

Practical Action

GENDER POLICY

Version 0003.00

Date 10.02.22

Scope All employees

Approval required from	Director of Influence and Impact	
Policy Owner:	Impact and Gender Advisor	
Responsible Director:	Director of Influence and Impact	
Approval date	10 February 2022	

Queries:	Contact the Policy Owner
Exceptions:	Contact the Responsible Director

Big change starts small

Context

Practical Action acknowledges that gender and other social inequalities are fundamental causes and drivers of poverty. As expressed in the Sustainable Development Goals, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are human rights that are critical to the achievement of sustainable development. We therefore recognise that without putting in place measures to address gender inequalities, we may not achieve the change we seek through our long-term strategy and change ambitions.

We recognise that women and girls may not enjoy the same status, power or access to and control over resources as men and boys and that men and women are not homogenous groups and that this disparity is further influenced by other factors such as ethnicity, age, religious beliefs, class, caste or tribal systems, sexual orientation and ability.

We believe that the possibilities open to employees of Practical Action to participate and reach their full potential should not be defined by gender. Practical Action therefore seeks to create an inclusive workplace for women and men. We do not believe that an inclusive workplace requires an equal number of women and men, but we **do** believe that our people should not encounter any barriers on joining, progressing or contributing based on their gender.

Potential barriers to gender equality and diversity might include conscious or unconscious assumptions or bias about the characteristics of women and men, or a lack of opportunity to balance work with personal responsibilities which could result in reduced opportunities for career progression.

Aim of the policy

The gender policy sets out the organisational approach and commitments required to embed gender transformative practices and ways of working across all our work. This includes:

- in how we recruit and nurture staff
- in our organisational culture, behaviours and ways of working
- in our programmes and projects to achieve our change ambitions
- in our communications and engagement with others

To fulfil our commitment and ensure that opportunities are not defined or limited by gender, Practical Action may need to treat women and men differently. Because there is evidence to show that many obstacles to achieving inclusivity relate to women more than men, in practice our gender action plans may focus on addressing key difficulties that women face entering and progressing in the workplace as well as in achieving their socio-economic development in the communities we serve. We are, however, committed to understanding barriers experienced by **either** women or men and taking action to address them.

Policy statement

Practical Action believes that everyone, irrespective of gender, race, religion, ethnic or national origin, caste, tribe, belief, age, marital status, pregnancy, caring responsibilities, sexual orientation, or disability, should have the opportunity, resources and support to access an adequate standard of living, health and education and to achieve their potential.

At a minimum we will ensure that all our work is gender sensitive, seeking gender transformative approaches as our overall ambition. We understand that transforming gender relations will require

conscious effort to closely work with men and boys as well as women and girls to change perceptions, knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, social norms and legal entitlements.

Gender sensitive

Interventions and activities to meet the day to day practical needs of women and men

Gender transformative

Interventions addressing structural inequalities pertaining to division of labour, access to and control over resources and decision-making

At an organization-wide level this requires that:

- Our staff are knowledgeable, committed and able to address gender aspects as part of their remit.
- Gender is integrated into all aspects of the organisation's work and operations (recruitment, programmes, projects, consultancies, publishing, advocacy, communications, research, knowledge and learning, people and culture, finance and other services).
- Gender analysis is used to identify and address the barriers that women and men face in improving their lives.
- We invest in building our gender awareness, capacity and expertise.

Putting our policy into practice

Working towards our change ambitions

Mainstreaming a gender transformative approach into our systems analysis and change ambitions in our Strategic Business Plans (SBPs) will mean that:

- a) Thematic leads and business development teams carry out gender analysis when designing programmes and projects. This includes looking at practical and strategic needs of women and men and understanding the differing impacts of social norms, policies and laws on their lives
- b) Thematic leads and business development teams develop interventions that address strategic as well as practical needs of women and men, and that also consider ability, access, age and literacy
- c) Business development teams ensure that relevant gender activities including staffing are adequately budgeted for in all project proposals and budgets
- d) Thematic leads, business development and programme delivery teams collect, analyse and use relevant gender disaggregated data to inform our current and future programmes and our policy advocacy agenda
- e) Programme delivery teams implement activities, depending on the context, with women or men together or separately to promote equal participation, voice and agency
- f) Fundraising and Business development teams actively promote gender in our partnerships and seek to work with actors that promote gender equality and women's empowerment

Through our Enabling Objectives

People, capabilities and leadership

Develop and nurture a diverse and gender diverse staff team through:

- Recruitment practices that promote staff diversity and equal opportunities at all levels of the organization
- Recruitment practices to identify and recruit people who are gender aware
- Induction and training programmes that ensure understanding and commitment of all staff to gender equality in Practical Action and its work

Ensure we have the knowledge and skills to identify and address gender-based inequalities through:

- People and Culture policies and practices that ensure equity and fairness through reward, resources and opportunities
- Including appropriate Strategic Leadership Team gender priorities in job roles and performance management

Proactively address socio-cultural beliefs and norms that lead to gender-based discrimination within the organisation creating a work environment that promotes equal opportunities for all through:

- Regular training in diversity and inclusion and addressing unconscious bias
- Including gender objectives in People Management Process where appropriate

Endeavour to raise and allocate adequate resources for the implementation of our gender priorities, in particular to:

- Raise and allocate funding for sufficient number of gender posts
- Raise and allocate funding for induction, staff needs assessments, raising awareness and training in gender for all staff

Generating income and managing relationships

- Seek funding opportunities that enable us to further our efforts to address the barriers that hinder gender equality in development and ways of working
- Ensure funding proposal budgets include provision for gender specialists, staff training in gender, and gender specific activities such as gender analysis, gender sensitive MEL and gender focused research and influencing activities
- Inclusion of gender equality as a prerequisite to award approval (through PAMS)
- Develop partnerships with organisations committed to gender equality and with organisations that demonstrate well developed skills, knowledge and the organisational remit to address gender inequalities. These may include women's organisations, and women-led organisations.

Delivering performance and impact as One Practical Action

- Ensure that project and support teams work closely with gender specialists in programme design and delivery
- Ensure that gender is considered during project design processes including via gender assessment/analysis and community engagement activities that enable us to hear directly from women and those who may have less voice
- Plan and implement all project activities in ways that promote gender equity and where possible empowerment
- Design and deploy community accountability and feedback mechanisms to ensure accessibility to women and men
- Design and implement MEL systems that enable gender differentiated changes to be tracked, analysed and used to inform implementation
- Undertake regular gender assessments/analysis and integrate gender in evaluation design to understand gender differentiated outcomes and impacts

- Explore gender issues during reviews and evaluations
- Embed gender equality in all our procedures and policies with partners and providers of goods and services

Building our profile and inspiring support

- Through different media, equitable reflection of the voice and experience of women and men and to deepen the understanding of the specific gender issues that may impact on people's ability to improve their lives.
- Ensure that both our internal and external communications, staff newsletters, advocacy messages, social media, reflect and promote our commitment to gender equality through the use of inclusive language and appropriate images that challenge existing gender stereotypes

Accountability and responsibilities

Overall accountability for the implementation of the gender policy is with the Strategic Leadership Team. Together with their respective senior management teams, they are responsible for proactively driving our gender agenda by providing leadership and ensuring the gender minimum standards are met.

Consistency and coherence of policy implementation will be supported through the Gender Global Group, the Global People and Culture Group, and the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) sponsor for gender and the DEI Taskforce.

Interdependencies with the following global policies, guidance and manuals:

- Recruitment Policy
- Global Diversity and Dignity at Work policy
- People and Culture Manual
- Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Policy
- Global Remuneration Policy
- Global Complaints Framework
- Global Induction Module
- Gender & Inclusion Guidance (and tools) in the 'Programme Quality and Delivery Framework'
- Gender minimum standards
- Guidance on integrating gender in our thematic areas of work
- Gender Assessment and Action Plan tool (*coming soon*)
- Guidelines for Gender-Sensitive Communication
- Gender Transformative Change: Our Expertise and Experience
- Participatory Market Systems Development Toolkit
- Other relevant local policies e.g. Agile working policy (UK)

End of Policy.