

## **EVERY HOME GLOBAL CONCERN Ltd GENDER EQUALITY POLICY**

*First Adopted: May 1999*

*Revised: November 2012, November 2020, December 2021*

*Next Review: 2024*

### **1.INTRODUCTION**

This policy outlines EHGC’s commitment to gender equality both in its operations in Australia and through the development work of its partners in overseas countries. We understand gender equality as “equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women and men, girls and boys.”<sup>1</sup>

Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is a core goal within the sustainable development agenda [Sustainable Development Goal 5] and it informs and underpins all aspects of our development work.

### **2.RATIONALE**

#### **2.1.Theological Rationale**

Our concern for gender equality arises from our Christian faith. Christians believe that women and men are both created in the image of God, equally endowed with dignity and the mandate to steward creation [Gen 1:27-28]. Gender inequality is therefore contrary to God’s intended order, which was “very good” [Gen 1:31]. The ministry of Jesus demonstrated inclusion, empowerment and partnership with women in a culture where women had low social status and little power. We seek to follow the example of Jesus and love one another [John 13:34, John 15:12], regardless of gender, as He instructed.

#### **2.2. Development Rationale**

The countries EHGC partners with overseas in general remain patriarchal societies, where women and girls have traditionally held low social status and bear the heaviest impacts of poverty.

Given our commitment to work with the poorest and most disadvantaged people in overseas countries, it is imperative that we work with women and girls to promote their rights and wellbeing. Gender equality is central to the achievement of sustainable development and to our vision of “life in all its fullness.”

In addition, we believe that, at minimum, effective development must consider how interventions will differentially impact upon genders. Development that does not consider gender has the potential to, at best, miss opportunities to promote gender equality and, at worst, do harm.

Gender equality is a priority of the Australian Aid program through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). EHGC aligns itself with the three priority areas for action identified by DFAT, namely:

1. Increasing women’s voice in decision making, leadership, and peace-building;
2. Women’s economic empowerment; and,
3. Ending violence against women and girls at home, in their communities, and in disaster and conflict situations.

### **3.OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this policy are to:

1. Promote and ensure gender equality through all of EHGC’s operations in Australia.
2. Clearly outline EHGC’s approach to promoting gender equality through the work of our partners.

### **4.POLICY**

#### **4.1.IN AUSTRALIA**

EHGC does not tolerate unlawful discrimination based on sex, gender, or gender identity in the workplace. EHGC does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of sex or gender when remunerating employees. EHGC will encourage all staff to develop professionally, and will not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of gender when offering professional development opportunities. Any incidents of such unlawful discrimination will be addressed according to our Complaints Handling Policy. EHGC also has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual exploitation, bullying, abuse and harassment in the workplace.

EHGC wants to achieve equal representation of men and women among staff and volunteers, regarding this as beneficial through the breadth of experiences and insights brought through diversity. However, appointment to work or volunteer positions will be based in the first instance on suitability for the position.

EHGC wants to achieve a gender-balanced Board that provides an appropriate and necessary skill mix, without discrimination.

EHGC recognises the role of both men and women in parenting. In addition to unpaid parental leave entitlements mandated by the Fair Work Act 2009 and the Federal Government Paid Parental Leave Scheme, EHGC provides four weeks pro-rata paid parental leave to both male and female employees, within the first twelve months of the birth or adoption of a child. This is also available at half-pay rates. EHGC is also committed to offering flexible working conditions to allow parents to both work and care for their families, to be developed on a mutually-agreed basis between employer and employee.

EHGC recognises that domestic and family violence is a significant issue in Australia that primarily affects women. EHGC will provide five days paid domestic and family violence leave, and up to five days additional unpaid leave. In the instance of an employee requesting to take domestic and family violence leave, EHGC will ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

## **4.2. DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS**

EHGC is committed to empowering women and girls and supporting progress towards gender equality through the work of its development partners. In particular, it supports community development projects and programs that prevent and respond to gender-based violence, increase women's economic development, improve local health services [including maternal and child health], and encourage female leadership and decision-making.

EHGC commits to ensure gender equality is an outcome of its partners' community development work by supporting projects that adopt either a targeted or mainstream approach to gender equality [see section 6].

All projects supported by EHGC, whether targeted or mainstream, are required to meet these requirements:

- A gender analysis is conducted, with findings informing project design.
- Barriers to the participation of women and girls are identified, and strategies are designed to overcome these.
- Projects consider systemic and structural barriers to gender equality and wherever possible and appropriate, seek to address these.
- All potential risks to women and girls are identified during project planning and appropriate treatments are proactively devised. Risks are monitored throughout the life of the project. Projects that pose or develop significant risks of harm to women and girls, which cannot be effectively mitigated against, will not be supported.
- Gender equality outcomes, indicators and targets are explicitly identified in project logics and log-frames.
- Gender equality outcomes are monitored and evaluated. Project data collected is disaggregated by age and sex, and outcomes for women and girls are explicitly reviewed in evaluations.
- There is sufficient time and resources for projects to achieve these outcomes and make genuine change.

EHGC believes that engaging men and boys as key stakeholders and allies is critical to the success of both targeted and mainstream projects, and will ensure that partners do so appropriately. Recognising, influencing and addressing interpersonal, social, economic and political power dynamics is critical to achieving gender equality.

EHGC recognises that working towards gender equality overseas involves challenging patriarchal norms and addressing sensitive issues, including harmful practices like early and/or forced marriage, chhaupadi (menstruation practices), dowry, son preference, and violence against women.

Whilst always seeking to support the well-being of women and girls, and to achieve gender equality overseas, EHGC will support and follow the leading of its local partners in the work of influencing culture. EHGC will strive to understand these practices within their social, economic, political and religious contexts and refrain from sensationalising them.

Recognising the significant and historic imbalance of decision-making power between men and women in partner countries, where possible and appropriate, EHGC will support and encourage female leaders and leadership in its development partners.

## **5. Monitoring & Review**

EHGC will review this policy and procedures every three years, to continuously improve our gender equality practice. This will include development partners reviewing and continuously improving their practice organisationally and through programming. Gender equality outcomes will also be monitored through partners' quarterly and annual reports, monitoring visits by EHGC staff and in all project evaluations.

## **6. Glossary**

*Gender*: The socially constructed characteristics of women and men –such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men.[1] These are learned, vary across and within cultures and are changeable.

*Gender analysis*: Highlights the differences between and among women and men, girls and boys in terms of their relative distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints, and power in a given context.[2]

*Gender balance*: Equal representation and participation of men and women.[3]

*Gender equality*: Equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women and men, girls and boys.[4]

*Gender identity*: The gender-related identity, appearance or mannerisms or other gender-related characteristics of a person which may or may not correspond to the person's physiology or designated sex at birth. [5]

*Gender justice*: The protection and promotion of the dignity of women and men who, being created in the image of God, are co-responsible stewards of creation. Gender justice is expressed through equality and balanced power relations between women and men and the elimination of the institutional, cultural and interpersonal systems of privilege and oppression that sustain discrimination.[6]

*Gender mainstreaming*: The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels.

It 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. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.[7]

**Sex:** The different biological and physiological characteristics of males and females.

*Targeted approach:* Targeted projects refer to those whose main objective is to improve gender equality. This is also known as gender programming.

*Women's empowerment:* The process by which women gain power and control over their own lives and acquire the ability to make strategic choices.[8]

[1] WHO, 'Gender' in Gender equity and human rights. 2019, viewed 16 June 2021, <https://www.who.int/gender-equity-rights/understanding/gender-definition/en/>.

[2] Commonwealth of Australia, DFAT, Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) Manual, 2021, p. 25  
<https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/australian-ngo-cooperation-program-manual.pdf>

[3] E Neuenfeldt (ed.), Gender Justice Policy, The Lutheran World Federation – A Communion of Churches, Switzerland, 2013 p. 37,  
[https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/DTPW-WICAS\\_Gender\\_Justice.pdf](https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/DTPW-WICAS_Gender_Justice.pdf)

[4] Commonwealth of Australia, DFAT, Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) Manual, 2021, p. 24  
<https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/australian-ngo-cooperation-program-manual.pdf>

[5] European Institute for Gender Equality, 'Gender identity in Glossary & Thesaurus. 2019, viewed 16 June 2021,  
<https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1179>.

[6] Neuenfeldt, p. 23

[7] United Nations Economic and Social Council, Gender Mainstreaming, 1997, p. 2, <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/GMS.PDF>.

[8] European Institute for Gender Equality, 'Empowerment of women' in Glossary & Thesaurus. 2019, viewed 16 June 2021,  
<https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1102>