



Gender Policy

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Gender Policy

Center for Church-Based Development (CKU), member organisations and partners are dedicated to work for the promotion of gender equality and the attainment of equal rights for men and women. We are jointly committed to this task on all levels of the societies, where we work as well as within our own organisations. CKU, members and partners share Christian core values that inform and guide our understanding and approach to development work.

- **As Christians we believe that men and women alike are created in God's image. In Genesis 1 it is a fundamental point that both genders have the likeness of God and that God desires to relate to every created person, men as well as women.**
- **As Christians it is our obligation to treat men and women without moral or ethical denouncement. In the New Testament it is a central quality of the meetings between Christ and men or women that conversations take the form of dialogues in respect for the other part's dignity.**

The purpose of policy and guideline

CKU, members and partners agree that addressing gender relations and promoting gender equality is fundamental to successful and sustainable development. With this publication CKU therefore wishes to outline an explicit gender policy as well as operationalise this policy through a set of guidelines and tools. With the policy we hope to inspire and support partners in their work for the promotion of gender equality and equal rights in all the particular contexts and projects in which they are involved.





CKU's gender approach and policy

CKU's partners in South are characterized by the great credibility they enjoy due to their long-term relations with the local societies they serve and work with. The gender approach of CKU, members and partners has traditionally focused on individual women and their particular needs in their daily lives on grassroots level. Activities have involved the formation of women's groups and the start up of income-generating projects. Thereby CKU, members and partners have sought

to create opportunities for women to obtain a larger degree of independence and manoeuvring space as well as empowering them to formulate their own needs towards their families, communities or church societies. The strength of this approach has been that our members and partners have had success in improving women's possibilities within their existing life situations and traditional and local roles.

Gender inequality in figures:

Gender disaggregated statistics demonstrate that there is still a long way to go:

- Among the world's one billion poorest people, 60% are women and girls
- Two-thirds of global illiteracy affects women and 70% of children out of school are girls
- Measured in terms of parliament seats, women globally only account for 16%
- Female paid income is less than male, both because women work in low-paying sectors and because women earn less than men for the same job
- In Sub-Saharan Africa close to three-fifths of those living with HIV are women, and young women (15-24) are at least three times more likely to be infected than men at the same age.
- Domestic violence is the most common form of gender-based violence: Between 10 and 69 per cent of women report they have been physically abused by an intimate partner in their lifetime (WHO 2002)

Men and women are equal in Christ. Paul summarises the core principle in the letter to the Galatians 3, 28: »There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither Slave nor Freeman, there can be neither male nor female – for you are all one in Christ Jesus«.



Acting and advocating for gender equality

Looking ahead, CKU, members and partners envision broadening our gender approach and focus. We opt to continually improve as practitioners and advocates for gender equality, both internally in our organisations and externally in the societies where we are engaged in development work. While continuing to create opportunities for women in their everyday lives, we further want to divert focus to how gender equality can become a joint interest and venture of men as well as women. To this end, it is our policy to invest efforts in involving the men and local leaders in the societies in which we work. We have for too long perceived the gender aspect in development as basically a women's issue. This has had the consequence that our intentions to include women too often have resulted in the

development of mere survival strategies for women within the existing structures, rather than engaging in efforts to change unjust societal structures, that oppress women and hinder equal rights, equal access to resources and equal influence. It is our aim to broaden our focus from the individual women at community level to a focus that encompasses society as a whole. We must ask what structural changes are needed in order to secure equal rights, equal access to resources and equal influence on grassroots level in men's and women's daily lives, and we must ask what our particular organisations can do to help achieve that. Our efforts to promote and advocate for gender equality will therefore take place on local as well as national, regional and international levels.

Gender and development

CKU believes that gender is about relations and that gender relations are fundamental to development. We have to understand the dynamics of gender relations to understand the cultural environment and the power relations in a given local setting. Gender analysis is therefore an essential tool in designing successful development projects. For example, if we want to secure a better income for poor families, it is imperative to ensure that men and women are united and work in the same direction. We have to meet the interests of women and men alike to make sure that they will participate constructively in the process and finally own the intervention. If the aim is to empower women to claim more influence in decision-making at household- or community-level, it is crucial to consider

how the intervention will affect the position and the interests of men. How can e.g. women's increased manoeuvring space be seen as an advantage for the men? In most cases, the quest for gender equality will entail empowerment of women and consequently a lessening of control over women by male duty-bearers. This poses the crucial challenge of being immensely cautious that we in our work for heightened gender equality do not undermine male identity and sense of self-worth, which is often related to traditional male roles and obligations as providers and family heads. Instead an approach should be adopted where men and women are continuously brought to reflect upon how the one gender can act as duty-bearer for the other gender's rights and vice-versa.

Gender and culture

Some CKU partners have proved to be much further ahead in their gender reflections and gender sensitive work than their Danish partners. The issue of gender equality is indeed a global issue, and not just another Northern invention. However, gender equality is an important issue of debate within member and partner organisations. It is therefore important to stress that the present policy respects and wishes to support gender approaches that build on the traditions and cultures in the different societies

of intervention, diverse as they are. It is important to adjust approaches to particular cultural and socio-economic contexts in order for them to be relevant or have any impact. For example, it has an immense influence on what type of work can be undertaken whether the setting is rural or urban. Different challenges pertain to working with different age groups, and it is necessary to always consider what structures or authorities are in place, or who can secure sustainability.



Advocating for gender equality internally and externally

A central challenge is the quest to advocate for gender equality both internally and externally. Recently, local churches have been successful in undertaking advocacy on gender issues directed towards leaders in the church as well as local duty-bearers and decision-makers. This has proved that local churches can have a quite powerful impact through advocacy work, due to their popular

foundation in local societies. CKU wishes to strengthen and support advocacy for the promotion of gender equality aimed at broader parts of societies. We believe that CKU, members and partners can do much more for the promotion of gender equality, for example in cases of divorce, custody rights, inheritance rights and violence against women.

Principles for CKU's gender approach

The following four principles are used for CKU interventions:

Dialogue:

CKU, members and partners work to foster open and respectful dialogue and mutual understanding between the two genders in all development interventions and at all levels.

Participation:

CKU, members and partners do their utmost to promote genuine equal gender participation, including more space of manoeuvre for the weaker part, most often women, as well as heightened influence on decision-making on joint issues at all levels.

Mutuality and responsibility:

CKU, members and partners perceive men and women alike as responsible change agents and work for the promotion of mutual respect between men and women. Men are dutybearers for women's rights as women are duty-bearers for men's rights. Change processes that positively influence the life and work conditions of one gender should receive active support and responsible action from the other gender. Men's and women's time and resources should be considered equally valuable for joint development.

Role models:

CKU, members and partners take upon themselves to sincerely act as visible role models for each other and to the communities they work in all interactions. As duty-bearers for men's and women's rights CKU, members and partners are advocates for the rights of women and men and for equal access to resources and influence.

