

Working paper on structure for Strategy and Activities,**UBC working group on gender equality (WGGE)**

Gertrud Åström, February 8 2021

Introduction

UBC WGGE has decided to develop a structure for strategy and activities to strengthen the work carried out resulting in improvement of equality between women and men within the UBC framework. The structural approach is aiming at a longterm strategy and annual or biennial assessable activity plans.

The WGGE strategy will link to the UBC overall strategy. Instead of building a separate gender equality segment gender equality mainstreaming will be used as strategy by WGGE to dock the UBC Commissions fields of activities. The approach enables a systematic analysis on equivalent rights and opportunities on all threads of life for women and men, girls and boys, within UBC. Point of gravity will thus be the Commissions core issues and factual matters.

The WGGE aims at building commitment for collaboration and stronger networking on gender equality within the UBC and with actors in the public sector, companies, civil society organizations and others. As a prerequisite for fulfilling the aims WGGE will develop capacity to offer on-line and irl trainings and instructions, provide UBC Commissions with an overview of internatinal treaties, EU and other documents on gender equality, gender equality mainstraeming and gender equalitiy budgeting as well as knowledge on statistics and other data. WGGE task is not to be experts on all aspects of gender equality work but to know where to find it.

UBC

UBC is a network of cities in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). It was founded in 1991 in Gdansk and brings around a hundred member cities from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden into organized and goal-oriented cooperation. Member cities participate actively for the implementation of regional strategies, notably the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region EUSBSR, stressing the key role of cities and their citizens in the economic and social development.

UBC work is carried out within seven Commissions: Cultural Cities, Inclusive and Healthy Cities, Planning Cities, Safe Cities, Smart and Prospering Cities, Sustainable Cities, and Youthful Cities.

As for now gender equality is described as a democratic value amongst others such as inclusiveness and participation. WGGE will develop equality between women and men as an horizontal issue interlinked with sustainability.

Vision

WGGE strategic work will have the same vision as the UBC vision. WGGE will interpret the vision from a gender equality perspective.

UBC present Vision for the Baltic Sea Region: *The Baltic Sea Region is known as a dynamic, innovative and attractive global growth center, where success is based on smart, green, resource-efficient and sustainable economic and social development. The region and its cities are increasingly recognized as global forerunner in creating a high quality living and environment for their inhabitants.*

UBC Strategy

A new UBC Strategy is under process and will when adopted be inserted into the WGGE strategic work. The new strategy will be an overall strategy for all Commissions and will pay regard to conclusions from 30 years of co-operation within UBC. The new UBC strategy will be adopted by the General Conference and cover October 2021 – 2030 and . The WGGE strategy will have the same time span, 2021-2030.

UBC Aims

WGGE strategic work will have the same overall aims as the UBC. When new UBC aims are adopted they will be inserted into the WGGE strategic work. WGGE will interpret the aims from a gender equality perspective.

The present overall aims of the UBC are:

- *Promote cooperation and exchange of experiences between cities in the BSR to advance and deliver sustainable urban solutions and quality of life, and so to bring added value for them;*
- *Promote cities as drivers for smart, sustainable, green and resource-efficient growth;*
- *Advance cities as inclusive, diverse, creative, democratic and safe hubs, where active citizenship, gender equality and participatory policy making are promoted;*
- *Advocate for common interests of cities and their citizens, act on their behalf and further the interests of the BSR.*

WGGE Strategic framework and activities, 2021–2030, conclusion

- Following the UBC strategic work the WGGE strategy will also be longterm 2021-2030.
- Vision and overall UBC aims will be interpreted from a gender equality perspective resulting in goals explicitly built on equality between women and men as part of factual matters and inserted into the WGGE strategic framework.
- WGGE strategic framework will be based on gender equality mainstreaming as expressed in the UN Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, EU Strategy for Gender Equality, CEMR Charter for Gender Equality and other relevant documents and treaties.
- WGGE Annual and Biennial Activity Plans will define focal areas and key points based on gender mainstreaming within core areas of UBC Commissions
- WGGE key actions will be based on identified focal areas and key points including developing trainings, instructions, methods and presenting comprehensive and binding treaties and documents.
- WGGE will initiate projects in collaboration with UBC Commissions and others such as public sector bodies, companies and civil society organizations.
- Activities will be dated as well as indicating responsibilities within steering and governance as appropriate
- WGGE will develop a machinery for implementation, evaluation and follow up on results.