

EMBRACING A GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH



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INTRODUCTION

Tackling all forms of inequity, including gender inequity, is crucial for sustainable and peaceful development. Achieving gender equity entails addressing the unequal power relations that prevent men, women, and gender-diverse people from reaching their full potential, obtaining a decent living, and satisfying basic needs. In this document, we outline Cordaid's approach to gender and the organisation's gender policy for the years 2024-2026.

This policy document describes Cordaid's commitment to gender equity and to a gender transformative approach in our mission and our organisational policy. While a lot has been done to reduce the gender gap and improve the opportunities for women, girls, and gender-diverse people [1] over the past decades, significant gender gaps remain across sectors and in all countries around the world. Evidence confirms that gender blindness is an obstacle to sustainable change[2]. Only when people of all genders are equitably included in all processes, can sustainable development take place, especially in fragile settings. For example, investments in girls and women using culturally sensitive strategies and approaches not only enables them to reach their full potential, but it creates a ripple effect that yields multiple benefits for families, communities, and countries.

We envision a gender transformative approach which:

■ Is implemented at an operational as well as organisational level, through gender integration across all offices, programmes, and projects, and creating and maintaining a gender-sensitive work environment.

Being gender inclusive for Cordaid means...

For Cordaid working on gender means working with women, men, and gender diverse people from diverse backgrounds and from an intersectional approach. This means we strive to work inclusively and not discriminate based on gender, age, class, ethnic background, disability, sexual orientation or gender expression. Cordaid's approach always takes into account the context and values of each country or region we operate in.

- Is localised, focussing on co-creation and implementation of programmes and interventions in which partner organisations have opportunities to actively challenge harmful gender norms. We support gender-, conflict- as well as culturally sensitive approaches, defined by local actors, to advance gender equity.
- Recognises and addresses the intersectionality of gender with other forms of oppression and discrimination based on ethnicity, age, class, disability, etc.
- Promotes equitable positions of social and political influence for people of all gender identities, expressions and sexual orientations within communities and institutions at all levels.
- Addresses power inequities between persons of different genders. This is necessary to create sustainable interventions, that create opportunities for all people in society, while recognising structural and systemic barriers that perpetuate inequality, such as unequal access to education, employment, healthcare and decision-making processes.

"As Cordaid we strive towards inclusiveness, thus we recognise that gender is not binary but a spectrum of identities and expressions."

- 1. All terms used in this policy are explained in the glossary $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) \left(1\right)$
- 2. What is Gender Blindness? Talkspace

Scope

This is a Cordaid-wide gender policy that applies to all Cordaid operations at the global office, and in the country offices, to the programmes we develop and implement in the selected countries, to our monitoring and evaluation tools, to our lobby and communication, and to the environment we create to effectively reach our goals. Including partnerships. This environment includes our organisational structure and culture and the partnerships we engage in. The areas included within the scope of our gender policy are (S)GBV, promotion of equal participation and representation in decision making processes, promotion of the rights and empowerment of marginalised groups and gender integration in all Cordaid programs, projects and policies.

GENDER EQUITY AND EQUALITY

We realise that the relationship between gender equity and gender equality is inherently interdependent. Gender equality refers to the status of enjoying equal rights and opportunities by all genders, for which a working process of gender equity is necessary. In practice, our commitment to gender equity recognises that the diverse circumstances of men, women, and gender-diverse individuals call for tailored and appropriate measures to achieve true equality within our organisation. We understand that gender equity and the empowerment of women are critical strategies that guide us toward the ultimate goal of gender equality (see the infographic below):



EOUALITY = SAMENESS

Giving everyone the same thing
It only works if everyone starts
from the same place



EOUITY = FAIRNESS

Access to the same opportunities

We must first ensure equity before we can enjoy equality

A gender transformative approach aspires to change the unequal realities we face in the various contexts we work in. It tackles the root causes of gender inequality and reshapes unequal power relations. To ensure this, gender- and age-segregated data is crucial.

SDG 5 and more

The adoption of The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) consolidated gender equity as a universally recognised core development objective and overall confirmed the critical role women must play in the attainment of these goals. Specifically goal 5, the stand-alone gender goal, sees women empowerment and gender equity, not only as an objective but also as a crucial element of the aimed goals1. It also underlines the importance of integrating gender considerations into strategies aimed at other SDGs such as 2 (Zero hunger), 3 (Good health and well-being), 13 (Climate action) and 16 (Peace, justice, and strong institutions).

CHALLENGING GENDER INEQUALITY

As Cordaid we understand that if the causes of gendered and unequal access and control over assets, resources and services are not addressed, the organisations' goals cannot be accomplished. A "one size fits all" approach would fall short of addressing the diversity in experiences, needs and issues that people of different genders face, and how these change and intersect with other aspects of their identities (such as ethnicity, age, disability and social class). Because of current disparities, treating or assisting men, women and gender-diverse people in the same way is inadequate and does not transform the sources of these differences. Equal treatment could instead result in the perpetuation of harmful inequalities. Hence, a commitment to a gender transformative strategy is key to gender equity and by extension, gender equality. A process of gender equity and gender transformation will require working to change the institutional mindsets, practices and social relations that reproduce and sustain gender inequality. To this end, the voices of women, men and gender diverse people need to be heard and amplified to a level where women, men and gender diverse are equally able to shape their societies. Active promotion and support for this is needed, to ensure meaningful participation. Therefore, in Cordaid, we stress the importance and urgency of a gender transformative approach in all our programmes and initiatives. Concurrently, we believe that gender should be integrated throughout all our operations, regardless of their focus: gender plays a role in all domains, from health and agri-food systems to peacebuilding and education.

FRAGILITY AND INEQUALITY

Cordaid operates in fragile and conflict-affected areas, with a thematic focus on humanitarian aid, health, agri-food systems, peace and security and education. Our mission is to drive the structural social change and transformation needed to achieve lasting, sustainable peace. Women, girls, gender-diverse and marginalised communities are disproportionately affected by insecurity and violence, impacting their health, opportunities, and rights. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) affects their economic and political opportunities, their mobility, their personal health and their ability to get an education. Gender inequality is not only a consequence of fragility but also a fundamental cause of fragility, as it intersects with other power imbalances in the economic, political, and religious domains of social life. Fragile and conflict-affected settings thus provide valuable opportunities to positively transform gender roles and relations in long-lasting and sustainable ways.

It is our mission to reduce vulnerability and build resilience in fragile and conflict-affected societies and it is coupled with a strong commitment to gender equity and to our gender transformative approach focused on people of all genders and sexual orientations.

Do No Harm

In our work, we are guided by the <u>Do No Harm policy</u>, ensuring that all interventions are designed to avoid unintended negative consequences for the communities we serve. This includes adopting **conflict-sensitive approaches**, which take into account the specific context of each region. For example, our strategies for Afghanistan differ from those for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), as we recognise that each area presents unique challenges and dynamics. This ensures that our interventions are context-specific, effective, and responsive to local needs.

COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUITY

Cordaid promotes gender equity and commits to international agreements on gender equality (such as the UNSC WPS resolutions and the CEDAW conventions). These are international agreements based on universal human rights. We support all that want to build a stronger local, national and international framework with concrete policies related to this. By addressing inequity, we can reach a more balanced power distribution between men, women, gender diverse people, as well as enhance their rights. A sound gender policy capable of transforming power relations and levelling the power balance at the level of households, communities, services, and society at large, which is key to the achievement of our goals.

CORDAID'S COMMITMENTS TO ITS GENDER POLICY · Contributes to the SDGs and especially to SDG 5: 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls and interlinked SDGs. · Takes a gender transformative approach in all our advocacy, campaigns, and programming. · Networks and lobbies at national, regional, and global level for regulations, rules, and its implementation that lead to greater gender equity and displays our gender transformative approach. Accounts for the organisation's contributions to gender equity and makes the results (gender-**On strategy** disaggregated data) available (Open Data Policy). Reports regularly to programme participants, donors, and the public on progress on gender equity and our gender transformative approach in the work of Cordaid. · Upholds in external marketing, fundraising, advocacy, and communications our commitment to our gender transformative approach, including being respectful, using inclusive and positive language and images, and avoiding stereotypes with particular attention to those based on gender. Maintains and promotes a conflict-sensitive approach. · Incorporates a gender and power analysis in the preparation and in the design, implementation and monitoring of our programmes and projects. On programmes · Includes a gender transformative approach in the entire project cycle and includes indicators to measure progress in its gender transformative work for all stages: programming, implementing, monitoring and evaluation. · Includes sharing of resources and expertise not only within programmes, but also across programmes. · Engages in partnerships with organisations that strengthen our gender transformative approach and stimulate partners to work in partnerships with gender transformative organisations. In networks and · Shares the gender policy actively with partner organisations during and as part of their contracting with partners and asks partners to share gender policies with Cordaid. Performs regular audits of partners' practices related to gender equality and helps partners improve and align to the gender policy through tools such as workshops, resources, and compliance timelines. · Trains and sensitises staff in our gender transformative approach and promotes the commitment of the organisation in this regard. Addresses gender in human resources policies and practices, communication mechanisms and tools, programme materials and all forms of documents and documentaries in the Cordaid organisation In the worldwide organisation · Ensures, at senior management and human resource level, that all Cordaid employees understand and comply with this policy. • Cordaid aims and promotes gender parity in all layers of the organisation.

HOW WE WORK

The objective of our gender policy is to enhance gender equality and to support and roll out gender transformative strategies. This means ensuring that men, women, and gender diverse people participate in peace processes, access appropriate sexual and reproductive health, and that they are free, capable, and enabled to exercise their human and economic rights.

To achieve this, we:

- Implement a gender transformative approach in all programmes,
- Design specific programmes contributing to women empowerment and gender equality,
- Support organisations to work on gender operationally and structurally,
- Create an enabling environment for women empowerment and gender equality.

We will do that by adhering to the following operational principles:

- **1.** Through all stages of the programme and project design, attention will be paid to the diverse needs, interests, rights, and opportunities of people of all genders, by means of:
- Gender and power analysis examining the differences between the roles that women, men and gender diverse people play in communities and in society, the various levels of power they hold, their age, differing needs, constraints and opportunities and the impact of these differences on their lives.
- Incorporating gender into project design documents, guidelines and monitoring and evaluation tools.
- Programme strategy that reflects the result of the analysis and ensures that the root causes of the inequalities between all genders are addressed in the programme design and implementation. Knowledge of and compliance with minimum gender standards and programmes.
- Results framework that will include gender-disaggregated indicators ideally with intersectional approaches to monitor against and measure the results achieved in women empowerment and gender equality. Monitoring and evaluation are essential components 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 to get to know our best practices.
- **2.** We work in partnership with other actors such as (local) partners and other relevant stakeholders. We ensure that in our cooperation with partners, we also collect and report gender- and age-segregated data. We ensure that we integrate gender in our lobby and advocacy efforts by using gender marker to assess project proposals and implementation.
- **3.** Collect gender and age-disaggregated data (ideally intersectional) throughout all our programmes. Without specific data on how women, men and gender-diverse people are included in or reached by the interventions, you cannot evaluate whether the programme or project is benefitting them or on the contrary, harming them. Good data on gender in all it is diversity will allow us to:
- Understand the size and nature of disadvantages experienced by people of different genders in absolute terms and compared to each other.
- Identify and analyse the underlying causes of gender inequality.
- Analyse the roles, responsibilities, cultural constraints, stereotypes and relationships between men and women in programmes.
- Measure the consequences of gender inequality and design an effective policy.
- Design an effective intervention to ensure we are using the learning to revise our intervention strategies.
- Data collection concerns the preparation phase (analysis) as well as the implementation and completion phase where gender and age-segregated output and outcome data are collected.

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- **4.** The gender dimension will be integrated into thematic programmes. This means that part of the organisation will ensure a gender transformative approach and if possible, facilitate gender standalone programming. The structures beyond the community that affect women and men's access to and control of resources, and power of decision-making will be examined, as well as how these structures might be influenced by the programme.
- **5.** Gender focal points will be appointed in each country office and supported by the gender expert in the global office. The gender focal points will be trained and coached. Next to this, exchanges between colleagues will be facilitated and encouraged to ensure gender focal points can learn from each other, to ensure exchanges between countries. Through the Community of Practice, knowledge sharing, tool development and monitoring will be discussed and promoted. A dedicated gender focal point Terms of Reference will be developed. Developing the gender analysis tools and skills necessary to support project participants serves not only to meet immediate practical needs, but also to explore and advance strategic interests that may challenge socially defined roles which limit development potential.

GENDER IN THE CORDAID ORGANISATION

Gender equity and women empowerment can only be achieved in an environment where the staff is prepared to work in a gender transformative way, the offices are equipped to allow women, men, and gender diverse people to develop equally, where discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and everyone has equal opportunities to thrive. This comes down to having:

- A HR (Human Resources) policy that promotes gender equality, diversity and inclusion.
- The right structure and mechanisms in place to define targets, to monitor performance and to account for our results.

The HR policy aspires to achieve gender parity at all levels of the organisation. It can support this gender balance at the global office as well as in the country offices through:

- The recruitment of staff (selection); the target in all positions, especially (higher) management, gender parity is
- A conducive environment in line with Cordaid's gender policy. For example, by ensuring provisions that make
 women feel safe at the workplace and in their environment (safe room, separate toilets, nursing room), parental
 leave and sanctions on sexual harassment, as well as a clear policy against (sexual) and gender-based violence.
 The gender policy will be shared and discussed during the onboarding trajectory.
- Easily accessible complaint mechanism.
- Confidential advisor in every office, both male and female; this cannot be someone in higher management.
- Building gender awareness as a criterion in partnership strategies and by supporting partners in developing and applying gender equity.
- Continuing to expand the organisation's knowledge about and commitment to gender issues through research, documentation and sharing of lessons learned MEL in place for gender biases.
- Ensuring that career development opportunities are afforded to both women and men and gender diverse people. This may include such activities as formal mentoring and coaching.
- Developing core competencies that address core values and gender awareness and equity. These competencies should be integrated into performance management systems and all management development models.
- Create favourable conditions of the participation of breastfeeding mothers in offices and in field missions (for example support in childcare on a mission)

"By 2030, Cordaid ensures equal rights and opportunities for women, men, and gender diverse people throughout our organisation and all our work. Our intersectional gender transformative strategy is fully incorporated in the DNA of our organisation and rests at the core of our work."

CORDAID GENDER COP

A CoP (Community of Practice) is a network of Cordaid staff (from the global and country offices) working in a specified domain and/or sharing an interest in this domain and connected to each other (in person or online). The CoP facilitates generation and exchange of information and knowledge, stimulates discussion and allows for sharing of experiences and lessons learned. It also contributes to networking among Cordaid staff.

The aim of the Gender CoP is:

- Identify existing tools, manuals and policy present in the various units and country offices.
- Create unified gender strategies and tools for the whole of Cordaid.
- Create a strong network of gender focal points throughout the organisation.
- Organise yearly learning event for gender focal points both at global office and at the country offices.
- Create a safe space for knowledge sharing, sharing of challenges and a support network for the whole organisation.
- Bi- monthly online meetings for gender focal points, facilitated by the Gender Expert at the global office.
- Review the Gender Policy every two years.

The Board of Directors will include the gender objective to enhance gender quality and implement our gender transformative strategies in the result agreements with the country directors and with the unit managers and will monitor performance and staff development in gender. The Gender CoP will work on appropriate (corporate) gender indicators to monitor the progress of the implementation of the gender policy.



DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions [3] shall apply.

DEFINITIONS GENDER POLICY	
Gender	The social and cultural attributes, expectations and norms associated with being male or female. As opposed to biological sex, notions of gender are context-specific, time-bound and thus subject to change. Gender intersects with other aspects of a person's identity (such as ethnicity, religion, age, socioeconomic status etc.), affecting their experiences, opportunities and relationships with other people.
Gender equality and gender equity	Gender equality refers to equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women, men and gender diverse people. Gender equity refers to the process to achieve equality, which at times means different treatments to achieve equal outcomes in terms of rights, opportunities and benefits, according to the respective needs of women, men, and gender-diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men, and gender-diverse people will become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born with male or female genitals. Gender equity requires taking into consideration the diversity of people's interests, needs, and priorities based on their gender. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage people, regardless of their gender. Equality between people of all genders is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for - and indicator of - sustainable people-centred development [4].
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 both inside and outside of her private life. 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), but 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). To exercise agency, women must live without fear of coercion and violence. 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 [5].
Gender perspective	A 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 have certain privileges. It also opens doors to the analysis of other power structures: class, age, sexuality, spiritual beliefs, wealth, residence (urban or rural), skin colour and disability are some of the many categories affecting the status of individuals in society. In a policy context, taking a gender perspective is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.
Gender mainstreaming	A process that systematically integrates gender perspectives into legislation, public policies, programmes, and projects. This process enables making the concerns and experiences of people of all genders an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres with the goal of achieving gender equality [6].
Intersectionality	Intersectionality refers to the understanding of how overlapping social identities—such as race, gender, class, and sexuality—interact to create unique experiences of discrimination or privilege. It ensures that policies are designed to meet the specific needs of marginalised groups by considering how different forms of oppression, such as sexism and racism, intersect.

- 3. World Bank Group, gender equality, poverty reduction, and inclusive growth, 2016-2013
- 4. https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsandefinitions.htm
- 5. Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality, 2005, Taking action: achieving gender equality and empowering women
- 6. https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/what-is-gender-mainstreaming

DEFINITIONS GENDER POLICY

(Sexual) and gender-based violence

Sexual and gender-based violence ((S)GBV) is violence targeted at individuals or groups based on their gender. This violence can take many forms, namely physical, psychological and financial. While research suggests that a considerable 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. This is often due to widespread cultural norms surrounding masculinity which discourage the suggestion of "weakness". An associated form of violence against Women and Girls (VAWG), which is directed specifically at females. Another associated form of violence is violence against LGBTQI+ people, who express alternative sexualities and/or 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 based on 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 (and femininities)

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 an early 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 versions of masculinity – masculinities – and they are changing all the time. [7]

Gender responsive budgeting

Gender-responsive budgeting (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 a tool that analyses budget allocations, public spending and taxation from a gender perspective. It 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. [8]



Gender inequalities are reinforced to achieve desired development outcomes Uses gender norms, roles, and stereotypes that reinforce gender inequalities

Gender blind:

Gender is not considered relevant to development outcome Gender norms, roles, and relations are not affected (worsened or improved)

Gender sensitive:

Gender is a means to reach set development goals
Addressing gender norms, roles and access to resources in so far as needed to reach project goals

Gender responsive:

Gender is central to achieving positive development outcomes Changing gender norms, roles and access to resources a key component of project outcomes

Gender transformative:

Gender is central to promoting gender equality and achieving positive development outcomes Transforming unequal gender relations to promote shared power, control of resources, decisionmaking, and support for women's empowerment.

LGBTQI+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex + other sexualities and gender identities.

Gender standalone programming

Programming that is designed around a fundamental aim of addressing root causes of gender inequality within society.

- 7. https://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/masculinities-conflict-and-peacebuilding.pdf
- 8. Gender Equality Glossary (unwomen.org)

ABOUT CORDAID

Cordaid is a value-based international development and emergency relief organisation, based in the Netherlands with offices in 14 countries. We work in and on fragility and support communities in their efforts to improve health care, education, food security, and justice. Where disaster strikes, we offer humanitarian assistance.

Cordaid is deeply rooted in the Dutch society with more than 250 .000 private donors. The Christian values of human dignity, justice, compassion and care for the planet guide us in our work. Cordaid is a founding member of Caritas, CIDSE and ACT Alliance.

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