

Upwind for (planning) projects? Rethinking urban planning and regional development with a gender approach

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1 BACKGROUND AND STARTING POINT

Based on the authors experience in urban planning and regional development as well as in the managing of the Alpine Space INTERREG IIIB project “GenderAlp! spatial development for women and men”¹ the paper tries to rethink the state of the art in planning practice, the key skills, tools and instruments of planning professionals and of politicians. Special interest lays on social innovation and on social sustainability of cities and regions.

Two words to the GenderAlp! project: its focus is the integration of gender mainstreaming strategy and equality goals into planning practice as well into public subsidies and public budgeting. The main target groups are administrations and politicians in urban and regional governments, urban and regional managements as well as in the field of EU-programms and projects.

2 QUESTIONS AND APPROACHES

Which answers have to be given for new challenges in cities and regions, as demographic changes, lifestyle changes, deconstruction of social roles of women and men, european integration, etc. ?

Does gender mainstreaming assure quality planning practice?

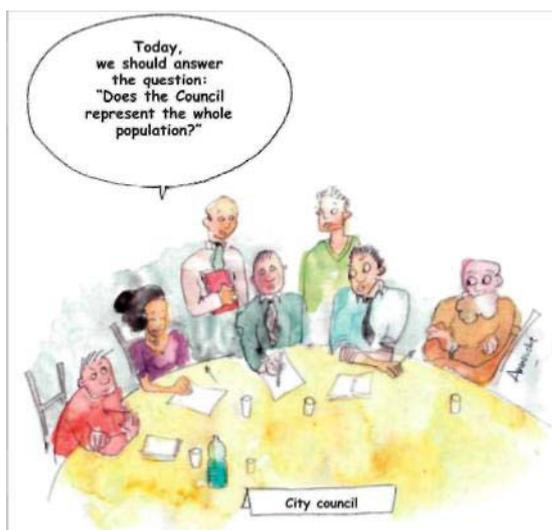
What is the role of planning professionals in and outside of administrations?

Do we have to change instruments? do we have to change targets? Do we have to change our decision making procedures in front of the challenges of a wor Do we have to change procedures?

Does parity of women and men in decision making boards and in governements assure equality?

What are the success factors for good governance in urban planning and in regional development?

How can standard project management tools help for a better implementation and for quality assurance in planning practice?



Graph 1: French example for rethinking decision making²

¹ More information on GenderAlp! see www.genderalp.com (english), www.genderalp.at (german), www.genderalp.si (slovenian) and www.genderbudget.it (it)

² Exemple from GenderAlp! partner CFPPA (= Centre de Formation professionnelle et de promotion agricole) Digne-Carnejeane for a sensitization campagne in rural area in 2005, translation into english in 2007 for GenderAlp! project.

3 SOME EXEMPLES FROM PARTNER PROJECTS

Within the GenderAlp! framework, the 12 partners integrated the gender mainstreaming approach and equality goals into their day to day practice. 32 partner projects have been implemented for developing tools and standards for similar projects and procedures after the GenderAlp! projects' closure.

3.1 Impact and requirement oriented planning for urban quarters and industrial zones (projects from city of Freiburg, Land Lower Austria / NÖ and Land Salzburg)

Three projects have been dealing with an impact and requirement oriented approach in planning for urban quarters and for regions. On the one hand the City of Freiburg focuses on quality-management in the planning process of a light-rail with a requirement-oriented and gender-sensitive approach. On the other hand, Lower Austria focuses on the site optimization of business parks and industrial zones managed by the public-private real estate and businesspark-management company Eco-plus. Last but not least, Land Salzburg focuses on the strategic spatial planning programm for industrial zones as well as for housing areas in the Salzburg region.

Some experiences: rethinking planning procedures with a "gender-look" brings back into the center of planning social structure of the target groups, age and sex, their professional background, their position in lifecycle, the family situation. The main questions are: which structures, networks, urban infrastructure are user friendly and offer high quality for living and working? Which strictures are multifunctional and flexible enough for future needs? So it demands deep analyses of the area and the projects before decision making. This means statistical analyzis, inquiries and investigations, structure and use of buildings, streets and public space, communication systems and provision etc. This also means to rethink (traditional) planning concepts like the separation of the functions living and working (Charta of Athens): places of living are also places of work for those who keep the household, those who do child-care; more and more people are independent working in their homes without leaving for working places. And: places of working are more and more places of living: employees and not only commuters are spending the whole day on their working place, also sparetime and leisure time.

For the GenderAlp! partner projects, this means that for exemple the design of the light-railway does not only plan the new trace, the stations and the street, where the railway is situated but also the whole quarter and their inhabitants. This means for the industrial zones and business parks, that not only the development area has to be optimized but also the relations to the regional economy and to the labour market.

Further: the choice between different decisions demands clear political targets and a dialogue with politicians before and during the planning procedure. Binding political goals as well as equality goals have to be defined for planners in administrations as well as for external experts.

All projects confirm the necessity of integrative and interdisziplinarity in planning procedures: This demands department spinning procedures within administration and the development of a new cooperation culture within administration and beyond. That is why unusual cooperation platforms like project groups and project management tools have to replace the usual but slow and unflexible administration procedures.

Last but not least: the design of an adequate participation procedure as well as the dialogue with the public and with other decision makers is one of the key factors in planning practice. Transparency of the decisions, defined framework of cooperation and open discussions of the goals and different possibilities are crucial for these procedures. Many papers of the corp show good practice in these procedures.

3.2 Impact of public subsidies in cities and regions (projects from City of Munich, City of Salzburg, Land Salzburg and Land Upper Austria)

Impact oriented approaches in planning have to include investments and finances: the best plans do not help if they do not become reality, that means money and investments. As GenderAlp! tries to improve the impact of administrative decisions and investments on the quality of a city or region as well as on equality for women and men. The most important question is: how much money is spent for which target group and for which goal? Who benefits from public subsidies? In total, 9 partner projects of GenderAlp! project have focused on this "gender budgeting" question, 4 of them focus in the question of the allocation of public subsidies and the impact for women and men as well as on the development of measures and procedures for changing inequalities in this field.

3 levels have been investigated:

- the impact of selected subsidy programmes of cities and regions: Who are the beneficiaries – women and men? What is the impact? How could be changed imbalanced situations?
- the procedure of analysis as well as of developing, design of target, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and redesigning subsidy programmes for cities and regions including EU-funded programmes.
- the analyse of selected fields of the complete budget of cities and regions for defining the impact of these expenditures on women and men.

City of Munich has analysed the use of public subsidies for start-ups, for tourism measures as well as for labour market measures. City of Salzburg has analysed the use of public money for apprenticeship-subsidies. Upper Austria has analysed the impact of selected subsidy programmes from Land Oberösterreich. Land Salzburg has analysed the impact of target 2 programmes in Salzburg the regions Pinzgau, Pongau and Lungau from the periode 2001 – 2006.

All analyses have revealed, that there are big differences in the use in the benefits of subsidies between women and men. The lack of equality goals and of monitoring indicators in almost all projects not allow to steer the impact on subsidies in terms of beneficiaries. Further the structure of budgets does not help for more transparency in impact analysis: mostly, it is not possible to distinguish between sexes and between target groups. In short: without special data-collection, it is not possible to evaluate the of subsidy programmes.



and so
does
impact

Some people say that this transparency is not wanted by politicians nor by administration. If we are thinking on the discussion during EU-comissions proposition and obligation of the publication of the use of subsidies from EU-funded projects this comments seem to be right.

But: as we are living in times of reduced public budgets and with concepts of “good governance”, which means high efficiency and maximum of impact for a minimum of investement, the improvement of these programmes seems to be very important. If equal opportunities for women and men and equality for all (2007 is the European Year of Equality for all) is an european value, the improvement in “gender-fair” use of money and “gender-fair” public subsidies is necessary.

Not only austrian industry managers have discovered women as new target group for skilled workers and for technical jobs!

3.3 Change management in administration for project orientation and governance capacity

All projects show, that planning procedures as well as the daily work of administration in economic and regional development are in constant transformation: new skills and competences have to be developed: e.g building project management competence within a project oriented administration, politics and management by goals and by benchmarks will be more accepted and less “exotic”.

Governance capacity has to be defined in different field and at different levels of government; what is certainley included is a new relationship between politicians, administration, public sector, private investors as well as the citizens and people living in cities and regions. Some good exemples of a new relation between external and internal experts, planners and politicians, investors and enterprises have already been presented and discussed in the corp-congresses of the last years. Some projects of the GenderAlp! team also show good practice in this direction³. Building gender competence is already part of the development of human ressources in some Cities like Freiburg and Munich and (as far as I know) in Vienna.

4 DO WE HAVE ANSWERS TO SOME QUESTIONS?

We do have some answers, we do have lots of questions and would like to take part in the discussion of the corp audience.

Let me give some short answers to the questions (Q) formulated in Chapter 2.

Q: Which answers have to be given for new challenges in cities and regions, as demographic changes, lifestyle changes, deconstruction of social roles of women and men, european integration, etc. ?

- Answer: Many european cities have developed new approaches in planning and in decision making. Politics is still male as well as budgeting and economic leadership. The gender approach and the question of social innovation is -in my opinion and in GenderAlp! Projects experience – one of the key factors in urban and regional development for social cohesion and competitiveness. Sometimes it is not possible to “deconstruct” the roles, but only to improve the living conditions of women. They are still responsible for most of the unpaid “care economy”,

Q: Does gender mainstreaming assure quality planning practice?

- Answer: Yes it does, because it is necessary to deepen the analysis as well as to define precise (equality) and planning goals for the planning procedure. Further this approach requires a project oriented organization which coordinates different sectors and different target groups.

Q: What is (or could be) the role of planning professionals in and outside of administrations?

- Answer: bringing in the differentiation between different male and female users. To give the voice to under represented groups in planning and in decision making process as well as to define “public interest” based on these target groups.

Q: Do we have to change instruments? do we have to change targets? Do we have to change procedures?

- Answer: Yes, we have to adapt the focus in planning. More differentiation in analysis, defining of equality goals and social goals, which means more binding procedures in decision making and in developing targets and measures as well as in deciding on public subsidies and public budget.

Q: Does parity in decision making boards and in governments assure equality?

- Answer: Certainly no! Female sex does not mean more gender-sensitivity and the other way round. It is no use to wait for parity in politics and in decision making boards! MALE decision are now learning gender-sensitiveness; at the same time women will be systematically more involved in politics and in urban and regional development.

Q: What are the success factors for good governance in urban planning and in regional development?

- Answer: a project oriented administration and a cooperation culture between administration, politics, private sector and public; clear targets (from politicians) and department spinning procedures in planning and in budgeting. Transparency in decision making and in implementation of projects.

Q: How can standard project management tools help for a better implementation and for quality assurance in planning practice?

- Answer: In a very important way: interdisciplinarity in planning projects needs clear rules of cooperation and clear definitions of the goals and the results of a project.

³ Besides the projects reports and publication of the partners all GenderAlp! projects experience and documentation will be published as a good practice database on www.genderalp.com till october 2007.

Final question: Are these questions and answers not part of “good planning practice” and of “good administration and politics”?

- Answer: Partly yes! Nothing new? With one restriction: as austrian planner and project manager, I see big differences in planning culture and participation culture in my country (in general) compared to Germany, Swiss, Netherlands or northern countries. Only Vienna and the capitals of our Federal States do have a more elaborated planning practice and participation culture (not only in the question of gender sensitive planning). Compared with these cities and regions, sometimes I am ashamed of our profession (!). But there is still hope.....

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