

Gender Policy of the International Federation

Adopted by the 12th Session of the General Assembly, 1999.

Introduction

The rationale for integrating a gender perspective in the activities of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies lies in the Red Cross and Red Crescent humanitarian mandate - to prevent and alleviate human suffering without discrimination. Gender equality ensures that there is no sex-based discrimination in the allocation of resources or benefits, or in access to services.

The purpose of this policy is to define the main approach of the Federation to how to address gender issues in Red Cross and Red Crescent actions.

Scope

The Federation's focus is on *gender*, rather than specifically on women. Gender refers to the roles, responsibilities, needs, interests and capacities of both men and women. These are influenced by social and cultural factors. Therefore the term "gender" does not replace the term "sex" which refers exclusively to biological differences. Men and women often play different roles in society and accordingly they may have different needs. A gender perspective is required to ensure that men's and women's specific needs, vulnerabilities and capacities (set in the broader context of class, ethnicity, race and religion) are recognized and addressed.

This policy establishes the basis for the Federation and individual National Societies to ensure that the gender differences are taken into account and dealt with in relation to core programmes as defined in Strategy 2010, such as disaster relief, disaster preparedness, health and promotion of humanitarian values.

Statement

With regard to gender issues, the goal of the Federation is to ensure that all Red Cross and Red Crescent programmes benefit men and women equally, according to their different needs and with the input and equal participation of men and women at all levels within the National Societies and the Federation's Secretariat.

Every National Society and the Federation's Secretariat are committed to taking the necessary steps towards achieving this goal, in particular recognizing that:

- natural disasters, conflicts, social and political instability may affect men and women differently and that Red Cross and Red Crescent emergency response and long-term humanitarian assistance may also have a different impact on men and women;
- the integration of a gender perspective into Red Cross and Red Crescent action is an important strategy towards the fulfilment of the Federation's humanitarian mandate to improve the lives of the most vulnerable;

- the Federation operates in a wide variety of cultures; as such it needs to take a culturally sensitive approach with regard to mainstreaming a gender perspective in Red Cross and Red Crescent work;
- the full participation of both men and women in all Red Cross and Red Crescent actions not only ensures gender equality, but also increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the organization;
- although the primary task of National Societies is to ensure gender sensitivity in their existing programmes, they may also implement projects to assist special groups of men or women, if local situations so require.

To achieve its goal, each National Society and the Federation's Secretariat shall:

1. Put in place institutional procedures which ensure that the needs of boys, girls, men and women are all met equitably in disaster response, vulnerability reduction and the provision of health and other services;
2. Formulate measures to ensure that gender-specific vulnerabilities and capacities of men and women are systematically identified and addressed;
3. Ensure that data on beneficiaries is disaggregated by sex for needs assessment and programme planning and gender analysis is integrated into programme design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation;
4. Design strategies for capacity building in gender mainstreaming as part of institutional development programmes with special attention to staff training on gender analysis skills;
5. Ensure that reporting and accountability mechanisms for activities and results in gender mainstreaming are put in place. This includes performance evaluations, budget allocation analysis and actions to enable the full participation of men and women on an equal and meaningful basis in all Red Cross and Red Crescent activities at all levels.

Responsibilities

The *senior management* of each National Society and the Federation's Secretariat is responsible for:

- increasing awareness and skills of staff and volunteers in considering the social differences between vulnerable men and women when designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes;
- conducting a systematic review of the institution's procedures to put in place gender analysis as part of programming or improving the existing systems;
- a gender balance in the different levels of the structure within their organization, in particular to involve more women in the decision-making processes at all levels;

- ensuring equal opportunities among female and male staff members and volunteers in the areas of recruitment, promotion, benefits, training and working conditions.

The *governance* of each National Society and the Federation is responsible for:

- assessing the implications of their policies and decisions for men and women, and thus ensuring that all Red Cross and Red Crescent policies and programmes are gender sensitive.

Reference:

This policy was adopted by the 12th Session of the General Assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, October 1999.

As gender crosses all aspects of the Red Cross and Red Crescent work, the statements of this policy must be translated into all major policies of the Federation.