



## **GENDER JUSTICE POLICY**

February 2020

The first CWSA Gender Equality Policy was developed in 2018. This is an updated version to be implemented in all of CWSA's institutional and organizational programming.

## **Introduction**

**Community World Service Asia (CWSA)** has revised and developed this Gender Justice Policy to increase inclusivity and gender equality and minimize the risk of gender-based discrimination and violence among the communities we work with and those working with or associated with our partners. This Policy complements, but does not replace, CWSA's Sexual Harassment Policy, Fraud and Corruption and Abuse of Power. It also complements the Principles of the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief. It has been developed in line with global best practices, drawing on the ACT Alliance Gender Policy, Core Humanitarian Standard, SPHERE Standards, and the IASC Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action to be applied in all three modalities of work.

Community World Service Asia believes in an end to gender inequality and injustice, gender-based discrimination and violence, and in closing the gender gap and address unequal power relationships for the promotion of human dignity for all. Community World Service Asia is committed to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls as stated in Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 5. Community World Service Asia is committed to respect, empower and protect the dignity, the individuality and human rights of every human being it works with. It does not accept any discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation, disability, nationality, race, religion or belief, class or political opinion.

Gender is a cross-cutting theme in all of Community World Service Asia's programming and Community World Service Asia is committed to ensure gender equality as a common value and an absolute human right. Community World Service Asia considers gender mainstreaming as an appropriate strategy to achieve gender equality.

This policy applies to all CWSA programs and staff and aims to improve quality and accountability on gender. The Gender Justice principles cover the minimum standards that CWSA must comply by as an [ACT Alliance](#) member, and expects all CWSA staff and project partnering organizations to conform to.

## Key Definitions

Key definitions of concepts that will follow have mainly been retrieved from *ACT Alliance Gender Justice Policy* and *Training manual on Gender-Inclusive Rights-Based Development*:

**Sex** is a medical term that relates to the biological determination of the individual and the physical distinction and categorization as either male, female or intersex and their different biological functions.

**Gender** first and foremost refers to unequal power relations based on socially constructed norms and practices that are derived from a person's real or perceived sex. Gender is learned through socialization, and is often expressed in terms of masculinity or femininity. Gender inequality affects the equal right of people of all genders to enjoy their rights. Since gender is socially constructed, and thus context and time specific stereotypical notions of men and women's roles can be challenged and are changeable. In all societies, these roles have evolved and changed. The term gender is often used as if it is synonymous and interchangeable with the word women. This is not the case. The reason why gender approaches often focus on women and girls is because of the acknowledged discrimination and exclusion which most women and girls still face globally.

**Gender equality** is the equal enjoyment of human rights, opportunities, responsibilities, resources and rewards irrespective of gender or sex, including fundamental freedoms in the political, civil, economic, social and cultural fields of life.<sup>3</sup> Gender equality is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development.

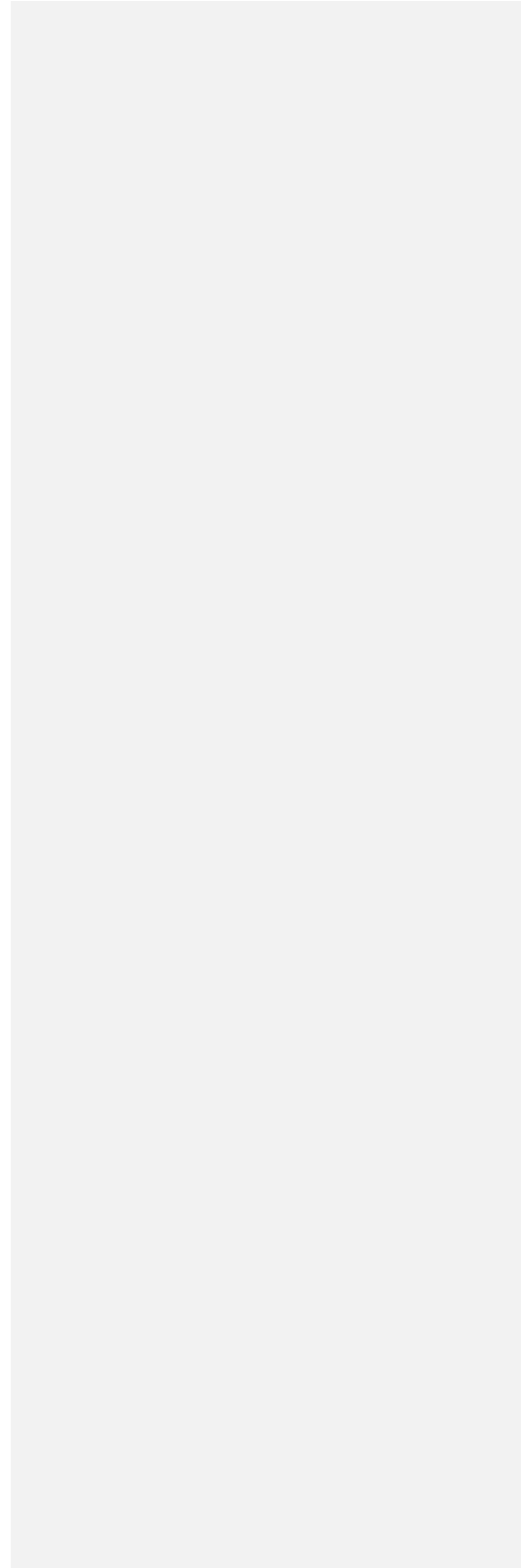
**Gender identity** is a personal perception of one's own gender which may or may not match -with their sex assigned at birth. It includes all of the attributes and characteristics that different cultures attach to the belonging to one or the other sexes.

**Gender mainstreaming** is a strategy for attaining gender equality. A process of assessing the gender implications of any planned action. It is a strategy for making the concerns and the experiences of all people an integral part of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all economic, political and social spheres, so that all benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

**Gender-based violence (GBV)** is any act of violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.<sup>5</sup> Gender-based violence is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences, like power inequalities, between females and males. Acts of GBV violate a number of universal human rights. The nature and extent of specific types of GBV vary across cultures, countries and regions. GBV includes e.g. sexual gender-based violence (SGBV), sexual exploitation and abuse, rape, forced prostitution, human trafficking, harmful traditional practices, intimidation, psychological violence and gender-based violence in close relationships, such as honour-related violence.

<sup>5</sup> UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 1998, in Article 1.

6 SDG 5 Target 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life; SDG 5 Target 5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions



**Intersectionality** is a theory and an approach that seeks to examine how various socially and culturally constructed categories, such as gender, class, disability and other axes of identity, interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels, contributing to systematic social inequality and oppression. Intersectionality holds that the classical conceptualizations of oppression within society, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and religion-based bigotry, do not act independently of one another. Instead, these forms of oppression interrelate, creating a system of oppression that reflects the "intersection" of multiple forms of discrimination.

#### **Sexual and reproductive health and rights**

**Sexual rights** are the rights of all people to decide freely and responsibly on all aspects of their sexuality, including protecting and promoting their sexual health, being free from discrimination, coercion or violence in their sexual lives and in all sexual decisions, expecting and demanding equality, full consent, mutual respect and shared responsibility in sexual relationships. **Reproductive health rights** concerns the complete physical, mental and social well-being including the concerns of persons with disabilities (PWDs), in all matters related to the reproductive system including a satisfying and safe sex life, capacity to have children and, freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so.

#### **Gender Discrimination Examples /Scenarios**

- Discriminating against an individual with regard to terms and conditions of employment because of that individual's race, gender, age, religion, disability, affectional or sexual orientation, place of origin, or his/her ancestor's place of origin
- Treating an individual differently because of race, gender, age, religion, disability, affectional or sexual orientation, place of origin, or his or her ancestors' place of origin, or because an individual has the physical, cultural or linguistic characteristics of a racial or national origin group
- Treating an individual differently because of marriage to or association with persons of a racial, religious or national origin group; or due to membership in or association with an organization identified with the interests of a racial, religious or national origin group; or because an individual's name or spouse's name is associated with a racial, religious or national origin group
- Calling another by an unwanted nickname which refers to one or more of the above characteristics, or telling ethnic jokes which harasses an employee or create a hostile work environment
- Using derogatory references regarding any of the above characteristics in any job-related communication
- Engaging in threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts, in the workplace, based on the foregoing classifications
- Displaying or distributing material in the workplace that contains language or images that are derogatory or demeaning, based upon any of the foregoing classifications

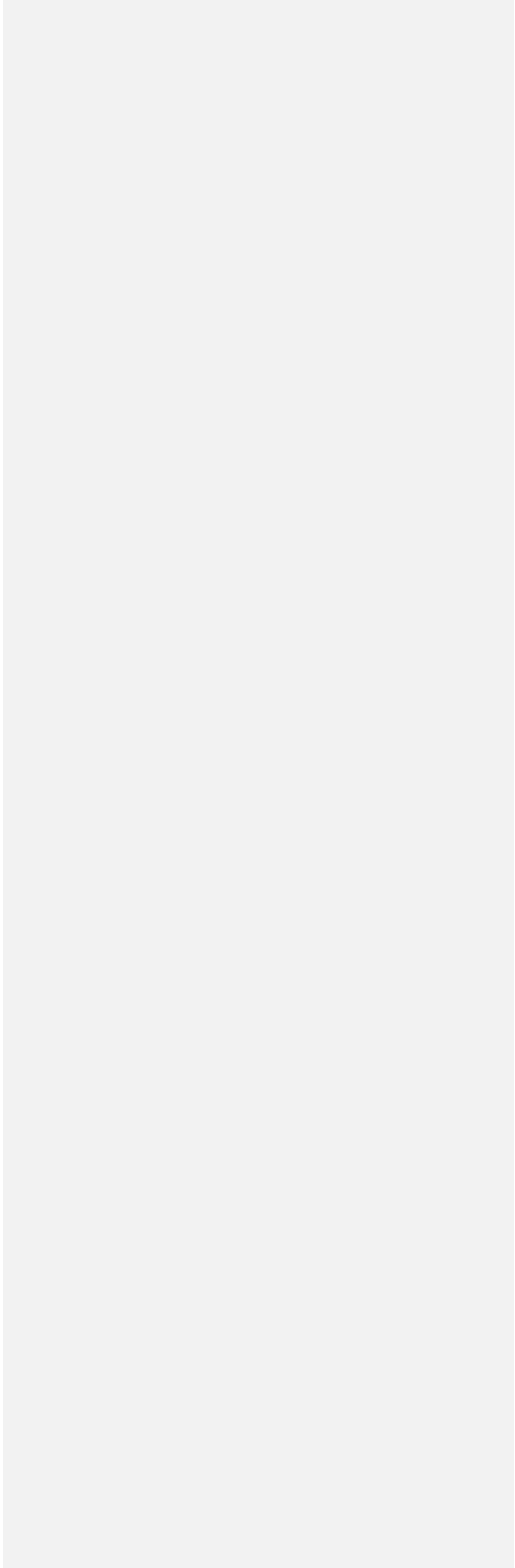
#### **Gender Justice Policy Principles**

To achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (SDG 5), Community World Service Asia will:

##### **Principle 1: Ensure gender balance in participation, decision-making, representation and staffing**

Participation and empowerment are part of the process and definition of development. Therefore people have a right to take part in decisions that affect their lives. CWSA works with a gender-inclusive rights-based perspective which always includes consultations with and participation of people

irrespective of gender, building upon their own capacities. This includes the identification of barriers to people's participation during all phases of the programme cycle.





Women and men have full participation, including women being empowered in decision-making, in all areas of CWSA's work from planning through to final programme evaluation. CWSA respects the promotion of gender balance at all levels and in all human resources requirements. This means that in the composition of CWSA governing board, senior management, program and project teams and field teams, the gender balance will be gradually improved until parity is achieved. A gender ratio of 60:40 is considered reasonable. Anything less than 40% of women or men should require corrective action. It is equally important to consider equality of women and men in terms of seniority and roles in the context of gender balance.

Gender balance is a human resource issue that concerns equal participation of women and men in all areas of work. It is conducive to a diverse workforce, enhances the agencies' capacity to serve the entire population and improves the effectiveness of programmes.

All staff<sup>7</sup> are treated equally and offered equal opportunities for promotion etc., unless recognised gender imbalances calls for explicit affirmative action. Performance indicators shall be gender sensitive and both female and male leadership shall be valued with a gender-sensitive lens.

<sup>7</sup> Staff: Staff refers to full time, part time, or casual persons working in ACT Secretariat or for ACT members, and those engaged on short term contracts such as but not limited to: consultants, researchers, photographers etc. working in any project location.

<sup>8</sup> SDG 5 Target 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere; SDG 5 Target 5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex.

## **Principle 2: Ensure gender equality through gender mainstreaming in all strategic areas including programme design**

Community World Service Asia commits to gender mainstreaming as a strategy for attaining gender equality, and to the process of assessing the implication of gender of any planned action, in all areas and at all levels. Gender justice will be mainstreamed in humanitarian, development and advocacy programmes, and through practical application of the CWSA gender justice policy. Attention to gender equality is integrated in design, analysis, planning, implementation, performance, personnel policy, monitoring, assessment, reporting and evaluation thereby changing the content and direction of these practices at project and programmes and institutional level to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. When mainstreaming it is important to identify and use reporting and accountability mechanisms for monitoring gender mainstreaming.

CWSA generally consider risks when designing new programmes and interventions. This should include consideration to empowerment of women and gender equality. Gender analysis is crucial in programme design to examine the relationship between women and men and their access to and control over resources and benefits, their gender roles and the constraints they face relative to each other. A gender analysis should be integrated into all needs and sectoral assessments or situation analyses and shall include the full life-cycle.

**Principle 3: Ensure training and capacity development provided for all staff**

Community World Service Asia will provide training to their staff and others on the Gender Justice policy. This includes induction of new staff and periodic refresher training for existing staff.

Gender awareness and expertise in the implementation of gender sensitive programming should be part of all Terms of Reference for all positions in CWSA or with their contracting parties (e.g. evaluation or audit contracts or implementing partners), from the middle to the senior levels.

**Principle 4: Ensure that communities, partners and others are informed of the policy**

Community World Service Asia believes that accountability to the communities we work with and transparency in all we do. Building the capacity of communities and partners is a significant component of good practice in order to achieve gender justice. Gender-sensitive monitoring, reporting and data collection mechanisms should be in place and feed-back should be downward as well as upward. Gender roles shall be given particular consideration. Community World Service Asia should develop plans for awareness-raising on the policy in communities it works directly or through partners. Community World Service Asia will work with local partners to develop their understanding of the policy, and work with them to mainstream Gender Justice in their own programmes through gender sensitive trainings, and tools.

**Principle 5: Promote strategies that guard against human rights violations perpetrated on the grounds of people’s gender identity**

All people, irrespective of sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, are entitled to enjoy the protections provided for by international human rights law, including in respect of rights to life, security of person and privacy, the right to be free from torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, the right to be free from discrimination and the right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

Community World Service Asia acknowledges that human rights violations based on gender identity constitute legitimate areas of human rights concern. Women, men, girls, boys and intersex persons who do not conform to social or cultural conceptions of gender are often victims of persecution, discrimination and human rights violations. Community World Service Asia strongly opposes any discrimination, persecution and violence against persons based on gender identity or sexual orientation.

**Principle 6: Ensure protection from gender-based violence**

Community World Service Asia holds a zero-tolerance approach to gender-based violence (GBV)<sup>11</sup>, not only in armed conflicts<sup>12</sup> but also during peacetime.<sup>13</sup> Community World Service Asia recognises that GBV is a continuing global problem that takes place in all countries, religions and social classes. GBV includes harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and child, early and forced marriage (CEFM).<sup>14</sup> GBV directed at women is one of the most commonly occurring violations of human rights.<sup>15</sup> Community World Service Asia holds a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of all people it works with.

11 SDG 5 Target 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation; SDG 5 Target 5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age; SDG 5 Target 5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence

12 In situations of conflict, GBV is often practiced or tolerated by government and non-government actors.

13 UN Resolutions 1325

14 SDG 5 Target 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation; SDG 5 Target 5.3.1 Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18; SDG 5 Target 5.3.2 Proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age

15 The United Nations’ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights’ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) defines it as “violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately”, in its General Recommendation.

particularly including women, boys and girls with disabilities<sup>16</sup>. This is a serious and life-threatening protection issue which often goes unreported. To save lives and maximize protection, prevention and responses are needed from the humanitarian actors from the early stages in a crisis and in the continuum towards long-term development cooperation and advocacy.<sup>17</sup> In humanitarian crises the dependency of affected populations on humanitarian agencies for their basic needs creates an additional ethical responsibility and duty of care on the part of all ACT Alliance staff, and staffs have an obligation to report this according to the Code of conduct.

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.add.org.uk/sites/default/files/Gender\\_Based\\_Violence\\_Learning\\_Paper.pdf](https://www.add.org.uk/sites/default/files/Gender_Based_Violence_Learning_Paper.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> According to UNICEF (Geneva, 2008), the first 72 hours after a disaster has struck or a conflict broken out, the worst human rights violations against women and children occur: kidnapping, forced (para) military or gang enrolment, rape and all other forms of SGBV.

<sup>18</sup> SDG 5 Target 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences; SDG 5 Target 5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care; SDG 5 Target 5.6.2 Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee women aged 15-49 years access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education

<sup>19</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002357/235707e.pdf>

[20 http://www.unfoundation.org/what-we-do/campaigns-and-initiatives/universal-access-project/briefing-cards-srhr.pdf](http://www.unfoundation.org/what-we-do/campaigns-and-initiatives/universal-access-project/briefing-cards-srhr.pdf)

### **Principle 7: Ensure access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights**

Community World Service Asia wants to ensure access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)<sup>18</sup> for all individuals, so that they can make their own informed decisions concerning their sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care, free from discrimination, coercion, and violence.

Community World Service Asia believes that access to SRHR is a prerequisite for ensuring the enjoyment of other rights and for poverty reduction as it enables girls' education and women's economic empowerment. The inclusion of family planning, age-of-consent minimums, access to sexual and reproductive health care and context are all essential elements for human rights and dignity and holistic, sustainable development.

Gender equality is integrated in Community World Service Asia's organizational policies as listed below, details of which can be found in the CWSA Operations Manual:

- The organization Vision & Mission statement
- Organizational Strategy
- All the Codes of conduct that the organization practices

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### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed every four years. If there is any significant programme or contextual changes, the policy may need to be reviewed more frequently.