

Vision

The Public Service Commission is an independent and impartial body created by the Constitution, 1996, to enhance excellence in governance within the Public Service by promoting a professional and ethical environment and adding value to a public administration that is accountable, equitable, efficient, effective, corruption-free and responsive to the needs of the people of South Africa.

Mission

The Public Service Commission aims to promote the constitutionally enshrined democratic principles and values in the Public Service by investigating, monitoring, evaluating, communicating and reporting on public administration. Through research processes, it will ensure the promotion of excellence in governance and the delivery of affordable and sustainable quality services.

Gender Maintstreaming initiative in the Public Service



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Glossary of terms

Gender : In socio-political discourse gender is understood to mean not only biological sex, but roles assigned by society to individuals as a consequence of their biological sex.

Sex describes human categorization on the basis of reproductive functions.

Gender Equality refers to a social end state in which there was no unfair discrimination and exclusion on the basis of gender.

Mainstreaming is a process of integrating that which is marginal into every aspect of life, thinking and business of an organization.

Gender mainstreaming is the process which entails weaving into the consciousness and actions of individuals and organizations an impulse to promote equality between sexes.

Gender-responsive Programmes and Objectives are programme and project objectives that are non-discriminatory, equally beneficial to all sexes and which aim at correcting gender imbalances.

Gender and Development (GAD) attempts to institutionalise gender awareness in all developmental initiatives, including policy. It focuses on interventions to address unequal gender relations which prevent equitable development and which often lock women out of full participation. GAD seeks to have both women and men participate, make decisions and share benefits on an equal basis and it often entails the implementation of affirmative action to level the playing field between sexes.

Women in Development (WID) aims to integrate women into the existing development processes, often through women-specific activities.

Practical gender needs arise from the conditions and difficulties women experience and are often related to their roles as mothers, homemakers and providers of basic needs. A practical gender need would be for example to provide child care facilities at the work place for working parents.

Strategic Gender needs are needs that need to be met to overcome the subordinate position of women to men in society, e.g. improving educational opportunities. These needs relate to women's empowerment and vary according to the economic, social, political and cultural context.

Gender analysis: This involves the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data which reveals the differential impact of development activities on women and men, and the effect gender roles and responsibilities have on development efforts. It also involves qualitative analyses that help to clarify how and why these differential roles, responsibilities and impacts have come about.

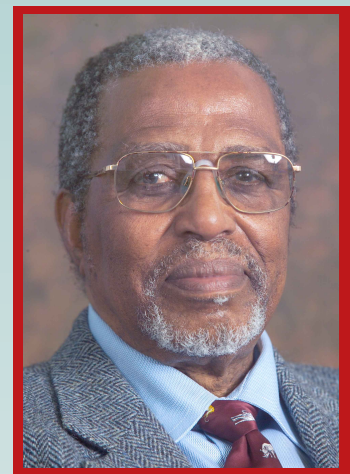
Beijing Platform for Action: Refers to resolutions taken at the United Nations Fourth World Conference of Women held in Beijing, China in 1995. This conference highlighted the necessity to ensure that gender equality is a primary goal in all areas of social development

Gender Focal Person: This a person appointed with the explicit aim of leading gender mainstreaming and other special projects that focus on issues of empowerment such as HIV and AIDS, youth, children, disability, Employee Assistance Programme, etc. in departments.

Acronyms

CEDAW:	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CGE	Commission for Gender Equality
DDG	Deputy Director-General
DoL	National Department of Labour
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme
EE	Employment Equity
EEF	Employment Equity Forum
GFP	Gender Focal Person
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
HOD	Head of Department
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NGM	National Gender Machinery
OSW	Office on the Status of Women
Persal	Personnel and Salary Administration System
PSC	Public Service Commission
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SAMDI	South African Management Development Institute
SMS	Senior Management Service
SMT	Senior Management Team
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific Cultural Organisation.

Foreword



The birth of the Commission on Status of Women in 1946 heralded the commitment of the recently formed United Nations (UN) to the advancement of women with the signing of the UN Charter in San Francisco, United States of America in 1945. During the inaugural meeting of the UN General Assembly in London in February 1946, Eleanor Roosevelt, a United States delegate, read an open letter addressed to 'women of the world', stating that *"To this end, we call on the Governments of the world to encourage women everywhere to take a more active part in national and international affairs, and on women who are conscious of their opportunities to come forward and share in the work of peace and reconstruction as they did in war and resistance."* A sub-Commission dedicated to the Status of Women was established under the Commission on Human Rights. Since then a number of initiatives have been undertaken by women under the auspices of the UN to advance their course. These initiatives culminated in the UN declaring 1976 – 1985 as the UN Decade of Women: Equality, Development and Peace. The Decade contributed to bringing legitimacy to the international women's movement, and moved women's issues forward to the global agenda. Over the course of the decade, the belief that development served to advance women shifted to a new recognition that development was not possible without women.


To this end one of the greatest achievements of the Commission on the Status of Women has been the ideal of integrating gender issues into the mainstream of society, and by extension workplaces which was established as a global strategy for promoting gender equality in the Platform for Action adopted at the United Nations Fourth World Conference of Women in Beijing, China in 1995. This conference highlighted the need to ensure that gender equality is a primary goal in all areas of social development. In 2006 South Africa commemorated the 50th anniversary of the march by women to the Union Buildings on 09 August 1956.

More than 20 000 women of all races under the leadership of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) and the African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL) protested the imposition of pass laws against women. It is, however, important to note that the struggle for emancipation by women gained impetus when a Women's Charter was adopted at the Founding Conference of the FEDSAW two years earlier on 17 April 1954. The preamble of the charter stated that: "We women of South Africa, wives and mothers, working women and housewives, African, Indians, European and Coloured, hereby declare our aim of striving for the removal of all laws, regulations, conventions and *customs that discriminate against us as women, and that deprive us in any way of our inherent right to the advantages, responsibilities and opportunities that society offers to any one section of the population.*"

This is particularly poignant in the South African context, as the society is undergoing a process of transformation which also includes placing issues of women empowerment and emancipation at the forefront of such endeavors. One of the key strategic trajectories involves the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996, particularly the Bill of Rights which prohibited discrimination on various grounds including gender. To this end, the South African Government has introduced a number of policies and legislation aimed at the issue of gender mainstreaming in the Public Service as well as society in general. These policies and legislation include the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development, 1994, White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995, White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service, 1998 and the Employment Equity Act of 1998. The development of policies and legislation has ensured at a minimum the establishment of employment equity targets as the indicator for gender mainstreaming.

On their own, however, equity targets fall far short of advancing gender empowerment. The key challenge for the South African government is to move beyond these and ensure that gender relations in the public service are fundamentally transformed to empower all the sexes to be equal participants and beneficiaries in the consolidation of the South African consolidation of the South African democratic state, and to cultivate an entrenched reflexive impulse for this, particularly at senior management levels. This will entail moving beyond setting numeric targets. Critical in this is the creation of an enabling environment to ensure that women's talents and potential are harnessed and nurtured for the benefit of the South African society as a whole. This report on Gender Mainstreaming in the Public Service therefore aims to bring out issues on gender mainstreaming. It highlights the important strides that have been achieved, identifies areas which need attention and makes recommendations on how these can be addressed in order to advance gender mainstreaming in the South African Public Service. I hope national and provincial departments will find this report helpful in their quest of ensuring that gender issues are addressed.

May I take this opportunity to express the PSC's profound gratitude for the assistance it received in conducting the research for preparation of this report from the German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ) without which the successful completion of the study would have been difficult.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sangweni', with a stylized, circular flourish at the beginning.

PROF SS SANGWENI
CHAIRPERSON: PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION



Executive Summary

1. INTRODUCTION

Affirmative Action is regarded as a pillar for the transformation of the Public Service and a means to achieve gender equality. Government inherited a Public Service which was influenced by discriminatory employment policies and practices based on race, gender and disability. Within the context of slow progress in achieving affirmative action and the resulting detrimental impact in achieving gender equality, the PSC undertook a study to analyse the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the Public Service.

The objectives of this study were to-

- develop a gender representivity profile describing progress and status of departments on representativeness according to targets that have been set in the Public Service;
- examine the extent to which empowerment of women has occurred in terms of their role as part of the executive structures of departments and their involvement in decision making;
- establish whether there are family-friendly policies, which take into account the social benefits of families, such as flexi time for men and women and childcare arrangements, which support equal family responsibility;
- examine the impact that gender mainstreaming has on management responses to both male and female staff members;
- examine the extent to which recruitment and promotion practices are utilised to enhance gender equality in employment;
- examine how sensitive issues associated with gender relations (including sexual harassment cases) are handled in departments;
- propose interventions to implement gender mainstreaming in departments; and
- examine the role that the Office on the Status of Women plays in supporting and encouraging gender mainstreaming in the Public Service and what role they may have in implementing the results of this investigation.

2. KEY FINDINGS

Women's access to executive power and decision-making has improved since the 1994 elections. There is strong representation of women in the national and provincial departments. The challenge to institutions in the Public Service is to change their culture in order to be more responsive to the needs of women civil servants. At present the focus on employment equity targets as the only indicator for gender mainstreaming presents serious limitations to gender empowerment and gender equity. The challenge is to shape the broad

transformation agenda in a way which acknowledges the centrality of transforming gender relations as part of the broader institutional change process. This requires a fundamental review of what has come to be accepted as 'business as usual.'

Therefore strides have been made towards creating an enabling environment for the advancement of gender equality. Elements of this include political commitment at the highest level, for instance, the establishment of the Office on the Status of Women (OSW), placed within the President's office and established, inter alia, to monitor gender equality. Although South Africa's National Gender Machinery is universally acknowledged to be a "best practice," the lack of skills, resources, and an integrated co-ordination framework with clear lines of communication and accountability has rendered it ineffectual.

Although there are policies in place within some departments as well as a National Policy Framework and Draft National Programme of Action on Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality 2005 – 2015, successful implementation is often limited or non-existent. A number of problems have been experienced in the implementation and monitoring of such policies. The aim is to create an enabling environment and make it possible for government to develop mechanisms that will assist in the achievement of the national goal of gender equality, which do not yet exist. Policy on gender equality should outline commitment to gender equality at all levels, identify mechanisms to achieve gender equality, specify the resources allocated to efforts, and include effective accountability, monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

2.1 Knowledge and understanding of gender mainstreaming

A clear conceptual understanding of gender concepts and gender mainstreaming is essential for all government officers at all levels, but especially in key departments that determine national policy. When decision-makers understand the practicalities of gender mainstreaming as a strategy, they are much more likely to abandon the narrow focus on women.

There is a lack of knowledge about gender mainstreaming in most departments and across all levels. Senior management does not know how to move from vision (policy) to strategy and action. The main reason for this is because of a lack of knowledge and understanding of what it is that needs to be changed, why it needs to be changed, how to go about the change process, and what results should be produced. For implementing gender mainstreaming—in order to realize gender equality—you need to build up a good base of gender knowledge¹ to build gender competence which is absolutely necessary in order to do proper strategy planning.

1. Gender Mainstream Practise I: Example from the EU and South Africa by B.Thege and Prof Welpe, 2002

2.2 Gender Representivity Profile

The proportion of women in senior management positions (director level and above) in the Public Service has increased significantly since 1994 and has exceeded the target of 30% that was set for the management echelon by April 2005. A number of national and provincial departments have made considerable progress in gender representivity at the senior management levels while others have made little or no progress.

While 30% is used as the benchmark for departments to use as an indicator for the success of gender mainstreaming, when departments reach the 30% target they could assume that they don't need to do more. Target setting could therefore, create a barrier to the continued advancement of women, especially as gender mainstreaming in the South African Public Service is still seen as meeting numerical targets.

Some departments reflect higher numbers of women in senior positions in what was traditionally viewed as more male-dominated departments; examples include Departments of Public Works, Transport and Safety & Liaison. Similarly, departments that traditionally employed more women, such as Health and Education have fewer women in senior positions than would have been anticipated.

2.2.1 Provincial overview of Women in Senior Positions (levels 13-16) in the Public Service

The average percentage of women in senior positions in provincial departments is 29,8% which is only 0,2% below the target that was set.

In terms of the provincial analysis, North West (33,4%) and Limpopo (32,5%) have the most women in senior positions followed by Gauteng and Mpumalanga reflecting 30,6% respectively. The Western Cape has the lowest percentage of female managers (23%).

Across all the provinces there is a 10,4% difference between the province with the highest number of women in senior positions (North West at 33,4%) and the province with the lowest number of women in senior positions (Western Cape at 23%).

2.2.2 National Departmental Review of Women in Senior Positions levels [13-16] in the Public Service

The average percentage of women in senior positions in national departments is 31,2%, which exceeds the target of 30%. A similar trend in national departments is observed to that of provincial departments, where the highest percentage of women in senior positions is in departments such as Health and Social Development.

2.2.3 Women with Disabilities in Senior Positions (levels 13-16) in the Public Service

More disabled men than women are employed at senior management level in the Public Service in seven Provinces no female managers with disabilities are employed.

2.3 Empowerment of women

In general the empowerment of women is not happening in any significant or meaningful way in departments. Apart from general policies and practices that affect all staff, there are no specific programmes that recognise women as a separate interest group with specific interests and needs. This includes issues related to recruitment, training and addressing the practical needs of women. Participants at senior management level argued that the predominantly male culture has made it difficult for their voices to be heard.

2.4 Structures

There is a lack of a clearly defined institutional framework that is necessary to facilitate the attainment of the vision of gender mainstreaming. Roles and responsibilities within the National Gender Machinery need to be clarified and then implemented and institutions held accountable for its success or lack thereof, within the Public Service. The national structures established to promote women's empowerment and gender equality (specifically the OSW and the CGE) will need to be strengthened to be able to provide the support and services required by government departments in implementing and monitoring gender mainstreaming.

The role of the Gender Focal Person (GFP) needs to be reviewed and the competence of GFPs assessed. Most GFPs do not understand their roles or know how to implement their responsibilities. Whether the GFP is dedicated to gender mainstreaming or plays a multi-faceted role as is presently the case remains a contested issue. Until gender mainstreaming is entrenched in departments, a person should be designated to this role.

Having addressed the lack of and inadequacy of the 'drivers' of gender mainstreaming at all levels within departments, it is fair to say that the environment in general is not enabling for the empowerment of women.

2.5 Processes

Gender mainstreaming is not included in any departmental planning, monitoring and budgeting processes apart from ensuring that employment equity targets are met. To achieve gender equality, government must embark on a rigorous gender mainstreaming strategy. To this end, much of the responsibility for planning and implementing effective and innovative strategies for the promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality will rest equally with key structures of the National Machinery and with individual government departments at the national, provincial and local levels. Individual departments will obviously need to tailor

their strategies for gender equality to suit the particular needs and requirements of their departments but government must provide the strategic guidelines which might usefully inform the processes of overall gender mainstreaming and overall planning and implementation.

With respect to the planning and implementation of programmes for women's empowerment and gender equality at the departmental level, the costs involved will need to be incorporated into existing departmental budgets. Expenditure on gender-related initiatives and programmes will need to be planned in advance and incorporated into the MTEF planning process. If the plans have already been made, then they need to be reviewed and adjusted to meet the specific needs of women².

2.6 Family friendly policies

The only provision allowing for women's practical needs such as attending to a sick child is by taking Family Responsibility leave provided for in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. Apart from this there are no family friendly policies. The Family Responsibility leave on its own is wholly inadequate in responding to the practical needs that women face and seems to have been a knee jerk response to addressing issues such as these. In addition, management still sees parenting as a woman's responsibility and responds with skepticism when men request time to attend to parenting duties.

Flexi-time is not supported in most departments. However, individual managers use their prerogative in deciding who they allow to use flexi-time or who they allow to work from home. When a practice is based on the relationship between a manager and a staff member rather than systemic, the danger is that it becomes a subjective practice, which could be regarded as biased. In general, senior management are very sceptical of introducing flexi-time or child care facilities because these could be abused.

A deep and far-reaching transformation of those structures and systems that promote or allow for subordination and gender inequality is necessary. In order for this to be achieved, gender concerns must be mainstreamed into all operations, which does not mean that men and women are the same, but that their similarities and differences are recognised and equally valued. This clearly was not demonstrated in the policies that currently exist hence the view that they are 'gender blind' or 'gender neutral'.

2.7 Management responses to gender mainstreaming

There is a lack of support for gender mainstreaming from senior management based on a lack of understanding about "how" to do gender mainstreaming as well as having other departmental priorities. The lack of knowledge of gender mainstreaming coupled with conservative attitudes from senior management towards gender equity has in many cases a trickle down effect. So there are no discussions about gender mainstreaming, no

2. Ibid, 2002.

support for those trying to drive gender mainstreaming, and no zero tolerance for sexual harassment. Hence no need to think about gender, apart from meeting targets.

2.8 Recruitment and promotion practices

In most departments recruitment takes place according to the Employment Equity targets as informed by the Employment equity plans. Women feel disadvantaged from the onset because they have practical needs that impact on their ability to apply for certain jobs. While there are no formal restrictions on the recruitment of women into senior positions, some subtle discrimination might come into play. This also refers to the obstacles or perception about the work that men and women should be doing. For example, secretarial work is generally seen as women's work.

Women experience promotions differently from men: with the possibility of longer working hours, frequent travel and transfers to other parts of the country, women often don't apply. While women have opted to attend training courses offered seeing this as a stepping stone to promotions this has not translated into actual promotions. Succession planning was not formally implemented in any department, and there is a lack of mentorship and support to integrate new skills into the work environment.

2.9 Gender Relations

In general, relationships between men and women are described as satisfactory and largely determined by position. However, many women felt undermined, not respected or appreciated by male colleagues. On the other hand, many women preferred having men as managers citing that women bosses are much harder, less sympathetic and inflexible. What was most significant was that the majority of women said that when women are in leadership "they do not support other women; do not encourage mobility of other women and generally behave more like men and even worse". On the other hand, women have to work extra hard to get into senior positions and feel they need to behave like men in order to prove themselves.

2.10 Sexual harassment

Junior and senior staff display a lack of knowledge and understanding about sexual harassment. Often cited was the continued fear of victimisation from the perpetrator and colleagues who were usually other senior management staff. There is also pressure from peers and sympathy displayed to the perpetrator because 'he has a family'. The lack of confidentiality of those staff to whom sexual harassment matters were being reported was of great concern, almost replicating secondary victimisation.

Despite the fact that this was a difficult topic to explore given the methodology used in this research, it was clear from the little evidence received that sexual harassment is largely ignored in the Public Service. Victims would rather not take action but choose the safer route of going to the Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) for counseling.

2.11 The role that the Office on the Status of Women (OSW) plays in supporting and encouraging gender mainstreaming in Public Service

It was apparent that the OSW did not have the institutional capacity to deliver on their mandate. In addition, they are also expected to participate in intergovernmental partnerships where they act as a support to Government, stretching their limited resources and capacities.

The OSW should play a much bigger role in monitoring compliance on gender mainstreaming within all departments. The findings of this study could provide an ideal opportunity for the OSW to sensitise national and provincial government stakeholders about gender equity issues in relation to the workplace and would provide an entry point for jointly addressing these issues and to provide guidance and support to the departments.

Between the Commission on Gender Equity (CGE) and OSW tensions exist around mandate and functioning, resulting in the overall lack of coordination and communication between the OSW, CGE, and DPSA with confusion raised at all levels about roles and responsibilities. In order for the OSW to fulfill its mandate effectively there should be a clear definition of what this office's role is in relation to other stakeholders in gender mainstreaming in the Public Service.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

As the situation currently stands there is not a strong enough commitment within the Public Service, beyond numerical targets, to actually create the necessary enabling environment for gender mainstreaming and gender equality. Organisational cultures need to be revisited and changes made to the way we work in order to reshape policies and programmes and thereby eliminate those laws, structures and behaviours that allow for gender inequalities to be perpetuated. This requires the development of new skills, working methods and tools, and the changing of attitudes.

The following recommendations are put forward as interventions to implement gender mainstreaming in departments:

3.1 Accelerate Empowerment of women

A specific programme targeting women on accelerated learning for specific roles and senior positions in departments should be introduced by SAMDI. In order to qualify for such training and to ensure that the right persons are targeted, competency testing should be applied to applicants.

A structured mentoring programme should be put in place by departments so that women who are advanced to leadership positions have the necessary support. Mentoring is a powerful means of helping women who have been advanced to senior positions, to make the significant transitions, both professionally and personally. The essence of mentoring is imparting wisdom through a process of providing support, advice and feedback that allows the individual to identify their aspirations and maximise their strengths. A clear identification plan must therefore be outlined and feedback sessions between mentors and mentees must be outlined. The process can be very empowering to women as they become more aware of their abilities and their own worth.

3.2 Improve Gender representivity profile/ Recruitment and promotions

In order to change the profile of government especially at senior levels, it is proposed that recruitment should specifically target women for senior positions. A tracking system to follow the movement of women into senior management should be developed to assess after a period of time whether women are promoted and advanced to senior management.

3.3 Effective Gender structures and processes

The eligibility requirements for appointment as a GFP should be commensurate with the skill levels required for providing leadership and direction for gender mainstreaming. It is important that the GFP be given the authority to drive gender mainstreaming programmes. Most important is that the GFP should have access to the SMS and the Head of Department so that reports on gender mainstreaming can be addressed at that level. The GFP should be dedicated to work with gender issues and all its intricacies and not have additional multiple roles to play as is currently the case (the role could be reviewed after a 3-year period).

Gender should be incorporated into departmental strategic plans with clear activity plans and indicators. If departments are to mainstream gender, visible mechanisms to co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of gender-related plans of action need to be put into place. Gender mainstreaming activities and programmes must be included in budgeting processes.

3.4 Family friendly policies

DPSA must put in place a national framework aimed at creating a more enabling environment and recognise the importance of providing social benefits to families. This framework should compel departments to provide for:

- Breastfeeding facilities;
- Flexi-time to accommodate child caring considerations; and
- Consideration to be given for child care facilities.

3.5 Management responses to gender mainstreaming

It should be compulsory for all senior managers to be capacitated to enhance gender management skills and raise the general level of gender awareness. Unless the organisational culture changes to ensure the empowerment of both women and men through equal participation in decision-making on issues which affect their lives, gender equality will not happen. For this to be effective, a change process should be implemented. This is not a once off event but must address the key organisational culture issues and attitudes that affect gender mainstreaming. Change management should also address the issue of culture within the work place and its relation to home values. It becomes important to change the hearts and minds in order to change the attitudes of men towards women.

3.6 Improved Gender relations

It should be compulsory for all staff including senior management to attend workshops on sexual harassment. A more supportive environment must be created for sexual harassment to be reported and addressed outside of normal grievance and disciplinary processes. Those who are responsible for employee grievances should sign a confidentiality clause that ensures that matters brought to their attention are dealt with in a professional manner. There should be a zero-tolerance policy with regard to sexual harassment for all in the Public Service to recognise the seriousness with which this is taken.

3.7 Effective coordination and collaboration for gender mainstreaming in the Public Service

If the role and mandate of the OSW is to promote gender mainstreaming in the Public Service and to monitor its implementation, then it is critical that the OSW is provided with the skills and resources to implement their mandate, and be held accountable. Part of the mandate of the OSW should be to enhance the efficiency of the National Gender Machinery (NGM) at national and provincial levels, and to develop effective collaborative

strategies. A coordinating structure of the NGM should be introduced and coordinated by the OSW but in close partnership with other institutions in the NGM.

3.8 Institutional roles and accountabilities

In order for gender mainstreaming to become a success the collective effort of all role players will be required, to ensure that the policy framework is in place and that there is compliance, for empowerment and capacitation, and for mentoring and support. Specific roles to be played by institutions such as OSW as well as senior managers and GFP are therefore proposed.

3.9 Institutional Change Management

As the situation currently stands there is not a strong enough commitment within the Public Service, beyond numerical targets, to actually create the necessary enabling environment for gender mainstreaming and gender equality. It is against this backdrop that organisational cultures need to be revisited and changes made to the way we work in order to reshape policies and programmes and thereby eliminate those laws, structures, attitudes and behaviours that allow for gender inequalities to be perpetuated. This requires the development of new skills, working methods and tools, and the changing of attitudes.

4. CONCLUSION

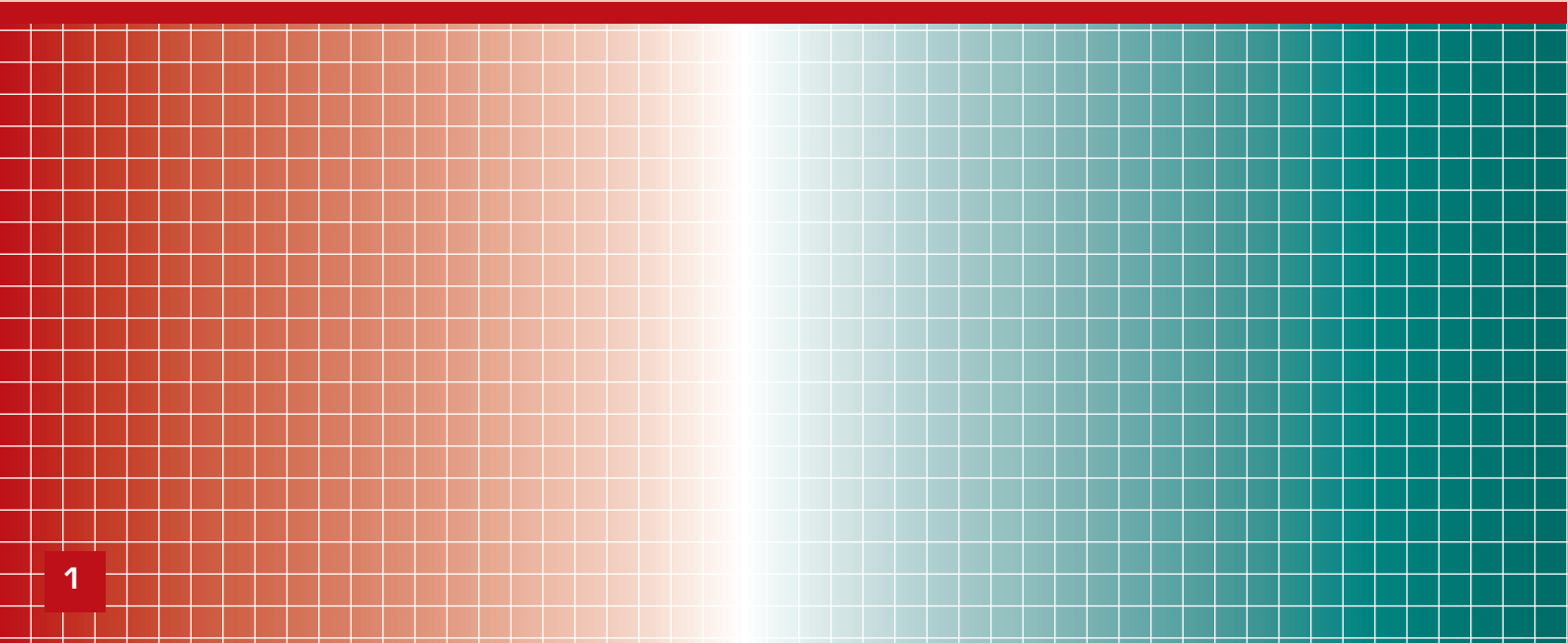
Women's access to political power and decision-making has improved since the 1994 elections. There is a strong representation of women in national and provincial departments. The challenge to institutions in the Public Service is to change their culture in order to be more responsive to the needs of women civil servants. A number of departments, nationally and provincially, have made considerable progress in gender representivity at the senior management levels while others have made little or no progress.

In general the empowerment of women is not happening in any significant or meaningful way in departments. Apart from general policies and practices that affect all staff, there are no specific programmes that recognise women as a separate interest group with specific interests and needs. This includes issues related to recruitment, training and addressing the practical needs of women. Participants at senior management level argued that the predominantly male culture has made it difficult for their voices to be heard.

Through this report, the PSC would like to believe that it has finally put to rest the notion that gender mainstreaming is all about setting and achieving numerical targets. There is much to be done to ensure the empowerment of women in the workplace. Putting policies and processes in place is but one strategy that

needs to be strengthened. Of more importance is to change attitudes and thereby create the commitment to operationalise such policies and processes in practice.





Chapter One

Introduction to the research

1.1 Introduction

The concept of bringing gender issues into the mainstream of society and in the workplace was established as a global strategy for promoting gender equality in the Platform for Action adopted at the United Nations Fourth World Conference of Women in Beijing in 1995. It highlighted the necessity to ensure that gender equality is a primary goal in all areas of social development.

South Africa is still in a process of transformation. One of the key objectives in this process is the transformation of gender relations. At present the focus on employment equity targets as the only indicator for gender mainstreaming presents serious limitations to gender empowerment and gender equity. The challenge is to shape the broad transformation project in a way which acknowledges the centrality and compatibility of the transformation of gender relations to the broader institutional change process. This requires a fundamental review of what has come to be accepted as 'business as usual'.

The government's commitment to the promotion of gender equality has been demonstrated by the establishment of a National Machinery for the advancement of gender equality in South Africa. It is composed of key structures such as the Office on the Status of Women and the Commission on Gender Equality. This commitment is further affirmed by the following initiatives:

- The focus on gender issues in a variety of policy documents,
- Introduction of new legislation designed to root out gender discrimination and to promote women's rights and empowerment,
- Growth in the numbers of women occupying senior positions in government, and
- Advancement of democratisation in all institutions of the state and civil society.

The main concern for gender mainstreaming in the Public Service at the moment is the perceived slow progress in implementation. The challenge is how we can move from simply wishing for change to building gender mainstreaming into daily practice.

1.2 Purpose of the study

This study, provides a baseline for future research as well as to provoke debate about a number of key issues around gender mainstreaming.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) with the assistance of the German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ) agreed to monitor and evaluate gender mainstreaming initiatives by departments at a national and provincial level during the financial year 2005/2006.

The objectives of this study were to:

- Develop a gender representivity profile describing progress and status of departments on representativeness according to targets that have been set in the Public Service
- Examine the extent to which empowerment of women has occurred in terms of their role as part of the executive structures of departments and their involvement in decision making;
- Establish whether there are family-friendly policies, which take into account the social benefits of families, such as flexi time for men and women and childcare arrangements, which support equal family responsibility;
- Examine the impact that gender mainstreaming has on management responses to both male and female staff members;
- Examine the extent to which recruitment and promotion practices are utilised to enhance gender equality in employment;
- Examine how sensitive issues associated with gender relations (including sexual harassment cases)

are handled in departments;

- Propose interventions to implement gender mainstreaming in departments; and
- Examine the role that the Office on the Status of Women plays in supporting and encouraging gender mainstreaming in Public Service departments and what role they may have in implementing the results of this investigation.

1.3 PSC mandate to undertake this study

In terms of section 196 (4) (f) (i) and (iv) of the Constitution of the Republic Of South Africa Act, 1996, the powers and functions of the PSC are amongst others, to investigate and evaluate the application of personnel and public administration practices, and to report to the relevant executive authority and legislature. The PSC is also empowered by section 195 (1) of the Constitution to promote the basic values and principles governing public administration as set out in section 195. One of these principles provides that “Public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation”¹.

1.4 Understanding Gender Mainstreaming

1.4.1 What is mainstreaming?

“Mainstreaming” is a process that brings what can be seen as marginal into the core business and main decision-making process of an institution². The term mainstreaming is derived from the objective to prioritise gender equality as a development activity. An important element in the mainstreaming strategy is to give attention to gender equality by influencing goals, strategies and resource allocations, and thus bring about real changes in policies, programmes and other activities³.

1.4.2 Why do we need a Gender mainstreaming strategy in the Public Service?

Gender mainstreaming is an essential part of good governance and is critical if the Public Service wants to ensure that institutions, their policies and programmes respond to the needs and interests of all employees, and distribute benefits equitably between men and women. Gender mainstreaming considers both sexes and not just women. At the same time while gender mainstreaming is a move away from women-specific projects and programmes it is important to recognise that women have different needs and priorities from men and are therefore affected differently by policies and development interventions.

Mainstreaming of policies does not occur in a vacuum. They are devised in institutions which are already gendered in ways that undermine women and their interests. In addition, gender mainstreaming is taken up by individuals who might have their own interests in keeping the existing gender order intact. Mainstreaming policies may thus get manipulated and reshaped in accordance with institutional and individual agendas. When in the hands of people who have no real interest in advancing women’s equality, these strategies can end up entrenching existing power imbalances.

Often the resistance to gender equality hides behind a symbolic acceptance that gender equality means nothing more than employing more women. The number crunching approach takes increasing numbers of women to equal mainstreaming. However, the culture, rules and procedures of institutions which women enter remain unchanged. Hence, equality and the empowerment of women can only be achieved by taking account of and addressing the relationships between women and men, and as such challenging⁴ the status

1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996"

2 UNESCO'S Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Framework (GMIF) for 2002-2007

3 The Development of Gender the Mainstreaming Strategy, United Nations, Aug 2001.

4 Shameem Meer, Mainstreaming: Understood or Misunderstood April 2005.

quo. This is one of the key challenges for gender mainstreaming in the Public Service. The question remains how far the Public Service can go in transforming existing relationships in any significant or sustainable way, particularly as these are fundamentally arrived at by structural constraints and social values that are determined outside of the work place.

1.4.3 Working definition of gender mainstreaming for purposes of this study

There are different and contested definitions for gender mainstreaming, depending on ideological orientation and perspectives on gender relations. However the working definition for purposes of this study is:

“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part 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 of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality”⁵.

Therefore, gender mainstreaming in the Public Service involves the following:

- Bringing about institutional changes to ensure the empowerment of both women and men through equal participation in decision-making on issues which affect their lives;
- Analysing all government policies and practices to examine the different impact they have on men and women; and
- Providing training and capacity building to enhance gender management skills and raise the general level of gender awareness – this would include working to change attitudes and behaviours of individuals and organisations.

Mainstreaming gender differs from previous efforts to integrate women's concerns into government activities in that, rather than adding on a women's component to existing policies, plans, programmes and projects, a gender perspective informs these at all stages, and in every aspect of the decision-making process. What is new about gender mainstreaming is that it considers both sexes and not just women. It considers the developmental and equality needs of both men and women.

Chapter Two

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the scope of the study as well as the methodology that was used during the research process. It explains why certain methodologies were used, the research instruments developed for the different categories of staff and how departments were selected for inclusion in this study. Limitations that impacted on this study are also identified from both a management as well as logistical point of view.

2.2 Scope of the study

The project covered two departments per province as well as six national departments. A comprehensive analytical review of gender mainstreaming initiatives took place with specific assessment of human resource practices that are geared towards ensuring fair and equitable opportunities for both men and women in the Public Service as well as a detailed profile of gender representivity in these departments. Included in the study were aspects such as the legal and regulatory framework, structures and processes and organisational culture and how these impacted on the advancement of women in the Public Service.

In addition to the above, working definitions for the Public Service on the following gender issues were developed:

- Mainstreaming
- Empowerment

The study included an account of experiences and contributions of women in relation to:

- Women's empowerment;
- Affirmative action;
- Employment equity; and
- Service delivery improvement.

2.3 Methodology

The design of this study focused on reviewing the impact (or lack thereof) of gender mainstreaming in the Public Service. A combination of research methodologies were used during this study, which included the following:

- **In-depth interviews** provided an opportunity for critical areas to be explored as a means to extract opinions and attitudes surrounding the topic under investigation. It was critical to this study to ascertain and understand the extent to which staff members understood the concept and challenges surrounding gender mainstreaming in the Public Service. These issues would not have been adequately addressed through a survey.
- **Focus group discussions** were utilised as they allowed a forum for opinions to be voiced through discussions with a group of people. It was intended that the focus groups provide a platform for staff members to voice their opinions, attitudes and knowledge of gender mainstreaming with reference to their departments.
- **Policy reviews** were undertaken to determine the extent to which the departments under review, included principles of gender equality and gender mainstreaming into their policies. This would also indicate whether the departments had implemented aspects of gender mainstreaming into the management of their departments.

- **Data analysis** was utilised in order to present the extent to which gender mainstreaming had occurred in the Public Service according to numerical targets. This quantitative analysis was based on personnel data information sourced from Vulindlela⁶ which is the government Human Resource Information Management System.

The study was initiated by sending invitations to Heads of the selected Departments. The Gender Focal Points (GFP) took responsibility for inviting members of the Senior Management Service (SMS), human resource staff and junior and middle level staff to participate in the research process.

2.3.1 Personnel data review

Statistical information was drawn from Vulindlela as at 30 April 2005. The information was processed and analysed to provide insight into the status of gender representativeness as a key element of gender mainstreaming. While the research included men and women within all categories, the gender representivity profile focused only on women in salary levels 13 – 16 (senior management). The target as set out in the White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service in 1995 was that 30% of senior managers should be women by 1999. When these targets were not met, a Cabinet decision in June 2003 extended the time frame to April 2005.

The focus was specifically placed on senior management as the extent to which women take up key decision-making positions is a good indicator for gender mainstreaming.

2.3.2 Research Instruments

Standardised questionnaires were developed as research instruments after an extensive review of existing literature. The open-ended questions allowed participants the opportunity to raise their thoughts, views and opinions, which might not have been otherwise articulated. It was used to ask participants the following:

- Figures, statistics, perceptions and other facts relating to gender mainstreaming;
- To describe conditions, procedures, organisational culture issues, systems with which they were involved, and their views about processes, performance, and adequacy; and
- About their attitudes and opinions of their work situations as it pertained to gender mainstreaming.

Refer to Appendix I for copies of the research tools.

Different questionnaires were developed for the following categories:

- **Senior Management Service (SMS):SMS** members were interviewed in order to ascertain the extent to which those in leadership positions (men and women) view and support initiatives surrounding gender mainstreaming. Women were asked questions specifically focusing on their experiences in senior management.
- **Human Resource Personnel:** This interview checklist focused on human resource staff that could provide information on human resource policies and assess to what extent these impacted on gender mainstreaming. This included whether there were family friendly policies that took into account the needs of women as a special target group.
- **Focus Group Schedule:** Middle and junior staff members provided information on their opinions, understanding and awareness of gender mainstreaming. Focus in this research tool was on their perceptions of women in senior positions, empowerment of women and sexual harassment in the workplace. It included

6. Vulindlela is the government Human Resource Information Management System

exploring issues such as men taking on roles that are traditionally associated with women such as parenting and home responsibilities.

This study covered a total of 128 interviews and 55 focus groups with varying amounts of participants in each focus group. The number of women who participated in the research process increased at lower staff levels. The percentage of males and females that participated was as follows:

- In **senior management** at least 80% of the participants were men. This could be attributed to the number of women that are employed in senior management positions in the Public Service.
- In **middle management**, 60% of the participants were men and 40% women.
- At **junior staff** levels more women (60 – 70%) participated in the research. In departments such as Health, Social Development and Education more women than men are employed at these levels.

2.3.3 Selection of Departments under Review

The selection of provincial departments was based on an analysis of the number of women in senior positions in each province. Two departments per province were selected according to the department that had the most women in senior positions and the department that had the least women in senior positions⁷.

The following provincial departments were included in the study.

Table 1: Provincial departments included in study

Province	Provincial Department	Cluster	Date of Visit
Limpopo	Transport	Economic	26-28 September 2005
	Education	Social	28-30 September 2005
Kwazulu / Natal	Economic & Tourism	Economic	12-14 September 2005
	Housing	Social	14-16 September 2005
Free State	Social development	Social	13-15 October 2005
	Safety and Security	Justice	13-14 October 2005
North West	Safety and Liason	Social	5-7 October 2005
	Transport	Economic	3-5 October 2005
Mpumalanga	Public Works	Economic	3-5 October 2005
	Education	Social	11 October 2005
Gauteng	Social Services	Social	19-21 October 2005
	Development Planning & Local Government	Economic	17 and 26 October 2005
Western Cape	Social Services	Social	21-23 September 2005
	Education	Social	21-23 September 2005

7. The Information that was used to select such departments was based on the number of women that are in senior positions of management (level 13 – 16) in that department, and was obtained from Vulindlela.

Eastern Cape	Housing & Local Government Safety & Liaison	Governance Social	11-13 October 2005 22-24 October 2005
Northern Cape	Social Services Finance	Social Economic	26-28 September 2005 28-30 September 2005

The following national departments were included in the study.

Table 2: National departments included in study

National Department	Date of Visit
Department of Public Service and Administration	19 October 2005
Department of Labour	19 October 2005
Department of Transport	18 October 2005
Department of Science and Technology	2 November 2005
National Treasury	11 November 2005
Department of Public Enterprises	13 October 2005

The selection of national departments was random with the exception of the Departments of Public Service and Administration and Labour. These were included as they are custodians of the relevant policy frameworks and have responsibility to ensure that gender equality is implemented through various pieces of legislation (e.g. the Public Service Act and the Employment Equity Act).

Stakeholders were selected based on gender as their main focus area to provide further insights on gender mainstreaming in the Public Service. These stakeholders also play a significant role in promoting gender equality in the Public Service, either through research, programming and/or strategic management. The stakeholders were the following:

- **The Office of the Status of Women (OSW)** was included in the research process as this Office plays a crucial role in terms of the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the Public Service. The OSW has a vital role to play as the principal coordinating structure for the National Machinery on gender equality. It has been constructed as the nerve centre for developing and maintaining a vibrant gender programme, to develop frameworks and monitor its implementation. It is also responsible for developing national gender plans as well as national strategies for implementation. It is important to understand the challenges the OSW is currently experiencing in implementing its objectives. These challenges are addressed in Chapter 5.
- **The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE)** was included into this research process because of its mandatory role of monitoring and evaluating policies pertaining to gender equality. The CGE's mandate includes having the power to hold accountable state organs, statutory and public bodies, as well as the private sector, for promoting and protecting gender equality.

2.4 Limitations

The following limitations were experienced:

2.4.1 Information

- The researchers could only rely and report on information that was provided to them during the course of the fieldwork. This often depended on the knowledge and accessibility to information of the person interviewed as well as the extent to which departments had prepared for the visits. Although the request was that senior officials in Human Resources should be available for the interviews, the researchers were in many cases referred to junior officials. The intention was to meet with the SMS members of each department collectively, but in the majority of cases this was not possible as a result of competing departmental priorities or lack of understanding of the importance of the research. In this case meetings were held with individual SMS members where they were available.
- The GFP in most departments was at Assistant Director level limiting the extent to which they could identify some of the strategic issues around their jobs.
- The figures received from Vulindlela did not always correlate with what was found in departments, making it difficult to ascertain which were indeed the correct figures.

2.4.2 Women in Senior Positions

- Although women in senior management were invited by the GFP, to attend interviews and focus groups, only a limited number of them participated in this study. This was attributed to reasons beyond their control or due to other departmental priorities. Where the researchers were able to interview women in senior positions, the information received from them was invaluable. Increased participation at this level would therefore have contributed significantly to the findings of the research.

2.4.3 Logistics

- The commencement of fieldwork was delayed due to the unavailability of key persons, and many dates had to be changed during the process. Staff availability varied from department to department. In some departments line function staff were not available to be interviewed. An example of this was with teachers, who were unavailable due to their involvement in examinations.
- Some provincial and national departments were not available for the required amount of days. In such cases the researchers had to structure the research process in such a way as to obtain the utmost information despite the limited amount of time.
- Although it was intended to conduct this review with both departments in a province during the same week, in most cases departments could not accommodate the researchers during the same week. This meant that two trips had to be made to most of the provinces, resulting in time delays.

Chapter Three

CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a contextual framework for gender mainstreaming, looking at the international, regional and national instruments for gender mainstreaming, including the national policy framework that should serve as a guide for gender mainstreaming in the Public Service. In this section the National Gender Machinery are identified in government, the legislature as well as other statutory bodies. This chapter provides an overview of the context but does not include a critique on the role or performance of the institutions that are responsible for implementing gender mainstreaming and ensuring gender equality.

3.2 International Instruments

3.2.1 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

In December 1979, the General Assembly of the United Nations in Resolution no 34/180, adopted **the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**⁸. This came into force on the 3rd of September 1981 after twenty countries had ratified the document. One hundred and sixty-six States are party to this "Bill of rights for women", and thus obliged under international law to realise equality between women and men in the civil, cultural, economic, political and social fields. The Convention is a powerful tool in the hands of activists and legislators, judges and educators, politicians and professionals. It is used to influence legislative processes and Government policies. It also is instrumental in shaping public opinion for women's equality and in advocating for women's rights. Courts in many countries refer to the Convention in domestic litigation to redress discrimination against women in areas such as sexual harassment at work, nationality, or violence against women. Its Optional Protocol adopted in December 1999, provides for women or groups of women the right to submit to the UN Committee responsible for CEDAW individual complaints concerning violations of the Convention by their Governments.

At the Fourth World Conference on Women, Member States committed themselves to the goal of universal ratification of the Convention by the year 2000. The comprehensive Convention reflects the depth of the exclusion and restriction practiced against women solely on the basis of their sex, by calling for equal rights for women, regardless of their marital status, in all fields i.e. political, economic, social, cultural and civil. It calls for national legislation to ban discrimination, recommends temporary special measures to speed up equality between men and women, and action to modify social and cultural patterns that perpetuate discrimination. Other measures provide for equal rights for women in political and public life, equal access to education and the same choice of curricula, non-discrimination in employment and pay, and guarantees of job security in the event of marriage and maternity. The Convention underlines the equal responsibilities of men with women in the context of family life. It also stresses the social services needed, especially child-care facilities, for combining family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life. Additional articles of the Convention call for non-discriminatory health services to women, including services related to family planning, and a legal capacity identical to that of men, with party states agreeing that all contracts and other private instruments that restrict the legal capacity of women "shall be deemed null and void".

In January 1996, the South African Government ratified the *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*. This calls on state parties to condemn discrimination against women and to take appropriate measures to eliminate it in all spheres of life. Article 1 of CEDAW defines discrimination against women as:

"any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and

⁸The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly

women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other sphere".

This step legally binds Parliament and the Executive to work actively towards the abolition of gender discrimination in the governance of the country. International conventions such as CEDAW are an important step towards becoming part of national law. Ratification is an important step and signifies government's commitment to the principles and actions specified. Lawyers, women's groups, and policy makers can use the provisions of CEDAW to make demands of the government and remind it of the commitment that it made at international level.

3.2.2 Fourth World Conference on Women held by the United Nations in Beijing

Of particular importance was the participation by the South African government and NGOs in the *Fourth World Conference on Women held by the United Nations in Beijing* in September 1995. While this was the first official participation by the South African government at an international women's conference, South African liberation movements had consistently participated in international women's conferences since 1975.

Both before and during that Conference, women internationally expressed the idea that it was time for action and not for words. This is why the document emanating from the Conference is called the *Beijing Platform for Action*. It sets out a series of practical actions that governments should take in order to advance and empower women.

The *Beijing Platform for Action* identified critical areas of concern. These include:

- The burden of poverty on women;
- Violence against women;
- Women in armed conflict ;
- Women in the economy;
- Power and decision-making;
- Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; and
- The human rights of women and of the girl child.

The United Nations established mainstreaming as the global strategy for promoting gender equality through the Platform for Action at the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Hence one can assume that if South Africa has ratified, without reservation the CEDAW, that the Beijing Plan of Action as a by-product of this process is also enforceable and legally binds government to work towards abolishing gender discrimination in the governance of the country.

3.3 Regional instruments

The *African Charter on Human and People's Rights* entrenches the pursuit of non-sexism as a human rights priority on the continent of Africa. One of the areas of intervention for achieving gender equality in Africa is the area of family law, with special reference to culture and customary law. The reporting guidelines on the *Charter* also highlight the issues of ending violence against women and achieving the economic empowerment for women.

In September 1997, the Heads of State of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), including South Africa, signed a declaration committing their governments and countries, *inter alia*, to:

- Embedding gender firmly into the agenda of the SADC Programme of Action and Community Building Initiative;
- Ensuring the equal representation of women and men at all levels of the decision making structures of member states as well as in SADC structures;
- Promoting women's full access to and control over productive resources;
- Repealing and reforming all laws and changing social practices which subject women to discrimination;
- Enhancing access to quality education by both women and men and removing gender stereotypes from the curriculum, career choices and professions;
- Making quality reproductive and other health services more accessible to women and men;
- Protecting and promoting the human rights of women and children;
- Recognising, protecting and promoting the reproductive and sexual rights of women and the girl child;
- Taking urgent measures to prevent and deal with the increasing levels of violence against women; and
- Encouraging the mass media to disseminate information and materials in respect of the human rights of women.

3.4 National legislative and policy context

To reinforce transformation, the South African Government has enacted a plethora of laws, formulated policies and passed bills which have a bearing on men and women in this country. Gender mainstreaming in the South African Public Service is guided by legislation, regulations and policies, namely:

- The Constitution, 1996;
- White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service, 1995;
- White Paper on Affirmative Action, 1998;
- The Employment Equity Act of 1998;
- The Public Service Regulations, 2001; and
- Other Gender policy frameworks.

3.4.1 The Constitution

The Bill of Rights as set out in the Constitution is the cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. In terms of Equality, the Bill of Rights articulates that the state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth. Gender equality is therefore, enshrined in the Constitution as a fundamental principle.

Section 195 (1) of the Constitution further endorses that Public Administration must be governed by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution. According to section 196 (4) (a), the Public Service Commission is empowered to promote the basic values and principles governing public administration as set out in section 195. One of these principles provides that "Public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation⁹".

3.4.2 The White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service, 1995

Given the historical imbalances of the past, the Public Service reflected an administration that had been influenced by discriminatory employment policies and human resource practices based on race, gender and disability. These disparities created such pronounced disadvantages for certain categories of people that simply repealing discriminatory laws would not have helped to redress these disparities. The principle aim of this White Paper is

9. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996

to establish a policy framework to guide the introduction and implementation of new policies and legislation aimed at transforming the South African Public Service.

Some of the central goals were to:

- Create a genuinely representative Public Service which reflects the major characteristics of South African demography, without eroding efficiency and competence;
- Facilitate the transformation of the attitudes and behaviour of public servants towards a democratic ethos underlined by the overriding importance of human rights; and
- Promote human resource development and capacity building as a necessary precondition for effective change and institution building¹⁰.

3.4.3 The White Paper on Affirmative Action 1998

The first overarching policy to be legislated in South Africa to promote equality in the Public Service was the White Paper on Affirmative Action of 1998. Affirmative action can be defined as laws, programmes or activities designed to redress past imbalances and to ameliorate the conditions of individuals and groups who have been disadvantaged on the grounds of race, gender or disability.

The goal of this policy was to “.....speed up the creation of a representative and equitable Public Service and to build an environment that supports and enables those who have been historically disadvantaged by unfair discrimination to fulfill their maximum potential within it so that the Public Service may derive the maximum benefit of their diverse skills and talents to improve service delivery¹¹”.

In this regard, the development and implementation of affirmative action programmes allow for special measures to be taken to ensure that people from disadvantaged groups will be identified and appointed through proper procedures within all departments and at all levels of the Public Service, with the aim of achieving representativeness and improved service delivery. The White Paper presents Affirmative Action¹² as an integral element of every aspect of the Public Service’s management practices. It provides a policy framework that sets out the mandatory requirements and steps that national departments and provincial administration should take to develop their own affirmative action programmes, structures, mechanisms and guidance.

The White Paper refers to women as one of the designated groups (race and disability being the other) and recognises that “these groups are poorly represented at decision-making levels and in other technical occupational classes”. It also makes specific reference to women in the following way:

“Gender stereotyping has resulted in the majority of women being employed in areas such as education and health in which they perform relatively lower level work, with very few in decision-making positions. As a result, the occupational structure in the Public Service has become skewed on the basis of gender and these occupations are positioned at generally low levels within the hierarchy of occupations and are also the more lower paid of occupations.

Even where women are well qualified and experienced, the predominance of males at management level has resulted in a culture in which male behaviour patterns are perceived to be the norm, and in which women often find it difficult to be accepted as equals by their male colleagues. These problems are compounded by a working

10. White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service, 1995

11. White Paper on Affirmative Action, 1998

12. White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service

child-rearing, which are still primarily a female concern. Thus the challenge for affirmative action is to create those conditions that women need to:

- Overcome the barriers that block access to the wide spectrum of occupations within the Public Service;
- Overcome the barriers that block progression up the employment hierarchy for all women irrespective of rank; and
- Create an environment that affirms them.

This should include a review and a refocus of all training and development programmes geared towards the empowerment of women and a widening of the training focus beyond women in management. Likewise, the increase of women at decision-making levels will lead to greater sensitisation of the workplace on gender issues and more responsive delivery to women".

3.4.4 The Employment Equity Act of 1998

The Employment Equity Act of 1998 was introduced to provide further measures to promote affirmative action and hence gender equity throughout workplaces in the country. The purpose of this Act is to achieve equality in the workplace by:

- Promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination; and
- Implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, to ensure equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce¹³.

Affirmative action measures are measures designed to ensure that suitably qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce of a designated employer. These measures implemented must include:

- Measures to identify and eliminate employment barriers, including unfair discrimination, which adversely affect people from designated groups;
- Measures designed to further diversity in the workplace based on equal dignity and respect of all people;
- Making reasonable accommodation for people from designated groups in order to ensure that they enjoy equal opportunities and are equitably represented in the workforce of a designated employer; and
- Retaining and developing people from designated groups and implementing appropriate training measures, including measures in terms of an Act of Parliament providing for skills development.

3.4.5 Public Services Regulations

To support the above White Papers and to give effect to the provisions of the Employment Equity Act, the Public Service Regulations of 2001¹⁴ sets out the requirements for Departments to implement an Affirmative Action programme. In terms of the Regulations an executing authority shall develop and implement an affirmative action programme, which shall contain, as a minimum, the following:

- A policy statement that sets out the department's commitment to affirmative action, and how that policy will be implemented;
- Numeric and time-bound targets for achieving representativeness;
- Annual statistics on the appointment, training and promotion within each grade of each occupational category, of persons historically disadvantaged; and

13. The Employment Equity Act, 1998

14. Public Service Regulations, 2001

- A plan for redressing numeric under-representativeness and supporting the advancement of persons historically disadvantaged.

An audit of Affirmative Action in the Public Service¹⁵ found that whilst overall progress is being made with the setting of Affirmative Action targets, there are significant challenges for the effective compliance with the policy requirements on Affirmative Action.

3.4.6 Gender Policy Frameworks

The policy environment for gender mainstreaming in South Africa is also outlined in two key documents, namely:

- A framework for transforming gender relations in South Africa, by the Commission for Gender Equality.
- South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, prepared by the Office on the Status of Women, 2002.

3.4.6.1 Framework for Transforming Gender Relations

This document produced by the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), is said to be written "for anyone who is working to transform and develop South Africa, but particularly for policy makers and trainers"¹⁶. It is the Commission on Gender Equality's (CGE) first attempt to formulate a framework, which seeks to promote and protect gender equality. The document has many gaps but essentially covers issues such as:

- Conceptual issues of gender and gender equality,
- The contextual framework for gender equality,
- Policy making approaches, and translating these into practice, and
- The institutional framework for advancing gender equality in South Africa.

The CGE saw this document as but a part of its mandate to educate the public on gender equality, in a broad sense. This need for public education was identified over a number of years and the framework was designed to meet some of the needs expressed in workshops, meetings and daily calls to the offices of CGE. It was also seen as their attempt to provide policy makers and planners with a tool that can help them to understand what is required, as well as be able to design effective policies and programmes.

3.4.6.2 South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality

The National Policy Framework¹⁷ establishes guidelines for South Africa as a nation to take action to remedy gender inequalities by defining new terms of reference for interacting with each other in both the private and public spheres, and by proposing and recommending an institutional framework that facilitates equal access to goods and services for both women and men. The National Policy Framework proposes a process that moves away from treating gender issues as add-on issues. Often, while discussing issues of development, it is presumed that gender issues can be addressed after the "hard-core issues" have been dealt with.

"....The National Policy Framework attempts to ensure that the process of achieving Gender equality is at the very center of the transformation process in South Africa within all the structures, institutions, policies, procedures, practices and programmes of government, its agencies and parastatals, civil society and the private sector....."
(Ibid)

15. Audit of Affirmative Action in the Public Service, February 2006

16. A Framework for transforming Gender Relations in South Africa

17. South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, prepared by the Office on the Status of Women, 2002

The National Policy Framework aims to provide generic guidelines, which the various sectors will use to issue more detailed policy documents that are sector specific. Sectors will be able to integrate the principles contained in the Gender Policy Framework into their prevailing policy and strategic documents. It further proposes “an annual national reporting mechanism to ensure that there is regular follow-up and review of progress in the implementation of the National Policy Framework. This will take the form of an annual meeting to which various stakeholders will be invited to report on progress. The meeting will focus on assessing performance on the basis of indicators described in the National Policy Framework and on providing guidelines for the way forward.

In 2005, a Draft National Programme of Action on Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality 2005 – 2015 was distributed by the OSW as a discussion document. This document states “.....Government has indicated its contribution to a broader Programme of Action to be launched on 10 December 2005 which will also include the commitments of Section 9 Institutions, the Legislation as well as NGOs and civil society to the empowerment of women in South Africa.....”

Some key elements in the Programme of Action include “actions to be taken by government to ensure women’s empowerment and gender equality” and highlight issues, amongst others, such as:

- Ensuring compliance with the South African National Policy Framework on Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality;
- Ensuring compliance by Heads of Departments on the effective implementation of the provisions of the National Policy;
- Creating appropriate institutional mechanisms to advance gender equality and empower women;
- Implement the roll out of training programmes for all public sector managers including managers on gender mainstreaming in the Public Service;
- Ensure implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies across all sectors into all policies, programmes and projects;
- Take positive action to build a critical mass of women leaders, executives and managers in strategic decision making positions;
- Put in place appropriate training programmes to assist men in the Public Service to be able to deal with gender equality imperatives and women’s empowerment initiatives in the workplace;
- Ensure government training includes gender management and gender mainstreaming for all Public Service managers to ensure the integration of women and women’s issues into all areas of governance; and
- Review the 30% quota with regard to women in decision making positions in the Public Service in line with the new 50% parity clause of SADC Heads of State.

Underlying all of this is the importance of a strong and well coordinated National Gender Machinery as an effective forum for ensuring women’s empowerment and gender equality.

3.5 National Gender Machinery

There are key processes and mechanisms that must be adopted to affirm a vibrant national gender programme advancing the country towards gender equality. The mechanisms for transforming gender relations in South Africa were therefore reviewed, and are collectively known within government and civil society as the “National Gender Machinery”. Together, these mechanisms aim to promote and protect gender equality, both by mainstreaming it and by dealing with it separately. The National Gender Machinery has structures at different levels in national government, the legislature and statutory bodies.

3.5.1 The National Machinery in Government

The **National Office on the Status of Women** is located in The Presidency. The National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality states "...The OSW has a vital role to play as the principal coordinating structure for the National Machinery on gender equality. It has been constructed as the nerve centre for developing and maintaining a vibrant gender programme. It develops frameworks and monitors their implementation. It is responsible for developing national gender plans as well as national strategies to implement them...."

According to the Gender Policy Framework "At the operational level, the main responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation of the National Gender Policy, will rest with individual government departments at national and provincial levels. All departments will be required to establish dedicated Gender Units or Focal Points to assist in the formulation and implementation of effective action plans to promote women's empowerment and gender equality in the work of departments".

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) is responsible for the formulation of Public Service policy. It is the custodian of the Public Service Act of 1994, which provides for "the organisation and administration of the South African Public Service, the regulation of the conditions of employment, terms of office, discipline, retirement and discharge of members of the Public Service, and matters connected therewith"¹⁸. The DPSA is also responsible for ensuring that Affirmative Action programmes in the Public Service are implemented, which indicates the critical role they have not only in promoting gender equality in government, but also in holding Departments accountable for implementing gender programmes in the workplace. The DPSA would also be the key driver to ensure that recommendations arising out of studies such as this are implemented in government departments as a way to promote and enhance gender equality.

3.5.2 The National Machinery in the Legislature

The **Women's Empowerment Unit (WEU)** aims to identify and address the obstacles to women's full participation in law-making processes. It is a project of the Speakers' Forum and situated in the Gauteng provincial legislature. At present, most of the women's caucuses in provincial legislatures are informal. Some provincial legislatures have standing committees or sub-committees for gender issues.

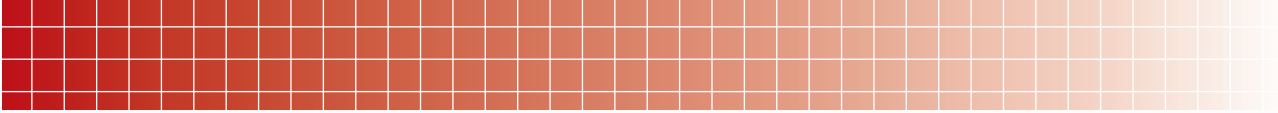
The **Parliamentary Women's Group (PWG)** is a multi-party women's caucus established in 1994 and aims to make parliament more gender sensitive.

The **Committee on Improvement of Quality of Life and Status of Women is a Parliamentary Committee established** in August 1996 and largely responsible for gender mainstreaming. Their role is to formulate policy and review draft legislation.

3.5.3 The National Machinery's Independent Statutory Bodies

The **Commission on Gender Equality (CGE)** is an independent public body established in accordance with the Commission on Gender Equality Act No 39 of 1996, which spells out its mandate and functions. The CGE's mandate includes having the power to hold accountable state organs, statutory and public bodies, as well as the private sector, for promoting and protecting gender equality. Its constituency is all South Africans, but it is targeting those who live on the periphery, and has identified, in particular, women in rural areas, on farms, in domestic employ and in informal settlements. The CGE strives to transform society through exposing

18. Public Services Act, 1994



and addressing gender discriminatory practices of any kind and through instilling respect for women's rights. Its functions include providing information and education on promoting and protecting gender equality in South African society.

The **South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC)** is an important mechanism for promoting and protecting human rights, which include women's rights. The SAHRC is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the rights in the Bill of Rights, with special emphasis on the implementation of socio-economic rights.

The **Public Protector** receives complaints from the public against government agencies and officials and investigates cases of unfair conduct. Women can take advantage of this office when they have been treated unfairly.

The **Public Service Commission** supports greater gender equality in the Public Service as it is responsible for promoting an equitable and unbiased Public Service, a broadly representative public administration and employment practices that are based on ability, objectivity, fairness and which also redresses the imbalances of the past.

The **Financial and Fiscal Commission** advises government on the allocation of government money. It is particularly concerned with how money is distributed between the different parts of government and its allocation formula favours the more rural provinces. This bias has a positive impact on women as the majority of rural people are women.

3.6 Concluding comments

While the purpose of this chapter was not critique the role and performance of the National Gender Machinery, it serves to identify the various components that collectively make up the institutional framework to support gender empowerment and gender equality in the Public Service of South Africa.

Chapter Four

QUANTITATIVE OVERVIEW OF WOMEN
IN SENIOR POSITIONS IN THE PUBLIC
SERVICE

4.1 Introduction

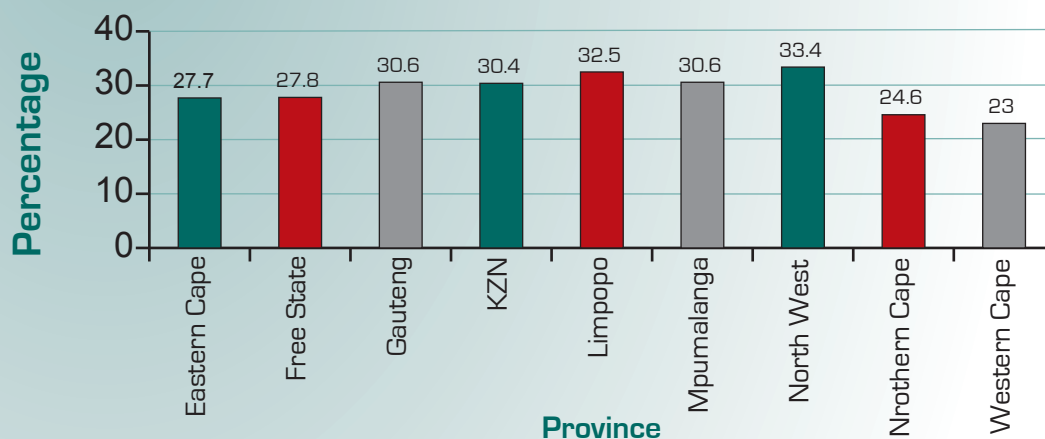
The Employment Equity Act 1998 outlines the measures necessary to make affirmative action a success, and for achieving gender equality. As already mentioned in this report, the target set by Cabinet was that 30% of senior managers appointed should be women (that is, from salary level 13 to 16) by April 2005. This chapter provides a quantitative analysis and reflects the number of women that are in senior positions in the Public Service. As at June 2006 women occupied 30,3% of managerial positions.

The data was sourced from the Vulindlela database¹⁹. It is important to point out that information presented in this report may vary to some extent to the actual numbers of women currently in senior positions. This was evident in collating information received from selected departments. Various reasons for this include:

- Staff promoted into more senior positions.
- Staff who resigned or dismissed from their jobs.
- Information may be presented by departments differently to how it is captured by Vulindlela.
- The time period between the start of the research and when the report was finally produced might present additional variances.

4.2 Provincial overview of Women in Senior Positions (levels 13-16) in the Public Service

Figure 1: Percentage of women by Province in salary levels 13 – 16



A profile of provincial departments according to the percentage of women in senior positions was undertaken as displayed in Figure 1. The average percentage of women in senior positions in provincial departments is 29,8% which is only 0,2% below the target that was set. Some of the reasons for the varying degrees of women in senior positions relate to the extent to which the environment supporting women is enabling or constraining, which will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

In terms of the provincial analysis, North West (33,4%) and Limpopo (32,5%) have the most women in senior positions followed by Gauteng and Mpumalanga reflecting 30,6% respectively. The Western Cape has the lowest percentage of female managers (23%).

It must be noted that the percentage of women in senior level positions is not proportionate to the overall number of women in a department. This means that while there are many women employed in departments,

¹⁹. Vulindlela Database as at 30 June 2006

they mainly occupy lower positions.

This is evident in the example of both the Western Cape and Limpopo. In the Western Cape there are more women employed in the province (64%) as compared to Gauteng (61%). However, the Western Cape has the least amount of women in senior positions (23%). Gauteng on the other hand has a higher number of women employed in senior positions (30,6%) despite having comparatively less women at all levels in the province.

4.3 Provincial Departmental Review of Women in Senior Positions (levels 13-16) in the Public Service

Figure 2: Percentage of women in salary levels 13 – 16 in Eastern Cape Departments

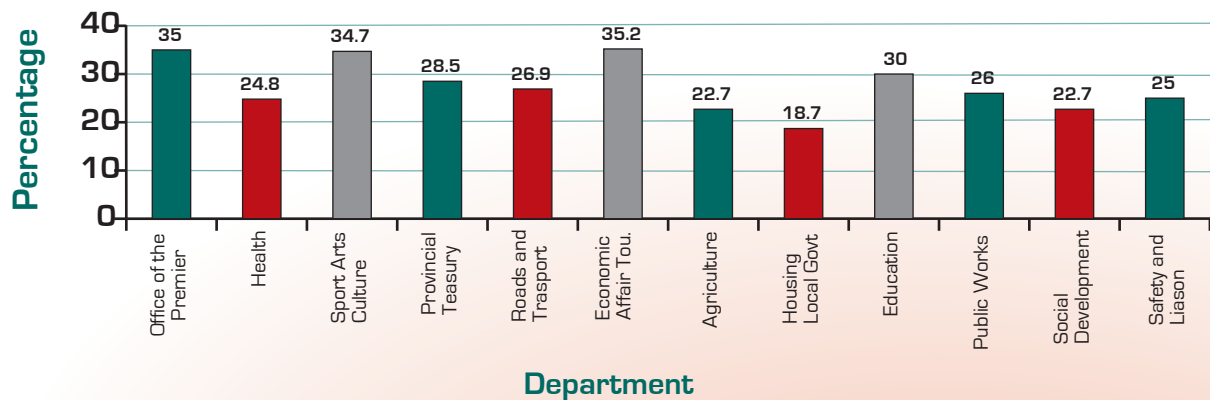
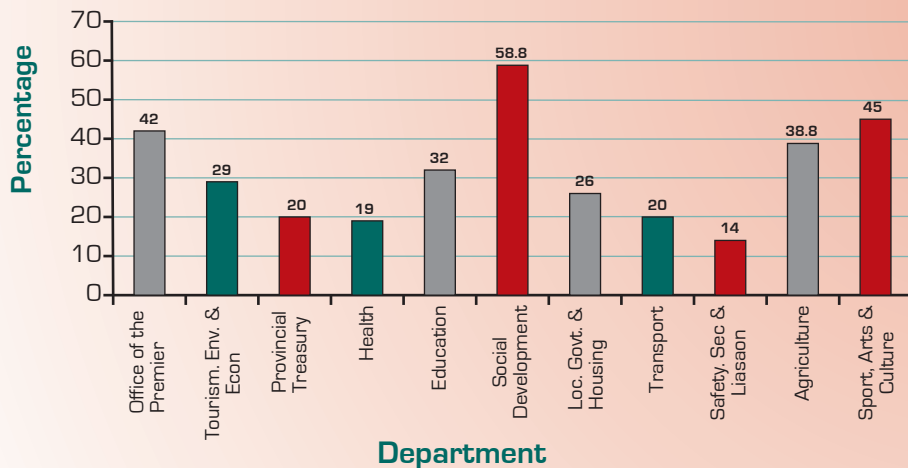


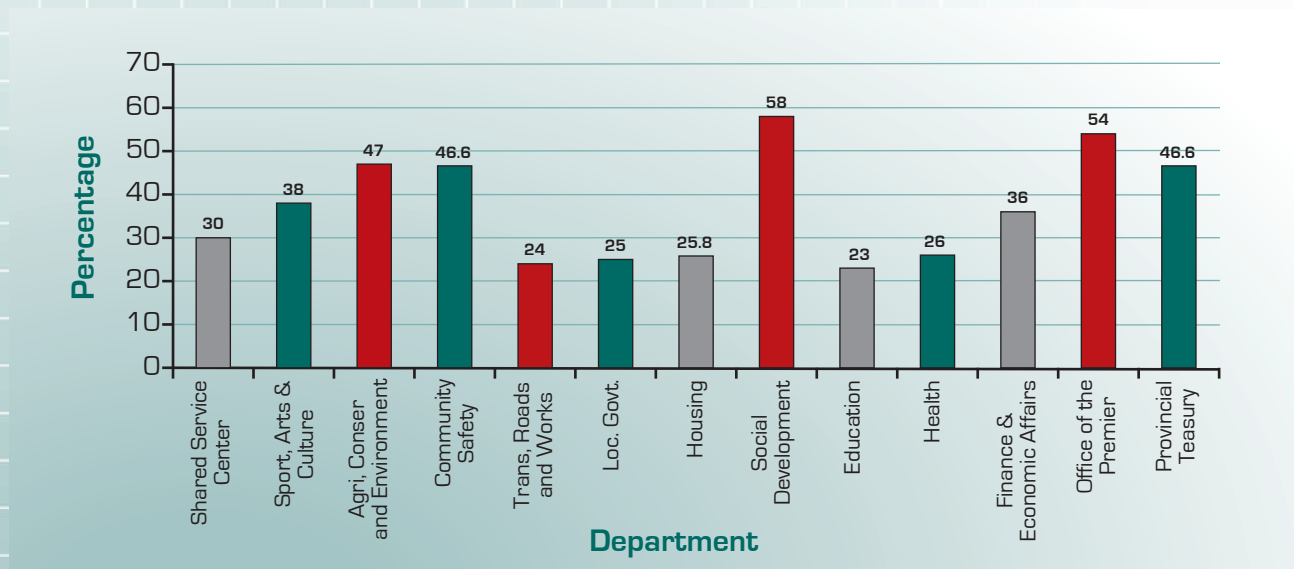
Figure 2 above provides a presentation of how the different departments in the Eastern Cape fare in terms of employing women in senior positions. The provincial percentage of women in senior positions in the Eastern Cape is 27,7%. Seven of the 12 departments fall below this average. The Office of the Premier, Economic Affairs and Tourism and Sports and Culture are well above the average.

Figure 3: Percentage of women in salary levels 13 – 16 in Free State Departments



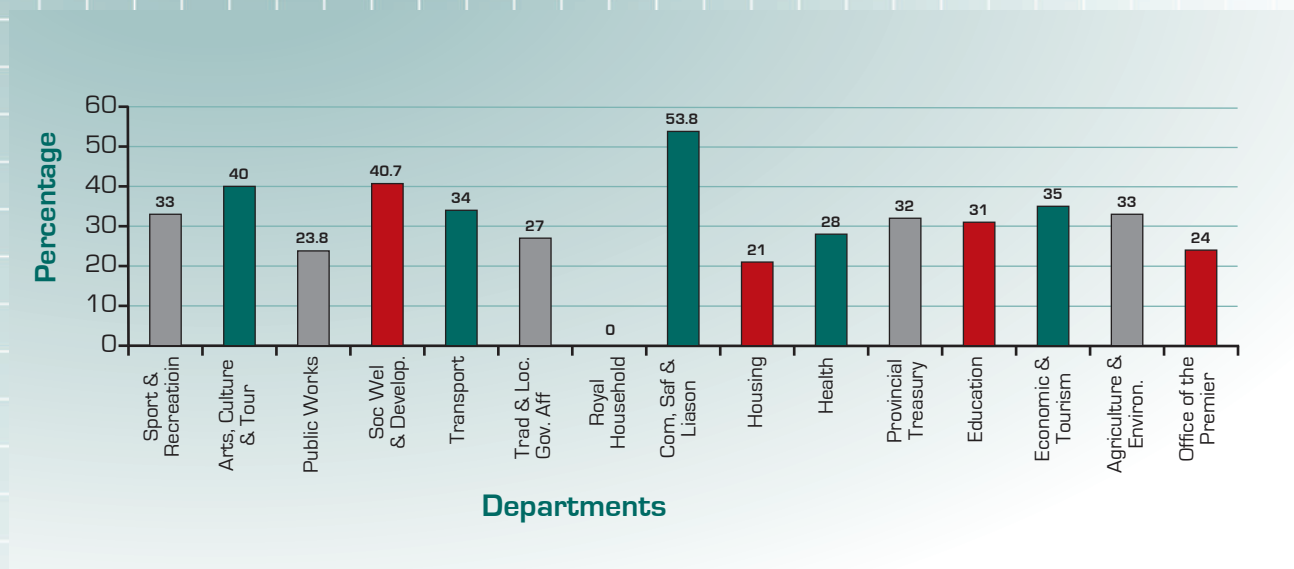
In the Free State the average percentage of women in senior positions is 27.8%. The Department of Social Development has an exceptionally high percentage of women in senior positions (58.8%) and sets a clear example for the other departments to strive for. Of concern is Safety and Liaison where only 14% of senior managers are women.

Figure 4: Percentage of women in salary levels 13 – 16 in Gauteng Departments



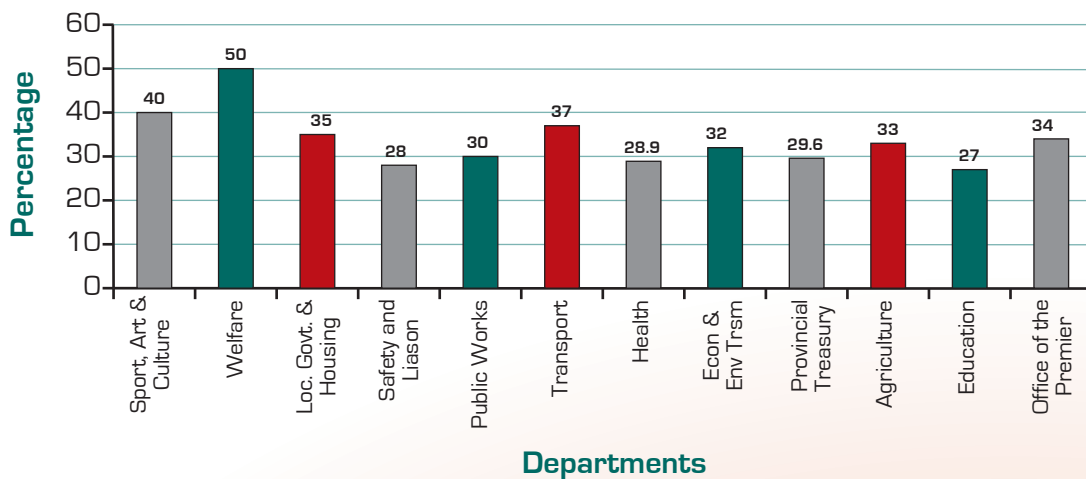
In Gauteng the average percentage of women in senior positions is 30.6%. Only four (4) departments fall below the national average of 30,3%. While the Department of Social Development has traditionally employed more women, the Departments of Finance and Sports and Culture which are traditionally known to employ more men also have a high percentage of women employed in senior positions.

Figure 5: Percentage of women in salary levels 13 – 16 in KwaZulu-Natal Departments



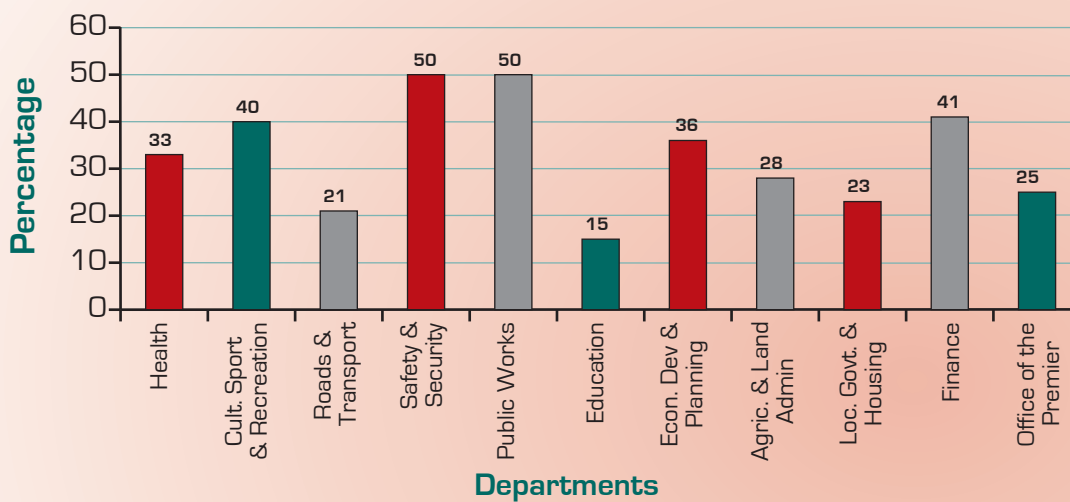
In KwaZulu-Natal the average percentage of women in senior positions is 30,4%. Figure 5 above shows that three departments, that is Community Safety and Liaison, Social Welfare and Population Development and Arts, Culture and Tourism have an average of 40% and more female managers. At the same time, there are six (6) departments that fall below the provincial average.

Figure 6: Percentage of women in salary levels 13 – 16 in Limpopo Departments



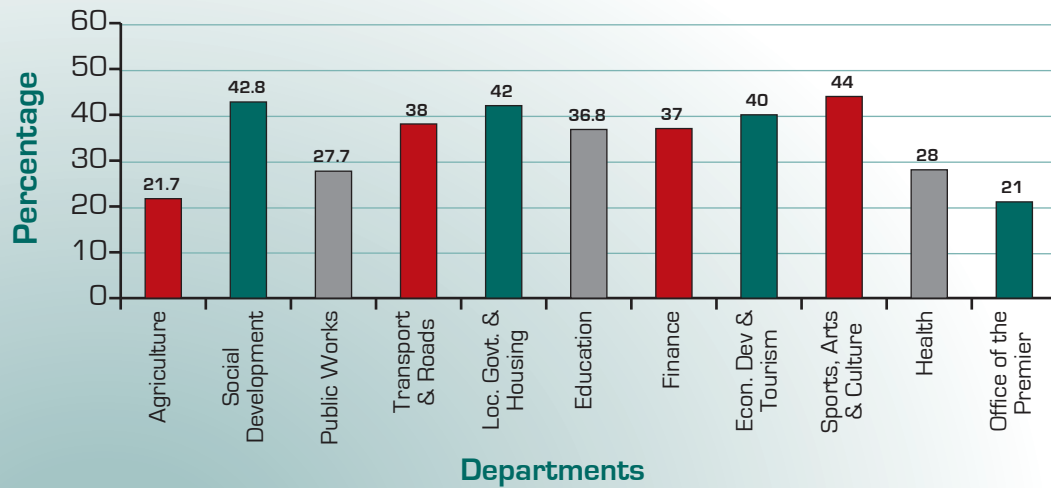
Limpopo has the second highest average percentage (32,5%) of women in senior positions. Only five (5) departments fall below the national average of 30,3%. Of all provinces Limpopo has the most departments (8) with 30% and more women in senior positions (see Figure 6 above).

Figure 7: Percentage of women in salary levels 13 – 16 in Mpumalanga Departments



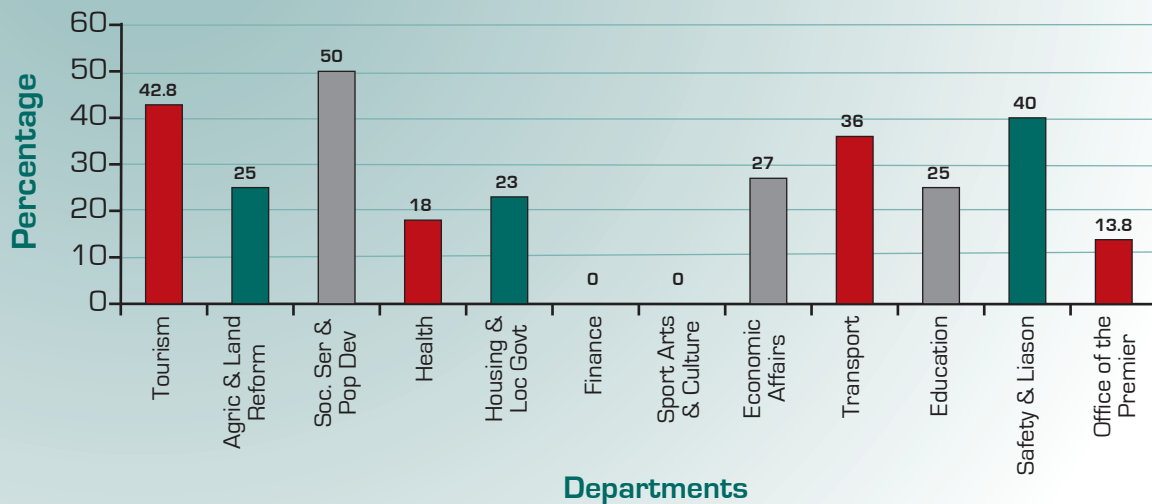
Mpumalanga has attained the target set by Cabinet with the provincial average being 30,6%. There are four (4) departments with an average of 40% and more female managers as indicated in Figure 7 above.

Figure 8: Percentage of women in salary levels 13 – 16 in North West Departments



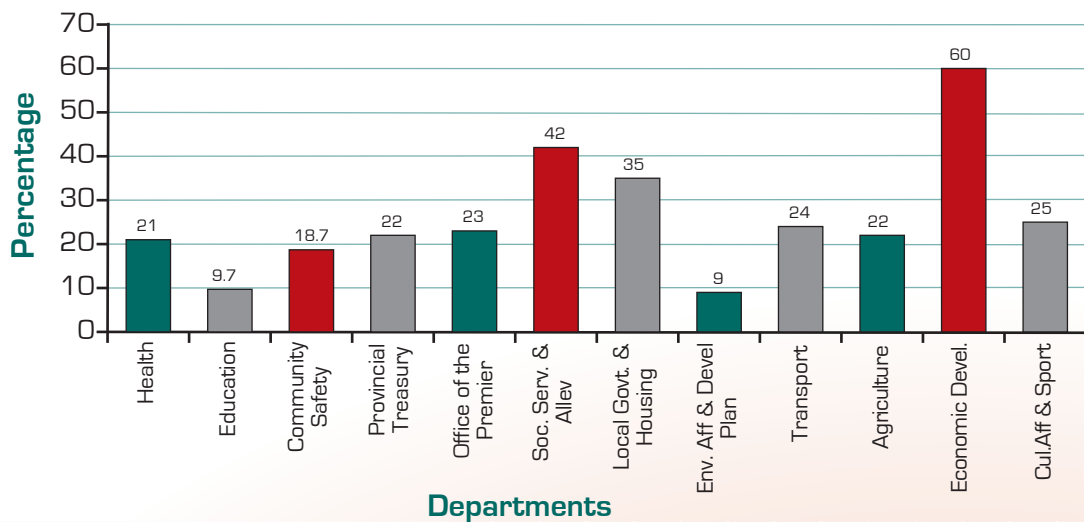
The North West has the highest average percentage women in senior positions (33,4%). Figure 8 shows Sports, Arts and Culture in particular having a high percentage of women in senior positions (44%).

Figure 9: Percentage of women in salary levels 13 – 16 in Northern Cape Departments



In the Northern Cape the average percentage of women in senior positions (24,6%) falls below the national average of 30,3%. It is the second worst performing province. In this province, as shown in Figure 9, there is a big difference in the range of percentages of women employed in senior positions (from 50% in the Department of Social Services to 0% in the Departments of Finance and Sports, Arts and Culture).

Figure 10: Percentage of women in salary levels 13 – 16 in Western Cape Departments



The Western Cape has the lowest average (23%) female managers. Departments such as Education (9,7%) and Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (9%) are specifically lagging way behind.

Across all the provinces there is a 10.4% difference between the province with the highest number of women in senior positions (North West at 33.4%) and the province with the lowest number of women in senior positions (Western Cape at 23%). It is observable from previous studies conducted by the PSC that the Western Cape has been the slowest of all provinces in achieving representivity targets. For example, the Audit on Affirmative Action²⁰ found that in the Western Cape “Whites, despite comprising 20.1% of provincial employees dominate the management levels, with their representivity rising sharply from 5.5% at the lowest salary level to 53% at the highest salary level. This is in the context of a province where coloureds constitute 62.4% of the public servants, while Whites constitute 20.1%”.

A trend found across provincial departments is that the majority of women in senior positions are in the departments of Health and Social Development as compared to other departments. While this seems to be the norm due to the fact that women were traditionally more attracted to such occupations, or had easier access thereto, the trend seems to be changing. For example:

- In the Northern Cape Departments of Health and Education, women only occupy 18% and 25% respectively of senior positions.
- In the Western Cape Departments of Health and Education, women occupy 21% and 9,7% respectively of senior positions.

On the other hand, in some provinces higher numbers of women are employed in senior positions in what were traditionally viewed as more male-dominated departments. Examples include:

- Gauteng Department of Finance with 36% women occupying senior positions and the Departments of Agriculture (47%) and Community Safety (46,6%).
- KwaZulu-Natal Economic Affairs and Tourism (35%) and Sports and Recreation (33%).
- Limpopo Departments of Sports, Arts and Culture (40%).
- Mpumalanga Department of Finance (41%).

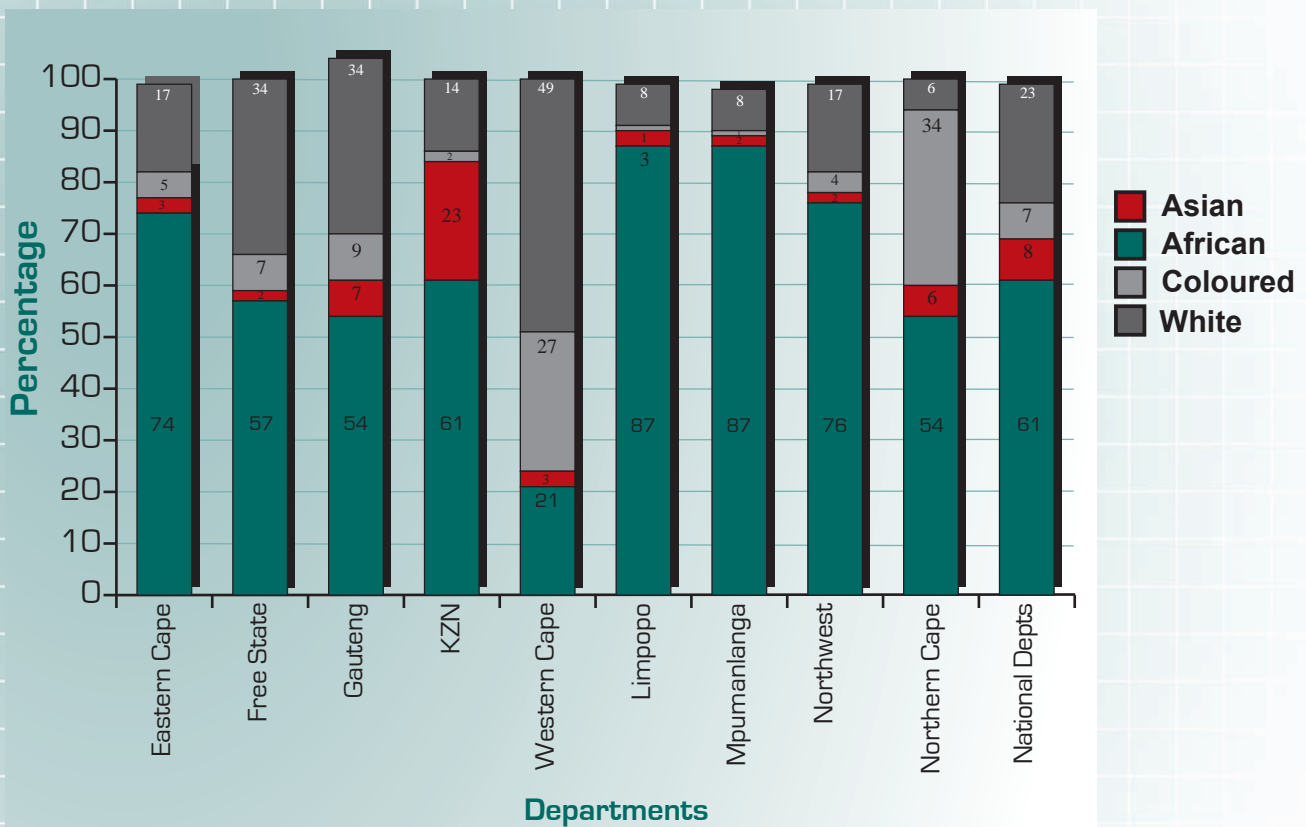
20. Audit of Affirmative Action in the Public Service, 2006

While progress has been made to mainstream women in the Public Service, there is a need to ensure that women executives continue to be appointed to reflect equality between themselves and their male counterparts.

4.4 Breakdown of Women in Senior Positions (levels 13 – 16) in the Public Service by Race Group

Apart from ensuring gender representivity, there is also an obligation on departments to affirm black women, specifically. An analysis presented by Figure 11 below in this regard was therefore made. It is clear that the majority of women in senior positions are black²¹ and therefore in line with the Affirmative Action objectives of the Public Service.

Figure 11: Breakdown of Women in Senior Positions (salary levels 13-16) in the Public Service by Race Group

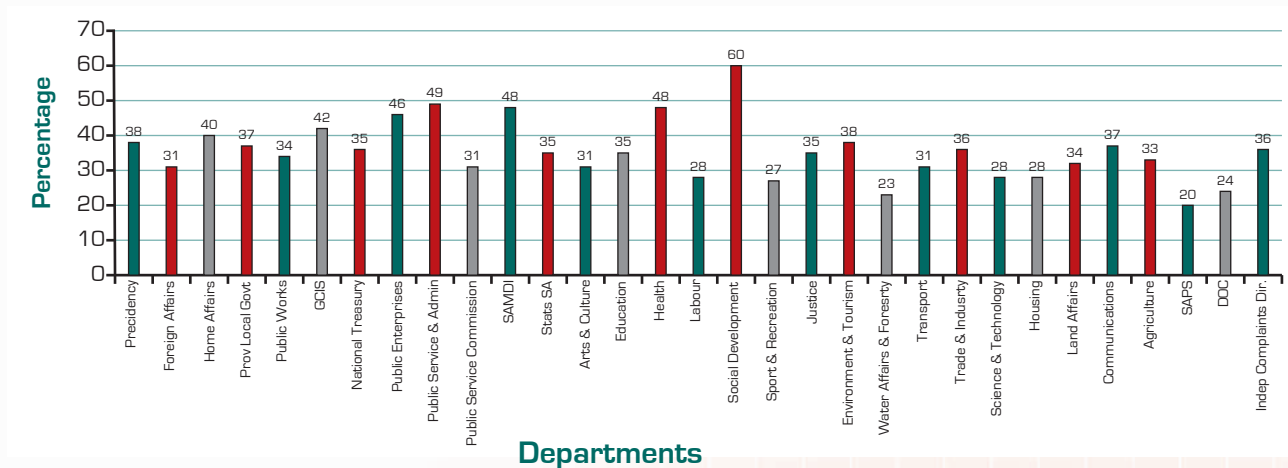


4.5 National Departmental Review of Women in Senior Positions (levels 13-16) in the Public Service

The average percentage of women in senior positions in national departments is 31,2%, which exceeds the target of 30% by 1,2%. Figure 12 indicates that a similar trend in national departments is observed to that of provincial departments, where the highest percentage of women in senior positions is in departments such as Health and Social Development.

21. Racial classification in the Vulindlela database is broken down into African, Indian, Coloured and White. Black as a racial classification for the purposes of this study refers to African, Indian and Coloured.

Figure 12: Percentage of women in salary levels 13 - 16 in National Departments

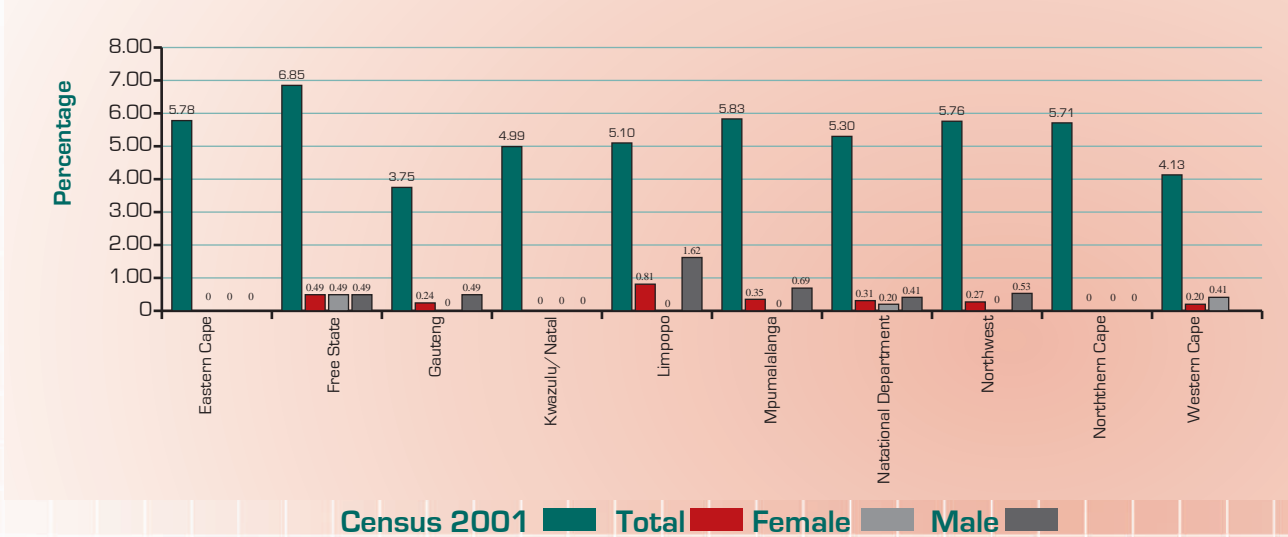


4.6 Women with Disabilities in Senior Positions (levels 13-16) in the Public Service

Previous studies by the PSC have found that the employment of disabled persons in the Public Service is not being addressed appropriately by departments. The figure for males is 0.10% whereas for females it is 0.06%, reflecting a difference of 0.04% between males and females.

Based on Figure 13 it is evident that more disabled men are employed than women at senior management levels in the Public Service. Seven provinces, that is, Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West and Northern Cape have no disabled women occupying senior positions. The Free State (0.49%) and Western Cape (0.41%) are the only two provinces that have employed disabled women in senior positions.

Figure 13: Women with Disabilities in Senior Positions (salary levels 13-16) in the Public Service



4.7 Summary

Whilst it is important to note that the Public Service wide average for female representativity at senior management level stands at 30.3% with the national average at 31.2% and provincial average at almost 30% (29.8%), it is also equally important to acknowledge that some provinces and national departments performed better than the others who had not nearly achieved the target that was set at 30%. Although the target of 30% that was set to be achieved by 2005 at senior management level has been achieved in the Public Service,

it was evident that the majority of women are employed at support staff levels, e.g. secretaries and administration clerks.

The White Paper on Affirmative Action set a benchmark of 30% to be achieved by 1999 for departments to use as an indicator for the success of gender mainstreaming and, hence gender equality. The problem is that when departments reach the 30% target they could assume that they don't need to do more. Target setting could therefore, create a barrier to the continued advancement of women, especially as gender mainstreaming in the South African Public Service is still seen as meeting numerical targets.

The following were highlighted during the research by participants as challenges in altering the gender profile to include more women into senior positions:

- The Public Service has inherited from the government prior to 1994 a staff profile that had men holding the majority of senior management positions. This has been altered with more women being employed in middle management positions and at junior staff levels however, women continue to be under-represented at senior management levels.
- Restructuring of various departments has taken place since 1994. Departments went through amalgamation processes, with some being over-represented by men in senior positions. Thus the staff profile had to be accommodated when departments merged, which resulted into an over-representation of men in senior positions.
- In some departments there are men who are mostly in the 55 year and older age group who will not leave their positions until they retire (at the age of 65 years). This has frustrated the mobility of women into senior positions and therefore is an obstacle to improving gender representivity in the Public Service.
- The quest to achieve gender equality in the Public Service is often hampered, because of factors such as the following:
 - The remuneration of senior posts in the private sector is not able to be matched by the Public Service.
 - The Public Service was often seen as a training ground for women in senior positions, who after gaining critical skills and experience in the Public Service were recruited by the private sector.
 - The culture in the work environment is not yet conducive and enabling for women to be supported and empowered.

Chapter Five

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the key findings of the study. The data collection process used five thematic areas as a basis to source information in addressing the objectives of the study. These thematic areas are profile and representivity, legal and regulatory framework, human resource practices, gender mainstreaming structures, processes and organisational culture. The findings are an amalgamation of issues that cut across the areas identified and are compiled around the key objectives of the study. The findings incorporate aspects that have emerged from the literature review that was undertaken during this study.

5.2 Staff's understanding of gender mainstreaming

The concept of gender mainstreaming was not understood by most of the staff members interviewed. This lack of understanding was not confined to only junior level staff but included many senior staff members. In almost all cases staff members equated gender mainstreaming with employment equity, and indicated that this was about the number of women employed at different levels.

It is clear that the issues surrounding gender must be clarified, and a "gender perspective" established in order to implement gender equality as far as possible in South Africa. Developing a gender perspective is, by itself, a complex and challenging task, yet an essential step toward Gender Mainstreaming.

5.3 Empowerment of women in terms of their role as part of the executive structures of Department's and their involvement in decision making

Empowerment is about people (men and women) taking control over their lives. It refers to the process of "conscientisation" which builds critical analytical skills for an individual to gain self-confidence in order to take control of her or his life. Women's empowerment therefore enables women specifically to set their own agendas, gain skills, build self-confidence, solve problems, and develop self-reliance. It is also an essential process in the transformation of gender relations because it addresses the structural and underlying causes of subordination and discrimination. Women's empowerment is but one means of achieving gender equality and should not be seen as an end in itself.

In terms of the gender representivity profile, it is evident that there are not many women in executive structures in departments, hence limiting their involvement in decision-making. Women in executive structures that participated in the research argue that the predominantly male culture has made it difficult for their voices to be effectively heard.

The power relations that prevent women from leading fulfilling lives operate at many levels of society, from the most personal to the highly public. "Women's equal participation in decision making is not only a demand for justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved"²².

In order to properly assess whether the empowerment of women has occurred in the Public Service, it is important to ask the question: what are the key elements needed in the Public Service in order to empower women. The thematic areas used during this research provides an indication of the extent to which the empowerment of women has been successful.

22. South Africa's National Programme of Action on Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality 2005 - 2015

5.3.1 Legal and regulatory framework

The legal and regulatory framework is an essential tool towards the empowerment of women so that they can advance to senior positions and be part of decision making. Without this framework there are no measures to guide or enforce gender equality.

All Government departments are guided by, and operate within, the legal framework provided by the range of Acts, agreements and policies. A wide range of policies were identified by departments as being relevant to, and assisting them with gender issues. Such policies included provisions surrounding leave, recruitment and selection, promotion, performance management, HIV/AIDS, financial assistance, training & development, bursaries, learnership and mentorship, and sexual harassment. In general most of the policies referred to women as a designated group as stipulated in Affirmative Action and Employment Equity legislation.

Some departments (eleven of the twenty four departments surveyed) had developed their own gender policies to address a variety of issues that would impact on the empowerment of women in their departments. These policies seek to address issues that impact directly or indirectly on the empowerment of women such as:

- Addressing the attitudes and behaviour of individual, group and institutional practices that are discriminatory and entrench the traditional stereotyping of males and females which impacts negatively on their growth and development.
- Ensuring that all decision-making and all practices in the Department are informed by gender considerations which impact proactively on future practices.
- Aligning policies, practices and procedures in all educational institutions, sub-directorates, directorates and programmes with the national legal framework of Government that is signatory to many international declarations.

The policies also addressed issues of capacity building and training of staff through awareness workshops, training and development initiatives as well as reviewing departmental policies and procurement processes to ensure they are gender sensitive.

However, although these departments have been successful in developing gender policies, the implementation of the policies was not as successful with a key challenge being the ability to effectively integrate such policies into overall departmental plans, programmes, and other processes. Reasons cited as limitations in the implementation of gender policies included that:

- Senior staff did not take the gender policies seriously;
- Senior staff did not know the 'how' of gender mainstreaming, in other words the guidelines and toolkits for how to implement gender mainstreaming;
- There was no one with authority to drive gender mainstreaming; and
- There were time constraints and other departmental priorities.

From a policy perspective, empowerment of woman can therefore still be improved.

5.3.2 Structures and processes

What is evident from the literature review is that gender mainstreaming will not occur naturally due to various mitigating factors. Processes and structures need to be in place for gender mainstreaming to occur effectively. The structures and processes internally in departments that drive gender mainstreaming, its role and reporting mechanisms are therefore addressed in this section. Later in the report the role of the Office of the Status of Women (OSW) in terms of gender mainstreaming will be addressed.

The structures that exist in most departments and have a role to play in gender mainstreaming are the gender focal person and Employment Equity Forum. In all cases the Employment Equity Forum had no role to play in monitoring or supporting gender mainstreaming apart from ensuring that employment equity targets with regard to women were met.

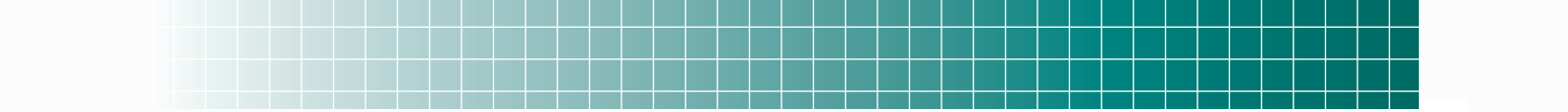
5.3.2.1 Gender Focal Persons (GFP)

The GFP is supposed to drive gender mainstreaming in departments. What is meant to 'drive' gender mainstreaming is, however, unclear to the majority of respondents at all levels. In many cases the GFP was a Special Projects Officer that included having multi-faceted roles with responsibility for children, youth, disability, HIV/AIDS, and in some cases even the Employee Assistance Programme. Only three departments had specifically assigned GFP's to carry out the responsibility of gender mainstreaming. In most cases all the GFP was responsible for, was to organise activities around events such as National Women's day and Sixteen Days of Activism. There was generally a lack of understanding from both GFPs and staff members about what gender mainstreaming is, with a superficial approach indicating that it was about celebrating women's day and "showing appreciation to the ladies".

The National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality clearly identifies the functions of the GFP's. None of the GFPs were however, able to implement their functions in any significant way as identified in the Policy Framework.

GFP faced a number of challenges which included:

- There did not appear to be a great deal of senior management support for the role of the GFP in any of the departments surveyed, resulting in the compromising of the GFP's position in departments and the seriousness with which their work and processes were taken more broadly. Although immediate managers generally tried to be supportive, there was not a clear understanding of or commitment to gender issues more broadly. The supervisors of the GFP were often inappropriate and did not hold a position in the departments that sent a clear message about gender and its importance in the departments.
- Gender was not mainstreamed in the departments, but seen as a stand alone issue to be dealt with on an ad hoc basis.
- It was felt by respondents that the level of the GFPs in the departments was too low with the majority being in positions of Assistant Director. In order for this position to carry more weight, influence and decision-making powers, it was suggested by some respondents that it should be at Director level. Alternatively, if the level remained that of Assistant Director, that the position should be given the authority that is needed to genuinely drive gender mainstreaming.
- The GFPs often worked alone or with minimal support and were therefore not able to do their jobs properly.
- Managers were not familiar with gender issues and thought that gender was about women only.
- Lack of dedicated budget for gender mainstreaming resulting in an inability to conduct proper programmes and activities. In cases where funding was allocated to gender related activities this was prioritised for events such as National Women's Day.
- Many of the departments did not have a coherent strategy within which to focus on gender issues.
- Lack of co-operation from other members of the departments generally.



In addition, the GFP themselves did not have the capacity to drive gender mainstreaming in departments. The majority of them did not understand their role or how to carry out their responsibilities. Even if they were provided with the concepts and tools for gender mainstreaming, they could not do justice to their tasks unless they were dedicated to address gender mainstreaming.

5.3.2.2 Processes

Although there were planning and budgeting processes in place, in most departments gender was not mainstreamed into the planning processes. In three departments, however, gender mainstreaming planning had taken place (Gauteng Department of Social Development, Western Cape Education Department and Northern Cape Department of Social Services and Population Development). The Department of Social Development in Gauteng had a strategic work plan for gender which was developed three years ago. In the Northern Cape the Department of Social Services and Population Development had developed a comprehensive “Provincial Gender Action Plan”. In the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) the GFP developed strategic planning documents on gender mainstreaming as well as developing indicators of success in the gender mainstreaming process. The Department of Social Development in the Western Cape also provided a similar example where staff were trained in how to develop gender sensitive indicators. The WCED strategic planning documents on gender mainstreaming, amongst others, provided for the following:

- “Implement and prioritise the WCED Gender Policy and implementation strategy in all sites of the WCED.
- To establish mechanisms and a process for monitoring and evaluating progress in mainstreaming gender, and reports on this provided to senior management.
- To provide gender training (in analysis, planning, mainstreaming, budgeting, advocacy and lobbying in WCED) in order to enhance awareness around gender implications of, for example, budgets.

In all cases, the plans were broadly defined and the implementation of these plans, as with that of the gender policies, was difficult to integrate into normal planning processes and therefore, difficult to implement.

Having addressed the lack of and inadequacy of the ‘drivers’ of gender mainstreaming at all levels within departments, it is fair to say that the environment in general is not enabling for the empowerment of women. It remains a mainly male-dominated environment.

5.3.3 Human resource development

This section addresses training and development opportunities as it contributes to the empowerment of women. It is evident from the research that no specific actions were taken to fast-track women into leadership and senior management positions.

Although it appeared that there are adequate resources, support and encouragement for staff development and training, these opportunities were ‘gender neutral’ and did not promote women in any meaningful way. In some departments there was a focus to promote women in the external programmes activities. For example in the National Department of Science and Technology, there was an understanding that in order to advance women they are given preference in the issuing of bursaries. Another example refers to the National Treasury where specific targets were set to either award bursaries or recruit women into external programmes.

In the Western Cape Department of Social Development a training course had been developed particularly for women. The executive training programme was particularly aimed at building the capacity of women. However, on further examination it was ascertained that it had not lead to women being promoted even though women were hoping for acknowledgement through promotions. This raised the issue of mentoring

and coaching in departments. Apart from the DPSA and DoL where a Mentorship Guide Policy exists, no other department had a formal mentoring and coaching programme. However, mentoring seemed to occur on an informal basis although not a large scale. Mentoring was seen as particularly useful in ensuring that training programmes attended by staff members were translated into practice at the workplace. More importantly if women were provided with some form of mentorship this could assist in fast tracking to apply for promotions into executive structures.

Another complexity was that women often did not take up the opportunities for training where they would have to leave their homes for extended periods due to domestic responsibilities. Opinions were divided on this issue as some staff members suggested that women do not make themselves available for training, whilst other agreed that due to family responsibilities women were unfairly excluded from such opportunities.

5.4 Family friendly policies which take into account the social benefits of families, such as flexi-time for men and women and childcare arrangements which support equal family responsibility

In the Public Service women and men face different social constraints. A very real and practical constraint for women to achieve real satisfaction in their jobs is the responsibility they naturally bear for raising children and performing household tasks. An important feature of their professional and managerial work is the long hours often required to complete tasks to gain recognition and eventual promotion. Thus, women who want both a family and career have to straddle both these heavy responsibilities.

A more subtle constraint is that even women without family responsibilities are still seen as potential mothers, with less attention being given to their training and career opportunities than their male counterparts, thus reducing their chances of obtaining top jobs further up the hierarchy. This can be perceived as a “glass ceiling” that limits their advancement and is a possible reason that can be attributed to the slow progress in the attainment of targets set to achieve gender representivity in senior management echelons²³.

5.4.1 Human resource policies/programmes

Human resource practices have an impact on how women progress into senior positions in the workplace. In general most of the policies refer to women as a designated group as stipulated in Affirmative Action and Employment Equity legislation. Policies such as maternity leave and family responsibility leave were seen as examples of policies/ programmes that have a gender focus in them. This negates the fact that many of these are basic conditions of employment that apply to all employees, as stipulated in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. It was noted that the EAP was seen as having a women's focus when in fact it is a programme meant to assist all employees, although most of the users were women.

Apart from the Family Responsibility leave there are no family friendly policies. In many instances staff were able to use this policy to attend to emergencies, health issues such as pre-menstrual tension and other domestic responsibilities and in this way it was seen as dealing with women's practical needs, albeit very inadequately. The DPSA initiated a policy on breast feeding meant to create a more conducive physical environment for pregnant mothers and those that were breast feeding. This was probably one of the only policies that referred specifically to the interest and well-being of women, and could be promoted in the Public Service as long as there are facilities available. Similarly, the Gauteng Department of Social Development had an Employment Equity Plan that was very clear about providing support to women employees particularly, resulting in the policies and procedures being applied using this lens. In addition, the department had undertaken an 'organisational climate' survey which had resulted in a document entitled “Organisational Culture Interventions 2005 – 2006”, that also spoke implicitly of gender equality issues.

23. Terms of Reference Public Service Commission German Technical Cooperation Gender Mainstreaming Initiative in the Public Service.

5.4.1.1 Flexi-time

Very few of the departments had a flexi-time approach which allowed women to come in early or late or not take lunch, or even work from home in some instances. However, these arrangements were negotiated with managers and supervisors and depended on the relationships between staff members and their bosses. In many instances there appeared to be more of a sense of discrimination between levels of employment rather than between men and women. For instance, in some departments there was a clear distinction between women who were at senior management level because they had access to laptops so they could work from home. The same did not apply to women at lower levels.

There is a significant increase in men assuming their parenting responsibilities that were traditionally seen to be a women's role, as well as men as single parents. The response from management has been varied and on the one hand again dependent on the relationship between manager and staff. Many managers still maintain that parenting is a woman's responsibility and would allude to this when asked for permission to fulfil these responsibilities.

5.4.1.2 Child care facilities

Whilst no departments reported that they had on-site child care or crèche facilities the Department of Health had in the past provided subsidised child care facilities at hospitals. Many staff members who are parents stated that it would be beneficial for them to have such a facility at their place of work especially during school holidays or when a child was sick. In instances such as these where parents found themselves with no alternative but to bring children to work, this created difficulties as the children stayed in their parents' offices and this often distracted them from their work and also made them feel anxious that they were disturbing their colleagues. Some departments were keen to pursue the issue of child care facilities but were waiting for DPSA to provide guidelines of how to go about doing this.

Whilst most staff members who had babies took the allocated maternity leave, for some this was not adequate as they wanted to continue breastfeeding their children. Obviously being able to allow for child-care facilities as well as facilities for breastfeeding requires that some resources be put into establishing such facilities. This also impacts on women with small children (and in some cases breastfeeding their children), who are not able to leave their children at home and consequently who are not able to accept training opportunities away from home. The issue around flexi-time, child-care and breast feeding facilities raised an inherent concern amongst participants in the research that these policies would be abused and affect service delivery negatively.

5.4.1.3 Example of international practice

Given the context described above, as well as the stalling or slow progress of government to move forward in developing family friendly policies that would support and empower women towards greater gender equality, the following example of a policy adopted by the United Kingdom provides an example of how this could be approached. The policy called the Child Care Strategy is based on the premise of "ensuring that every child has the best start in life and to creating more choice for all parents: helping fathers and mothers better control the balance between work and time spent with children, whilst ensuring that the needs of business are met".

Following publication of its Ten Year Strategy for Childcare²⁴, consultation commenced on a set of proposals aimed at providing more choice for families in how they balance work and caring responsibilities. The underpinning principles guiding the development of the proposals were to:

- Ensure that every child has the best possible start in life;
- Respond to the changing patterns of employment and ensure that parents, especially mothers, and others with caring responsibilities can work and progress their careers; and
- Enable all families to have genuine choices about how they balance work and family life.

24. Work life Balance: www.dti.gov.uk/workandfamilies

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24. Work life Balance: www.dti.gov.uk/workandfamilies

As a result of its Ten Year Childcare Strategy the following were extended to working parents:

- Maternity and adoption pay from six to nine months from April 2007, towards the goal of a year's paid leave;
- Allowing fathers to take up to six months paid additional paternity leave during the child's first year, if the mother returns to work; and
- Introducing measures to help employers manage the administration of leave and pay and plan ahead with greater certainty.

While this has been promoted as a best practice for government, the extent to which the implementation thereof has been successful is not certain and would need further investigation. However, the important point is that at the highest level there should be political will to support the equality and empowerment of women and this example attests to that.

5.5 The impact that gender mainstreaming has on management responses to both male and female staff members

Apart from meeting employment equity targets for women, gender mainstreaming is not happening in any significant way. It is worth noting that while management verbalise support for gender mainstreaming this has not been seen as a priority in departments and has therefore not been translated into practice.

5.5.1 Senior management responses

Senior management often do not even understand their role in relation to gender mainstreaming. Many managers in senior positions have overtly conservative and traditional views on women and this is often translated back into the work place. Neither has senior management created an enabling environment for gender mainstreaming. The challenge is that at a conceptual level most senior managers do not understand the concept of gender mainstreaming and equate it with employment equity targets and this in turn informs how they approach the subject. In addition, they have not attended training programmes because there is either no time or no interest so they don't improve their own conceptual understanding of the subject.

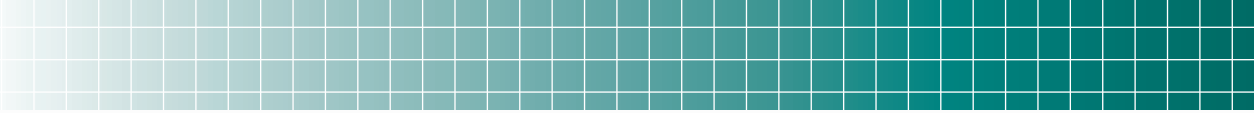
5.5.2 Differences between male and female managers

There was no uniformity of responses to the question about differences between male and female managers across the departments. Some men and women agreed that male managers were better to work for as they were more predictable and less moody than female managers. What was most significant was that the majority of women said that when women are in leadership "they do not support other women; they do not encourage mobility of other women and generally behaved more like a man than men did". However this argument was countered by many female managers who said that it was harder for women to be managers as it was sometimes expected that women had to act like men.

In a number of departments where gender mainstreaming was receiving more attention than in other departments, it was significant that the Director-General or Head of Department was a woman. Staff members ascribed the commitment to gender mainstreaming in these departments to the women in leadership positions.

5.5.3 Example of international practice

Likewise with the previous example of a best practice, the success of gender mainstreaming and gender equality rests not only with verbal support but with the demonstrated political will at the highest level of



government. The examples above indicate that there is very little understanding of gender mainstreaming and gender equality because many senior executive structures do not see it as a priority, and have rather traditional views on the role of women. Hence it is important that government at the highest level create the environment and conditions that will ensure that gender equality is a priority of government as a whole.

The following lessons can be learnt from the governments of Kenya and Australia:

- Kenya established a gender thematic group to influence budgeting at the planning stage. They built the capacity of government officials in several line ministries to employ a gender analysis in policy-making. A gender-mainstreaming project was also developed in the Ministry of Finance and Planning.
- In Australia, a key development was work to advance gender mainstreaming in the planning, development and implementation of government programmes, policies and projects. A range of measures had been undertaken to help government departments in this area, such as:
 - A gender mainstreaming kit which contains practical 'how to' guides and checklists for policy makers, programme managers and service providers;
 - Work to encourage government departments to work jointly with the Office on the Status of Women on some projects; and
 - A gender mainstreaming telephone 'hot-line' service where departments can get personalised assistance.

Another important area of work that Australia is taking forward is promoting the involvement of men and boys to advance equality for women through a variety of programmes aimed at promoting changes in attitudes and behaviours. These include exploring ways to combat entrenched gender stereotypical attitudes and behaviours that are harmful to both men and women.

5.6 The extent to which recruitment and promotion practices are utilised to enhance gender equality in employment

5.6.1 Recruitment

Recruitment of women at all levels was seen as a critical aspect of gender mainstreaming. This was often equated with meeting employment equity targets (where most people understood gender mainstreaming to be the same as employment equity). Recruitment practices in all departments are regulated by the Public Services Regulations and must be in line with Employment Equity and Affirmative Action. In all departments where Employment Equity Plans were in place, this assisted in giving direction to the recruitment and appointment of women. Recruitment practices are allegedly overtaken by "political appointments", with the examples cited often resulting in men being employed over women. This is a complex issue that was explored in various departments with senior managers often defending such appointments, whereas junior staff members felt that such practices discriminated unfairly against women. Junior staff members sometimes referred to recruitment procedures as being window dressing. There was also a feeling that, rather than gender discrimination, there was often racial discrimination, with certain race groups being advantaged unfairly over others and out of the boundaries of the policy and legislation.

There was a perception that employment equity targets can sometimes result in women who are inexperienced filling posts whereas competent and experienced males will lose out on these appointments. In some cases there seemed to be a great deal of ill-feeling from men and particularly white men in this regard.

In the Department of Public Works in Mpumalanga their recruitment and selection processes had targets which informed the scoring system applied to the short-listing of candidates. In recognition of the need to empower women, the recruitment and selection directives would be amended to give women an automatic extra 5 points in the scoring system for posts from Director-level and upwards.

After applications had been scored the practice would still be to interview applicants outside of the designated targets, with managers conducting interviews and undertaking the final selection and having to motivate why the target would not be met, should this eventuality arise.

5.6.2] Types of work women are recruited for

Also evident was that the type of jobs that women are appointed for often place limitations on women being appointed to senior positions in government. Both men and women still believe that posts that involve night meetings and travel are particularly difficult to fill with woman candidates.

Those responsible for ensuring the appointment of more female staff members expressed the challenge of changing the staff profile of women in senior positions. An example of this was given by a senior staff member in a Human Resource Directorate:

"It is difficult to change the profile of certain positions to fit woman candidates who face particular constraints because of their domestic responsibilities. Employment equity is about opening doors for women, not about changing the job and transforming the environment within which people work. If a woman cannot adequately fulfill the job requirements (in terms of qualification and competencies) then she is automatically excluded. We need to find candidates that can best serve the mandate and interests of the department."

While this stereotype must not be reinforced and used as a reason not to employ women to these positions, it is also important to recognise the impact of not addressing women's practical needs in order to make these jobs more accessible to women.

5.6.3] Promotions

The issue of promotions is generally regulated by government policy and internal recruitment processes which maintained that certain positions had to be advertised before they could be filled. While this did not seem to be a problem in relation to gender inequality, there was a definite feeling of disquiet amongst lower level staff members (e.g. support staff, secretarial and cleaning staff particularly) who felt despondent at their lack of promotion and associated opportunities for salary increases. Promotions for women in particular were that much harder if the pool of potential candidates was extended more broadly. In the Department of Science and Technology, however, women have been targeted for advancement and these women were actively encouraged to apply for posts.

Women experience promotions differently from men. With the possibility of longer working hours, frequent travel and transfers to other parts of the country, women often don't apply. While women have opted to attend training courses offered seeing this as a stepping stone to promotions this has not translated into them actually being promoted. With the skills and experience gained in the public sector women are often drawn to the private sector.

Succession plans were not implemented by any of the departments. This is an illustration of departments' inability to proactively identify women who could potentially be promoted. Women are identified to attend training courses, however, due to the lack of mentorship and support to integrate new skills into the work environment, the effects of training was not optimised and in most cases training did not result in promotions.

5.7 The manner in which sensitive issues associated with gender relations (including sexual harassment cases) are handled in departments

5.7.1 Gender relations

Gender relations can impact both positively and negatively in an organisation. The way in which men and women relate to each other is often determined by personal values. In terms of gender mainstreaming the relationships between men and women are therefore often influenced by either the culture of those people who make up the organisation, or by the collective organisational culture of that particular department. The organisational culture can negatively impact on how a woman progresses into senior positions in the work situation.

On the surface, relationships between men and women were reported as satisfactory. However, many women managers stated that they were treated unfairly by male senior managers and sometimes by peers. Some women did not feel that their male colleagues appreciated or respected them, and that double standards were applied with regard to work volumes and accessibility of support: i.e. women expected to carry out more work than their male counterparts with little or no administrative support.

While gender relations often resulted in dynamics negatively affecting women this was also extended to racial dynamics. It was stated by some women that because of the Employment Equity legislation, people doubted black women's ability to do their jobs, and therefore they were not taken seriously.

5.7.2 Sexual harassment

It became apparent that sexual harassment is a very sensitive topic and that many staff members were uncomfortable to discuss such matters in an open forum. On one occasion the researchers were approached after a focus group to discuss a participant's experience of sexual harassment that could not be discussed openly.

5.7.2.1 Sexual harassment policies

Although the issue of sexual harassment has been highlighted in the media and talked about by the National Gender Machinery, only eight departments surveyed appeared to have made progress with regard to sexual harassment policies. Of these only three seemed to have been formally approved. Those departments that had not developed their own policies or procedures around the prevention and management of sexual harassment were using national and provincial protocols such as grievance procedures and service standards to guide them in their responses to sexual harassment.

5.7.2.2 Knowledge of sexual harassment

The issue of sexual harassment has raised some disturbing scenarios. On the one hand, there was a lack of understanding about sexual harassment from both senior and junior staff which is alarming because sexual harassment policies have been around for about 10 years. Many of the departments claimed to have had or were planning workshops on sexual harassment. In most cases this response seemed to be because the issue was raised by the researchers rather than because it was genuinely being considered, as none of the staff were aware that workshops on sexual harassment had been conducted or were being planned.

This lack of knowledge and understanding of sexual harassment often resulted in ambiguity in interpretation. Whereas some of the departments indicated a culture of men being 'affectionate' towards their women colleagues which, seemed to be acceptable to all concerned, the same actions had been identified as sexual harassment in other departments. The tolerance levels for familiarity between men and women varied markedly between departments and indicated a lack of uniform understanding of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate gender relations at the work place.

The concern also arose around senior management having affairs with junior staff. When these relationships ended the junior staff member would then lay charges of sexual harassment. Caution was raised by many women at the tendency for young women to 'throw themselves at senior management' where they are either exploited or ignored. Often when the manager does not concede to certain demands then they say it was "sexual harassment". This obviously places a cloud over women who are really victims of sexual harassment.

5.7.2.3 Outcome of reported sexual harassment

The outcome of reported cases of sexual harassment differ from department to department, with some cases being dismissed due to lack of evidence, and others withdrawn by the complainant. Those cases that did result in the perpetrator being found responsible resulted in either dismissal or warnings. In one department, two cases were mentioned where both the men (at management level) responsible were dismissed. In another department the alleged perpetrator resigned after being found innocent of the charge. Despite him being proved innocent, he felt that the environment was hostile and that he was marginalised.

In departments which were female dominated it was easier to deal with sexual harassment as women do not feel as vulnerable as in male dominated departments.

5.7.2.4 Under-reporting of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment often went under-reported for the following reasons:

- The continued fear or perceived fear of victimisation from not only the perpetrator but colleagues, who are mainly other senior management staff;
- Victims felt marginalised from peers because they were concerned about ".....the alleged perpetrator's family and what would happen if that person was dismissed....."and they therefore felt pressurised to drop charges;
- The victim is married and is worried about her family;
- The confusion about the definition of sexual harassment;
- Afraid that it will impact qualification for performance bonuses; and
- The lack of confidentiality from those staff to whom sexual harassment matters were being reported was of great concern, almost replicating secondary victimisation.

In many departments the EAP got to know about cases of sexual harassment where the victim chose not to lay charges but sought counselling from the EAP. In some groups the following questions were asked:

- Why do we assume that only women can be sexually harassed? What about female to male sexual harassment, especially where the perpetrator was a woman in senior position?
- What about homosexual harassment?

It is clear that sexual harassment may be construed to be only male to female. These misconceptions will have to be addressed.

5.7.2.5 Concluding comments

Despite the fact that this was a difficult topic to explore given the methodology used in this research, it was clear from available evidence that sexual harassment is largely ignored/or is not treated with the seriousness it deserves in the Public Service. Victims would rather not take action because the examples where decisive action has been taken against the perpetrator are few and far between, and in general the environment is not enabling for victims to feel safe enough to tackle this issue. Hence, victims would rather choose the safer

route of going to the EAP for counselling, dealing with it on an individual, personalised level rather than using the grievance procedures within departments to formally take action against perpetrators.

5.8 The role that the Office on the Status of Women plays in supporting and encouraging gender mainstreaming in the Public Service

5.8.1 Introduction

The Office on the Status of Women is part of the National Gender Machinery for women's empowerment and gender equality. The National Gender Machinery refers to "a set of coordinated structures within and outside government which aim to achieve equality for women in all spheres of life (political, civil, social, economic and cultural)"²⁵.

The OSW has developed a National Policy Framework which states that "this Gender Policy Framework will represent a significant step in the struggle for gender equality and justice in South Africa, in particular by:

- Enhancing the visibility and influence of the National Gender Machinery.
- Strengthening the voices of women in civil society, in Parliament and in other legislatures who have already made a visible impact by challenging gender blind laws and policies."

This policy framework was first released in the year 2002 and updated in 2004. Despite this there is very little evidence to suggest that the visibility and influence of the National Gender Machinery has been enhanced, nor that the voices of women in civil society and in Parliament have been strengthened by challenging gender blind laws and policies.

While the National Policy Framework existed it was not accompanied by a Programme of Action until very recently. The next step was to build the Strategy or a plan of action for making the vision come true. "When we strategise, we make plans, set goals, set measures, and allocate resources (such as people, time, money) to reach the goals. We create a budget and a timeframe. We identify responsibilities. And then, we put all this together into a project structure"²⁶.

In 2005 the OSW released the Draft Programme of Action on Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality 2005 – 2015 which was to be launched on the 10th December 2005 marking the International Day of Commitments on No Violence against Women and Children. This document compliments government's 8 priority areas for the second decade of democracy. Although this document identifies strategic objectives and broad actions to be taken by Government it falls short of identifying specific activities, indicators for success and the persons who will be responsible for implementing these actions.

5.8.2 Provincial experiences with the OSW

The role of the OSW differed in provinces with some departments indicating that they played a role only in terms of information dissemination and co-ordination, while in others they did not appear to have any presence. To a large extent this also determined the kind of relationship that was forged between the GFP and the OSW.

In the Limpopo Departments of Education and Transport the OSW was reported to have played quite a prominent role in the province, and was active in ensuring that policy is being observed. Support had been

25. Ibid, 2002.

26. Gender Mainstreaming Practices I: Examples from the EU and South Africa by B.Thege and Prof Welpé, 2002.

given to women staff members in the department, where they were invited to attend workshops and conferences. The GFP in one of the departments in this province also went to Canada through a selection process coordinated by the OSW. The OSW also played a role in the monitoring of appointments by assessing if the process was fair.

In the North West Province the OSW had developed an Integrated and Provincial Gender Strategy: November 2003 – March 2007. The purpose of this document is stated as:

“To provide an integrated framework for managing and accelerating the pace of gender transformation through effective planning, implementation and monitoring of women empowerment and gender mainstreaming strategies in pursuit of the advancement of women, women’s human rights and gender equality in the North West Province”.²⁷ With reference to Public Service management, the strategy includes as its objective: *“Mainstreaming gender into all governance decisions, plans, processes and systems”*.

Senior managers shared the view that the OSW’s capacity needed to be developed as it did not appear to play a very strong role, nor did it clarify its role as there was an absence of clear vision and strategy from most of the provincial OSW’s. The only time many respondents had heard about the office’s activities was during August (Women’s Month) and the Sixteen Days of Activism Campaign at the end of the year.

5.8.3 Challenges faced by the national OSW

While the national OSW office as a structure of the Presidency has a mandate to promote gender mainstreaming in governance, it faces a challenge as this responsibility is not reinforced by legislation. One of the difficulties in implementing its mandate and programmes lies in its institutional capacity to undertake these. There are currently six staff members in the National OSW office of which three are content and technical experts while the remaining three are support and administrative staff. The OSW is also expected to participate in a large variety of international and continental dialogues, and is often called upon to provide support to countries in SADC on gender matters. This takes up a large amount of time as does the participation of this Office in intergovernmental partnerships where it acts as a support to the South African Government.

The OSW expressed the view that the co-ordination of gender mainstreaming activities should be implemented at a provincial level and the OSW provincial offices should be in a position to carry this out. However this is dependant on the participation of GFP’s in the departments. Without their participation this will not be implementable. The OSW has developed a training manual for Public Service managers on gender mainstreaming. It is envisaged that in 2006 SAMDI will implement this training programme. This is a positive step in promoting gender mainstreaming in departments.

5.8.4 Relationship between the Office on the Status of Women (OSW) and the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE)

Included in the National Gender Machinery is the CGE whose mandate includes having the power to hold accountable state organs, statutory and public bodies, as well as the private sector, for promoting and protecting gender equality. Between the CGE and OSW there was clearly an indication that tensions exist around mandate and functioning. Who is ultimately responsible for driving gender mainstreaming in South Africa? How do the two bodies support and compliment each other? What are the areas of cooperation and collaboration? At the time of writing this report there was clear indications that the organisations were talking to each other to “iron out differences”.

27. North West Province Government, Office of the Premier, Integrated Provincial Gender Strategy and Implementation Matrix. November 2003 – March 2007

Chapter Six

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the main conclusions based on the findings emerging from this study. It also provides some recommendations to strengthen gender mainstreaming in departments.

6.1 Conclusions

Women's access to political power and decision-making has improved since the 1994 elections. There is a strong representation of women in the national and provincial spheres of government. The challenge to institutions in the Public Service is to change their culture in order to be more responsive to the needs of women civil servants.

6.1.1 Knowledge and understanding of gender mainstreaming

A clear conceptual understanding of gender concepts and gender mainstreaming is essential for all government officers at all levels, but especially in key ministries that determine national policy. When decision-makers understand the practicalities of gender mainstreaming as a strategy, they are much more likely to abandon the narrow focus on women.

There is a lack of knowledge about gender mainstreaming in most departments and across all levels. Senior management does not know how to move from vision (policy) to strategy and action. The main reason for this is because of a lack of knowledge and understanding of what it is that needs to be changed, why it needs to be changed, how to go about the change process, and what results should be produced. For implementing gender mainstreaming - in order to realize gender equality - you need to build up a good base of gender knowledge²⁸ to build gender competence which is absolutely necessary in order to do proper strategy planning.

If gender mainstreaming is to lead to far-reaching changes, it must be backed up with extensive educational measures. The consistent collection and assessment of gender-specific data must be ongoing. Suitable tools and instruments need to be developed and applied, continuous evaluation performed, and "gender expertise" built up as a discipline. Such expertise, as well as "gender controlling," will become very important during the next decade if the gap between the rhetoric and reality is to be closed²⁹.

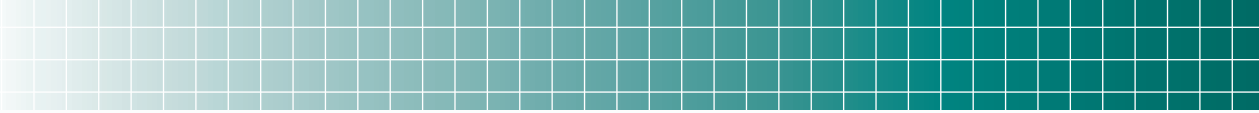
6.1.2 Gender Representivity Profile

Women's access to political and administrative power and decision-making has improved since the 1994 general elections. With respect to the Public Service, the proportion of women in senior management positions (director level and above) has increased significantly since 1994. In fact the target of 30% that was set for the management echelon by April 2005 has been met. Whilst many departments and provinces have made considerable progress in gender representivity at the senior management levels it is of concern that others have made little or no progress.

The issue with regard to setting targets is that while 30% was used as the benchmark for departments as an indicator for the success of gender mainstreaming, it is questionable whether departments after having reached the benchmark endeavours to do more. It is therefore noted with appreciation that a revised target of 50% to be achieved by 2009 has been set by Cabinet. Target setting can however, create a barrier to the continued advancement of women, especially as gender mainstreaming in the South African Public Service is still seen as meeting numerical targets.

28. Gender Mainstreaming Practices I: Examples from the EU and South Africa by B.Thege and Prof Welpe, 2002.

29. Ibid, 2002



Some departments reflect higher numbers of women in senior positions in what was traditionally viewed as more male-dominated departments; examples include Departments of Public Works, Transport and Safety & Liaison. Similarly, departments that traditionally employed more women, such as Health and Education have fewer women in senior positions than would have been anticipated.

6.1.3 Empowerment of women

In general the empowerment of women is not happening in any significant or meaningful way in departments. Apart from general policies and practices that affect all staff, there are no specific programmes that recognise women as a separate interest group with specific interests and needs. This includes issues related to recruitment, training and addressing the practical needs of women. Participants at senior management level argued that the predominantly male culture has made it difficult for their voices to be heard.

6.1.4 Structures

There is a lack of a clearly defined institutional framework that is necessary to facilitate the attainment of the vision of gender mainstreaming. Roles and responsibilities within the National Gender Machinery need to be clarified and then implemented and institutions held accountable for its success or lack thereof, within the Public Service. The national structures established to promote women's empowerment and gender equality (specifically the OSW and the CGE) will need to be strengthened to be able to provide the support and services required by government departments in implementing gender mainstreaming.

The role of the GFP needs to be reviewed and the competence of GFP's assessed. Most GFP do not understand their roles or know how to implement their responsibilities. Whether the GFP is dedicated to gender mainstreaming or plays a multi-faceted role as is presently the case remains a contested issue. Until gender mainstreaming is entrenched in departments, a person should be dedicated to this role.

Having addressed the lack of and inadequacy of the 'drivers' of gender mainstreaming at all levels within departments, it is fair to say that the environment in general is not enabling for the empowerment of women.

6.1.5 Processes

Gender mainstreaming is not included in any departmental planning, monitoring and budgeting processes apart from ensuring that employment equity targets are met. To achieve gender equality, government must embark on a rigorous gender mainstreaming strategy. To this end, much of the responsibility for planning and implementing effective and innovative strategies for the promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality will rest equally with key structures of the National Machinery and with individual government departments at the national, provincial and local levels. Individual departments will obviously need to tailor their strategies for gender equality to suit the particular needs and requirements of their departments but government must provide the strategic guidelines which might usefully inform the processes of overall gender mainstreaming and overall planning and implementation.

With respect to the planning and implementation of programmes for women's empowerment and gender equality at the departmental level, the costs involved will need to be incorporated into existing departmental budgets. Expenditure on gender-related initiatives and programmes will need to be planned in advance and incorporated into the MTEF planning process. If the plans have already been made, then they need to be reviewed and adjusted to meet the specific needs of women³⁰.

30. Ibid, 2002

6.1.6 Family friendly policies

The only provision allowing for women's practical needs such as attending to a sick child is by taking Family Responsibility leave provided for in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. Apart from this there are no family friendly policies. The Family Responsibility leave on its own is wholly inadequate in responding to the practical needs that women face and seems to have been a knee jerk response to addressing issues such as these. In addition, management still sees parenting as a woman's responsibility and responds with skepticism when men request time to attend to parenting duties.

Flexi-time is not supported in most departments. However, individual managers tend to use their prerogative in deciding who they allow to use flexi-time or who they allow to work from home. When a practice is based on the relationship between a manager and a staff member rather than systemic, the danger is that it becomes a subjective practice, which could be regarded as biased. In general, senior management are very sceptical of introducing flexi-time or child care facilities because these could be abused.

In the UNESCO document³¹ it states that gender equality cannot be achieved through seeking to improve individual conditions alone. A deep and far-reaching transformation of structures and systems that allow for subordination and gender inequality is necessary. UNESCO has recognised that, in order for this to be achieved, gender concerns must be mainstreamed into all operations. This does not mean that men and women are the same, but that their similarities and differences are recognised and equally valued. This clearly was not demonstrated in the policies that currently exist hence the view that it is 'gender blind' or 'gender neutral'.

There needs to be a recognition and understanding that women are not a homogenous group. This principle must inform all policies and programmes that will lead to the implementation of gender equality. Distinctions according to race, class, sexuality, disability, age and other variables should not be overlooked or taken for granted. However, similarities should also be used to strengthen initiatives designed to reverse past gender discrimination.

6.1.7 Management responses to gender mainstreaming

There is a lack of support for gender mainstreaming from senior management based on a lack of understanding about "how" to do gender mainstreaming and having other departmental priorities. The lack of knowledge of gender mainstreaming coupled with conservative attitudes from senior management towards gender equity has in many cases a trickle down effect. So there are no discussions about gender mainstreaming, no information flowing from senior management to lower levels, no support for those trying to drive gender mainstreaming, no zero tolerance for sexual harassment. Hence no need to think about gender, apart from meeting targets. Useful insights were provided with regard to differences between home and work values, especially in relation to fitting into traditional roles of house wife and mother at home and the role of supervisor or manager where women and men's roles were treated as the same.

It is clear that leadership and senior management must be supportive of gender mainstreaming or they can undermine gender equality. In addition, gender mainstreaming has to be based on knowledge and not on personal, individual assumptions or preferences. Implementation will be successful only if there is a visible commitment at the top executive level to achieve broad acceptance among all members of the departments. Such "top-down" leadership will establish both the tone and the climate for effective implementation of policies. There must be transparency and practicability in implementation, with clear and well-defined responsibilities and competencies.

31. UNESCO 2003, UNESCO's Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Framework (GMIF) for 2002-2007, UNESCO, Paris

6.1.8 Recruitment and promotion practices

In most departments recruitment takes place according to the Employment Equity targets as informed by the Employment equity plans. Women feel disadvantaged from the onset because they have practical needs that impact on their ability to apply for certain jobs. A perception from both men and women was that women were less able to travel for work purposes because of domestic and parenting responsibilities and therefore did not apply for certain positions that required travelling. This should not be seen as the reason to justify why women don't apply for such jobs but instead it raises substantive questions regarding how far a department would need to go in ensuring organisational transformation to combat these challenges. Therefore, while there are no formal restrictions on the recruitment of women into senior positions, some subtle discrimination might come into play. This also refers to the obstacles or perception about the work that men and women should be doing. For example, secretarial work is generally seen as women's work.

Women experience promotions differently from men: with the possibility of longer working hours, frequent travel and transfers to other parts of the country, women often don't apply. While women have opted to attend training courses offered seeing this as a stepping stone to promotions this has not translated into actual promotions. Succession planning was not formally implemented in any department, and there is a lack of mentorship and support to integrate new skills into the work environment.

6.1.9 Gender Relations

In general, relationships between men and women are described as satisfactory and largely determined by position. However, many women felt undermined, not respected or appreciated by male colleagues. On the other hand, many women preferred having men as managers citing that women bosses are much harder, less sympathetic and inflexible. What was most significant was that the majority of women said that when women are in leadership "they do not support other women; do not encourage mobility of other women and generally behave more like men and even worse". On the other hand, women have to work extra hard to get into senior positions and there is a hypothesis that suggests that when women are in senior positions they feel they need to behave like men in order to prove themselves.

6.1.10 Sexual harassment

The issue of sexual harassment has raised some disturbing scenarios. Both junior and senior staff displays a lack of knowledge and understanding about sexual harassment. Often cited was the continued fear of victimisation not only from the perpetrator but from colleagues who were usually other senior management staff. More surprising was the pressure from peers and the sympathy displayed to the perpetrator because 'they have a family'. The lack of confidentiality of those staff to whom sexual harassment matters were being reported was of great concern, almost replicating secondary victimisation.

Cultural differences in the workplace gave rise to different definitions of what constitutes sexual harassment. This was due to the stereotypical nature of male and female relationships held by some people and often related to cultural beliefs. This is a key challenge in combating sexual harassment.

Despite the fact that this was a difficult topic to explore given the methodology used in this research, it was clear from the little evidence received that sexual harassment is largely ignored in the Public Service. Victims would rather not take action but choose to go the safer route of going to the EAP for counselling.

6.1.11 The role that the Office on the Status of Women plays in supporting and encouraging gender mainstreaming in Public Service

The role of the OSW differed from province to province. In some departments the OSW played a role only in terms of information dissemination and co-ordination, while in others it did not appear to have any presence. To a large extent this also determined the kind of relationship that was forged between the GFP and the OSW.

It was apparent that the OSW did not have the institutional capacity to deliver on their mandate, with an absence of a clear vision and strategy, apart from raising their profile around events such as Women's Month and the Sixteen Days of Activism Campaign. In addition to the lack of institutional capacity to fulfil its mandate and programmes, they are also expected to participate in intergovernmental partnerships where it acts as a support to Government. The small size of this office results in challenges in fulfilling these roles.

The OSW could play a much bigger role in monitoring compliance on gender mainstreaming within all departments. The findings of this study could provide an ideal opportunity for the OSW to sensitise provincial government stakeholders about gender equity issues in relation to the workplace and would provide an entry point for jointly addressing these issues and to provide guidance and support to the departments.

Between the CGE and OSW tensions exist around mandate and functioning, resulting in the overall lack of coordination and communication between the OSW, CGE, and DPSA with confusion raised at all levels about roles and responsibilities. In order for the OSW to fulfill its mandate effectively there should be a clear definition of what this office's role is in relation to other stakeholders in gender mainstreaming in the Public Service. There is a commitment from the OSW, however, to ensure that blockages to fulfilling their role should be cleared.

6.2 Recommendations

As the situation currently stands there is not a strong enough commitment within the Public Service, beyond numerical targets, to actually create the necessary enabling environment for gender mainstreaming and gender equality. In support of UNESCO's³² stance on the implementation of gender mainstreaming "...programmes and processes demands an ongoing commitment to ensuring gender concerns are part of the mainstream. Organisational cultures need to be revisited and changes made to the way we work in order to reshape policies and programmes and thereby eliminate those laws, structures, attitudes and behaviours that allow for gender inequalities to be perpetuated. This requires the development of new skills, working methods and tools, and the changing of attitudes..."

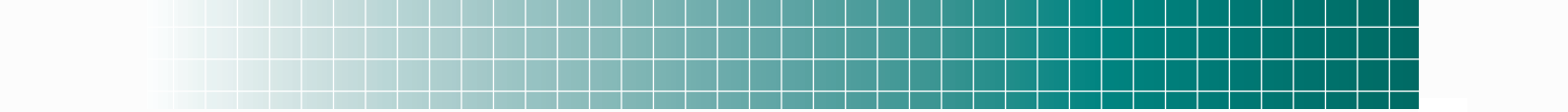
The following recommendations are put forward as interventions to implement gender mainstreaming in departments:

6.2.1 Accelerate Empowerment of women

A specific programme targeting women on accelerated learning for specific roles and senior positions in departments should be introduced by SAMDI. In order to qualify for such training and to ensure that the right persons are targeted, competency testing should be applied to applicants.

A structured mentoring programme should be put in place by departments so that women who are advanced to leadership positions have the necessary support. Mentoring is a powerful means of helping women who have been advanced to senior positions, to make the significant transitions, both professionally and personally. The essence of mentoring is imparting wisdom through a process of providing support, advice and feedback

32. Ibid, 2003



that allows the individual to identify their aspirations and maximise their strengths. A clear identification plan must therefore be outlined and feedback sessions between mentors and mentees must be outlined. The process can be very empowering to women as they become more aware of their abilities and their own worth.

6.2.2 Improve Gender representivity profile/ Recruitment and promotions

In order to change the profile of government especially at senior levels, it is proposed that recruitment should specifically target women for senior positions within a set period of time. In other words, for the next three years government will target women specifically for employment and promotions in senior positions. A tracking system to follow the movement of women into senior management should be developed to assess after a period of time whether women are promoted and advanced to senior management.

6.2.3 Effective Gender structures and processes

The eligibility requirements for appointments as a GFP should be commensurate with the skill levels required for providing leadership and direction for gender mainstreaming. It is important that the GFP be given the authority to drive gender mainstreaming. Most important is that the GFP should have access to the SMS and the Head of Department so that reports on gender mainstreaming can be addressed at that level. The GFP should be dedicated to work with gender issues and all its intricacies and not have additional multiple roles to play as is currently the case (the role could be reviewed after a 3-year period).

Gender should be incorporated into departmental strategic plans with clear activity plans and indicators. If departments are to mainstream gender, visible mechanisms to co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of gender-related plans of action need to be put into place. Gender mainstreaming activities and programmes must be included in budgeting processes.

6.2.4 Family friendly policies

DPSA must put in place a national framework aimed at creating a more enabling environment and recognise the importance of providing social benefits to families. This framework should compel departments to provide for-

- breastfeeding facilities;
- flexi-time to accommodate child caring considerations; and
- consideration to be given for child care facilities.

6.2.5 Leadership and support from Management

It should be compulsory for all senior managers to be capacitated to enhance gender management skills and raise the general level of gender awareness. Unless the organisational culture changes to ensure the empowerment of both women and men through equal participation in decision-making on issues which affect their lives, gender equality will not happen. For this to be effective, a change process should be implemented. This is not a once off event but must address the key organisational culture issues and attitudes that affect gender mainstreaming. Change management should also address the issue of culture within the work place and its relation to home values. It becomes important to change the hearts and minds in order to change the attitudes of men towards women. Specifically designed training courses by SAMDI could be used for this purpose.

6.2.6 Improved Gender relations

It should be compulsory for all staff including senior management to attend workshops on sexual harassment. A more supportive environment must be created for sexual harassment to be reported and addressed outside of normal grievance and disciplinary processes. Those who are responsible for employee grievances should sign a confidentiality clause that ensures that matters brought to their attention are dealt with in a professional manner. There should be a zero-tolerance policy with regard to sexual harassment for all in the Public Service to recognise the seriousness with which this is taken.

6.2.7 Effective coordination and collaboration for gender mainstreaming in the Public Service

If the role and mandate of the OSW is to promote gender mainstreaming in the Public Service and to monitor its implementation, then it is critical that the OSW is provided with the skills and resources to implement their mandate, and be held accountable. Part of the mandate of the OSW should be to enhance the efficiency of the NGM at national and provincial levels, and to develop effective collaborative strategies. A coordinating structure of the National Gender Machinery (NGM) should be introduced and coordinated by the OSW but in close partnership with other institutions in the NGM.

6.2.8 Roles and accountabilities

Gender mainstreaming requires the collective efforts of a range of role players, to ensure that the policy framework is in place and that there is compliance, for empowerment and capacitation, and for mentoring and support. The following roles and responsibilities should be reinforced:

Table 3: Roles and Responsibilities

Driver	Roles and Responsibilities
DPSA	Must create a national framework to effect a more enabling environment that recognises the importance of providing social benefits to families. DPSA must also ensure compliance from all departments, and be more rigorous in the monitoring thereof.
Senior Managers	Must have the necessary knowledge and understanding about gender mainstreaming and provide the necessary leadership and overt support to the GFP. Accountability for gender mainstreaming must be at this level driven by the HoD.
GFP	Must be capacitated to drive gender mainstreaming in departments and must have the necessary competencies to carry out this task effectively.
SAMDI	Must develop the necessary training programmes that will provide the SMS and GFP and other relevant role players with the knowledge, understanding and requisite tools for effectively implementing gender mainstreaming. A toolkit on the "how" of gender mainstreaming must be developed that departments can use as a checklist and a guide to gender mainstreaming

Driver	Roles and Responsibilities
OSW	<p>Must have the necessary capacity to mentor and support GFP and departments in their efforts to mainstream gender.</p> <p>If this is not possible then an approved agency should be contracted to provide this service to departments.</p>

6.2.9 Institutional change management

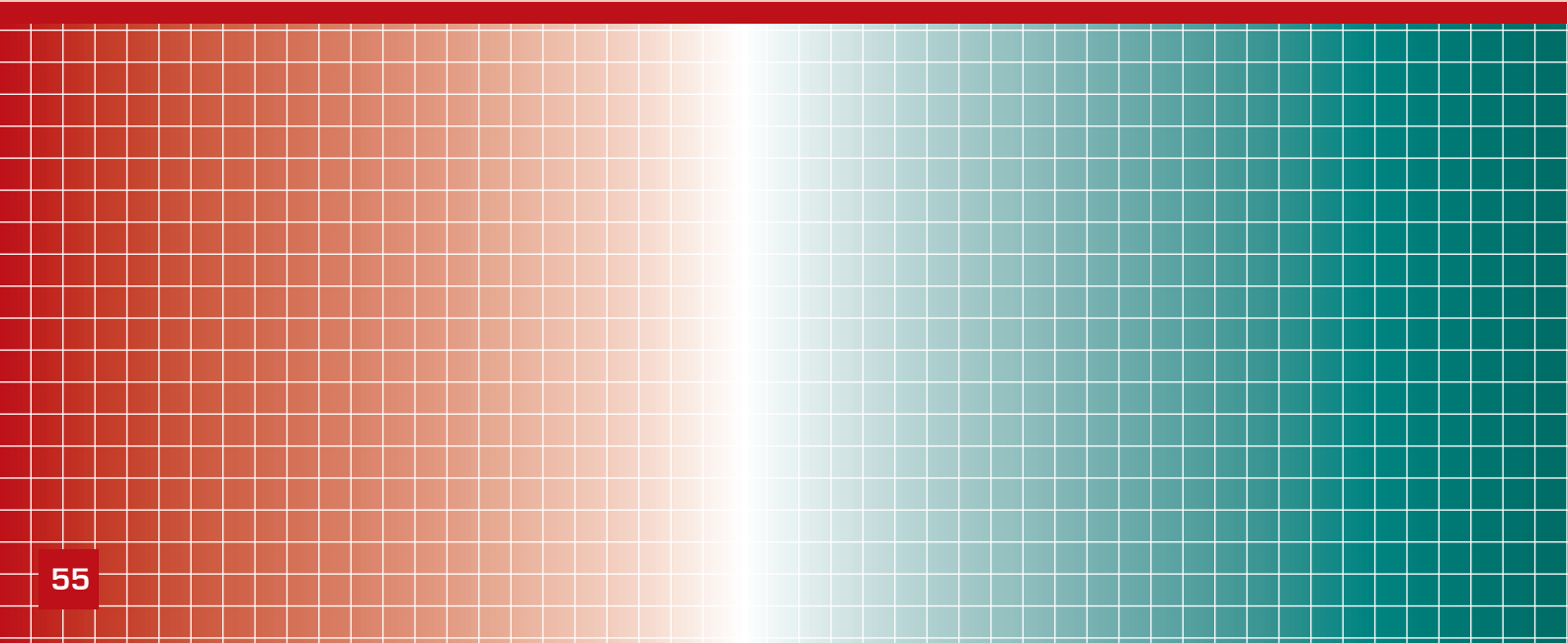
As the situation currently stands commitment within the Public Service, beyond numerical targets, to actually create the necessary enabling environment for gender mainstreaming and gender equality is questionable. Organisational cultures need to be revisited and changes made to the way we work in order to reshape policies and programmes and thereby eliminate those laws, structures, attitudes and behaviours that allow for gender inequalities to be perpetuated. This requires the development of new skills, working methods and tools, and the changing of attitudes.

6.3 CONCLUSION

Women's access to political power and decision-making has improved since the 1994 elections. There is a strong representation of women in the national, provincial and local legislative branches of government and in some governments departments. The challenge to institutions in the Public Service is to change their culture in order to be more responsive to the needs of women civil servants. A number of departments and provinces have made considerable progress in gender representivity at the senior management levels while others have made little or no progress.

In general the empowerment of women is not happening in any significant or meaningful way in departments. Apart from general policies and practices that affect all staff, there are no specific programmes that recognise women as a separate interest group with specific interests and needs. This includes issues related to recruitment, training and addressing the practical needs of women. Participants at senior management level argued that the predominantly male culture has made it difficult for their voices to be heard.

Through this report, the PSC would like to believe that it has finally put the rest the notion that gender mainstreaming is all about setting and achieving numerical targets. There is much to be done to ensure the empowerment of women in the workplace. Putting policies and processes in place is but one strategy that needs to be strengthened. Of more importance is to change attitudes and thereby create the commitment to operationalise such policies and processes in practice.



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Gender Mainstreaming initiatives in the Public Service

Public Service Commission

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