



# Gender Equality Policy

April 2019

## I. Background

ADRA Norway recognizes that women and girls worldwide continue to face extensive and systematic gender discrimination despite of laws guaranteeing equal rights between genders<sup>1</sup>. Women are throughout the world disproportionately represented among the poor, most marginalized and oppressed and the majority of people living in extreme poverty are women<sup>2</sup>.

This disadvantage of women and the unequal power relations between men and women constitute a significant barrier for development. Women face enormous barriers to positions of power and decision-making in both the public sphere and at household level. Many women are denied their rights to land and property, financial resources, employment, training and information as well as adequate education. Women's roles in productive work unpaid care economy tend to be unnoticed and undervalued.

Gender-based violence and sexual abuse and exploitation, including harmful traditional practices in the home or society, disproportionately affects girls and women.

## II. Purpose

The purpose of the present policy is:

- To outline ADRA Norway's vision and commitment to address gender issues through the organization's programs and sets standards to ensure a gender perspective and address gender inequality in all its work.
- To create an organizational culture of inclusion and equity that encourages staff to practice gender equality in their personal and professional lives.
- To build an understanding of the different behaviors, aspirations and needs of women and men by considering, valuing and favoring them equally.
- To drive initiatives to end violence, sexual exploitation, and all other forms of abuse against women in all settings, including in situations of emergencies and disasters.
- To communicate ADRA's commitment to work for inclusion and equity and advocate for equal rights of girls and boys.

## III. Definitions

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities, including the division of power and resources, of women and men, and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations. Division on Advancement of Women (accessed 2009). Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> Global Fund for Women (2009) <http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/cms/issues/overview/>

women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development. Gender equity is the process of ensuring fairness to both men and women. To do this, measures must often be available to compensate for and rectify historical and social disadvantages of women. In this way, equity is the means and equality the result.<sup>3</sup>

#### IV. Policy Statement

ADRA Norway is an international humanitarian and development organization focussed on empowering and protecting the most vulnerable women, men, girls and boys. Therefore, ADRA Norway will challenge all forms of gender discrimination, stereotyping, violence and abuse, and unequal power relations among women, men, girls and boys, but especially women and girls as everywhere in the world they are disproportionately affected by poverty, injustice and discrimination. We are also committed to preventing and where necessary responding to sexual and gender-based violence that may occur during the delivery of ADRA Norway supported community development and emergency response programs.

#### V. Policy Scope

This policy applies to and is mandatory for our policy adherents who are defined as all ADRA Norway board members, full and part-time staff, volunteers, interns, contractors and representatives. Memoranda of understanding with partners will require partners to adhere to gender equality policies in line with this policy.

#### VI. Why We Need a Gender Equality Policy

ADRA Norway is committed to serving humanity so all may live as God intended and consequently is responsible for and committed to the safety and wellbeing of all people in its programs. Gender discrimination affects women and men, and girls and boys, at all stages of the life cycle, and remains a major barrier to human development. ADRA believes that all persons must have equal rights and opportunities in all areas of society if sustainable development is to be achieved. Furthermore, gender discrimination is a violation of human rights and therefore ADRA Norway will not tolerate gender based discrimination, prejudice or inequality.

ADRA Norway supports international commitments to gender equality under the Convention on all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, Norway's Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Foreign and Development Policy 2016-2020, the Norway's 4<sup>th</sup> Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2019-2022) and the Sustainable

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<sup>3</sup> UNESCO (2003) UNESCO'S Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Framework. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001318/131854e.pdf>

Development Goals (SDGs), specifically goal 5<sup>4</sup>, the Principles in the Humanitarian Charter, the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines and principles.

## VII. Policy Commitments

ADRA Norway will...

1. Promote gender equality as an explicit human right and be guided by human rights standards and principles.
2. Be sensitive to diversity and cultural differences and develop contextually appropriate, gender sensitive and/or transformative programming.
3. Ensure programs are informed by a gender analysis and include strategies to improve gender equality.
4. Ensure the equitable and meaningful participation of women, men, girls and boys in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of ADRA's programs
5. Especially seek to empower women and girls in its programs to reduce gaps in equality and to facilitate the realization of their rights.
6. Protect women, men, girls and boys from sexual and gender-based violence.
7. Engage men and boys in the promotion of gender equality and prevention of SGBV to transform gender relations at the household, community, and political level.
8. Foster an enabling environment for gender equality within our organizational culture and promote gender equality in our internal operations.
9. Guarantee adequate and specialized attention and resources for gender equality, ensuring that work is monitored against gender indicators and that technical, financial and human resources are provided.
10. Disaggregate project data by sex and age and use this data to inform project design, implementation, evaluation and reporting.
11. Identify good gender practices and share these through publications, reports and feedback to members and partners.
12. Ensure all staff members across ADRA Norway are accountable for the implementation of the commitments in this policy.

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<sup>4</sup> SDGs (2015-2030) Goal 5 includes targets to eliminate discrimination, violence, harmful factors against women and ensuring women's participation and leadership at all levels, access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, equal rights to economic resources and enabling technology.

ADRA Norway will work to align its work with the Norway's Action Plan for Women's rights and gender equality in foreign and development policy 2016-2020 by promoting

- Inclusive and equitable quality education for all girls and boys.
- Women's equal participation in political life.
- Full economic rights for women and equal opportunities for women to participate in the labour market.
- The elimination of violence and harmful practices against girls and women.
- Sexual and reproductive health and rights for girls and women.

## VIII. Gender Equality Key Terms

**Gender** - The roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women. In addition to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, gender also refers to the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities, and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed, and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context, as are other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis including class, race, poverty level, ethnic group, sexual orientation, age, etc.

**Sex** - The physical and biological characteristics that distinguish whether an individual is female, male, or intersex.

**Gender Equity** - Fair treatment with respect to all genders according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment, or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. Equity is a strategy in achieving gender equality.

**Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)** - Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

**Gender Based Violence (GBV)** - Violence directed against a person because of his or her gender and expectations of his or her role in a society or culture. It also highlights the fact that an overwhelming majority of victims of gender-based violence are in fact women and girls. However, it is important to note that that boys and men may also be victims of GBV, including sexual violence.

**Gender Analysis** - A critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities, and rights/entitlements affect men, women, girls, and boys in certain situation or contexts. Gender analysis examines the relationships between females and males and their access to and control of resources and the constraints they face relative to each other. A gender analysis should be integrated into all sector assessments or situational analyses to ensure that gender-based injustices and inequalities are not exacerbated by interventions, and that where possible, greater equality and justice in gender relations are promoted.

**Gender Mainstreaming** - The chosen approach in the international community toward realizing progress on gender equality. It is a strategy for increasing equality for women and girls in relation to

men and boys. It is the process of assessing the implications of any planned action on women, men, girls and boys; including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a way to ensure that women's and girl's as well as men's and boy's concerns and experiences are an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that they experience equal benefits and so that inequality is not perpetuated.

**Gender Roles** - Different socially ascribed attitudes, behaviors, work or responsibilities assigned to women, men, girls and boys, and third gender or transgender persons.

**Gendered Division of Labour** - How each society divides work among women, men, girls and boys, according to socially-established gender roles or what is considered suitable and valuable for each sex. The gendered division of labour can impact the effectiveness of a programme, particularly if the roles, tasks, and responsibilities assigned to either gender are not considered at the outset.

**Practical Gender Needs (PGNs)** - Immediate necessities as defined by women, men, girls and boys; usually focused on the domestic arena, on income earning activities, and community level needs of housing and basic services.

**Strategic Gender Needs (SGNs)** - Needs determined by women, men, girls and boys, that help to achieve an alternate, more equal and satisfactory organization of society - both in structure and the nature of relationships. SGNs may include the abolition of the sexual division of labour, the alleviation of the burden of domestic labour and childcare, the removal of institutionalized forms of discrimination (such as rights to own land and property, access to credit), the freedom of choice over childbearing, and the adoption of adequate measures against male violence and control over women.

**Empowerment:** Is about people - both women and men - gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves setting their own agenda, raising awareness, expanding choices, increasing access to and control over resources, gaining skills, building self-confidence, solving problems and developing self-reliance and decision making. From a gendered perspective, it includes working towards the transformation of the structures and institutions that perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality.

**Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights** - guarantee all people the freedom to make decisions for a safe and satisfying sex life; to decide if, when and how many children to have; to have all the necessary information, means, and services available to reach the best possible physical, mental and social well-being.

### References:

ADRA Canada Gender Equality Policy 2017

ADRA Denmark Gender Policy 2009

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