

Gender Equality policy



2014



Gender Equality Policy

Introduction

Policy Statement

Gender equality is high on the agenda of most donor organization. Gender equality is linked to the primary goal of the New Consultancy and Relief Organizations, which is to *reduce economic and social disparities in the postwar countries*.

Men and women must have equal rights and opportunities in all areas of the economy and society for a real sustainable economic and social development. On the other hand, gender discrimination is a violation of fundamental human rights.

It is obvious that not all projects will lead to a maximum impact on gender equality. However, the inclusion of gender equality in the financial mechanisms acknowledges the fact that including gender equality considerations are effective in the grants.

Scope

This document provides guidance as how the activities carried out under the mechanisms shall contribute to furthering gender equality.

This document as with the other cross-cutting policy documents and checklist is intended to give implementers a better understanding of the cross-cutting issues. Together, these documents indicate how gender equality considerations, and the



considerations of other cross-cutting issues, will be considered by NCRO in the project implementation both in terms of their eligibility and suitability.

Gender equality - definition

In respect to NCRO policy application, the term 'gender equality' to mean:

“that all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by strict gender roles; that the different behavior, aspirations and needs of women and men are equally considered, valued and favored”.

Implementing gender equality fully requires equal representation and participation of both men and women in the economy, decision-making, as well as in social, cultural and civil life. Only in this way will men and women reach their full potential in society. It implies a fair distribution of resources between men and women, the redistribution of power and carrying responsibilities, and freedom from gender-based violence.

Closely linked to the concept of gender equality, is that of gender mainstreaming. Gender equality cannot be achieved by dealing with the issues of one gender seen in isolation from those of the other, nor from those of society as a whole. Hence, gender mainstreaming is used in order to ensure that gender issues are dealt with at all levels and at all stages. It involves all general policies and measures, so that they may specifically bring about equality by actively and openly taking into account, at the planning stage, their effects on the respective situations of women and men in implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Key dimensions of Gender equality

Considerable progress has been made regarding gender equality in the NCRO projects beneficiaries, however formal rights do not necessarily reflect actual rights in practice. This consideration - combined with persistent under- representation of women in politics and economic leadership, as well as cultural restrictions of women - shows that despite the legal framework, structural inequalities persist.

Although the dimensions of gender equality often contain overlapping elements and may be divided in different ways, for the purposes of the financial mechanisms they have been broadly grouped as following;

- Economic and social rights
- Human rights
- Prevention of violence
- Participation and decision-making

The overlapping characteristics of the categories listed naturally results in the



outcomes not being linked to a specific category of gender equality, but rather that activities in one area are likely to have outcomes in one or more of the others.

Economic and social rights

The essence of the economic rights element of this dimension of gender equality is that women and men must have the opportunity to participate equally in economic development. It entails the full integration of women into the economy and is therefore very closely linked to social rights. The economic dimension of gender equality is also found to some extent in both of the other two categories of gender equality listed below. Failure to protect social rights relates directly to the feminization of poverty, which emerges as a result of dated models that do not take into account the family role. This can be due to career breaks, part time work, lack of education and training, etc.

By its very nature, there is a wide range of activities relating to economic and social rights in gender equality. Initiatives that may contribute to the inclusion of gender equality issues into the economic dimension include:

- eliminating gender gaps in the labor market,
- Equal pay for equal work,
- Access to education,
- Provision of day-care facilities, more flexible work environments, etc.

Initiatives that promote gender equality in social rights may include such initiatives that take into account parental leave, maternity protection, working time, part-time and fixed-term contracts, and particularly those that impact women's daily life such as public transport, public health, etc.

Human rights

As affirmed at the UN Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1992, and reaffirmed at the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, women's rights are human rights; they are not a special category of rights. Hence this dimension of gender equality relates to the issue of the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Participation and decision-making

This dimension includes representation and participation in decision-making both at a political and an economic level. The political level encompasses the equal participation and representation of women in the societal systems and local decision-making processes, including elections. Decision-making at an economic level relates to the step from education and training into working life, including recruitment and career development aspects.

Gender Equality in NCRO Projects

Promoting gender equality has shown that it is insufficient to work only with gender equality-oriented projects. Gender equality issues must be a part of entire processes, policies and actions. Care must also been taken to secure the focus on gender



equality throughout the project cycle. Therefore, gender equality is defined as a cross-cutting issue that is evaluated in all project applications of the financial mechanisms. However, the notion of gender equality may also exist as the key focus of a project; an element without which the project would not exist.

As a cross-cutting issue

Gender equality is one of four cross-cutting issues identified for projects. The cross-cutting issues are:

- Sustainable development
- Good governance
- Gender equality
- Bilateral relations

Gender equality is inextricably linked to the other cross-cutting issues. On a broad level, without gender equality, sustainable development cannot be achieved. Moreover, gender equality is an inherent component of good governance, without which there would be an inefficient use of a country's resources and good governance could not be achieved.

The involvement and the full and equal participation of both women and men are crucial aspects of economic and social development, if effective and sustainable development is to be achieved. The related issues of 'poverty and social exclusion' and 'economic and employment exclusion' tend however to be more significant problems for women than for men, and have led to a feminization of poverty. The link between women and poverty/social exclusion is so strong that without the focus on gender equality, one cannot expect reductions in poverty levels.

As a cross-cutting issue, gender equality will be covered and followed up throughout the project cycle. This starts with the preparation of the application, continuing with the appraisal and decision processes, as well as throughout project implementation and evaluation. Gender equality considerations have been incorporated into all areas of the project cycle.

In projects

A key aspect of the success of any gender equality policy is to translate it into action. In the financial mechanisms this primarily entails its incorporation into projects and the project cycle, starting at the project application stage. In essence, the potential and actual impact of the inclusion of gender equality must therefore be assessed both in project appraisal and followed-up within project monitoring.

In assessing the inclusion of gender equality of each project, a gender equality checklist has been developed. The checklist is meant as a tool throughout the process of project development, appraisal, monitoring, and result evaluation. It is one of a number of tools, including discussions with appraisal agents and project monitoring, that will be used to ensure the inclusion of gender equality.

The checklist must be used in a flexible way, declaring the 'not applicable' questions as such, and focusing on the relevant ones.



When developing the gender equality element of projects, a number of elements should be considered in order to give an indication of its potential impact on gender equality issues. In particular, the applicant should address how the project takes the following issues into account.

General methodology

- How does the project take into account gender specific needs and address gender specific conditions?
- How does the project take past experiences and/or current gender equality activities in the country into account?
- How does the project address the gender equality issues and targets relevant to the project?
- How does the project provide qualitative information on gender issues where necessary?

Economic and social rights

- How does the project encourage lifelong learning and access by women to the labor market?
- How does the project enhance the income earning opportunities of women?
- How does the project strengthen social rights and/or contribute to participation in civil life by women?
- How does the project reduce the social exclusion of women?

Human rights

- How does the project contribute to strengthening organizations and public institutions working to improve the opportunities and rights of women, including NGOs?

Prevention of violence

- How does the project support awareness-raising actions and campaigns empowering women?

Participation and decision-making

- How does the project contribute to participation by women in decision making at both a political and an economic level?
- How does the project involve male and female stakeholders in the consultative process?
- How does the project promote women's participation within the project, for example as project staff, members of steering committees?

Monitoring throughout the project and ex-post evaluation are necessary elements for assessing the actual impact of a project, and are key elements in securing the inclusion of gender equality in projects. To facilitate monitoring, data must be sex disaggregated, reporting requirements must include gender equality considerations, and ex-post evaluations must not only measure impact, but also provide lessons learned and suggest possible future improvements.



Implementing the gender equality policy

The implementation of the gender equality policy has to address the entire project cycle:

1. When projects ideas are developed by the potential project promoters
2. When the beneficiary state government makes their prioritization of the projects
3. When the projects are appraised
4. When the grant decision is made
5. When the project is implemented and monitored

This gender equality policy must therefore be implemented in all parts of the project cycle based on the following principles and activities:

- This policy is an integrated part of the grant policy adopted by the donors and they will thereby be committed to include gender equality assessment as an important decision criterion.
- The cross-cutting checklist must be used in each appraisal. The recommendation for grant decision will be based on sustainable development.
- The checklist shall also be referred to in the *external project monitoring manual* in order for the implementation also to be checked for the same criteria.
- The *Gender equality policy and guide* and the checklist will be presented and thoroughly discussed with all the focal points in order for them also to consider the same criteria in their future assessments.