is concerned, it can often be useful to obtain the assistance of one or more persons from the outside. Another useful suggestion is to investigate if there is any research which may be relevant. There might be earlier 3R surveys that can be relevant for comparison purposes.

The questions proposed below might help during the analysis. If they are of use, they should probably be supplemented with more specific questions on municipal operations. They can also be useful afterwards as control questions: has something been left out or has not been completely discussed under the heading of realia.

Realia questions

- What is taken for granted where gender is concerned, what is made abnormal or different?
- What is implied? What is visible, invisible?
- Who benefits from reality being described in this way?
- Who is allowed to speak and what do they say?
- Are there any contradictions?
- Can the subject of the analysis be described in a different way?
- What is not considered as a problem?
- Are tacit standards used in the design of operations?
- Do operations perpetuate different conditions for men and women?
- What is possible to change when the problem/reality is described in this way?

The work continues...

Some examples of concrete projects implemented by municipalities with the support of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities have been presented above. Through the different projects, knowledge has been acquired about the real conditions in operations. This knowledge makes it possible to make changes where they are needed in order to increase equality. It is only when knowledge is available about things that are so natural and common that they are almost invisible, that politicians can demand, evaluate and stipulate measurable objectives for equality in operations. Members of staff can then work together to realise the objectives the politicians have set up. Real action to improve equality is made possible when concrete action plans are produced on the basis of actual conditions in operations. Thereafter, the challenging work of making changes to increase equality continues.

Would you like to know more?

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities offers lectures, seminars and project support to disseminate and develop experience from the work of gender mainstreaming in the municipalities.

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Summary

The Swedish Association of Local Authorities works to spread experience of gender mainstreaming as a strategy and the 3R method. Gender mainstreaming is a strategy for incorporating a gender equality perspective into regular activities. The 3Rs stand for representation, resources and realia. 3R has the aim of analysing the mainstream in order to bring to light the norms and values which govern attitudes. It is often a case of looking at problems that are so everyday and obvious that they are not visible. The results that emerge from a 3R survey can be compared with the gender equality objectives of the activity in question. When there is a discrepancy between objectives and results, there is scope for development of municipal operations that have a greater degree of equality between women and men.