



GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

APPLICABILITY: ACCI Staff & Strategic Partners

VERSION: June 2020 (v2.1 September 2022)

AUTHORISED BY: Board Approved

PREAMBLE

- *Globally, women earn 24% less than men in the labour market¹.*
- *Only 20 per cent of global landowners are women².*
- *Only 22 per cent of all national parliamentarians are female³.*
- *35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime⁴.*

Gender inequality is a systemic issue which is entrenched in societal beliefs, systems and laws leading to inequity and gender-based discrimination and violence. Therefore, it cannot be changed through simple initiative alone, but through fundamental shifts in attitudes and structures. ACCI aims to promote the rights of all people by addressing and removing barriers which oppress and prevent both women and men from achieving their full rights.

ACCI DEFINITIONS & APPROACH TO GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality: the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women and men, girls and boys. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognising the diversity among different groups of women and men⁵.

Gender equity: fairness in access to resources and in the distribution of benefits from development, according to the different needs of women, men, girls and boys⁶.

Mainstreaming: incorporating a gender perspective and initiatives into all areas of the organisation. This includes all program systems and processes, as well as programs such as education, health, livelihoods, water and sanitation and disaster management projects. This involves developing strategies to ensure that the concerns and experiences of both women and men are integral throughout the project cycle, so that inequality is not perpetuated.

¹ United Nations Women, 'Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016: Transforming economies, realizing rights', 2015, Chapter 2, available at: http://progress.unwomen.org/en/2015/pdf/UNW_progressreport.pdf

² Food and Agriculture Organization, 'The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-2011: Women and Agriculture, Closing the Gender Gap for Development', 2011, available at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2050e.pdf>

³ As at 1 August 2016. Inter-Parliamentary Union, 'Women in National Parliaments', 2016 available: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>

⁴ World Health Organisation (WHO), 'Global and regional estimates of violence against women,' 2013, p.2 available at: <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/9789241564625/en/>

⁵ Guide to Gender and Development, AusAID, 2007.

⁶ Australian Government, 2007

Gender analysis: The process of considering the impact that an initiative may have on women and men, boys and girls, and the economic and social relationships between them⁷.

OUR COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY

ACC International (ACCI) acknowledges that the promotion of gender equality and equity in programs is a precursor to delivering sustainable, people-centred development. As a faith-based organisation, we acknowledge that addressing systems and practices that lead to harm and exclusion based on gender is linked to our faith, as we believe that all people are created equal in the sight of God.

We know that it is vitally important for ACCI to prioritise the advancement of gender equality and equity, as we cannot achieve transformed communities and nations unless there is an increase in the equal distribution of opportunities, resources and power in order to promote social justice and poverty eradication.

Therefore, we seek to promote the full participation and dignity for all people, regardless of gender, at our organisational and program level. Through this we empower women living in poverty, who often face multiple vulnerabilities on top of gender inequality such as disability exclusion, racism or ageism.

PURPOSE

This policy aims to:

1. demonstrate ACCI's commitment to gender equity and equality, as it underpins our culture and behaviour;
2. outline ACCI's internal commitments and strategies across all areas;
3. outline expectations for stakeholders throughout the entire project cycle; and
4. provide a clear Policy Statement on Gender to inform the development, monitoring and implementation of a Gender Strategy across all areas and levels of ACCI.

STANDARDS & GUIDANCE

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1946) sets forth the basic rights and freedoms of every person "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status". This is further outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women CEDAW (1978), which was ratified by the Australian Government in July 1983. Other relevant Australian acts include the Sex Discrimination Act (1984) and the Workplace Gender Equality Act (2012).

As a member of ACFID and signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct (2015), ACCI has committed to promoting gender equality and equity and to non-discrimination within our development and humanitarian initiatives.

Other relevant ACCI policies include:

- ACCI's Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy

⁷ Guide to Gender and Development, AusAID, 2007.

- ACCI's Complaints Handling Policy
- ACCI's Whistleblowing Policy

SCOPE

Those who fall within the scope below are required to read, sign and adhere to the **ACCI's Women's Rights and Gender Equality Policy**.

This policy applies to all ACCI Stakeholders defined below.

- All ACCI Staff including but not limited to employees, contractors and consultants.
- All ACCI Field Workers.
- All ACCI Associates.
- All ACCI Strategic Partners including any organisation receiving ACCI funding in Australia or abroad to implement activities including but not limited to community development, disaster response or non-development activities.
- All ACCI Board Members.

This policy is recommended for ACCI Stakeholders defined below.

- All ACCI Volunteers including but not limited to office and event-based volunteers.

ACCI'S INTERNAL COMMITMENTS AND STRATEGIES

ACCI is committed through its organisational development to achieve the following.

- **Continued learning and organisational reflection** through staff training and by completing gender audits of the organisation.
- Assessment of **project design documents** to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed and clearly understood by partners.
- **Networking** with research, advocacy or development organisations who have a strong gender focus.
- **Supporting women's leadership** at all levels of the organisation and aspiring to continue to assess and maintaining gender balance in role distributions within management and board positions; and
- Supporting initiatives that are in our line of work to **reduce gender inequality**.

ACCI is committed to work with our partners to achieve the following.

- **Assess and strengthen our partners'** commitment to, and capacity for gender analysis, planning and implementation.
- Engage current and future partners in gender equality discussions with the aim of developing a **shared vision**.
- Develop **capacity building** plans for partners to ensure the incorporation of gender strategies in project design, implementation and monitoring, including connecting partners with gender analysis resources and expertise.

ALL STAKEHOLDER EXPECTATIONS

All ACCI stakeholders are expected to consider gender in all programming and activities and create plans and strategies unique to their context, size and programs.

ACCI is committed to **helping stakeholders** meet these expectations through:

- providing training and capacity building opportunities;
- information sharing; and
- ongoing coaching and support.

ACCIR PARTNER EXPECTATIONS

The below section applies to those with formal partnerships with ACCI Relief.

MINIMUM EXPECTATIONS

Before **onboarding** any new partner, ACCIR will:

- evaluate the organisation's understanding of and commitment to gender equality; and
- assist partners to develop a policy or statement which addresses Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH)

During project **design and delivery**, partners are expected to:

- complete a stakeholder analysis which includes gender in their program framework;
- outline their commitment to gender inclusion through their project design, including ensuring all people have an equal voice in community consultation and participation in decision making;
- identify and address barriers to ensure people of any gender have equal access and participation in program activities; and
- agree, by signing the MOU, that they will implement these commitments during the delivery of their program.

Through **monitoring and evaluation**, ACCIR will:

- assess partners every 6 months on how they are meeting their gender commitments outlined in their program framework; and
- evaluate each partner's delivery of their gender commitments during monitoring visits at least every 2 years.

BEST PRACTICE

To comply with best practice, ACCIR partners should:

- develop and design their own gender policy, code of conduct, guidelines or statement which addresses issues around gender equality, including the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment;
- develop appropriate and safe systems and mechanisms for staff and volunteers to report concerns or misconduct confidentially;
- assign a focal person with the responsibility of helping their organisation to be more gender sensitive;
- provide gender training to staff;
- consider how to support stakeholders, including government agencies, to become more gender sensitive;
- engaging men and boys as partners and allies in achieving gender equality and reducing gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices; and
- run initiatives within their organisation promoting women's rights, gender equality and equity.

REPORTING CONCERNS OR INCIDENTS

ACCI stakeholders and others are encouraged to report the following:

- concerns regarding ACCI's compliance to commitments outlined in this policy; and
- incidents of gender discrimination - In all Australian states and territories, sex discrimination is a crime (as per the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act (1984)).

To respond to discrimination and abuse on the basis of gender, please refer to ACCI's Complaints Handling Policy for more details.

- Report violence or gender discrimination incidents to the ACCI Director via complaints@acci.org.au.
- In Australia, report allegations of sex discrimination by a staff member or volunteer in the organisation to the state police.

ACCI is committed to:

- treat all concerns raised seriously;
- ensure that all parties will be treated fairly with prime consideration of the principles of natural justice; and
- handle all reports professionally, confidentially and expediently.

Complaints can also be submitted to a field worker, strategic partner, or another ACCI employee where the complainant has access to or contact with those personnel, particularly with respect to field-based complainants.

THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, ABUSE AND HARASSMENT

ACCI acknowledges the importance of the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment within this policy.

For more information, please refer to:

- ACCI's Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy

REVIEWING THE POLICY

ACCI Missions & Relief Gender Equality Policy and Code of Conduct will be reviewed every three years. ACCI General Manager will manage the review and stakeholders will be consulted during this process.