

From the Inside Out: The Role of Organizational Change and Capacity Building in the Promotion of Gender Equality in the OSCE¹

Introduction

In 1995, 189 governments and more than 5,000 representatives from 2,100 non-governmental organizations took part in the “Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace” in Beijing.

The principal themes of the conference were the advancement and empowerment of women in relation to women’s human rights, women and poverty, women and decision-making, the girl-child, and violence against women. The conference resulted in two key documents: the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

The overriding message of the Fourth World Conference on Women was that the issues addressed in the Platform for Action are global and universal. Deeply entrenched attitudes and practices, in all parts of the world, perpetuate inequality and discrimination against women, in public and private life. Accordingly, implementation requires changes in values, attitudes, practices, and priorities at all levels. The conference signalled a clear commitment to international norms and standards of equality between men and women; that measures to protect and promote the human rights of women and girl-children must, as an integral part of universal human rights, underlie all action; and that institutions at all levels must be reoriented to expedite implementation. Governments and the UN agreed to promote gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes.²

At the policy level, the participating States of the OSCE have made clear their commitment to gender equality and recognized that the full and equal exercise by women of their human rights is essential to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous, and democratic OSCE area. Through the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality adopted at the Sofia Ministerial Council in 2004, the OSCE also demonstrated a critical awareness that “gender issues” are not simply external concerns to be addressed within the participating States, or through the OSCE’s programmatic work. Rather, gender issues permeate the Organization itself and it is only by addressing both external and internal issues in tandem that the OSCE can move forward in pro-

1 The views expressed in this contribution are made in a personal capacity and do not necessarily reflect the views of the OSCE.

2 For more information about the Beijing Conference, outcome documents and follow up, see <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>.

moting gender equality. In other words, gender mainstreaming is an inside-out process.

While the manifestations of gender inequality within the OSCE region are rife, and the OSCE seeks to address these through the gender mainstreaming of OSCE policies, programmes, and activities, as well as through the participating States, this contribution will focus on “internal” issues and the Organization’s capacity for gender mainstreaming. It will briefly present gender mainstreaming as a strategy to achieve gender equality, and describe the policy framework for gender mainstreaming in the OSCE. Then it will outline key areas of concern within the Organization with respect to the promotion of gender equality. Finally, it will examine the importance of organizational change in the process of gender mainstreaming, as well as some of the challenges currently facing the OSCE.³

Gender Mainstreaming as a Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality

When governments across the world signed the Beijing Platform for Action (PfA) in 1995, they were endorsing a policy to promote gender equality and empower women. Gender mainstreaming was identified as the most important mechanism for achieving the ambitious goals laid out in the PfA. Following the lead set in Beijing, in 1997, the UN adopted gender mainstreaming as the approach to be used in all policies and programmes in the UN system. Throughout the next decade, governments and civil society organizations across the world have sought to implement the PfA – and in so doing to develop successful gender-mainstreaming policies, strategies, and methodologies.⁴

What exactly is gender mainstreaming? The definition of gender mainstreaming adopted by the OSCE in the 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality is “the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender

3 Although the focus of this contribution is on “internal” issues, it should be noted that there are external factors which can affect these. For example, in relation to recruitment, the OSCE cannot take sole responsibility for the statistics on gender balance, as the OSCE relies on participating States for nominations for seconded posts. Accordingly, under the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, participating States are encouraged to nominate more qualified women candidates for positions in the OSCE, and particularly for higher-level positions.

4 Cf. Caroline Moser, Has Gender Mainstreaming Failed? In: *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 4 December 2005, pp. 576-590, here: p. 576.

equality.”⁵ Most definitions of gender mainstreaming adhere closely to this definition set out by the UN Economic and Social Council in 1997.⁶

The term “gender mainstreaming” has become a mantra in international institutions as a technique for responding to inequalities between women and men. The idea behind gender mainstreaming is that questions of gender must be taken seriously in central, mainstream, “normal” institutional activities and not simply be left in a marginalized, peripheral backwater of specialist women’s institutions.⁷

The concept, at its core, is a simple one; the process of implementing it, however, has proved to be difficult and cumbersome. This is due, at least in part, to the fact that while the definition of gender mainstreaming tells us what to do, and there is vast literature justifying the need for it to be done, there is no one, universal set of indicators that measure success in this area. According to Caroline Moser, progress in gender mainstreaming can usefully be discussed in terms of four related stages: first, embracing the terminology of gender equality and gender mainstreaming; second, getting a gender mainstreaming policy into place; third, implementing gender mainstreaming in practice; and fourth, evaluating or auditing the practice of gender mainstreaming.⁸ How does the OSCE fare according to these criteria? The answer is somewhere on the spectrum between “great” and “awful”. The terminology and policy are in place, but in practice results have been limited. Why is this? The “usual suspects” can be cited here: lack of human and financial resources, lack of skills, lack of political will. The chorus is nothing new.

In truth, almost a decade of gender mainstreaming practice has revealed its limited impact. Although it has not been difficult to encourage the adoption of the vocabulary of mainstreaming, there is little evidence of monitoring or follow up. A constant problem for all the organizations that have adopted gender mainstreaming is the translation of the commitment into action.⁹ Why has this been so difficult? If the commitment is easy to adopt, and no one would, with any degree of seriousness, challenge the overall goal of gender equality, why is its translation into action such a Herculean task? Should we abandon gender mainstreaming as a strategy to achieve gender equality if it does not bring results? To what extent do its strengths outweigh its weaknesses? Can we conceive of a working alternative that is clearer and more capable of being implemented? The answers to these questions are certainly open to debate, but one thing is certain: As a means to an end, gender mainstreaming – as a concept, as it stands – is in need of further development, and this can only come about as a result of further scrutiny.

5 *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-Second Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/52/3/Rev.1)*, chapter IV, paragraph 4.

6 Cf. Moser, cited above (Note 4), p. 577.

7 Hilary Charlesworth, *Not Waving but Drowning: Gender Mainstreaming and Human Rights in the United Nations*, in: *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, Spring 2005, pp. 1-18.

8 Cf. Moser, cited above (Note 4), p. 576.

9 Cf. Charlesworth, cited above (Note 7), p. 11.

Another difficulty related to gender mainstreaming is the question of how we measure progress. The deployment of the language of gender mainstreaming in the area of human rights may appear successful, at least if measured by its omnipresence. But very little work appears to have been undertaken in measuring the progress made.¹⁰ How effective has gender mainstreaming been in catalysing social shifts towards equality? What impact are “gender mainstreamed” projects and policies having on the status of women? Who is monitoring the progress, and according to what indicators? Again, these are difficult questions, but they are questions the OSCE and other organizations working on gender mainstreaming need to be asking in order to check whether the strategy currently employed to achieve the goal of gender equality is in fact bringing us forward.

Moser notes that ten years since governments around the world signed the Beijing Platform for Action, practitioners are asking whether gender mainstreaming has succeeded. Moser’s analysis leads to her conclusion that “with hindsight, the Beijing PfA was immensely ambitious, not only because of the bold goal it set itself, but also because of the lack of real clarity or directive as to what gender mainstreaming meant in practice”.¹¹ The issue, she argues, “is not so much one of the failure or success of gender mainstreaming, as it is of deconstructing the concept and its different stages into a viable implementation process, with appropriate indicators to monitor or evaluate it”.¹²

More importantly, Charlesworth argues that “gender mainstreaming in the human rights field has been a mixed success, with institutional inertia and resistance effectively confining its impact to a rhetorical one. It has not led to any investigation of the gendered nature of international institutions themselves or any call for effective organizational change.”¹³ This notion that “organizational change” is a crucial, but often overlooked, factor in giving the concept of gender mainstreaming some bite to its bark is explored in more detail below.

Policy Foundation for Gender Mainstreaming in the OSCE

The Helsinki Final Act (1975), in its “Declaration on Principles Guiding Relations between Participating States”, affirms that “participating States will respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race,

10 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 13-16.

11 Moser, cited above (Note 4), p. 585.

12 *Ibid.*

13 Charlesworth, cited above (Note 7), p. 16.

sex, language or religion”.¹⁴ The range of commitments adopted by participating States has evolved since that time from a simple condemnation of discrimination on the basis of, in this case, sex to an appreciation that full and true equality between men and women is a fundamental aspect of a just and democratic society based on the rule of law, and that the full development of society and the welfare of all its members require equal opportunity for full and equal participation of men and women.¹⁵

In 2000, the OSCE approved an Action Plan for Gender Issues¹⁶ (hereinafter the 2000 Action Plan), calling for increased efforts to achieve equal treatment of women and men within the Organization in all areas, including personnel, recruitment, and the inclusion of a gender perspective in the activities of the Organization. There were, however, shortcomings in the implementation of the 2000 Action Plan, especially in the fields of training, management, recruitment, and in the overall practice of gender mainstreaming throughout the OSCE as well as within participating States. Renewed efforts were called for. In 2004, “Mindful of the need to appropriately reflect a gender perspective in the activities conducted under the auspices of the OSCE, and for participating States to take all necessary measures to encourage gender awareness raising and to promote equality in rights and full and equal participation of women and men in society, the aim being to promote the practice of gender equality and gender-mainstreaming in the OSCE area, which is essential to comprehensive security”,¹⁷ the Sofia Ministerial Council adopted the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality (hereinafter the 2004 Action Plan).¹⁸

The Ministerial Council stressed “the need for the OSCE to develop further and strengthen a continuous and sustainable gender-mainstreaming process, to promote a gender sensitive and professional working environment and management culture, and efforts towards gender balance in staffing in particular on a professional level, in accordance with the OSCE Staff Regulations”.¹⁹

The 2004 Action Plan highlighted three key problem areas for the OSCE as an Organization: (i) representation of women in the OSCE con-

14 Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Helsinki, 1 August 1975, in: Arie Bloed (ed.), *The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Analysis and Basic Documents, 1972-1993*, Dordrecht 1993, pp. 141-217, here: p. 146.

15 Cf. Document of the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, Moscow, 3 October 1991, in: Bloed (ed.), cited above (Note 14), pp. 605-629, Articles 40-40.13, pp. 622-624.

16 The 2000 Action Plan was approved as a “set of guidelines aimed at ensuring gender equality”. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Permanent Council, *Decision No. 353, OSCE Action Plan for Gender Issues*, PC.DEC/353, 1 June 2000.

17 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Twelfth Meeting of the Ministerial Council, Sofia, 6 and 7 December 2004, MC.DOC/1/04, 7 December 2004, *Decision No. 14/04, 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality*, MC.DEC/14/04 of 7 December 2004, pp. 38-53, here: p. 38.

18 *2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality*, Annex to Decision No. 14/04, *ibid.*, pp. 39-53.

19 MC.DEC/14/04, cited above (Note 17), p. 39.

tinues to be low, in particular at senior and policy-making levels, and statistics indicate that women candidates may have less chance of being employed by the Organization than men; (ii) training and sensitization of managers on gender issues, and on the responsibilities of all staff within their tasks and subject areas in this regard has not produced the expected results; (iii) although the 2000 Action Plan stipulated that a comprehensive framework would be established for gender mainstreaming projects, and that data and research materials on gender issues would be analysed and used in the design of new programmes, this process was not developed with due continuity.²⁰

It is not clear why the expected results were not achieved, or why processes of gender mainstreaming were not developed with due continuity. There have been reports detailing some of the possible reasons for this, such as a lack of human resources and a lack of training, but a more comprehensive analysis of these reasons would have offered important insight into why things did not work in the past, and what things would need to change in order for them to work in the future. This understanding, in turn, could have informed future OSCE policy on promoting gender equality and ensured the adoption of a strategy more responsive to the needs and capacity of the Organization.

The 2004 Action Plan, supported by an Implementation Plan, is the “strategic document for achieving gender equality”. It outlines a number of priorities, including (i) specific training for OSCE staff on gender awareness and sensitization to gender equality in their daily work; (ii) promotion of a professional and gender sensitive management culture and working environment; (iii) strengthened and innovative recruitment strategies to ensure that well qualified women candidates are identified and attracted – with the aim of increasing the number of women at the senior level in the OSCE; and (iv) effective gender mainstreaming of all OSCE activities and policies, as well as of the activities and policies of the participating States.²¹

While the Action Plan contains a number of laudable and ambitious goals, it lacks clarity on certain key concepts. How, for example, do we define a “gender sensitive management culture”? What would an “innovative recruitment strategy” look like? What does it mean to mainstream a gender perspective in your daily work if you do not work on programmes or projects? These are legitimate questions that are currently being addressed within the Organization, but conceptual clarity ought to have informed the development of the Action Plan, not been developed *ex post facto*. In any event, giant leaps forward are unlikely to occur until these questions are resolved.

20 Cf. *2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality*, cited above (Note 18), p. 40–41.

21 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 42.

Priority Issues within the Organization

The 2004 Action Plan identified three key internal areas where targeted action is needed in order to promote gender equality: recruitment, training, and management. These three areas should work together to build an organizational structure conducive to achieving the goal of gender equality, and better placed to implement commitments in this field. The analysis presented below would seem to indicate that more effort is required on all three fronts.

Gender Balance and Recruitment

In terms of the number of women and men employed in the Organization, a cursory look at overall statistics does not reveal any gross imbalance: Women hold 51 per cent of positions in the Secretariat and institutions (compared with 49 per cent of positions held by men). Women hold 41 per cent of positions in missions and field activities (compared with 59 per cent of positions held by men). While the numbers are not equal, they are also a far cry from the “virtual absence of women” often bemoaned in discussions of gender balance and recruitment. How can this be explained? Quite simply: The overall statistics include all categories of staff, at all levels. A closer look at the statistics broken down by professional category and area of work paints a rather different picture: Women make up only 18 per cent of management positions in the Secretariat and institutions, but 70 per cent of support staff positions. In missions and field activities, again women make up only 18 per cent of management positions, and 42 per cent of support staff positions.

When it comes to senior management in the form of Heads of Mission in OSCE field presences, women’s absence is not “virtual”, it is absolute: As of December 2005, there was not one female OSCE Head of Mission. Women held only 23 per cent of Deputy Head posts, and 24 per cent of other senior management positions in OSCE missions.²² It is important to note in this context the role of participating States in achieving gender balance in the OSCE, through the nomination of well-qualified women candidates, particularly in higher-level positions.

Awareness Raising and Capacity Building of Staff

In March 2006, the Training Section of the OSCE Secretariat conducted the first ever comprehensive Organization-wide gender training needs assessment. The survey was designed to address the lack of an organizational

22 For further OSCE statistics on gender balance within the Organization, see the first Secretary General’s *Annual Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality*, SEC.GAL/96/06, 29 June 2006, 7 June 2006. The latest available statistics are as of December 2005.

understanding and analysis of the obstacles that prevented the realization of OSCE goals in the field of gender equality.²³

Forty-five per cent of respondents stated that they were only somewhat familiar with the content of the 2004 Action Plan or not familiar with it at all. Nearly half of all respondents did not know whether a written plan to implement the 2004 Action Plan existed in their mission or institution. These rather disturbing figures illustrate the level of awareness among staff of the OSCE policy framework on gender equality, and their obligations with regard to gender mainstreaming.

The survey did highlight some positive aspects. For example, 61 per cent of respondents believed that acquiring gender mainstreaming skills would improve their overall performance as OSCE officials; 60 per cent of respondents wanted to develop their skills in gender mainstreaming; and 59 per cent of respondents believed that all OSCE officials should know how to conduct a gender analysis. These figures are a good sign, as they demonstrate an awareness of the relevance of gender in the work of OSCE officials, and a willingness among the majority of respondents to develop their skills in this area as a means of improving their overall performance.

Gender Sensitive Management

The results of the survey, however, also indicated some disturbing aspects: only 38 per cent of respondents agreed that OSCE senior management conveys to staff that gender mainstreaming is an important priority, and only 37 per cent of respondents agreed that mission/institution management required them to mainstream a gender perspective in their work. In terms of gender issues being on the “agenda”, 47 per cent of respondents stated that gender issues rarely feature at planning meetings at their mission/institution; 17 per cent said gender issues never feature at such meetings. The reasons given for this included (i) other issues are considered higher priority, (ii) inability to link a gender perspective to other issues, (iii) lack of understanding of the relevance of gender issues, and (iv) lack of commitment from senior management.

The need to train senior management, as a particular target group, on gender issues and gender mainstreaming was expressed by a number of respondents in the training needs assessment, who noted that without such efforts, the “little people” could not achieve much.²⁴

23 An invitation to participate in the online survey was sent to gender focal points, Programme Managers, Chiefs of Fund Administration and alternates, and participants in the General Orientation Programme from 2005. Overall, the invitation was sent to 437 OSCE officials in the Secretariat, institutions, and field operations. A total of 273 responses to the survey were received, including 234 complete responses, and 39 incomplete responses. Respondents comprise a cross-section of the Organization, including all levels of staff and geographic areas. It is therefore considered to be a representative sample.

24 Cf *Gender Training Needs Assessment Report*, Training Section, Department of Human Resources, May 2006.

Finally, although the 2004 Action Plan calls for a “gender sensitive management culture and working environment” there is still no general consensus on what this actually means. The challenge for the OSCE, then, is to define the term in a practical way that has the support of management and is understandable to staff.

The obstacles to implementing the 2004 Action Plan revealed by the survey appear to be endemic and relate largely to a lack of familiarity with the OSCE policy framework on gender equality, a lack of the skill set needed to conduct a gender analysis and ensure the integration of a gender perspective into OSCE policies, programmes, and activities, and a perceived lack of commitment from senior management.

These problems go a long way in explaining why progress has been so slow in this area, and why the “expected results” were not achieved following the adoption of the 2000 Action Plan: People are not sure what to do, they are not sure how to do it, and they do not perceive that people at the “top” even believe in the cause. This is not a solid base on which to demand results, and it should come as no surprise that, instead of being characterized by action and outcomes, the process of gender mainstreaming within the OSCE has been neither generalized nor systematic. Where it has happened, it has been more the result of individual initiatives, rather than institutional momentum.

But while these problems are serious and require attention, there is no need to throw our hands in the air and admit defeat, or claim the task at hand is just impossible to achieve. None of the obstacles described above are fatal, and all of them can be resolved through targeted training and education initiatives in support of the sought-after organizational change.

It should also be noted here that the obstacles described above are not unique to the OSCE. In fact, gender mainstreaming in practice has encountered sustained resistance from various quarters. For example, a review of gender-mainstreaming policy as implemented under the UNDP, World Bank, and ILO found inadequate budgeting for the gender components of projects, insufficient development of analytical skills, poor supervision of the implementation of gender components, and a general lack of political commitment both within the organization and at the country level.²⁵ The fact that the OSCE is not alone among international organizations in finding it difficult to bring about this change may say more about the process of gender mainstreaming than some people are willing to recognize, but at the very least it points to the fact that combined efforts are urgently needed to develop more effective means of implementation and evaluation.

25 Cf. Charlesworth, cited above (Note 7), p. 11.

Challenges the OSCE Faces in Gender Mainstreaming

When presenting the first OSCE-wide evaluation of the implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, the OSCE Secretary General praised the efforts that were being made across the Organization and noted that the requirements of the 2004 Action Plan had given a strong impetus to the process of gender mainstreaming in the OSCE, both in the working environment and in the development of policies, activities and programmes. He concluded, however, that “a lot remains to be done and each part of the OSCE must acknowledge responsibility, including the participating States”.²⁶ As the OSCE attempts to tackle the work that remains to be done, what are some of the challenges it may encounter along the way?

As a “global strategy”, gender mainstreaming has received endorsement from a wide range of organizations and governments. Indeed, few people would, on an intellectual level, challenge the value of assessing the potentially different implications for women and men of any programme, policy, or activity. Nevertheless, there are at least three forms of resistance that need to be addressed in order to maximize the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming within the OSCE.

- (i) **Scepticism:** This form of resistance arises from an inability to relate a gender perspective to particular areas of work (most notably in what are traditionally male dominated spheres and “administrative” spheres). Because people cannot see a correlation, they are not willing or able to examine their work from another dimension and they resist simply “being told” to mainstream a gender perspective.
- (ii) **Association:** This form of resistance arises when people perceive the goal as having a negative association. Some people are resistant to even the term, “gender mainstreaming”, because they perceive it as a “feminist” issue or a “women’s” issue. They do not want to engage in gender mainstreaming because they do not want to be associated with a feminist agenda.
- (iii) **Ambiguity:** This form of resistance arises from the tension inherent in having to meet ambiguous expectations. The precision with which targets and expectations are set is very important – if management is not specific about what it wants people do, then at least some people will get it wrong. If the expectations are ambiguous, people will see their goals as too difficult to achieve and they will resist even attempts to do so.

A gender mainstreaming approach that does not address the above forces of resistance, and only focuses on the technical process of “doing”, cannot suc-

26 Introductory remarks of the Secretary General, *Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan*, cited above (Note 22).

ceed, because it ignores the role of individuals as agents of change, and the roles of attitudes and behaviour in determining whether an individual is receptive or resistant to change. Such an approach is what allows a senior official to reject, personally, the value and purpose of gender mainstreaming, while at the same time claiming to implement exactly this strategy in his activities through the organization of an event that addresses the topic. The message this sends is that “lip service is acceptable, progress is optional”. The more this message permeates the Organization, the more parasitic it becomes and the greater the risk that it will overshadow the well-intentioned and productive work of truly committed people. The greater the risk, also, that people will distance themselves from a message which they perceive as insincere.

Does this mean that the policy framework is moot and that success really only hinges on the will of the people to implement a given change once they themselves see a value in it? The answer is no. The “political dimension” in the form of policy commitments and action plans is crucial; it provides a necessary framework for understanding the issues we want to address, outlining individual and collective responsibilities, and establishing a mechanism for reporting on the progress that is made. But it is a danger and a mistake to ignore or underestimate the role of the “human dimension”, in the form of OSCE staff at all levels, partner organizations, civil societies with which the OSCE works, and the beneficiaries of the OSCE’s work. Policy states the cause, but people drive the change. The key is to see them not as competing interests, but as complementary; one rarely works without the other.

Gender Awareness and Organizational and Social Transformation: The Importance of Education

In “Surviving the Twilight Zone: the Psychology of Organizational Change”, Joni Johnston argued that “often it’s not the destination employees are concerned about, it’s the journey”.²⁷ Employees, she contends, need to know what the journey from here to there involves, where the potential potholes are, where they can find the safety net, and how to pace themselves on the trail. Indeed, few if any OSCE officials would be concerned about gender equality as a destination, but the levels of resistance encountered when it comes to gender issues do indicate a significant amount of discomfort with the journey.

The process of changing attitudes and behaviour is not an easy one, precisely because it can only be guided, but not controlled, by external forces, including trainers or educators. But are there indicators that are likely to predict successful, less painful, and lasting change? According to Emily Lawson

27 Joni Johnston, *Surviving the Twilight Zone: the Psychology of Organizational Change*, at: http://www.workrelationships.com/site/articles/organizational_change.htm.

and Colin Price, psychological theory shows that four things are needed to enable individuals to start, transition, and complete a behaviour change. These premises can also be applied to the process of gender mainstreaming within the OSCE, as in most cases the implementation of this commitment will require a shift in personal attitudes and behaviour. The basis of changing a mind-set is:

- The individual can see the purpose of the change and agrees with it;
- The rewards and recognition system must support the new behaviour;
- The individual must have the skills for the new behaviour;
- Key people who are role models must be seen to model the new behaviour.²⁸

Of course, change can be silently sabotaged by people who ask for it but do not implement it first.²⁹ This is the case with a number of organizations that – through action plans, staff instructions, and other means – demand that staff adopt a certain approach, which staff cannot in fact identify in the behaviour of senior management. This is perhaps the single most determining factor in the failure to implement organizational change, and the most potent justification for active leadership at the highest level.

Social transformation, and, by the same token, organizational transformation, cannot take place without transformation of the individual. The most effective and sustainable way to achieve gender equality in the OSCE and the OSCE region, then, will be through an individual and collective shift in people's attitudes and behaviour. And the most effective and sustainable way to achieve that is through education and training.

In terms of seeing the pitfalls of the status quo and the purpose of the change, and in developing the skills for the new behaviour, organizational capacity building is absolutely crucial. Educational initiatives are the vehicle through which new values and skill sets are transmitted, and they are also the forum that allows for individual self-assessment and reflection, which can lead to a revision of attitudes and personal behaviour. The key to successful training programmes is for them to be consistent, co-ordinated, and continuous. One-off training efforts will have little effect; the message of promoting gender equality needs to be repeated and visible, and people need to have the opportunity to practice the new skills they develop under the guidance of others with expertise in this field. Eventually, as organizational capacity is built up over time, the need to rely on external expertise diminishes.

28 Emily Lawson/Colin Price, The psychology of change management, in: *The McKinsey Quarterly* 2/2003.

29 Cf. *ibid.*

What More Can the OSCE Do?

There are a number of steps the OSCE can take to sharpen its work in this field and position itself as a leading international organization devoted to realizing the goal of gender equality. First and foremost, the importance of gender mainstreaming needs to gain legitimacy through the actions, not just the words, of senior management. The signal sent by management on the significance of promoting gender equality within the OSCE region and the OSCE itself will largely determine the support it receives from all staff. When it comes to gender mainstreaming, senior management ought to lead by example – this means participating themselves in training offered on gender awareness and gender mainstreaming, it means raising gender issues at regular planning meetings, it means positioning gender focal points at sufficiently high levels and including them in decision-making processes, it means committing themselves to learning how to identify and integrate a gender perspective into their own daily work if they do not already know how to do this, it means giving recognition and praise to people who are doing excellent work in promoting gender equality and ensuring that these practices are visible to others. More than anything, it is about holding the personal conviction that gender inequality is an intolerable reality, and one that the OSCE will do everything it can to change. Management's commitment to ensure, not with lofty assurances, but in practical ways, a gender-sensitive working environment is also an important indicator of the weight they give to this issue.

Second, an enabling environment for gender mainstreaming needs to be created and sustained through ongoing and widespread awareness raising and capacity building for staff. The ability to identify and integrate a gender perspective into your work is not easy for everyone – some people get it instinctively, others can learn it, and some people may always struggle with it. But there have to be mechanisms in place to help people gain an awareness and understanding of the issues at hand, and the skills to deal with them. In practice this would mean offering regular training sessions on gender awareness and gender mainstreaming, and complementing these with simple but forceful OSCE-wide campaigns that draw people's attention to various gender issues, particularly within the Organization. These could be modelled on the successful campaigns of other organizations or institutions, such as the Equal Opportunities Commission in the UK, whose poster series on equal opportunities has been very effective. In addition, a lecture series on gender issues outside of the OSCE mainstreaming framework may be helpful in cultivating an understanding that gender issues are around us, everywhere, and that if we want to see any great social shifts, gender equality needs to be addressed and promoted far beyond the OSCE framework. This approach could provide a forum for important debate and also contribute to a process of self-

reflection in which people examine their own roles in supporting or perpetuating existing structures of inequality.

Third, better measures of accountability need to be introduced into the process of gender mainstreaming in the OSCE. Sophocles said: “What you cannot enforce, do not command”. Indeed, what is not enforced is often not adhered to at all. The development of indicators to measure success in gender mainstreaming for inclusion in the performance appraisal system would be one way of ensuring better accountability, and could put into place a system of incentives and rewards that might spur progress within the Organization. In addition, departments or units that are performing exceptionally well in this area could be rewarded for doing so, as experience shows that departments and units do not want to under-perform in relation to others, and that a system of rewards is an important motivator. By the same token, a system should be in place to hold departments and units to account who fail to produce results in this area. The notion that there are “consequences” for failing to ensure a gender sensitive working environment, or failing to meet the OSCE’s commitments on gender mainstreaming, should be literal, not figurative.

Finally, the OSCE could better engage in the process of “benchmarking”, whereby it compares its performance and progress with those of other organizations in a systematic way. This could allow for the infusion of “new life” into the discourse and debate on gender equality within international organizations, and allow for the replication of best practice models to the benefit of all.

Conclusion

In many ways, the OSCE has reached a turning point in its work to promote gender equality: through the strengthened commitments and tasks outlined in the 2004 OSCE Action Plan, the renewed drive and direction that has been garnered through the development of specific plans to implement the 2004 Action Plan, and the insight that stems from the first annual evaluation report on the implementation of the 2004 Action Plan.

There is of course still room for the OSCE to strengthen and improve its efforts in promoting gender equality, both inside and outside its own walls. But in order for this to happen, it is imperative to recognize that profound change is a complex process, requiring more than a well-formulated, articulate expression of will. It is only through organizational capacity building and strategic organizational change that the OSCE can come close to achieving the ambitious goals it set for itself in the 2004 Action Plan. It is not the easy way out – the process will require patience, persistence, precise planning, and provision for growing pains that may stall progress. It will also require some serious self-reflection and analysis of the consequences of the courses of ac-

tion to date. The change that grows out of this process may not be immediate – it may be slow and cautious, but supported by a foundation and structure that are committed to really understanding and reflecting on the ways in which they have contributed to inequality in the past, and how they can promote equality in the future, it will likely be a change we can sustain. As Carl Jung wrote: “Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside, awakens.”