

Gender Equality as a Necessary Approach for the Country's Development Process and for Gender Integration

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Abstract

The key word in the concept of gender integration is the word perspective. To implement this concept, a major change in the way we think and act is necessary. (Gender Integration in Practice, 2007:11) When gender equality is discussed as a policy in its own right, the focus is on gender structures, not just women as underrepresented gender groups. Gender mainstreaming is the inclusion of a gender perspective at every stage of the process, approval, implementation, planning, evaluation and delivery of legislation, policies or programmes. In all political, economic and social spheres, taking into account the promotion and advancement of equal opportunities between men and women. Defined as equality between men and women in all spheres, both public and private, gender equality means equal access to and control over resources and benefits, equal participation in political decision-making, and equality before the law for women and men. (Shkurti 2009:19). Gender is not just a socially constructed definition of women and men, it is a socially constructed definition of the relationship between the sexes. Policies and structures play a very important role in living conditions and often institutionalize the maintenance of the social construction of gender (Anastasi, Mandro-Balili, Shkurti, Bozo, 2012:8). This social construction contains an unequal power relationship with male dominance and female subordination in most spheres of life. This means a true partnership between men and women and their sharing of responsibility for correcting imbalances in their public and real lives. The issue remains in the use of the skills, values and talents of every citizen, as well as in the inclusion of women and men in the construction of society. Gender inequality must be fought, protected and promoted as a human right. Gender equality means participation, empowerment and visibility of both sexes in all spheres of public and private life. An important goal is the full recognition and implementation of women's rights as human rights. This means respecting, protecting and promoting the human rights of both women and men, ensuring that both parties fully respect these rights. It also means fighting interference with women's freedom and dignity.

Keywords: *Gender equality, Gender integration, Implementation, Human rights, Woman rights.*

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Introduction

For a long time, gender equality in Europe has been perceived as the de jure guarantee of rights, opportunities, conditions and equal treatment between men and women in all areas of life and in all areas of society. Nowadays it is accepted that de jure equality does not automatically translate into de facto equality. Two aspects are important in this context: the social construction of gender and the relationship between the sexes. Gender is a socially constructed definition of women and men. It is the social description of biological sex, defined by the jobs, functions and roles attributed to men and women in society and in public and private life. It is a culturally specific definition of femininity and masculinity and as such varies across time and space. It is important to understand that the living conditions of men and women are different, to some extent due to women's maternal function. The main problem is not the existence of these changes, but the fact that these changes should not have a negative impact on the living conditions of men and women, and should not cause discrimination against them, but should contribute to a fair distribution of power in the economy, society and decision-making processes. . The construction and reproduction of gender occurs at the individual and social levels, where both are equally important. Humans shape gender roles and norms through their activities. To determine gender equality, you need to take a look at where the concept of gender is viewed more narrowly.

An important goal is the full recognition and implementation of women's rights as human rights. This means respecting, protecting and promoting the human rights of both women and men, ensuring that both parties fully respect these rights. It also means fighting interference with women's freedom and dignity. Besides human rights, the most important point is the development and improvement of inclusive democracy. The poor representation or sometimes absence of women in decision-making processes at all levels and in all areas of life is a serious problem, although there are large variations in this aspect between different countries. When women or men make up around 1/3 of the members of a decision-making body, they influence the agenda and there is a real opportunity for change. (Shkurti, 2009:19) It is important that women are visible in social events as much as men and in the history of every country.

Of particular importance for gender equality is also individual economic independence which leads to guaranteeing the same salary, the same access to credit, the same labor market conditions and a distribution of assets that takes into account gender differences in private life. The position of women and men in the economy is in many ways vital to the balance of power between them. Fighting the feminization of poverty is also very important.

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Education is a key focus for gender equality because it encompasses the ways in which societies transform norms, knowledge and skills. It is important that education systems empower both girls and boys and take care to counterbalance existing gender hierarchies. In societies where there are known gender norms, education can play an important role in raising awareness and challenging traditional stereotypes. By encouraging a gender-aware culture, education can help build a more equal society. Improving education for both sexes is very essential, due to the fact that having an educated and equal society, the opportunity to develop and solve complex challenges will be quite large. These are the reasons why empowering girls and boys through education is vital for an equal and innovative society. The media also plays a very important role in transferring and consolidating these norms and knowledge.

1. Research methodology and methods

Of particular importance, the methodology is also presented in the document, which was designed through different methods. The methodology of the research work is based on the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods, depending on the topic and presented structure of the work.

Due to the objective of the topic, the prominent methods are historical method, analytical method and comparative method.

The historical method is of particular importance in the document because it summarizes in a general way the history of gender equality in order to increase and consolidate the role of women in society.

The analytical method is also of particular importance because in this article the material is analyzed in detail, i.e. doctrines related to women's rights, international, European and national laws on the protection of women, female.

European and regional jurisprudence relating to issues of discrimination and gender equality is also analyzed in detail.

The comparative method is also of particular importance because in this document, women's rights and issues of gender equality and non-discrimination have been addressed at a comparative level.

2. Gender integration and its importance

Gender mainstreaming has recently been conceptualized and defined as the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of political processes, so that the perspective of gender equality is included at all levels and in all phases, by the actors involved in designing the policies. Gender mainstreaming places people at the center of decision-making and leads to better governance (Gender Definitions and Concepts, 2012:12). The importance of gender mainstreaming is linked to several specific reasons that underline its added value. (Jacoba, 2012:15)

The key word in the concept of gender integration is the word perspective. To implement this concept, a major change in the way we think and act is necessary. (Gender Integration in Practice, 2007:11) When gender equality is discussed as a policy in its own right, the focus is on gender structures, not just women as underrepresented gender groups. When we talk about gender mainstreaming, we talk about policies, legislation and programs with a set of policy tools, including gender analysis, gender-sensitive budgeting, gender-disaggregated statistics and so on. (Balmori, 2009: 13) Problems of equality of integration underline the need to base and evaluate every policy based on the impact it has on individuals and social groups, men or women, with their needs and values. (Gender Integration in Practice, 2007:11)

Such an approach improves the practice that evaluates general policies based on their results and opens new ways to replace the "traditional" practice of economic and ideological indicators with more valid and concrete related indicators to the well-being of people.

The Gender Equality Law provides for gender mainstreaming as a strategy to achieve gender equality in society through the inclusion of the perspective of each gender in all legislative, decision-making, planning, implementation and monitoring processes. (Gender Integration in Practice, 2007:11) The Joint United Nations Program for Gender Equality has been one of the main contributors to ensuring the process of gender integration, especially gender budgeting (Balmori, 2009: 12) at the local level. These interventions were at pilot level. The mid-term evaluation of this program showed that modest progress has been made in developing processes to integrate gender equality issues into central and local policies and budgets. Experiences related to gender budgeting

at local level have highlighted the need to develop capacity in local authorities, in order to ensure the application of gender budgeting practice. (Jacoba, 2012:15)

Mainstreaming gender equality can represent a step towards a more humane and less economic approach to the overall development and management of democratic societies, using the perspective in which gender equality policies will be expressed more clearly in relation to true needs of women and men. , improving them and giving them a winning strategy. (Gruda, 2008:38). Gender mainstreaming will lead to better and more informed decision-making and therefore better governance. It challenges policies thought to be gender neutral, which in reality they are not, and will reveal hidden assumptions about reality and values. Integration will lead to greater transparency and openness in the political process. (Gender Integration in Practice, 2007:11)

So far, in fact, the work to promote gender equality has been carried out by women. Gender mainstreaming actually involves both women and men. This makes it clear that society depends on the use of all human resources and expertise of both women and men and recognizes their shared responsibilities in eliminating imbalances in society. (Jacoba, 2012:15)

Finally, a greater number of external actors are involved in the political process as gender mainstreaming can help reduce the democratic deficit that characterizes many democracies today. (Gender Integration in Practice, 2007:11)

It is known that women and men do not constitute a homogeneous group⁴; To pay due attention to this diversity, policies and political instruments must allow diversity to be taken into account. From the point of view of gender integration, the problem is not that there are changes but that these changes are linked to hierarchy and there is a risk that all citizens are measured according to the male norm. In this sense, gender mainstreaming goes beyond simply working towards gender equality. It allows for non-hierarchical diversity in terms of gender, race, class, or a combination of factors. Gender mainstreaming also gives a clear idea of the consequences and impact of women's and men's political initiatives and their balance. The problems of gender equality become more visible and integrated into society, whereas until now they have always been put aside. Gender equality is an important social problem with consequences for everyone and is not "just a cost or a luxury" (Rubery: 1996). Gender mainstreaming recognizes the inequality between men and women which cannot be effectively combated without the interest and commitment of the political system and society as a whole. Gender mainstreaming changes the often negative attitude towards gender equality and launches a new debate on equality issues.

3. Gender equality as a catalyst for the country's development process

Gender equality and gender justice in general is considered in the contemporary period as a milestone in the country's development process. Several studies have addressed and analyzed data on the family as the nucleus of society. In this article we will present in a critical perspective some existing gender data on the family classified according to the political and institutional environment. (Gruda, 2008:39)

To implement a gender-sensitive policy, an institutional environment is needed that is aware of satisfying the specific needs of boys and girls. So, how aware is this environment that they already implement programs that address gender inequalities and promote equality. Social institutions form the foundation on which social life is built. They are vital regulators of the relationships that human beings create between themselves through which the continuity of generations is ensured (Anthony Giddens). A structural condition that undermines a woman's power in the family and contributes to the

⁴ Men and women differ in various aspects: biological,group/class they belong to race, political beliefs/opinionpolitics, ethnicity, age,religion or sexual orientation.

power of her husband and her family is the widespread practice of patriarchy, in which the young woman moves into her husband's home.

The entire Albanian legal system is based on the principle of equality and non-discrimination. Life, marriage and family enjoy special protection from the State. The law "On gender equality in society" presented difficulties for its practical implementation in relation to institutional mechanisms and their responsibilities. The possibilities of complaint in case of gender discrimination and in other aspects, while providing for the dissemination of gender statistics throughout the entire public administration and in the private sector as a duty of the government and public administration, does not define the specific state structures for carrying out of this task and the deadlines for its implementation. (Jacoba, 2012:16)

Gender equality is a necessity in the country's development process. Gender equality is also believed to be a catalyst in the development process of a country. To achieve this, it is necessary to examine the causes of the inequalities found in the family, in the community, in the labor market and in general in Albanian society. The gender division of labor creates different burdens (measured in terms of time and energy), degrees of recognition (prestige), and powers for women and men. Gender inequality negatively affects the balance between opportunities, living conditions and social and political status of women and girls and men and boys. All over the world, life is different for men and women. Typically, women have far fewer rights and sources of income. These inequalities limit women's opportunities and achievements and contribute to unequal development, thus perpetuating women's low status in society. Albanian society is patriarchal, with different expectations regarding correct behavior and acceptable roles for men and women. There are many stereotypes about women, for example, women are considered inferior to men, women's education is valued less, women are only meant to get married, and so on. As a result, women have little power in terms of economic resources, have higher levels of unemployment than men, are victims of all types of violence and experience little improvement in their quality of life, despite their relentless development efforts. However, gender relations differ from one province to another and are quite visible in rural areas of Albania. Gender inequality in Albanian society is not only a human rights issue but also a development issue. Integrating the gender perspective is a difficult task. Gender mainstreaming is about changing attitudes about the roles, values and status of men and women together. The political and social change required by gender integration is a long but valuable process. The goal is for Albanian politicians to develop policies and programs that guarantee equality between men and women in life.

4. Gender equality as a necessity for the integration of the gender dimension

When we talk about gender mainstreaming in a certain context, we should definitely focus on the measures taken and implemented for the main trends of the gender perspective in general policies, program planning and activities of all levels of society. On this basis, a conceptual framework and methodology for gender equality trends would then be prepared and techniques, tools and actors would be identified to integrate and evaluate the gender dimension in an effective and visible way.

Integration as a new concept first appeared in international texts at the Third United Nations World Conference on Women (Nairobi 1985) in connection with the debate of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and the Role of Women in Development. There is much discussion about gender mainstreaming and there is little consensus on the definition of gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is the organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of political processes, so that the perspective of gender equality is incorporated into all policies and at all levels by government. actors who take part in policy making. Gender mainstreaming means that this process needs to be reorganized so that actors know how to incorporate a gender

perspective and expertise as a normal requirement for policy makers. Integration removes gender equality issues from the integration of gender equality mechanisms and involves more new actors in building a balanced society. In this way, the process of transforming gender relations in the direction of gender equality can be accelerated and strengthened. Gender mainstreaming defines the trend strategy in the context of the achievements in terms of gender equality.

Integration as a new concept appeared for the first time in international texts at the Third United Nations World Conference on Women (Nairobi 1985) in connection with the debate of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and the Role of Women in Development. This was seen as a way to promote the role of women in the development field and the integration of women's values into research work⁵ At the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995), the gender mainstreaming strategy was adopted by the Beijing Platform, which aims to promote gender mainstreaming policy by calling for “governments and other actors to promote a active and visible integration of women the gender perspective in all policies and programs so that an analysis of the effects on women and men is carried out before decisions are made. Many countries have adapted a national plan for gender mainstreaming as a result of the Platform for Action.

In recent years, within European intergovernmental organizations, the concept of gender integration has been greatly promoted. In the European Commission, the Community action program on equal opportunities for women and men (1991-1995) made this action program a key issue. The Commission has adopted a communication on gender mainstreaming⁶. Furthermore, it was decided to take active actions to have models for integrating a gender perspective. In 1997, a 3-year pilot project was launched which aimed to develop and test methods for gender integration.

There is much discussion about gender mainstreaming and there is little consensus on the definition of gender mainstreaming and how this is achieved in practice. In summary, below are some of the conclusions regarding the definitions of this concept:

- All definitions focus on the broad goal of achieving gender equality. They focus on what has been called the gender equality perspective or the women's perspective.
- Many definitions often reduce the definition to partial aspects of gender mainstreaming: they focus on the full participation of women in decision-making or on the study of policy proposals from a gender perspective.
- Some definitions focus on the effects of gender mainstreaming and what it brings to the functioning and structuring of society. These definitions indicate changes in organizational cultures and the way institutions function or new ways of thinking and policies. Usually these are related to NGOs.
- Many definitions assume that mainstreaming involves a shift in actors, meaning that mainstream actors are involved in gender mainstreaming.

Integration is difficult to translate into many languages and is often reduced to terms such as “gender-based approach”, but of course integration is much more than that: it is an attempt to channel issues of gender equality into integration of society. , in the organizations and ideas that make important policy decisions, and resources such as education. In each country the concept should be translated and explained more carefully

⁵ A resolution on the future work of this commission was approved in 1986, which decided to integrate Future Strategies into economic and social development program.

⁶ This communique says that integration involves ‘ the mobilization of general policies and specific measures to achieve the goal of equality, taking into account clearly and actively in the planning phase their possible effects on the respectivesituations of men and women’ COM(96)67 Final communication 21.02.1996.

to emphasize the integration of a gender perspective. Regarding the definition, several aspects should be included:

First, what should be integrated into the main gender trend, for example a gender equality perspective and a goal to be achieved, for example gender equality.

Secondly, mention the structural and functional implications that gender integration entails, for example, reorganization, improvement, development of political processes. Gender Mainstreaming is both a political and technical process (IDS:1997). Gender integration involves the reorganization of political processes because it requires the attention of gender equality policies, the change of organizational and institutional cultures.

Third, the definition is not partial and is limited to specific aspects and techniques of gender integration. It requires the need for multiple tools and techniques and includes the full participation of women in all aspects of life, as well as the analysis of all proposals and different policies from a gender equality perspective.

Gender mainstreaming means that the political process needs to be reorganized so that actors know how to incorporate a gender perspective and expertise as a normal requirement for policy makers. Integration removes gender equality issues from the integration of gender equality mechanisms and involves more new actors in building a balanced society. In this way, the process of transforming gender relations in the direction of gender equality can be accelerated and strengthened.

5. Why gender equality is very important for the integration of Albania into the European Union

Issues relating to gender equality are at the center of the social policies of European Union countries and one of the requirements for countries that have entered the process of European integration. Gender equality is not only a democratic necessity in itself, but also an economic, political and social necessity to reduce poverty and integrate Albania into the European Union. (Gruda, 2008:54). In the first decade of this century, important institutional and structural developments have occurred for the further progress and emancipation of women in Albanian society, as well as to ensure their active participation in equality with men in life political, economic and social of the country. Ignoring or not treating gender inequalities carefully would entail the risk of not benefiting at most approximately 50% of the population from the progress achieved through social, political and economic reforms. Gender inequality, which is evident in all aspects of social life in Albania, if not put at the center of social policies, will harm Albania's efforts to achieve sustainable development, as the full human potential of the village. Gender mainstreaming refers to the process of ensuring that the gender perspective and the goal of gender equality are at the center of all activities: policy development, research, advocacy/dialogue, legislation, resource allocation as well as planning, implementation and monitoring of programs and projects., as a strategy to promote and achieve gender equality, should be part of all social, economic and political policies in Albania. Such a strategy not only ensures the achievement of sustainable development through utilizing the country's full human potential, but also ensures that all social groups enjoy these outcomes. In general, we believe that the main objectives for the growth and empowerment of Albanian women in society are:

- efforts towards achieving gender equality in Albania, through the integration of the gender perspective into all aspects of policy development and implementation;
- improve protection, response to public authorities and support for victims of gender violence, as well as emphasize preventive work, addressing the causes of violence and abuse in the family and in society.
- Legal and institutional mechanisms that guarantee gender equality in Albania;

- Women's economic empowerment as one of the fundamental conditions for achieving gender equality;
- Gender equality in decision-making;
- Reduction of gender violence divided into categories: prevention, response, rehabilitation and reintegration.

This means equal participation of women and girls, men and boys in the social, economic and political life of the country, as well as equal opportunities to enjoy all their rights and make use of their individual potential for the benefit of society.

6. State institutional mechanisms that guarantee the implementation of laws, the principle of non-discrimination and equality between men and women.

In the implementation of laws, the principle of non-discrimination and equality between men and women is of particular importance. In addition to legislative and law enforcement institutions, there are also other state institutional mechanisms that guarantee the enjoyment of women's human rights and above all anything that promotes the advancement of gender equality. (Gruda, 2008:55)

The State Mechanism for Gender Equality, which consists of a number of state structures, was established to promote the advancement of gender equality and ensure the enjoyment of women's human rights. (Picari, 2008:38).

This mechanism was established in implementation of the recommendations of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women , the Beijing Platform for Action and in implementation of the Gender Equality Law. Its main function is to monitor and ensure the implementation of laws, the principle of non-discrimination and equality between men and women. The Law on Gender Equality in Albania designates the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities as the responsible authority for issues relating to gender equality. On the basis of the Law on Gender Equality and the Law against Domestic Violence, the Minister carries out the aforementioned function assisted by the specialized structure of his department, the Directorate of Policies for Equal Opportunities and the Family, which has been operating within this Ministry since 2006. Its main mission is to promote gender equality and broad participation of women in the economic, political and cultural life of the country, as well as the formulation and development of policies for the prevention and reduction of violence in family relationships, and in general, gender-based violence. (Focal Points of Gender Equality in Albania, 2008: 15) The Directorate of Policies for Equal Opportunities and the Family is composed of two sectors: the Sector for Gender Equality and Measures against Domestic Violence and the Sector for Children's Rights and Protection. After the issuance of the Law on Obligations Relations, this Directorate was assigned the task of working towards the implementation of this law. On the basis of the Law on Gender Equality in Albania, the proposal of policies on gender equality is entrusted to the National Council for Gender Equality. This council is responsible for advising the government on determining the direction of state policies for gender equality, except for matters considered by the National Labor Council, and ensuring gender mainstreaming in all sectors. It was established with Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 122 of 2.2.2009 "On the approval of the operating regulations of the National Council for Gender Equality", is chaired by the Minister in charge of issues relating to gender equality (currently by the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equality Opportunities) and has 9 deputy ministers from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the Ministry of Integration , the Ministry of Finance , the Ministry of Justice , the Ministry of the Interior , the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health , the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports , the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection as well as three representative members of civil society. (Focal points of gender equality in Albania, 2008: 15). The approval of the Law on Gender Equality in

Albania also established the institutional obligation for the appointment of Gender Officers in each relevant Ministry and in local government bodies. Article 13/3 establishes that "state institutions, at central and local levels, have the legal obligation to cooperate with the competent minister, for the exchange of information and the facilitation of the fulfillment of her function". The law imposes the obligation to appoint managers for gender issues in the Ministry and local authorities. At central level, only the Ministry of Health has institutionalized the figure of the full-time Gender Workers, as required by law, while in the other ministries there are gender focal points, i.e. people who cover other functions, but also have the task of dealing with equality gender issues. At the local level, 12 NonGovernmental Organizations have been formalised, although there are focal points for gender equality in 65 local units. (Focal points of gender equality in Albania, 2008: 15)

At parliamentary level, until 2009, the Subcommittee on Minors and Equal Opportunities functioned within the Parliamentary Commission for Labor and Social Affairs. This Commission examines draft laws and takes legal initiatives in the areas of its responsibility and builds cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities on issues related to gender equality and children.

With the entry into force of the Law "On Protection from Discrimination", the institution of the Commissioner was created, who carries out the functions of ombudsman in matters of discrimination for any reason, including gender, but also gender identity, pregnancy, sexual orientation, family or marital status, parental responsibility, which are generally closely related to the person's gender. This institution has the authority to examine complaints of discrimination by individuals, their groups or organizations, to conduct investigations, monitor the implementation of this law, impose sanctions, develop awareness-raising and educational activities that assist in the implementation of this law. (Focal points of gender equality in Albania, 2008: 15).

Conclusions

In this analysis, we think that the progress and the achievement of real gender equality in the three fundamental areas, in the family, in the socio-economic one, as well as in political and public life, cannot happen spontaneously, and not only through hopes of enlightening society. Naturally, in promoting women's rights and preventing the most extreme forms of violation of these rights, such as gender violence, a greater commitment to raising awareness and awareness in society is necessary. think that even if the legal provisions and institutions are consolidated and functioning, there is still much to be done to create the right environment for the effective functioning of the institutional mechanism. Beyond the statistics of the various institutions, also we believe that not all institutions at central and local levels have the adequate human, financial and technical resources for effective functioning. The cultural transformation of society is a long and complex process and as such requires not only an appeal, but also the improvement of legal instruments, the creation of support structures and the creation of equal opportunities for work, career, decision-making and representation, as well as the awareness of a society in which gender equality is accepted as a new reality, where men and women have the same obligations and privileges, the same real opportunities for affirmation of personality and participation in all spheres of social life. The broad involvement of civil society, the participation of the community and the assumption of responsibility by the local government, the strengthening of the family and the promotion of a new culture of respect for women's rights are the key to promoting the achievement of gender equality in all areas of life. Only in this context will it be possible to prevent and eliminate family crimes and forms of gender violence. Otherwise, aspirations and strategies to achieve gender equality according to contemporary standards and concepts would simply remain a utopia.

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