IMPACT

Civil Society Research
and Development

Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan for Syrian Civil Society Organizations

Scope and Application

There is no one-size-fits-all solution for gender mainstreaming. Practical actions and interventions depend on the context and challenges faced by each Civil Society Organization (CSO). This section provides general and practical recommendations and describes methods of supporting CSOs and staff who aim to integrate gender concerns and reduce the impact of gender bias in the workplace, projects, and programming. What we mean by integrating gender is being held accountable for the impact of our projects, activities, and interventions on men, women, boys, and girls, inside the communities we work for and with, and within the CSO structure and policy. Gender integration in the design and implementation of projects and activities also helps to highlight the different experiences and concerns of men, women, boys, and girls, and help the CSO of taking the proper mitigation and protection methods, and the prevention of any possible violations of rights.

Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy aimed at achieving greater gender equality. The United Nations adopted it in 1997.
"Mainstreaming 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."

Source: Economic and Social Council, agreed conclusions 1997/2.

Summary of Main Recommendations

- Syrian Civil Society organizations (CSOs) are recommended to develop a comprehensive and inclusive gender mainstreaming policy that reflects their organization, mission, and vision, and address gender, diversity, and inclusion issues. These policy documents should include clear definitions of all key terms relevant to gender mainstreaming.
- Building a support system that visualizes and prioritizes the gender mainstreaming strategy. This may include but is not limited to promoting mandatory gender training and addressing reluctant opinions and attitudes towards integrating gender concerns in the organization.
- Defining who is responsible or accountable of what regarding the implantation of the gender strategy at all levels in the organization
- Allocating adequate budget and human resources for implementing the gender mainstreaming strategy
- Developing relevant gender mainstreaming knowledge management and dissemination systems addressing the needs of CSOs.

- CSOs should seek the help and support of partner organizations and donors in providing additional guidance on the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy.
- CSOs need to develop systems to monitor, track and ealuate gender mainstreaming performance and report on gender equality results.y
- CSOs should benefit from their interactions with national counterparts, donors, civil society, and other partners to tacke the any social and cultural barriers to implementing gender mainstreaming strategy.

Aims and Objectives

This Action Plan aims to develop a framework for:

1- Enhancing the gender assessment score throughout the CSO, in every department, office, and at each level and all spheres of work.
2- Promoting positive change in the organizationl culture, where informal barriers that have obstructed advancement toward gender parity must all be ov.ercome.
3- Levering the commitment from senior management. Who must assume responsibility in implementing this Action Plan and disseminated gender policies.
4- Revising and modifying mechanisms for new staff selection system to reach gender balance at all levels.
5- Developing a policy which reflects the key elements of this Action Plan

Focus Areas for Implementation POLICY REVIEW

To bring about significant change, a gender mainstreaming strategy requires clear gender supportive policies and their firm implementation in the areas of recruitment and selection, career development, flexible working arrangements, daycare facilities, and informal barriers, including working culture.

Action Points

- Review all organizational policies to reflect gender concerns
- Include the gender concerns in all policy discussions and formulation
- Include women employee perspective in the policy review committee

COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS

An effective gender mainstreaming strategy requires firm commitment from the CSO leadership to ensure that managers and staff at all levels realize the process and the actions expected from them. They should implement a comprehensive and effective communication campaign to promote the awareness of this Action Plan and to promote a more gender-sensitive organization.

Actions Points

➤ Emphasize the importance of gender equality in work, communications, and general meetings with staff

➤ Widely disseminate information on this gender strategy, work/life policies, flexible working arrangements, and other gender-related information.

➤ Strong leadership consistent and continued messages consistent and continued messages from the CSO director on gender balance. Tools include a letter from the SMT to the Heads of Departments/Offices instructing them to comply with this strategy fully.

➤ Assign gender focal point(s) to address geder mainstreaming issues, in addition to planning for regular meetings with relevant staff on progress and implemtantion of the gender mainstreaming strategy.

➤ Implement a human resources Action Plan, which includes collecting relevant statistics such as gender integration in the selection process, flexible working arrangements, fair opportunity recruitment processes, and other indicators

➤ Senior managers should acknowledge those managers and staff members who have shown progress in meeting gender targets and disseminate their success stories to encourage others to follow their example.

GENDER FOCAL POINT

The post of the Gender Focal Point (GFP) is aiming at facilitating the integration of gender and implementing the gender action plan within the different sectors and departments in the organization. The GFP also supports the senior managerial teams in prioritizing the gender concerns within the different cycles of decisions making processes.

Actions Points

➤ Develop a GFP Terms of Reference (ToR) relevant to the organization›s domain of work and its gender mainstreaming strategy

➤ Budget adequate resources for the post of the GFP to appropriately carry forth the mandate and the implementation of this gender Mainstreaming strategy.

➤ Make available all the needed information for gender focald point for them to effectively exercise their functions

➤ Provide orientation/training for gender focal points on relevant matters
➤ Gender focal point work should be recognized and awarde

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Selection, appointment, and promotion of individuals are the critical stages that determine the quality and composition of an organization›s staff, including the aspect of gender equality. Any gender mainstreaming strategy should focus on these stages. Historical trends in organizational structures reveal no correlation between the representation of women at senior levels and the increase in their representation at lower levels. Therefore, special attention to these indicators will be required at all levels.

Action Points

➤ Work with senior managers in an advisory capacity and continue to strengthen monitoring of selection decisions, including by reviewing the justification provided by senior managers to select an equally qualified male candidate in departments that have not met gender balance targets.
➤ Incorporate the gender binding conditions in the revised administrative instructions on staff selection, which would show the consequences of non-compliance.
➤ Update to adapt to the new staff selection system to reflect gender concerns
➤ When there are no women on the candidates recommended list, at any level for any open vacancy, the HR team must certify that efforts have been made to include women in the various stages of filling the vacancy
➤ Announce vacancies within national women›s organizations, women›s professional associations, and any other relevant party to increase women›s access to these opportunities.
➤ Conduct outreach activities to identify women who meet the requirements of specific positions.

ADEQUATE DAYCARE FACILITIES

A lack of adequate childcare options for employees could lead to more significant attrition for both male and female employees.

Action Points

➤ The immediate action is to conduct a study of how other organizations in a similar context are approaching the issue of childcare facilities to develop an action plan to remedy the problem of insufficient daycare facilities.
➤ Addressing informal barriers/working environment and culture.
➤ The CSO should carry a general consultation of all directly affected staff members out.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The organization culture and work environment can promote or hinder efforts to gender mainstreaming in any organization, so make sure that your CSO culture is not an obstacle towards a gender-sensitive, healthy, and safe workplace for women and men.

Action Points

- ➤ Systematically identify gender-sensitivity indicators for fostering a healthy work environment and include such indicators in performance appraisals for managers and staff members.
- ➤ Plan for periodic workshops with women senior managers hosting these events and sharing their experiences.
- ➤ Promote policies that show zero tolerance with gender stereotyping acts and verbal comments

Accountability and Responsibilities

All staff are accountable for mainstreaming gender in their work area, in order to support the consistency to promote gender equality.
The roles, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms for advancing gender equality - including through implementation of the CSOs Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan - are listed below.

Roles and responsibilities for implementing the gender equality strategy in CSO work

Director-General	Responsible for policy development and organizational performance on gender equality. Accountable for implementing and monitoring gender mainstreaming strategy, ensuring that adequate human and financial resources are allocated to support gender equality work.
Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and learning manager	Accountable for gender-responsive outcomes and indicators within agreed priorities, including working with relevant staff and senior managers to strengthen staff capacity on gender mainstreaming and promoting gender equality.
Field managers	Accountable for gender-responsive outcomes and indicators in relevant areas, for gender mainstreaming in field activities, and for promoting strengthened capacity of gender mainstreaming through the relevant staff.
Strategic Programming and Management	Accountable for steering and overseeing a coherent approach to gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the organization as a whole and programme planning, monitoring, reporting, and resource allocation, including assigned responsibilities in line with results-based management.
Human Resources Department	Accountable for encouraging progress toward parity between women and men and equality of opportunity and treatment of all organization staff, including in job promotions and training and staff development, and other relevant activities.
Partnerships and Fundraising Department	Accountable for promoting gender equality and for gender mainstreaming in all partnership agreements, cooperation agreements, and projects proposals
Gender Focal Point	Accountable for playing a pivotal role to assist gender mainstreaming across all organization›s units and departments, and in the field activities, including cooperating with SMT to effectively promote gender perspectives, and input to analysis, planning, implementation, review, and reporting. Accountable for capacity building and knowledge sharing; and coordinating monitoring exercises and reporting on the action plan to the SMT.

Planning: Situation and Context Analysis

INFORMATION GATHERING ON GENDER AND DIVERSITY STATUS

- Identify data disaggregated by sex and other elements of diversity such as age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and other factors in all the CSO work activities.
- Where gender-specific information is not available, explicitly acknowledge the gap
- Collect data through various research methods, quantitative and qualitative.

DO A GENDER ANALYSIS

The following are a simple set of questions that can help to conduct a gender analysis within the CSO area of work:
- What are the gender concerns related to the CSO work, and how is it affecting women, men, and others differently?
- Do women, men, or others are more exposed to gender discrimination in the CSO activities?
- How should the measures be tailored to protect and promote the gender approach based on the human rights of all beneficiaries equally?

Designing Activities

The intervention will differ depending on the needs and type of projects/ programs/ and activities of the CSO. Interventions should address the specific needs of women, men, boys, and girls, and the differentiated impact of interventions on them. E.g., **TARGETED AUDIENCE** for which individuals are subjected to different treatments based on gender (excluding women because it is difficult to reach them) and different needs (women have specific alternative arrangements as they are often the caregivers in their families).

→ In such a case, gender must be integrated into the intervention, notably by looking at sex and age disaggregated data, including differentiated provisions for women, men, boys, and girls in the activities planning and their implementation.

Examples of how gender considerations can be integrated into activities:
Events, training, workshops:
- Gender balance in participants, speakers
- Gender-sensitive environment (venue, timeframe)
- Gender-sensitive content and method

External relation, partnerships, and communication:
- Working with gender-sensitive partners
- Awareness-raising (campaigns, reports, press statements)
- Gender equality message
- Gender-sensitive language and images

Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation

The impact of the CSO interventions on women, men, boys, and girls and their relations should be systematically addressed. Modification should be foreseen if there is an adverse effect on one category or more, based on their gender. To achieve this, it is advised to:

- Report on activity implementation should reflect gender perspective and be written in a gender-sensitive language.
- Sex and age disaggregated data should be systematically collected in all activities.
- Gender indicators and gender objectives should be included in the monitoring process and inform evaluation reports.

A four-step approach to integrate gender equality considerations into evaluative work is the following:

Step 1: Gender considerations should be integrated into the evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR), with specific indicators
Step 2: Gender considerations should be integrated into the evaluation criteria and questions
Step 3: Gender should be reflected in the data collection method and data analysis methodology.
Step 4: then, finally, the gender analysis should be reflected in evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

References and consulted documents:
1- Integrating Gender into Human Rights Monitoring, OHCHR publications, can be accessed through: https://www.ohchr.org/en/publicationsresources/pages/publications.aspx
2- Gender Balance Strategy - a strategic Action plan, UN women publications and online library, can be accessed through: https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications
3- ILO Action Plan for gender equality: https://www.ilo.org/global/lang--en/index.htm
4- European Institute for Gender Equality, Gender mainstreaming platform, can be accessed through: https://eige.europa.eu/

Gender Policy Sample

Gender Policy of [a Civil Society Organization in Syria]

We are committed to providing a secure and enabling work environment to our employees, a place of work that is gender sensitive and recognizes the role of men and women as equal players, agents and leaders of change in their families, communities and society.

The objectives of this gender policy are:

a- To espouse the cause of the right to gender equality and right to dignified livelihood.

b- To foster a social, physical and psychological environment that will enable employees to work productively.

c- To strive for gender justice at both institutional and programmatic level.

[Organization Name] defines gender policy guidelines at two levels: Institutional and programmatic.

1. Institutional Level

a- **Staff Policies:** All staff policies, rules and regulations shall be gender sensitive and will be reviewed periodically.

b- **Recruitment:** [Organization Name] seeks gender balance in staffing. Women candidates will be encouraged to apply for all vacancies including management and leadership positions both at the field and head office. There will be adequate representation of women in recruitment and interview panels.

c- **Performance reviews:** Gender sensitivity will be one of the performance indicators for assessing employees.

d- **Capacity building for gender sensitization:** We will organize workshops, training programs and discussions for promoting and enabling a gender sensitive work culture. Also, regular trainings will be conducted on awareness and confidence building of field staff, with special focus on women staff.

2. Programmatic Level

a- Building skills and capacities on gender perspectives to enable greater participation of all sections of community in our programs will be one of our objectives in all programs.

b- All programs will promote equal participation of all stakeholders. To promote and assess inclusion of gender equality in each project, managers will prepare and use a gender equality checklist.

Gender Focal Point

The post of the Gender Focal Point (GFP) will be established in accordance with gender mainstreaming strategy and relevant action point. The GFP post is aiming at facilitating the integration of gender and the implementation of the gender action plan, within the different sectors and departments in the organization. The GFP also supports the senior managerial teams in prioritizing the gender concerns withing the different cycles of decisions making processes

Applicability

This policy applies to all regular and contractual staff of [organization name]. In case of a complaint as a result of an act by a third party, management will take the necessary preventive and reasonable action to support and assist the affected party.

Reporting: Management will report annually to the donors on implementation of this policy. [date, location]

Resource: https://namati.org/resources/

Sample Sexual Harassment Policy

The Policy Statement

[Name of Civil Society organization] is committed to providing a safe environment for all its employees free from discrimination on any ground and from harassment at work including sexual harassment. [Name of Civil Society organization] will operate a zero tolerance policy for any form of sexual harassment in the workplace, treat all incidents seriously and promptly investigate all allegations of sexual harassment. Any person found to have sexually harassed another will face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment.

All complaints of sexual harassment will be taken seriously and treated with respect and in confidence. No one will be victimized for making such a complaint.

Definition of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated. It includes situations where a person is asked to engage in sexual activity as a condition of that person's employment, as well as situations which create an environment which is hostile, intimidating or humiliating for the recipient. Sexual harassment can involve one or more incidents and actions constituting harassment may be physical, verbal and non-verbal. Examples of conduct or behaviour which constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

Physical conduct

- Unwelcome physical contact including patting, pinching, stroking, kissing, hugging, fondling, or inappropriate touching
- Physical violence, including sexual assault
- Physical contact, e.g. touching, pinching
- The use of job-related threats or rewards to solicit sexual favours

Verbal conduct

- Comments on a worker's appearance, age, private life, etc.
- Sexual comments, stories and jokes
- Sexual advances
- Repeated and unwanted social invitations for dates or physical intimacy
- Insults based on the sex of the worker
- Condescending or paternalistic remarks
- Sending sexually explicit messages (by phone or by email)

Non-verbal conduct

- Display of sexually explicit or suggestive material
- Sexually-suggestive gestures
- Whistling
- Leering

Anyone can be a victim of sexual harassment, regardless of their sex and of the sex of the harasser. [Name of Civil Society organization] recognises that sexual harassment may also occur between people of the same sex. What matters is that the sexual conduct is unwanted and unwelcome by the person against whom the conduct is directed.

[Name of Civil Society organization] recognises that sexual harassment is a manifestation of power relationships and often occurs within unequal relationships in the workplace, for example between manager or supervisor and employee. Anyone, including employees of [Name of Civil Society organization], beneficiaries, volunteers, casual workers, contractors or visitors who sexually harasses another will be reprimanded in accordance with this internal policy.

All sexual harassment is prohibited whether it takes place within [Name of Civil Society organization] premises or outside, including at social events, business trips, training sessions or conferences sponsored by [Name of Civil Society organization].

Complaints procedures

Anyone who is subject to sexual harassment should, if possible, inform the alleged harasser that the conduct is unwanted and unwelcome. [Name of Civil Society organization] recognises that sexual harassment may occur in unequal relationships (i.e. between a supervisor and his/her employee) and that it may not be possible for the victim to inform the alleged harasser.

If a victim cannot directly approach an alleged harasser, he/she can approach one of the designated staff members responsible for receiving complaints of sexual harassment. This person could be another supervisor, a member of the human resources department, etc.

When a designated person receives a complaint of sexual harassment, he/she will:
- ➤ immediately record the dates, times and facts of the incident(s)
- ➤ ascertain the views of the victim as to what outcome he/she wants
- ➤ ensure that the victim understands the organisation's procedures for dealing with the complaint
- ➤ discuss and agree the next steps: either informal or formal complaint, on the understanding that choosing to resolve the matter informally does not preclude the victim from pursuing a formal complaint if he/she is not satisfied with the outcome
- ➤ keep a confidential record of all discussions
- ➤ respect the choice of the victim
- ➤ ensure that the victim knows that they can lodge the complaint outside of the organization through the relevant country/legal framework

Throughout the complaint's procedure, a victim is entitled to be helped by a counsellor within the organisation. [Name of Civil Society organization] will nominate a number of counsellors and provide them with special training to enable them to assist victims of sexual harassment. [Name of Civil Society organization] recognises that because sexual harassment often occurs in unequal relationships within the workplace, victims often feel that they cannot come forward. [Name of Civil Society organization] understands the need to support victims in making complaints.

Informal complaints mechanism

If the victim wishes to deal with the matter informally, the designated person will:
- give an opportunity to the alleged harasser to respond to the complaint
- ensure that the alleged harasser understands the complaints mechanism
- facilitate discussion between both parties to achieve an informal resolution which is acceptable to the complainant, or refer the matter to a designated mediator within the organsiation to resolve the matter
- ensure that a confidential record is kept of what happens
- follow up after the outcome of the complaints mechanism to ensure that the behaviour has stopped
- ensure that the above is done speedily and within […] days of the complaint being made

Formal complaints mechanism

If the victim wants to make a formal complaint or if the informal complaint mechanism has not led to a satisfactory outcome for the victim, the formal complaint mechanism should be used to resolve the matter.
The designated person who initially received the complaint will refer the matter to a senior human resources manager to instigate a formal investigation. The senior human resources manager may deal with the matter him/herself, refer the matter to an internal or external investigator or refer it to a committee of three others in accordance with this policy [Choose what options are most appropriate for the organisation].

The person carrying out the investigation will:
- interview the victim and the alleged harasser separately
- interview other relevant third parties separately
- decide whether or not the incident(s) of sexual harassment took place
- produce a report detailing the investigations, findings and any recommendations
- if the harassment took place, decide what the appropriate remedy for the victim is, in consultation with the victim (i.e.- an apology, a change to working arrangements, a promotion if the victim was demoted as a result of the harassment, training for the harasser, discipline, suspension, dismissal)
- follow up to ensure that the recommendations are implemented, that the behaviour has stopped and that the victim is satisfied with the outcome
- if it cannot determine that the harassment took place, he/she may still make recommendations to ensure proper functioning of the workplace
- keep a record of all actions taken
- ensure that the all records concerning the matter are kept confidential
- ensure that the process is done as quickly as possible and in any event within […] days of the
complaint being made

Outside complaints mechanisms

A person who has been subject to sexual harassment can also make a complaint outside of the organisation. They can do so through [insert mechanism depending on country/legal framework – i.e. employment tribunal, ombudsperson, etc].

Sanctions and disciplinary measures

Anyone who has been found to have sexually harassed another person under the terms of this policy is liable to any of the following sanctions:

➤ verbal or written warning
➤ adverse performance evaluation
➤ reduction in wages
➤ transfer
➤ demotion
➤ suspension
➤ dismissal

The nature of the sanctions will depend on the gravity and extent of the harassment. Suitable deterrent sanctions will be applied to ensure that incidents of sexual harassment are not treated as trivial. Certain serious cases, including physical violence, will result in the immediate dismissal of the harasser.

Implementation of this policy

[Name of Civil Society organization] will ensure that this policy is widely disseminated to all relevant persons. It will be included in the staff handbook. All new employees must be trained on the content of this policy as part of their induction into the organisation.

Every year, [Name of Civil Society organization] will require all employees to attend a refresher training course on the content of this policy.

It is the responsibility of every manager to ensure that all his/her employees are aware of the policy.'

Monitoring and evaluation

[Name of Civil Society organization] recognises the importance of monitoring this sexual harassment policy and will ensure that it anonymously collects statistics and data as to how it is used and whether or not it is effective. Supervisors, managers and those responsible for dealing with sexual harassment cases will report on compliance with this policy, including the number of incidents, how they were dealt with, and any recommendations made. This will be done on a yearly basis. As a result of this report, the organisation will evaluate the effectiveness of this policy and make any changes needed.

Resource: https://www.ilo.org/suva/publications/WCMS_407364/lang--en/index.htm