

Gender Mainstreaming

Making gender perspective mainstream consideration for achieving gender equality

What is "gender mainstreaming"?

"Gender mainstreaming" is the United Nations' key strategy to promote women's interest and to achieve gender equality. In brief terms, it makes gender perspectives and needs one of the mainstream considerations in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all legislation, public policies and programmes. It seeks to ensure that women and men have equitable access to, and benefit from, society's resources and opportunities.

Why do we need to make gender perspective a mainstream consideration?

There are differences in the lives, needs and experience of women and men. Because of such differences, policies and measures which apparently accord same treatment might have different impact on people of different genders on actual implementation. Therefore, we need to make gender an independent consideration factor to prevent unfairness between women and men.

What are the benefits of making gender perspective a mainstream consideration?

It helps us to balance the needs of both genders more effectively in making policies and designing programmes, thus enabling our proposals to gain support from Legislative Councillors and the public more readily.



Policy commitment of the Government

The HKSAR Government has accepted the Women's Commission's recommendation and has since 2002 introduced gender mainstreaming. We have also committed to progressively implementing gender mainstreaming in all policy and programme areas.

How to implement "gender mainstreaming" in daily work?

"Gender mainstreaming" is not meant to be an extra task, but rather it is the incorporation of gender perspective as one of our mainstream consideration factors in our daily work process. It is most important that colleagues have good gender awareness and sensitivity and can identify the different perspectives and needs of both genders.

To assist government officers to implement "gender mainstreaming", the Women's Commission has designed a Checklist. The Checklist contains a set of simple "yes" and "no" questions to assist us in considering the different needs and perspectives of both genders in a more systematic way during the process of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies.

"Gender mainstreaming" should also be based on objective data. As such, bureaux and departments should collect and analyse relevant sex-disaggregated data in the policy formulation and programme implementation processes. Reference may be made to the annual publication "Hong Kong Women and Men Key Statistics" and other thematic reports published by the Census and Statistics Department.

The Labour and Welfare Bureau together with the Civil Service Training Institute and different departments also provide gender-related training to civil servants of different grades and ranks. These classes seek to enhance officers' understanding of and sensitivity to gender-related issues. You are encouraged to enroll in these classes.



How to get more information about the subject?

At present, each bureau and department has designated a "Gender Focal Point" (GFP) who serves as the contact and resource person within his / her respective organisation and is tasked to help raise awareness and understanding of gender-related issues, and promote the application of the "gender mainstreaming" concept by staff in their daily work. If you have question, you may contact your department's GFP.

Furthermore, you may contact the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB), which is responsible for "gender mainstreaming", for enquiry and consultation. You may also visit the "**Gender Mainstreaming Information Portal**" ([CLC Plus Home](http://www.csb.gov.hk/clc) > [Department Resources](http://www.csb.gov.hk/clc) > [Labour and Welfare Bureau](http://www.csb.gov.hk/clc) > [Gender Mainstreaming Information Portal](http://www.csb.gov.hk/clc)) developed by LWB for more information.



Public Toilet - the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has applied the Checklist and made reference to overseas studies on the time spent by women and men in using toilets. As women usually require longer time than men in using toilets, FEHD increased the WC compartment ratio (female to male) from 1.5:1 to 2:1 to cater for the different needs of women and men.

Uniform and Accoutrements for Police Officers - the Police Force has applied the gender mainstreaming concept in the procurement of uniform and accoutrements for officers. Both female and male police officers have been consulted. Having regard to the differences in the body shape of male and female and the feedbacks received, the Force have made suitable improvements to the materials and design of uniform and accoutrements, e.g. improving design of bullet-proof vest and procuring pistols with handles of different sizes to suit the needs of different officers. These would not only help enhance the safety of the frontline police officers, but it would also help improve the overall operational effectiveness of the Police Force.

Indeed, in addition to the Police Force, the Customs and Excise Department, the Immigration Department and the Fire Services Department have likewise adopted the gender mainstreaming concept in the procurement of uniform and accoutrements for their officers. Similar positive impact has been observed.

Central Fund for Personal Computer - the Social Welfare Department has applied the Checklist on the operation of the Fund. It continues to ensure that all applicants with disabilities, both female and male, are treated equally in the vetting process. It has also promoted the Fund through local press and invitation to non-governmental organisations, thus more effectively reaching out to the target groups including women with disabilities. With these efforts, the ratio of female successful applicants has increased considerably from 26.3% in 2003 to 50.0% in 2008.

Tamar Development Project - the Tamar Development Project comprises the Central Government Complex, the LegCo Complex and an open space. The project has adopted the gender mainstreaming concept to cater for the different needs of female and male users. For example, sufficient toilets will be provided for both female and male users; breast-feeding facilities will be provided; improvement to the design of layout will be considered having regard to needs of users of different genders; and suitable construction materials (e.g. non-reflecting flooring materials) will be used having considered the concern of female users.

Examples on application of "gender mainstreaming"

Publicity Programme on Electricity and Gas Safety - the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) has applied the Checklist in devising its publicity programme on electricity and gas safety. For example, in conducting surveys on household electrical and gas safety, EMSD has collected sex-disaggregated data such that they can monitor the safety knowledge of both genders and devise their publicity strategy accordingly. Noting that many end-users are females, it has made use of different channels, such as posting and distributing publicity materials at busy public locations and public transportation systems, and TV programmes targeted at female audience etc, to reach out to females more effectively.

First Aid Services - the Auxiliary Medical Services (AMS) have since 2005 used curtains when treating injured persons to enhance patients' privacy. Furthermore, every first-aid team would have at least one female member such that patients would, as far as practicable, be examined and treated by AMS members of the same gender during normal first-aid administration.



Operational Duties of Immigration Department - the Immigration Department has adopted the gender mainstreaming concept in deploying staff for escort and search duties. They will ensure that persons involved in the relevant cases are handled only by officers of the same sex. For field operations, where persons of both sexes might be involved, operation teams with both male and female officers are deployed to carry out their duties.