Gender Strategy

Introduction

Incorporating the perspective of gender relations in all processes, activities and measures – gender mainstreaming - is an essential aspect of the Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development – APPEAR**.** Gender dimensions are regarded as an implicit part of a contemporary discourse in science and research. The gender-sensitive perception and analysis of society – and thus the unequal distribution of social power, resources and opportunities within a society – is obligatory in teaching and research cooperation.

Background

The Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) defines inclusion, gender equality and female empowerment as guiding principles of their work. As stated in its Strategy of Higher Education, ADC – in keeping with the human rights-based approach and the holistic concept of inclusive education – places particular emphasis on promoting access to higher education for marginalised and disadvantaged social groups. Based on an analysis of the gender-specific distribution of social power, resources and opportunities the goal of equal chances is pursued. The implementation of the gender mainstreaming principle thus becomes a cross-sectional task in APPEAR, this means that the gender dimensions are systematically integrated on the programme and on the project level. All measures are examined regarding their implications for gender. If women are strongly underrepresented in a certain field, supplementary measures for the advancement of women are introduced. Practical measures that increase the percentage of women working in as well as benefitting from the project can be implemented.

Gender-specific dominance constellations are deeply rooted in social and cultural realities and especially in patriarchal societies, where they are often regarded as part of the "natural order". Gender awareness is not regarded as an export of "euro-centric equality claims" imposed by one side, since APPEAR promotes the dialogue between equal partner organisations and stakeholders. Moreover, the objective is to take into account the culturally different manifestations of gender in a culture-sensitive way, based on the gender-theoretical finding that the "attribution of gender" is a social category. Gender roles lead subsequently to an unequal access to resources and mobility just as do other social categories (ethnic affiliation, class, religion …). Results from gender research provide an excellent basis for making gender-specific inequalities visible. By means of empiric phenomena such as "feminisation of poverty" women are especially addressed in the development cooperation discourse, measures and research.

In all phases of the programme and project implementation this gender-critical and equality-oriented approach is integrated for: establishing programmatic guidelines regarding the content criteria of research, incorporating gender aspects in the information documents, including gender-sensitive questions in standardised monitoring forms and formats, taking into account the gender aspect regarding the exploitation contexts of scientific results and of the teaching material and curricula development. Gender is explicitly represented as a cross-sectional matter in all areas. The transparency in the entire programme implementation enables the monitoring of the gender strategy.

1.) Programme Level

Gender is a central issue of APPEAR both on the structural/organisational level and on the content level.

The structural / organisational level refers to **gender mainstreaming as a fundamental principle** as well as **systematic advancement of women** with the objective to guarantee equal participation in all project activities and as beneficiaries.

The content level refers to **the gender perspective in the project, teaching and research contents**. In this way a gender-sensitive approach to scientific questions, analyses and problem solving strategies is not only supported but also implicitly claimed from the project partners.

Composition of the boards and of the APPEAR office
- Women and men are equally represented in the Advisory Board and in the Selection Board.
- In the Selection Board one member with voting right is particularly familiar with gender issues and the adoption of an inclusive approach.
- The APPEAR office is aware of gender mainstreaming and has already practical experiences.

Guidance and selection
- Gender-sensitive questions are included in the application and review forms and formats.
- Gender mainstreaming measures and the allocation of budget resources are described in reports.
- Additional points for projects that have a positive influence on equal opportunities, living conditions and the status of women (see dimension 4. Results & sustainability in the scoring matrix).
- In case of equal evaluation results and qualification, project applications with explicit gender-related contents and / or implications are given preference.
- Gender research in development cooperation contexts is preferentially supported.
- In case of equal rating and qualification (number of points) applications of female scholarship candidates are given preference.
- At least 50% of the individual scholarships will be awarded to female applicants.

Implementation
- Gender-sensitive questions are included in the reporting forms and formats.
- Introductory workshops are organised for the applicants of Preparatory Fundings. The objective is to inform about the APPEAR principles, the application process and administrative issues and to provide support for the incorporation of gender perspectives in the proposal.
- In the workshops for project coordinators the APPEAR gender strategy is explicitly presented and concrete support and advise with regard to the implementation of gender sensitive measures is provided.
- Relevant links and documents on gender mainstreaming for applicants and project partners are provided on the APPEAR website and regularly updated.
- Project partners are informed about gender relevant events.
- Female scholarship applicants are supported in their search for a scientific supervisor in Austria.
- Due to family duties and / or social / institutional barriers female applicants might find it difficult to complete a full degree programme in Austria. Therefore the scholarship for female students can be handled very flexible. This means for example that it is possible to increase the number of months for field studies in the home country.

Public relations
- Gender as a cross-sectional matter and as a selection criterion is explicitly represented in all information documents.
- Women and men (e.g. women as scientists, project managers) are represented in a gender-sensitive way in all communication measures (e.g. website, radio shows, events, articles)
- In the framework of events such as "APPEAR in PRACTICE" gender relevant topics and experiences with gender mainstreaming in the project implementation are discussed and reflected.
- Best practice examples in gender mainstreaming deriving from the project implementation are edited and presented on the website.

Additional measures
- In the framework of monitoring visits and APPEAR presentations at higher education institutions in the partner countries current and former female project partners and scholarship holders are requested to act as "role models" and to present their experiences in the project implementation and during their time as a scholarship holders.
- In case of existing gender offices at the partner institutions, especially in the eligible countries a cooperation is envisaged by the APPEAR team, in order to promote the equal participation of women.
- In the framework of extra-curricular activities for scholarship holders, courses on women empowerment will be offered for female scholarship holders, if requested.

2.) Project level

When planning and implementing APPEAR projects, gender is a critical issue on the structural / organisational level and on the content level. Women participate equally in the planning and the implementation of projects. The integration of gender perspectives in the project, teaching and research contents is not only supported but implicitly claimed from the project partners.

Composition of the project team
- Female and male team members are equally represented in the project and in decision-making.

Content of the projects
- Gender perspectives are integrated in the project, teaching and research contents. Gender-sensitive approaches to scientific questions, analyses and problem solving strategies are applied.
- Economic, social and cultural barriers and obstacles preventing the participation of women in the higher education sector are systematically documented.
- Practical incentives to promote women as well as measures to remove barriers guarantee equal participation of women as beneficiaries in the project activities.
- Gender aspects are integrated in the dissemination of scientific results, curricula development and the establishment of teaching material (component 1)
- In the project proposal specific measures and funds for the advancement of women are presented in a clear way.

Reports
- The implementation of gender activities and the use of funds are illustrated in the project reports to the APPEAR office.
- Implicit or explicit gender-relevant results that are to be expected from the projects and the research are described in the reports.