

**COURSE CONCEPT**

**SPECIALIZATION COURSE  
for GENDER ADVISERS**

**Presented by the Folke Bernadotte Academy**

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

Gender mainstreaming, i.e. the strategy to have a gender perspective during all phases of an organization's activities, is a growing demand in international civilian crises missions. The policy developments have been fast and steady, not the least in the last five to ten years. The UN, the EU, the OSCE and the AU have all adopted comprehensive policy frameworks and taken several steps to fulfil their responsibilities to integrate a gender perspective into their missions' activities. Supportive language has been included in important operational documents and gender advisers have been appointed. This notwithstanding, studies (Olsson L, Åhlin M, Sundin M & Lidström A, *Gender, Peace and Security in the European Union's Field Missions*, 2014) clearly indicate that a gap remains between what should be done and what this concretely means in the missions' day-to-day activities. In order to address this, gender mainstreaming courses have been developed by different actors. These courses tend to focus on raising general awareness about the concept and why it is important. The target group for these trainings are usually people who need to know what gender mainstreaming means and how it is relevant for their area of work. There are very few courses designed to meet the needs of those assigned a specific responsibility to support and facilitate gender mainstreaming in international organizations, i.e. those working with gender advising in one way or another. This course concept was designed to meet their needs.

This course concept departs in the gender adviser function and the skills deemed important to work effectively with gender advising in an international mission. The overarching role of gender advising is to support gender mainstreaming. However, gender mainstreaming is a comprehensive strategy and gender advisers are known to work in many different ways, depending on the mission. To establish what gender advisers in international missions do and what skills they consider to be important for their work, this course concept was preceded by an extensive training needs assessment sent out to former and current gender advisers. The training needs assessment focused on identifying actual activities/responsibilities of persons in a gender advising position and what they consider to be key skills and areas of knowledge. The course concept was developed based on the information from the results of this training needs assessment.

## **II TARGET GROUP**

The target group for this course is those who work with gender advising in one way or another. Organizations use different names, but functions would typically be gender advisers, gender experts or gender focal points.

## **III OVERALL OBJECTIVE**

This course concept is not designed for people who need to know more about the concept of gender as such, but for people who want to become more effective in promoting gender mainstreaming, what we refer to as gender advising. Accordingly, the overall course aims to provide participants with knowledge, practical tools and skills that will enhance their ability to

support gender mainstreaming in an international mission. This has been captured in three overarching learning objectives accompanied by a number of more specific session objectives, defining what the participants should be able to do after each session.

1) **Actively support gender mainstreaming**

- Identify key milestones in the development of the international policy framework on gender mainstreaming and women, peace and security;
- Explain what gender mainstreaming means without using unnecessary jargon;
- Apply different tools and concepts for gender analysis;
- Design a plan with clear and logical objectives, indicators and activities in support of gender mainstreaming;
- Write gender sensitive reports;
- Give examples of good practice when establishing a GFP-network.

2) **Design effective strategies for gender advising**

- Identify required qualities and skills for a gender adviser;
- Explain the essential components of gender advising;
- Design and deliver clear and relevant gender advocacy messages;
- Identify principles and strategies for building effective partnerships;
- Give examples of good practices when designing gender training.

3) **Identify effective strategies for handling resistance**

- Identify different causes to resistance;
- Give examples of good strategies to handle resistance.

## **IV. MODULES AND SUBJECT AREAS**

The course concept is built around four modules and a number of sessions (presented below). The different modules and sessions all contribute to the learning objectives in different ways. The sessions can be implemented in different sequences and the first time the course was implemented, the strategic planning session was divided into two separate sessions.

### **MODULE I: The gender adviser function**

*Session: Working as a gender adviser*

**Session objective:** To identify required qualities and skills for a gender adviser

The purpose of this session is to establish a common view on the very core of the course: the requirements of a gender adviser. This session discusses the actual function of a gender adviser, how the function has developed and the fact that gender advising looks very different in different organizations. It also focuses on the most common responsibilities of gender advisers and sets common ground regarding how the course defines and talks about gender advising. It

also establishes gender mainstreaming as the ultimate focus of gender advising. This is important due to the many different ways that organizations and missions approach gender mainstreaming and therefore the gender advising positions. This session also looks at the different skills sets deemed important for a gender adviser to be effective.

## **MODULE II – Gender mainstreaming**

**Session:** [The policy framework of gender mainstreaming](#)

**Session objectives:** Identify key milestones in the development of the international policy framework on gender mainstreaming and women, peace and security

The purpose of this session is to give the participants a solid policy background by outlining the overarching policy framework of gender mainstreaming and women, peace and security. It looks at the historical context of gender mainstreaming, how and why it developed as well as some concrete models of how we can think about gender mainstreaming and what we today know works (and doesn't work).

**Session:** [Gender analysis and gender mainstreaming](#)

**Session objective:** Apply different tools and concepts of gender analysis

The purpose of this session is to look at gender analysis as the first step of gender mainstreaming. The session looks at what gender analysis is, why it is important and presents a number of concrete models and concepts that can be used at different levels.

**Session:** [Reporting](#)

**Session objective:** Write gender sensitive reports

The purpose of this session is to look at what a gender perspective means in reporting. Reporting is a key activity for both gender advisers and other functions. It is therefore important to look concretely at what a gender perspective means in reporting and how it can be ensured.

**Session:** [Working with Gender Focal Point networks](#)

**Session objective:** Give examples of good practice when establishing a GFP-network

A Gender Focal Point (GFP) network is very often used to extend the gender advisers support for gender mainstreaming. This session looks at some of the lessons identified with regards to working with Gender Focal Point networks and aims to share both good practices and lessons learned.

## **MODULE III – Key skills for gender advising**

**Session:** [Strategic planning](#)

**Session objective:** Design a plan with clear and logical objectives, indicators and activities in support of gender mainstreaming

The purpose of this session is to introduce the thinking behind strategic planning. To be clear and strategic is important in any function, but due to the resistance faced by many working as gender advisers, being clear and strategic is of vital importance. This session therefore focuses on how to define clear gender related goals and objectives with relevant indicators and how we ensure that there is logic between what one wants to achieve and the planned actions.

### Session: Gender advising

**Session objective:** Explain the essence of gender advising

The purpose of this session is to define the distinct nature and aspects of advising and the key traits of an effective adviser. Gender advisers (and their likes) are not meant to be solely responsible for gender mainstreaming, but rather to advise and support the management of the organization to find means and methods to ensure that all staff can contribute to gender mainstreaming on his/her level.

### Session: Handling resistance

**Session objective:** Give examples of good strategies to handle resistance

The purpose of this session is to look at and identify common forms of resistance when working with gender advising. Gender advisers commonly face different sorts of resistance to their work. It is therefore important for those working with gender advising to understand resistance and to identify effective strategies to handle it.

### Session: Advocacy

**Session objective:** Design effective messages in support of gender mainstreaming

The purpose of this session is to identify and practice good ways to advocate gender mainstreaming-messages effectively. The session looks at how to prepare for effective advocacy and what to think about when defining clear and concise messages.

### Session: Building strategic partnerships

**Session objective:** Identify principles and strategies for building effective partnerships

The purpose of this session is to look at how and with whom to build strategic partnerships. In order to implement successful gender advising, it is important to build strategic partnerships both within and outside the organizations.

### Session: Gender training

**Session objective:** Give examples of practices when designing gender training

The purpose of this session is to look at good practice when planning for gender training. Gender training is one of the most common responsibilities assigned to gender advising functions.

## MODULE IV – Practical exercise

### Session: Final exercise

**Session objective:** Application of skills for gender advising

The purpose of this session is to practice a number of the tools and skills from the previous sessions in a common scenario in order to allow the participants to practice what they have learned during the week. This session is at least half-a day long and it is recommended to implement it in smaller groups with one mentor following each group, giving continuous feedback.

## V. METHODOLOGY

This course is implemented by a course team consisting of four experienced gender trainers, who also serve as mentors throughout the course. In addition to being good trainers, the course team also needs substantial experience and knowledge of gender advising and gender mainstreaming. A consistent course team allows for a process-oriented and cohesive approach that ensures consistency and continuous feed-back to the participants.

The course departs in a number of clearly defined learning objectives that state what the participants should be able to do after having participated in a) the course as a whole and b) the different sessions. It should be implemented with an interactive methodology based on a learner-centered approach that puts the *learning* of the participants center stage. As such the course methodology should be designed to take the participants' knowledge and experiences into account while promoting their continued development of different skills. Another important component is to make space for metacognitive exercises that encourage the participants to reflect on their own learning process. The main methods for self-reflection are the use of daily learning diaries and the recap sessions each morning. During the recap sessions the course participants sit down with one of the mentors in smaller teams and review issues from the previous day. These recap sessions also provide opportunities for the course team to monitor the learning process of the course participants and to pick up on outstanding wishes/needs.

The course runs over a period of six days, however, the first and the last days are not full days. The first day, preferably a Sunday, is used to set the framework of the course and get the course participants to get to know each other, particularly within their smaller groups. This is done in a relaxed, non-formal way, where the participants engage in four team-building exercises. These team-building exercises relate to different topics of relevance to the course, but are implemented in a non-formal, non-threatening way. The introduction/team-building session should be maximum three hours, given that many participants are tired from travelling.