solidar suisse



Gender Policy

Achieving Gender Equality and Justice

Policy Statement

We acknowledge that persistent and intersecting forms of gender inequalities, discrimination, inequities, and exclusion, as well as violence in all its forms, affect both our organisation and our programmatic work. Solidar Suisse commits to an intersectional feminist and decolonial approach, actively seeking to counteract and transform unequal power structures to advance gender justice, inclusion, and anti-racism within our institution and across our engagements. We are committed to an organisational culture that questions and challenges gender inequalities, and colonial and racist norms, and that promotes diversity and gender-balanced representation at all levels, including management and governance. We ensure equal opportunities and equal pay for equal work.

Our aim is to build an organisation that drives lasting systemic change by advancing gender equality and inclusion. To achieve this, we systematically analyse our practices, projects, and partnerships to understand what works, where gaps persist, and how gender and intersectional inequalities manifest in different contexts. These insights directly inform the development of this Gender Policy as well as the implementation roadmap, action plan, and the continuous learning and strengthening of our organisation.

Introduction

Solidar Suisse is committed to a socially, politically, economically, and environmentally just society. Gender equality, non-discrimination, inclusion, and a firm commitment to “Leave No One Behind” are essential to achieving this mission. This Gender Policy provides the framework to systematically integrate gender equality, diversity, anti-discrimination, and inclusive practices within our organisation, and across all programmes, partnerships, and advocacy work.

Our international cooperation work seeks to address the structural causes of poverty, exclusion, and inequality, including entrenched gender inequalities and other intersecting power imbalances rooted in patriarchal structures and colonial legacies. This includes recognising and addressing the fact that women, girls and other marginalised groups are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence, extreme poverty, informal and precarious labour, and exploitative practices such as modern slavery. We also acknowledge that crises - whether linked to conflict, climate change, displacement, financial crises, or health emergencies - tend to intensify existing inequalities and deepen the vulnerability of women, girls, and LGBTQI+ persons, and other marginalised groups. We strengthen leadership, participation and agency of marginalised groups and their organisations to advance democratic processes, social justice, and decent work.

Our commitment is to long-term transformative change that leads to fair and equitable social norms, gender roles, and power relations- in political life, economic structures, workplaces, communities, and private spheres. Achieving such change requires a consistent intersectional gender perspective throughout the planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes of our work.

For Solidar Suisse, gender is a central dimension of social differentiation and unequal power relations- alongside class, race and ethnicity, ability, age, religion, or origin. Our approach is grounded in an intersectional feminism, recognising that discrimination and marginalisation are shaped by overlapping factors such as sexism, racism, ableism, ageism, and other forms of exclusion. This perspective underpins our commitment to ensuring that no one is left behind. It informs our country and regional programmes, our partnerships, and the ongoing development of our own organisation. To overcome existing inequalities and discrimination, we strengthen the power and voice of marginalised groups across both public and private spheres.

We also recognise that unequal power relations exist within our own organisation. Solidar Suisse therefore commits to fostering gender justice, inclusion, and antiracism through its organisational culture and practices. We promote diversity in recruitment, strive for gender-balanced representation at all levels, including management and governance, and guarantee equal pay for equal work. This Gender Policy provides the framework for integrating gender equality, diversity, anti-discrimination, and inclusive practices across the organisation and all areas of our work.

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to Solidar Suisse HQ in Switzerland, and the regional and country offices as well as the programme and projects they are responsible for. The Solidar Suisse Gender Policy complements the Solidar Suisse Code of Conduct and is part of the policy structure of Solidar Suisse, particularly linked to the following policies: Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH), Human Resources Policy and Procedure, Localisation Policy and the Policy Framework on Reducing Inequality.

Terminology

Gender
" Gender can be understood as the social and cultural construction of norms, roles, and behaviours attributed to people differently based on their sex assigned at birth. Gender can also be understood as an identity. A person's innate sense of their own gender may or may not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth, for example, trans men and women, and non-binary people, and people of other genders as differently expressed in the different contexts and cultures in which we work".
Oxfam Inclusive Language Guide, 2023

Gender Justice
Gender justice is understood as full equality between women and men (including trans men and women) as well as non-binary people.
Oxfam Inclusive Language Guide, 2023

Gender Sensitive approach
approch that recognises different needs of women, men, boys and girls and acknowledges gender power dynamics but does not necessarily address these other than to try and integrate an understanding of these dynamics within programme design.

Gender Responsive approach
Approach which includes specific action to try and reduce gender inequalities within communities.

Gender Transformative approaches (GTA)
Gender-Transformative Approaches (GTA) focus on addressing the root causes of gender inequalities within society. GTA aim to move beyond treating the symptoms of gender inequalities, to changing discriminatory social norms, unequal political, legal, and economic structures, and power dynamics, all of which can make inequalities seem normal and natural in a given context.
EU Member States' Gender experts' working group, 2024.

Intersectionality
"Intersectionality recognises how various parts of our identity– like race, sex, gender, sexuality, class, religion, caste, and ability– overlap to create unique experiences of oppression and privilege. This is essential for analysing the different forms of discrimination that affect many women, while also recognising that not all women experience the same degree of inequality"based on the *Oxfam Inclusive Language Guide, 2023*.

Inclusion
" Inclusion refers to equal opportunities and rights for all people, regardless of their disability or social status". *Christoffel-Blindenmission (CBM)*, 2026.

Decolonisation
Decolonisation is the act of achieving independence from colonialism and undoing the harm caused. In the context of 'international cooperation', it's an ongoing process of shifting decolonial power back to Black, Indigenous and People of Color, who are calling for agency over their political and economic structures– as well as their culture, society, education, language and voice.
Oxfam Inclusive Language Guide, 2023.

Guiding principles and objectives

To achieve gender equality and justice, non-discrimination and inclusion, Solidar Suisse will work towards the following guiding principles:

Principle 1

Ensure gender equality and diversity in decision making, participation, staffing, and equal pay

As an organisation committed to gender justice, equal rights, and diversity, we aspire to act in a gender transformative way within our institution. This implies that:

- Solidar assures the following equal opportunity principles at HQ (as formulated in the collective labour agreement GAV) and in the coordination offices (as formulated in the Solidar HR Policy for Offices):
    - Ensure equal pay through an equal pay analysis at HQ and in offices every 4 years, including the communication of results.
    - Ensure equal access to further training, promotion, participation and decision making.
    - Promote diversity in recruitment through inclusive job ads and equal hiring, retention and career mobility opportunities.
    - Offer care and family-friendly working conditions including flexible working hours, maternity and paternity leave provision of space for breast feeding/pumping and accessibility for staff with disabilities.
- We commit to the principles of fair representation of women in leadership, as articulated in the *Fair Share of Women Leaders* framework. Therefore, we consistently work towards aligning our gender representation to the gender distribution in our staff at all levels of management in country offices, at HQ, and on the board of trustees; and we generally aim to reflect the diversity of our staff in our leadership. The HR department at HQ / in each office is responsible to monitor the gender representation within staff and different levels of management, communicate the results within their development plan, and define measures accordingly (see Development Plan and Reporting).
- Apply zero tolerance to any discrimination based on sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, descent or racism.
- Apply zero tolerance to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH- see Solidar Suisse PSEAH policy).
- The organisation is committed to fostering an organisational and leadership culture grounded in the values of inclusive leadership. This includes promoting team collaboration based on the principles of gender equality, non-discrimination, and respect for diversity. We will actively raise awareness on gender issues, intersectionality, and the ways in which discrimination can manifest, to ensure an environment where equity and inclusion are integral to all aspects of our work.

Each level of management is accountable for compliance with the policy within its scope of responsibility, translating it into the formulation and implementation of the Development Plan (see chapter “Development Plan and Reporting”).

Principle 2

Gender equality and intersectionality in programmes and projects

Addressing inequalities- including those based on gender, disability, and other intersecting factors- must be central to all Solidar Suisse programmes, ensuring that projects are designed to address and overcome disparities and fostering inclusive, equitable outcomes for all.

We strive to ensure that gender mainstreaming is incorporated into the development and implementation of the programmes and projects of Solidar. Wherever possible, we support projects with a gender transformative approach (see below).

Gender mainstreaming ensures that the specific needs of different groups, including men, women, other genders, persons with disabilities, and individuals across different age groups, are identified and addressed at every stage of project design and implementation. An intersectional approach is also crucial, considering factors such as age, disability, and the situations of single parents, among others. This enables to systematically address gender gaps, inequalities, and discrimination throughout the project cycle, which in the end ensure equal access to all our interventions (see also SDC *Gender in Project Cycle Management* (PCM). There are 5 key steps in gender mainstreaming:

1. **The Gender Analysis:** It aims to assess gender relations and gender inequalities, by looking at specific social, economic and political aspects such as gender roles and division of labour, access to and control over services and resources, participation at different levels, needs and interests. Depending upon the context and the projects aims, an analysis of other relevant intersecting factors such as age, ethnicity, disability, and socio-economic status is needed.
2. **Setting gender-sensitive objectives and indicators** based on the findings of the gender analysis, to guarantee equal participation and benefit of the project, possibly making needed specific activities and budget to overcome hurdles in access to the project services, further detailed in a logframe.
3. **Gender in Monitoring:** This is done by systematically integrating gender into the overall project monitoring system with gender-disaggregated data on all indicators, and/or by defining additional gender-specific monitoring fields, and analysing monitoring data to assess the extent of gender inclusion and mainstreaming in praxis.
4. **Gender in Evaluation:** Key questions on gender need to be integrated in the ToRs of all evaluations taking place.
5. **Gender in reporting:** Gender must be integrated systematically in the overall reporting, based on the defined objectives and indicators. It should focus on achieved changes, not only activities, or the obstacles and challenges in achieving change.

Solidar promotes projects that apply gender transformative approaches that actively challenge stereotypes and power structures, equal participation, and equal access to decision making. This should be done through promoting and strengthening local actors who are committed to promoting gender equality with a localisation mindset (rather than a top-down approach).

Applying a conflict-sensitive approach in line with the do-no-harm principles is essential to ensure that all interventions are carefully assessed to prevent exacerbating existing tensions or negatively impacting gender dynamics within the communities served.

Additionally, for each project a functioning Complaints Feedback and Response Mechanisms (CFRM) must be in place to address Prevention from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH) and other misconduct regarding discrimination, ensuring survivors have secure and confidential channels to report misconduct.

Solidar acknowledges that ensuring the integration of gender mainstreaming and sensitivity into its projects requires specialised knowledge and resources which need to be identified in the respective development plans

Principle 3

Gender equality within our partner organisations

Solidar carefully selects its partner organisations based on shared values and common goals as defined in our Solidar Partner Approach Requirements (*2023_Solidar Partner Approach Requirements_EN.docx*). The aspiration regarding gender equality for Partner Organisations are:

- Expertise to manage gender-sensitive projects
- Gender policy
- Equal gender representation within organisational bodies and management
- Equal pay

Cooperation remains possible as long as Solidar Suisse and the respective partner share alignment on objectives, strategies, and core values, and as long as credible efforts to address identified gaps are underway. Through the Partner Assessment, necessary changes are jointly identified, negotiated, and agreed, and their implementation is subsequently reviewed together. On this basis, Solidar Suisse and its partners establish the preconditions for continued cooperation in line with the organisational strategy and Code of Conduct.

Principle 4

Gender equality in marketing and communications

Communication, both at headquarters and in the cooperation offices, is guided by the Solidar Communication Guidelines. Among other things, it follows the following principles:

- Solidar Suisse applies gender-sensitive language in its communication in all channels.
- We strengthen gender-specific movements and networks and ensure they are in centre of our communication where possible.
- In illustrations and images, women and men Making the diversity of groups visible, showcasing diversity, and eliminating the stereotypes and prejudices that hinder people's full integration, are shown in a balanced way and in diverse and equal roles, activities and functions. We use the opportunities we have to raise awareness and avoid gender clichés.

Reference: *Communication Guidelines_EN.pdf*

Implementation: Measures and Responsibilities

Development Plan and Reporting

Solidar Suisse is conscious that the implementation of this policy is a continuous process. The organisation's Departments Heads at HQ, as well as the Representatives of each coordination office, develop a specific development plan using the template "Gender Policy Development Plan", where gaps to the policy are identified and objectives, measures and responsibilities to address these gaps are formulated. The Department Heads at HQ and the Representatives of the coordination offices are responsible that the "Gender Policy Development Plans" are reviewed annually in March/April in the framework of the yearly reporting cycle on the Solidar global administration policies, and to send the updated version to their supervisor who submits to the Gender Focal Point. Responsibility for this process for coordination offices lies with the Local Representative and for HQ with the Management Board.

Solidar Suisse appoints a Gender Focal Point whose role consists of:

- Ensuring and supporting the introduction of the policy, its requirements and responsibilities as well as development plan and reporting process to Solidar staff
- Organise annual joint reporting and reflection meetings with exchanges on best practices, achieved objectives, limitation and challenges and enabling peer exchanges
- Keep updated the Gender Policy Folder with relevant resources / toolbox for the implementation of the policy

Annual Development Plan and Reporting

Introduction & Commitment

This Development Plan is a mandatory tool to implement our Gender Policy and to give effect to our commitment to the principles of fair representation of women in leadership, as articulated in the Fair Share of Women Leaders framework. Every department and country office is required to define specific actions annually that respond to their unique local context and operational challenges.

Baseline Analysis (Status Quo)

The baseline analysis needs to be done at the start of the implementation of the gender policy. It needs to be updated at the start of every strategy cycle (4-5 years). The Baseline Analysis follows the 4 guiding principles of the Gender Policy. Not all principles of the Gender Policy may be relevant for your unit / office. Where applicable use the metrics as proposed below.

The Baseline Analysis can be concise. The idea is to identify good practices and gaps within your specific unit / office.

Baseline Analysis for Principle 1

1a Logib Analysis: Present the results of the Pay gap analysis. Use the Logib Tool of the Swiss Federal Office for Gender Equality FOGE (This analysis has to be renewed every 4 years).

1b Based on the results of Pay gap analysis what conclusions do you draw? Do you need to keep or improve equal pay?

2a Share of women in leadership: Present an overview on the share of gender representation in staff and in management / leadership positions

2b Based on the results of the share of women in leadership, which conclusions do you draw? Do you need to improve women representation in leadership?

3 Intersectionality: Are there other dimensions that need to be taken into considerations in your context? If yes, present an overview of staff and leadership composition regarding this dimension.

4 To what extent are inclusive leadership, zero tolerance for discrimination and SEAH embedded in your team collaboration, as for example awareness raising, prevention measures, functioning reporting mechanism, team collaboration based on trust and openness, and what evidence does show this (last 12 months e.g., trainings, actions, staff feedback)?

5 Conclusion: Considering your office/department today and the analysis above, where do you see already good practices established and where do you identify gaps?

Baseline Analysis for Principle 2

1 **The Gender Analysis:** to what extent do the projects in your programme already use gender analysis? What are good practices already applied, and where do you see need for improvement?

2 **Setting gender sensitive objectives and indicators:**

- a To what extend do projects in your programme use explicit gender objective and indicators?
- b To what extend do projects in your programme use explicit objective and indicators for relevant groups that face structural discrimination?
- c Do the objectives address structural barriers, power relations or social norms that affect different groups' ability to participate and benefit?
- d Project participants: present the share of women and other relevant groups that face structural discrimination reached in the projects of your programme

e What are good practices already applied, and where do you see need for improvement?

3 **Gender in Monitoring:** to what extent do projects in your programme use gender disaggregated data in monitoring? What are good practices already applied, and where do you see need for improvement?

4 **Gender in Evaluation:** to what extent do you integrate gender explicitly in evaluations? What are good practices already applied, and where do you see need for improvement?

5 **Gender in Reporting:** to what extent do you integrate gender explicitly in your reporting? What are good practices already applied, and where do you see need for improvement?

Baseline Analysis for Principle 3

1 **Expertise to manage gender-sensitive projects:** to what extent do your partners have a gender sensitive project management approach? What are good practices already applied, and where do you see need for improvement.

2 **Gender Policy:** Do your partners have a gender policy? To which extent is it applied?

3 **Equal gender representation within organizational bodies and management:** to what extent does your partner have an equal gender representation within its organizational bodies and management? What are good practices already applied, and where do you see need for improvement?

4 **Equal pay:** to what extent does your partner have equal pay between men and women? What are good practices already applied, and where do you see need for improvement?

Baseline Analysis for Principle 4

1 Do you apply gender-sensitive language in your programme communication in all channels?

2 In illustrations and images, are women and men shown in a balanced way and in diverse and equal roles, activities and functions?

3 Do you highlight gender-based discrimination and raise awareness of inequalities and challenges stemming from it in your communication?

Action Plan

This Development Plan is a mandatory tool to imple- Based on the good practices and gaps identified in the baseline analysis, formulate concrete aims for the next 4 years to advance in the application of the gender policy:

Principle To which of the 4 principles of the GP is the objective linked
Objective What would you like to achieve? Can be short-term or longer-term aspirations
Measures How do you want to achieve the objective
Success Metrics & Milestones How will you know you've actually improved
Time span Until when are measures to be implemented
Responsibility Who is responsible for the implementation
Budget What budget is needed for the implementation of the measures
Reporting What is the status quo of implementation

Annual Review & Reporting

The reporting needs to be completed annually in the framework of the Policy Reporting Cycle of Solidar.

A. Progress Achieved
Report on the Action Plan: Which objectives were met? What positive shifts in organizational culture have been observed?

B. Challenges & Lessons Learned
Which measures had a positive effect on your unit / office and the objective?
Where did we encounter resistance?
Which measures were ineffective, and why?
What best practices would you like to share with others?

C. Adjustments for the Next Cycle
Revise the Action Plan for the next year where needed?
Which objectives actions will be carried over?
What new priorities have emerged?

Date

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Signature – Head of Unit

_____

Approval Supervisor of Unit

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Validation – Gender Focal Point HQ

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