

# Section 1

## Why Gender Proof



## INFORMATION SHEET 1

### Making sense of the language... Definitions

**Sex** the biological differences between women and men.

**Gender** the social differences between women and men that are learned, changeable over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures. For example, while only women can give birth (biologically determined) biology does not determine who will raise the children (gendered behaviour).

**Gender Equality** means that women and men enjoy the same equality... that the different behaviour, aspirations and needs of women and men are equally valued and favoured.

**Gender Mainstreaming** involves the incorporation of gender considerations into all policies, programmes, practices and decision-making so that at every stage of development and implementation, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, and appropriate action taken.

**Gender Proofing** is the means by which it is ensured that all policies and practices within organisations have equally beneficial effects on men and women.

**Gender Impact Assessment** is one of the tools used in gender proofing. It involves an assessment of policies and practices to see whether they will affect women and men differently, with a view to adapting these policies/practices to make sure that any discriminatory effects are neutralised.

**Gender Disaggregated Statistics** are statistics and data gathered and analysed on the basis of sex. While the term 'sex disaggregated statistics' is more accurate, the term 'gender disaggregated statistics' is used in this publication as it is the accepted term throughout the EU.

## INFORMATION SHEET 2

### Gender Proofing - Why do we need it?

*50.35% of the total population of Ireland are women, 49.65% are men*

## National Statistics

### Economic Differentials

- 97% of county/city managers in local authorities are men, 3% are women
- Among the grade of Secretary in the Civil Service, 91% are men, 9% are women
- Among the grade of Assistant Secretary in the Civil Service, 83% are men, 17% are women
- Of clerical workers in the Civil Service, 80% are women, 20% are men
- Of CEOs (in top 100 companies) in Ireland, 96% are men, 4% are women
- Women earn 73% of the average male industrial wage
- 70% of part time workers are women, 30% are men

### Democratic Deficit

- 85% of Councillors are men, 15% are women
- 86% of TDs are men, 14% are women
- 79% of Senate members are men, 21% are women

### Social Differentials

- Of lone parents, 84% are women, 16% are men
- Of those in receipt of carers' allowance, 79% are women, 21% are men
- Childcare costs Irish parents 20% of taxed income compared with 8% for the rest of the EU<sup>2</sup>



*“The objective is not to replace male dominance with female dominance, but to establish a real partnership between women and men”*

*Mary Wallace*

2. Goodbody, 1998. Quoted in ADM “Gender Mainstreaming The Local Development Social Inclusion Programme 2000 - 2006” November 2000

## Border, Midland and Western Region Statistics<sup>3</sup>

### Economic Differentials

- 29% of employed women are employed on a part-time basis, compared with 8% of men
- 80% of clerical workers are women, 20% are men
- 2.5% of organisations offer workplace childcare

### Democratic Deficit

- 91% of TDs are men, 9% are women
- 85% of Senate members are men, 15% are women
- 88% of councillors are men, 12% are women
- 93% of county/city managers in local authorities are men - 7% are women (1 out of 14)



### Not just a women's issue...

While these statistics illustrate the extent to which women are significantly under-represented in key areas, it is important to acknowledge that gender inequality is not just a women's issue. A recent report on research undertaken in the North of Ireland, *Men's Attitudes and Values*, highlighted a number of issues affecting men.

- Many support services are geared towards women and there are no alternative or complementary supports for men.
- 60% of those who responded in the survey felt that it was easier for women to take on traditional men's roles than for men to take on women's.
- More emphasis is needed on men's health.
- There is a lack of paternity leave entitlements - 80% of respondents in the survey felt that men should have a right to some paid paternity leave.
- There are conflicting demands between workplace and family life. According to the majority of respondents in this survey, men want to assume more active roles as parents while society still expects them to assume the role of primary breadwinner.

**Note:** While these statistics were current at the time of publication, it is important to ensure that statistics used in presentations and training are updated and of local as well as national relevance.

3. Statistics for the BMW Region are included as they were used as part of the Training Initiative (run with BMW County Development Boards) which resulted in the production of this Handbook.

#### Information Sources:

- Dept. of Justice, Equality and Law Reform Website: <http://www.irlgov.ie/justice/equality/gender>
- NDP Gender Equality Statistics Databank
- Department of Finance
- Brady, N et al. Men's Attitudes and Values Research, Queen's University, Belfast & University of Ulster, November 2000

## INFORMATION SHEET 3

### Gender Proofing - What it's all about...

*Gender proofing is the means by which it is ensured that all policies and practices within organisations have equally beneficial effects on men and women.*

#### Principles of Gender Proofing

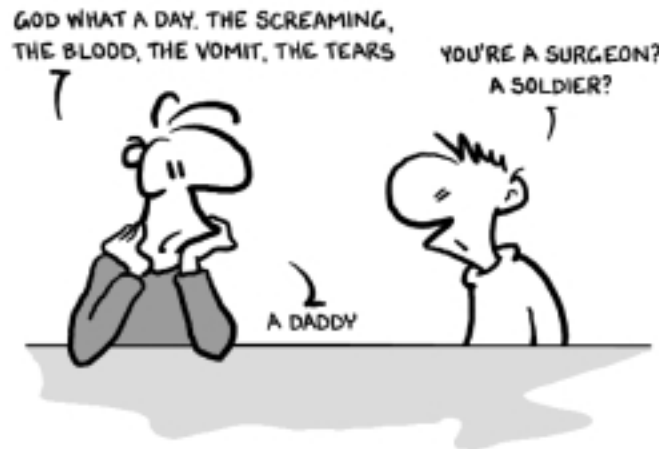
- Gender proofing is based on an understanding that gender is one of the most fundamental organising features in society and affects our lives from the moment we are born.
- Gender proofing recognises that differences exist in men's and women's lives and therefore our needs, experiences and priorities are different. Gender proofing is a process whereby these differences are taken into account in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies and actions.
- Gender proofing is based on a commitment to full gender equality. It is premised on a recognition that inequalities exist which can and do discriminate against either sex. Gender proofing is a pro-active process designed to tackle these inequalities.
- Central to understanding the process of gender proofing is that it concerns both women and men.
- It is not simply about increasing women's or men's participation in society - it is the nature and quality of this participation (including the need to ensure that it exists at the highest level of decision making). This participation has to be actively facilitated and encouraged.
- Gender proofing is based on a solid analysis of the current situation with, where possible, the use of statistics and scientific data. This ensures that policies and practice are not based on incorrect assumptions and stereotypes.
- Where an existing policy or practice results in an inequality, albeit unintentionally, the gender proofing process investigates the situation until the root cause of the inequality is established. Gender proofing responds to the root cause by putting remedial action in place.
- While gender proofing is not about apportioning blame around the inequalities which exist, or discrimination which took place in the past, it is about rectifying the effects of these.
- The achievement of equality of outcome in any activity or service may need an unequal investment - i.e. different actions or approaches for men or women may be necessary. Same treatment will not necessarily provide equitable results.
- Gender proofing is more often than not aimed at indirect or unintentional discrimination - for example, holding meetings at six o'clock in the evening when those responsible for childrearing (the majority of whom are women) are likely to be tending to childrens' tea and homework. Indirect discrimination can be very subtle and based on beliefs, assumptions and practices which go largely unchallenged and as such, are considered 'normal'.
- The questions that arise from the gender proofing process should stimulate discussion, reflection and action.

*“Strong leadership will be necessary within public authorities to ensure that equality is integrated into the development and design of all policies and services.”*

Chris McCrudden, Mainstreaming Gender Equality

### Organisational pre-requisites

- As with the implementation of most policies, commitment from the highest level in an organisation is essential if effective gender proofing is to take place.
- Gender proofing needs to involve as wide a range of people as possible to ensure effective implementation. If the gender equality policy is not fully accepted by a significant majority within the organisation, it is less likely to be implemented.
- Within organisations, it should not simply be the remit of a small group of people to assume responsibility for gender proofing and it should certainly not be seen as the sole province of women. The challenge is to get everybody in the organisation to assume responsibility for the process.
- Gender proofing is a process adopted as an integral part of work, rather than a goal to reach. When effectively implemented, it becomes part and parcel of the everyday work of the organisation, and no longer appears as an additional task or action.



### Gender proofing is not:

- just about having women on Boards or committees
- about having a well written statement, it's about changing the way you work
- about blaming anybody for the inequalities which do exist
- about only women taking action
- about only women benefiting from it
- about stopping or replacing gender specific policies and programmes targeted at either men or women.

**In summary, Gender Proofing essentially involves answering two key questions:**

- **Is there an inequality or a potential inequality between women and men in a given area?**
- **What can be done about it?**

## INFORMATION SHEET 4

### The Policy Context

#### National Policies

##### Equality Legislation

The Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000 outlaw discrimination in employment, vocational training, advertising, collective agreements, the provision of goods and services and other opportunities to which the public generally have access. These Acts prohibit discrimination on nine distinct grounds<sup>4</sup>. One of these is gender. Discrimination is described in the Equal Status Act as the treatment of a person in a less favourable way than another person is, has been or would be treated.



##### The National Development Plan

The National Development Plan (NDP) outlines Government plans for economic and social regional development for the period 2000 to 2006. The achievement of equal opportunities between women and men is a horizontal principle of the Plan, meaning it is applicable across all six policy programmes within it. Gender Impact Assessment Guidelines to assist in the implementation of this principle were adopted by the Cabinet in March 2000<sup>5</sup>. These Guidelines include a gender impact assessment form which must be completed in respect of the vast majority of measures funded under the NDP.

4. Gender, Marital Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Religious Belief, Age, Disability, Race, Membership of the Traveller Community.

5. These Guidelines apply to all but six of the 130 measures (these are environmental services, [comprising water, waste water and waste management], energy, coastal protection and roads).

Other mechanisms for achieving gender equality within the NDP include:

- The inclusion of equal opportunities within project selection criteria
- The inclusion of equal opportunities as a criterion in all evaluations
- The development of sex differentiated indicators
- Meeting requirements for gender balance on all monitoring committees.

In order to promote and encourage gender proofing within the NDP, the NDP Gender Equality Unit was established within the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

## European Community Requirements

Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty of Amsterdam formalise the European Community's commitment to gender mainstreaming by establishing equality between men and women as a specific task of the European Community. It is also a horizontal objective affecting all Community Programmes. European Union regulations on the Structural Funds (Articles 1, 34 and 35) also require that all measures supported by the Funds be gender mainstreamed.

*“There is a clear government interest in sound, credible and informed policy advice in order to ensure that policies are meeting their aims. Unless public authorities find out about the impact of policies on different groups, they cannot be sure whether their policies are having an adverse effect, even if unintentional.”*

Chris McCrudden, *Mainstreaming Gender Equality*



## Compelling Arguments for Gender Proofing

There are three compelling arguments why people need to become familiar with the concept and practice of gender proofing.

### 1. Achievement of Social Justice Goals (Equality & Fairness)

In the context of democracy and fair play there is a moral imperative which demands that proactive measures to ensure equality between men and women are pursued.

### 2. Fulfilment of Legal Obligations

There are a number of requirements, both EU and domestic, which policy makers and practitioners are obliged to fulfill.

### 3. Efficiency and Effectiveness

Through gender proofing policies and practices, organisations can improve their efficiency and effectiveness by maximising human resource potential internally and by identifying and addressing local needs more effectively.



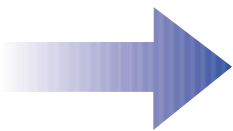
## INFORMATION SHEET 5

### Reminders

While gender proofing is an ongoing process there is nonetheless room for checklists or reminders within the context of such a process centred approach. Checklists are useful as a reminder of actions and procedures which should be put into practice in routine tasks and processes as means of gender proofing them.

#### *Meetings*

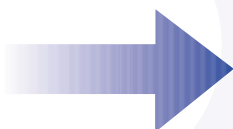
- Is a crèche - or childcare assistance - provided for meetings?
- Is provision or help with eldercare available?
- Where, and at what times, do meetings take place? Are meeting times suitable for women and men within the target group(s)?
- How will people without cars access the venue?
- What process or format will be used for the meeting? Will it encourage less confident people to contribute?
- Is the information regarding promotion of the meeting carried out in a way which targets both women and men?



*Many boards comprise sectoral representation such as state agencies, councillors, community and voluntary representatives, sporting organisations, business and trade union sector, etc.. Each sector should gender proof its own representation.*

#### *Board and Committee Membership*

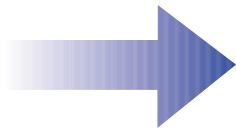
- Are women and men included in all committees (for example, are women included in agriculture or economic development committees and are men included in childcare and other social development initiatives)?
- Are women and men included at all levels and in all roles (for example, as chair)?
- Is Government policy on gender balance achieved (i.e. 60/40)?
- Have all member sectors/organisations gender proofed their own representation?
- Where, and at what times, do meetings take place?



*If equality is important to an organisation, new staff need to be made aware of gender issues and procedures so that they can play an active role in implementing the equality agenda. Furthermore, identifying 'knowledge of gender proofing' as a requirement in job descriptions and person specifications makes a strong statement about an organisation's commitment to gender equality.*

## Staff Recruitment & Training

- Are flexible employment options such as job shares offered?
- Is gender balance ensured on interview panels?
- Is paternity leave offered?
- Are both men and women provided with parental or 'duty of care' leave?
- Is Gender Equality training for staff provided?
- Is 'an understanding of gender equality issues' included in job descriptions and person specifications?  
Is information about gender analysis included as part of staff induction?
- Are gender proofing objectives included in general performance appraisals for managers and policy makers, in the same way as other targets and indicators?



*Disaggregated data should be gathered on everything from detailed research to one-off evaluation forms completed at the end of a day's training or a public meeting.*

## Research

- Are profiles on both women and men incorporated in socio-economic and demographic profiles commissioned by your organisation?
- Is all data gathered and analysed on the basis of gender?

*“Gender analysis ...enables more effective targeting of products and services. For example a Western Australia water authority found that it increased its rate of bill payment once it identified that women paid most household bills and changed its opening hours to suit women in paid work.”*

New Zealand Ministry for Women's Affairs



## INFORMATION SHEET 6

# Planning a Gender Proofing Training Programme - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The following FAQ's are designed to assist you in planning a training programme. They provide sample answers to some of the questions potential participants are likely to consider before agreeing to undertake a training programme, and may be of use to you in developing promotional materials.

### *What is gender proofing?*

Gender proofing is the process used to ensure that all policies and practices within organisations have equally beneficial effects on men and women.

### *How does it relate to 'gender mainstreaming'?*

Gender proofing is the means to an end - that end is gender mainstreaming (i.e. the incorporation of gender considerations into all policies, programmes, practices and decision-making so that an analysis is made of the effects for women and men, and appropriate action taken). What this means is that the issue of whether you are a man or a woman would make no difference to whether and how you access, and benefit from, services.

### *What has this to do with us?*

The National Development Plan (NDP) - which provides funding for human resource development, industrial development, infrastructure and regional development - requires that all policies are genderproofed, i.e. that all policies promote equal opportunities between women and men. Also, all EU funded programmes are subject to the promotion of gender equality.

### *Why is this training needed?*

Gender proofing is a relatively new concept, and a process with which we are largely unfamiliar. In order to meet our obligations in this area the development of practical skills and ideas is essential.

### *Why should I attend?*

Time spent now on gender proofing will result in more effective targeting of services - which in turn will lead to smoother implementation of your organisation's strategy and save time and money in the longer term. The training will also go a long way towards demystifying the whole process of gender proofing.

### *What exactly will the training involve?*

The training event will provide a valuable opportunity for members and staff to work together to develop ideas and tools for putting this statutory requirement into practice.

### *Is the training for both men and women?*

Yes! Gender inequalities in society affect both men and women and therefore we all need to be involved in addressing them. In particular we are all responsible for ensuring our strategic and operational plans benefit men and women in an equal way.

### *What difference will it make?*

It will help you achieve your objectives through more effective targeting of your services and resources. So, for example, if you were to gender proof your policy objectives around adult training and education you would be more likely to fill places and subsequently increase the number of appropriately skilled people in the local workforce.