

GENDER POLICY

Executive Summary

Tackling all forms of inequity, including gender inequality, is crucial for sustainable and peaceful development. Gender inequality is about unequal power relations leading to unequal opportunities to satisfy basic needs and develop oneself to one's full potential and to a decent living. For ABCO working on gender means working with women, men, girls, and boys from all different background and from an intersectional approach. This means we treat people equally no matter what their gender, age, class, ethnic background and physical ability (disabled people) is.

The adoption of the SDGs confirmed gender equality as a universally recognized core development objective. Women have a critical role to play in all of the SDGs, with many targets specifically recognizing women's equality and empowerment as both the objective and as part of the solution. Goal 5 is known as the stand-alone gender goal because it is dedicated to achieving these ends. It also underlines the importance to integrate gender in all other SDGs such as 3 (Good health and well-being) and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

If the causes of unequal access of women to services and assets and their lack of voice are not addressed, and if we do not understand and work on the underlying factors that cause inequality, ABCO's goals cannot be fully achieved. Gender equality means that the opportunities and life chances of men and women, boys and girls, are equal. The emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment reflects a concern that women and men have equal opportunities to make choices about what gender equality means and work in partnership to achieve it. Because of current disparities, equal treatment of women and men is insufficient as a strategy for gender equality. Equal treatment in the context of inequalities can mean the perpetuation of disparities. Commitment to achieving gender equality will require changes in institutional mindsets, practices and social relations through which disparities are reinforced and sustained.

This gender policy builds on ABCO's many successes in the field, where its gender transformative approach to programmes and policies helps bridge the gender gap. As the product of broad consultations with communities, NGOs and CSOs and stakeholders, the policy reflects the collective voice of ABCO.

ABCO promotes gender equality and commits to international agreements on gender equality (such as the UNSC WPS resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 & 2242 and the CEDAW conventions). By addressing the inequality, more balanced power distribution between men and women will be reached and the rights of women and girls, as well as men and boys, enhanced. A sound gender policy capable of transforming the power relations and equalling the power balance at the level of households, communities, services, and society at large is key to the achievement of our goals and for our mission to work on fragility, to reduce fragility and the vulnerability of people where it is most needed and most difficult: in fragile and conflict-affected societies. Of both women and men. This policy document describes ABCO's commitment to gender equality: our mission and approach as well as the organizational policy.

Scope

This policy applies to all ABCO operations. It applies to the programs we develop and implement in the selected areas of work, to our communication, and to the environment we create to effectively reach our goals. This environment includes our organizational structure and culture and the partnerships we engage in.

To monitor progress and to keep all units and all projects actively involved, each unit and each project will have a gender focal point. Yearly the gender policy will be reviewed by all gender focal points to update and adjust.

Commitments

ABCO

- Contributes to the SDG's and especially to SDG 2 and SDG 5 on gender equality and achieve empowerment of all women and girls.
- Incorporates gender and power analysis in the preparation and in the design of her programs and projects.
- Engages in partnerships with organizations that strengthen the gender perspective and stimulate partners to work in partnerships with gender transformative organisations.
- Includes gender in the entire project cycle and includes indicators (gender sensitive) for all stages: programming, implementing, monitoring and evaluating.
- Accounts for the contribution the organization makes to gender equality and will make the results (gender disaggregated data) available (Open Data Policy).
- Networks and Lobbies at national, regional and global level for regulations, rules, and implementation that lead to greater gender equality.
- Addresses gender in human resources policies and practices, communication & public relation mechanisms and tools, program materials and all forms of documents and documentaries.
- Trains and sensitizes staff to be gender sensitive and promotes the commitment of the organization in this regard.
- Will share the gender policy actively with partner organisations during as part of the contracting and ask partners to share gender policies with ABCO.
- Will regularly report to programme participants, donors and the public on progress on gender equality in the work of ABCO.
- Ensures external marketing, fundraising, advocacy, and communications respect and uphold our commitment to gender quality including being respectful, using inclusive and positive language and images and avoiding stereotypes with particular attention to those based on gender.
- Senior management and human resource will ensure that all ABCO personnel understand and comply with this policy.

Overall Objective Gender and ABCO

We do not accept a world of inequality, exclusion, and unsustainability. We are driven by the conviction that we, the human family, can build a better one. We believe that all humans are a single family and that the earth with all its resources is our common home.

Overall Objective gender and ABCO Ensure that women and girls' access and participate in community, access appropriate sexual and reproductive health, access to food security and resilience, women are free and capable and enabled to exercise economic rights and equality between women, girls men and boys is enhanced through:

- a gender perspective in all programs
- specific programs contributing to women's empowerment and gender equality

Operational principles

1. Through all stages of the program and project design attention will be paid to the different needs, interests, rights, and opportunities of women, men, boys, girls:
 - Gender and power analysis: the differences between the roles that women and men play in communities and in society, the different levels of power they hold, their differing needs, constraints and opportunities and the impact of these differences on their lives are examined.
 - The program strategy reflects the result of the analysis and ensures that the root causes of the inequalities between women and men, boys and girls are addressed in the program design and implementation.
 - The results framework will include gender disaggregated indicators to monitor against and measure the results achieved in women empowerment and gender equality. Monitoring and evaluation is an essential component of the project cycle and gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation is important to know if projects have created gender disparities or inequalities and to learn from our experience and get to know our best practices.
 - A gender marker will be developed to assess project proposals/implementation.
2. Collect gender and age-disaggregated data throughout all our programs. Without specific data on how women are included in or reached by the interventions, you cannot evaluate whether the program or project is benefitting women or on the contrary, harming them. Good data on women and girls will allow us to:
 - understand the size and nature of disadvantages experienced by women and girls, both in absolute terms and in comparison, with men and boys
 - identify and analyze the underlying causes of gender inequality
 - measure the consequences of gender inequality and
 - design effective policy.

Data collection concerns the preparation phase (analysis) as well as the implementation phase where gender and age-segregated output and outcome data is collected.

The gender dimension will be integrated into thematic programs. This means that each program unit will ensure gender mainstreaming and aim for a gender transformative approach in their work and if possible, facilitate gender standalone programming. To support this, gender focal points will be appointed who will convene in the Gender CoP.

Gender in the Organization

Gender equality and women empowerment can only be achieved if we create an enabling environment where the staff is prepared to work in a gender-sensitive and even transformative way, ABCO is equipped to allow women and men to develop equally, where discrimination on whatever base is not tolerated and where the support to achieving the goals is well organized. This comes down to having:

1. a human resources policy that is supportive for gender equality
2. the right structure and mechanisms in place to define targets, to monitor performance and to account for our results.

Indicator: the proportion of women in management positions

1. The human resources policy

The human resources policy aspires to achieve gender parity in all ranks and functions of the organization.

The HR resource policy can support this gender balance at the organization and project level.

- a. The recruitment of staff (selection); The target in the (higher) management positions is a 50/50 division (where possible).
- b. A conducive environment for women and men by ensuring the provisions that make women feel safe at the workplace and in their environment (safe room, separate toilets, nursing room) parental leave, sanctions on sexual harassment. And a clear policy that denounces (sexual) and gender-based violence. The gender policy will be shared and discussed during the onboarding trajectory.
- c. Easily accessible complaint mechanism
- d. Confidential advisor in every project, both male and female.

Gender in the project cycle

ABCO works through the project working approach. Of course, gender should be a central part of all the parts in the project cycle, but there are a few moments in the project cycle gender needs to be a crucial element. Underneath an overview of the specific steps in the project cycle.

Besides these steps, no proposal should be sent out without a proper gender and conflict analysis, for which a template will be developed. In most project cycles, the expert involved in the writing of the proposal will also be appointed as the gender focal point.

Definitions

Gender	The social and cultural attributes, expectations and norms associated with being male or female.
Gender Equality	Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women 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
Women empowerment	The concept of empowerment is related to gender equality but distinct from it. The core of empowerment lies in the ability of a woman to control her own destiny. This implies that to be empowered women must not only get equal capabilities (such as education and health) and equal access to resources and opportunities (such as land and employment), they must also have the agency to use those rights, capabilities, resources and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions (such as are provided through leadership opportunities and participation in political institutions). And to exercise agency, women must live without fear of coercion and violence ⁶ . Women empowerment has five components: Women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their rights to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally
Gender Perspective	The gender perspective shows that the different conditions and rights of women and men can be explained through interpretations of what is meant by male and female. It reveals how power is structured and helps us understand the reasons why women lack influence and why men are given certain privileges. It also opens doors to the analysis of other power structures: class, age, sexuality, spiritual beliefs, wealth, residence (urban or rural), the color of skin and disability are some of the many categories affecting the status of individuals in society and their right to a decent life
Gender mainstreaming	A process that systematically integrates gender perspectives into legislation, public policies, programs, and projects. This process enables making women's and men's concerns and experiences to be made an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres with the goal of achieving gender equality
(Sexual) and Gender-Based Violence	Sexual and Gender-based violence ((S)GBV) is violence targeted at individuals or groups on the basis of their gender. While research suggests that a significant proportion of women worldwide will at some point in their lives experience (S)GBV, the extent to which men and boys are affected is unknown. ⁸ An associated form of violence is Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG), which is directed specifically at females. Another associated form of violence is violence against LGBTs, who express alternative gender identities

Women's rights	The 'human rights' of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community. As defined in Article 1, 'discrimination against women' shall mean 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 fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. reflects and reinforces underlying gender-based inequalities
Masculinities	In all cultures, people have strongly held beliefs about the kinds of behaviours, attributes, and values which are most appropriate for men and those which are most appropriate for women, and these are learned from a young age. These socially constructed gender norms play a key role in shaping the lives of women, men, boys, and girls. The term 'masculinity' simply refers to anything which is associated with men and boys in any given culture, just as 'femininity' refers to that which is culturally associated with women and girls. Ideas about what is masculine and what is feminine vary over time, as well as within and between cultures. Therefore, there are many different possible versions of masculinity - masculinities - and they are changing all the time
Gender Responsive Budgeting	Gender-responsive budgeting or GRB is a method of determining the extent to which government expenditure has detracted from or come nearer to the goal of gender equality. A gender-responsive budget is not a separate budget for women, but rather a tool that analyzes budget allocations, public spending and taxation from a gender perspective and can be subsequently used to advocate for reallocation of budget line items to better respond to women's priorities as well as men's, making them, as the name suggests, gender-responsive. 1
Gender standalone programming	Programs that have a specific focus on improving gender equality. Often focused on for example women empowerment.
Gender neutral, Gender sensitive, and Gender transformative	The primary objective behind gender mainstreaming is to design and implement development projects, programs, and policies that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not reinforce existing gender inequalities (Gender Neutral) 2. Attempt to redress existing gender inequalities (Gender Sensitive) 3. Attempt to re-define women and men's gender roles and relations (Gender Positive / Transformative)