



**CROWN AGENTS**  
ACCELERATING SELF-SUFFICIENCY & PROSPERITY

## **INTRODUCTORY GUIDE** PUTTING GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSION AT THE HEART OF OUR PROGRAMMING PRACTICE

This guide provides a summary of how Crown Agents views the implications of the 'Leave No One Behind' agenda in its programme practice.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals offer a historic opportunity to eradicate extreme poverty. To realise this opportunity, governments, multilateral institutions, the private sector, civil society and citizens must act to ensure no one is left behind. To create lasting change, we need to address the root causes of poverty, discrimination and marginalisation within and between countries and the inequalities that ensue. As a not-for-profit international development organisation committed towards accelerating progress towards the SDGs, Crown Agents takes this call to action very seriously. We are committed to the 'leave no one behind' LNOB agenda.

At Crown Agents, our mission is to accelerate self-sufficiency and prosperity. However, gender inequality and social exclusion mean that not everyone has equal access and opportunity to achieve these things. To level the playing field, we recognise that we must do more to identify and respond to the needs and priorities of women and marginalised groups. These include individuals and groups that are excluded and discriminated against the basis of individual and intersecting factors such as sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, race, ethnicity, nationality, immigration status, disability status and more. We must also work harder to identify and address the underlying discriminatory laws, policies, norms, and practices that prevent women and marginalised groups from fully participating in and benefiting from all aspects of political, economic and social life. Without this focus on equity, we risk deepening the inequalities that drive poverty, inequality, conflict and instability.

## OUR PLEDGE

Moving forward, Crown Agents is committed to challenging exclusion and discrimination in all its programmes. We will strive to ensure all our programmes are informed by the latest research, evidence and learning on what works to advance gender equality and promote inclusion for all. We will aim to ensure everyone is treated equitably in our programmes and no one is left behind. To help operationalise these commitments, we pledge to:

- Collect, analyse and report on sex, age and disability disaggregated data.
- Ensure an intersectional gender and inclusion analysis informs the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of our programmes.
- Increase the number and quality of our partnerships with national and local actors, including organisations, movements and groups led by women and marginalised groups, such as persons with disabilities.
- Adopt a zero-tolerance approach to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in our aid operations, and ensure we have robust policies and procedures in place to safeguard the communities we work with, as well as our staff, contractors and volunteers.

Our work is evolving rapidly in this area. We know we are embarking on a long, complex and challenging journey, but we see this as integral to achieving our vision – accelerating self-sufficiency and prosperity for all.

## A PRACTICAL GUIDE ON INTEGRATING GESI INTO PROGRAMME PRACTICE

This guide has been designed to help Crown Agents staff, contractors and volunteers integrate gender equality and social inclusion considerations into programming practice. It is intended to be a useful resource for all, irrespective of their seniority and area of work. This guide can also be made accessible to organisations Crown Agents work with to help build shared knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the importance of gender equality and social inclusion to achieving our programmatic goals and the principle of do no harm. This guide includes a glossary of key terms and concepts.

## UNDERSTANDING GESI PROGRAMMING APPROACHES

Programming is one of the main ways to advance gender equality and social inclusion, alongside legislative, policy and social norm change. Many donors (including the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office) adopt a twin-track approach to programming. In practice, this means they use a portion of the aid budget to design standalone programmes, in which the main goal is to advance gender equality and social inclusion. At the same time, they ALL their programmes to mainstream gender equality and social inclusion. In other words, a strong intersectional GESI analysis should inform the design of the programme to ensure it is responsive to the needs of women and girls and marginalised groups and does not exacerbate existing inequalities. Some

donors (such as the UK Conflict Stability and Security Fund) are now going further and requiring all programmes to have at least one project /strand whose principal objective is to advance gender equality and social inclusion.

## UNDERSTANDING GESI PROGRAMME CATEGORIES ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF AMBITION

Another way to think about programming is in terms of the level of ambition. All programmes should aim to advance gender equality and social inclusion, but the degree of change possible will depend on the duration and budget of a programme, as well as contextual and operational factors. The following categories can be used to set a programme's ambition level and monitor and evaluate its performance.

**GESI-blind:** This category refers to programmes and interventions which make no reference to gender and inclusion considerations in their situation analysis, programme design and budget.

**GESI-sensitive:** This category refers to programmes and interventions which refer to a GESI analysis as part of their situation analysis and which seek to respond to the practical needs and priorities of women, girls and marginalised groups, as evidenced in the theory of change, logical/results framework and budget. Most donors require programmes to be GESI-sensitive at a minimum in line with the principle of DO NO HARM.

**GESI-empowering:** This category refers to programmes and interventions which refer to a GESI analysis as part of the situation analysis and which identify the practical needs<sup>1</sup> and strategic interests of women, girls and marginalised groups. Efforts to empower women, girls and marginalised groups (e.g., by increasing their assets, capabilities and opportunities) are evidenced in the programme's theory of change, logical/results framework and budget.

<sup>1</sup> Practical needs tend to be immediate and short-term, such as the need for food, income, shelter and safety. On the other hand, strategic needs tend to be longer-term and relate to the position of women, girls and marginalised groups in society and their rights, roles, responsibilities and access to opportunities and control over resources.

<sup>2</sup> A GESI analysis involves a critical examination of differences in the rights, roles, responsibilities and access to resources and opportunities available to men and women, and boys and girls, and socially excluded

**GESI-Transformative:** This category refers to programmes and interventions which refer to a GESI analysis which clearly identifies the discriminatory laws, policies, norms and practices which are at the root causes of the inequalities, discrimination and exclusion experienced by women, girls and marginalised groups. Efforts to challenge unequal and inequitable laws, policies, norms and practices and transform power dynamics are clearly evidenced in the programme's theory of change, logical/results framework and budget.

## GESI PROGRAMMING CHECKLIST

The following checklist has been created to assist colleagues, contractors and volunteers to ensure their programmes are GESI-sensitive at a minimum and integrate GESI considerations at each stage of the programme cycle:

### Situation Analysis and Needs Assessment

- Have you conducted or consulted a gender and inclusion analysis<sup>2</sup> to inform the design of your programme?
- Have you identified the practical needs, priorities and vulnerabilities of women and girls and marginalised groups as part of your analysis?
- Have you explored how sex can intersect with other determinants (e.g., disability status) to intensify vulnerability to exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination?
- Have you considered how your intervention might impact existing power dynamics and the risk of reinforcing gender inequality and social exclusion?

### Design and Implementation

- Have findings from the gender and inclusion analysis informed the design of the programme, as evidenced by tailored activities aimed at responding to the needs and priorities of women, girls and marginalised groups.
- Have you referenced what steps you will take to mitigate the risk of reinforcing gender inequality and social exclusion?

groups in particular contexts. There are many different GESI analysis frameworks. Some are geared towards development contexts, others towards humanitarian contexts. Some work better for projects, others for sector-specific or national strategies. For guidance on which specific framework to use, please contact Laura Martineau-Searle, Principal Consultant for GESI at [laura.martineau-searle@crowngents.co.uk](mailto:laura.martineau-searle@crowngents.co.uk).

- Is there an opportunity to go beyond compliance and help empower women, girls and marginalised groups? For example, are there opportunities to promote their participation and leadership in the delivery of the programme, or increase their assets, capabilities and resources? For example, if you are working on a public health promotion programme, is there an opportunity to recruit and train women and persons with disabilities as public health promoters?
- Is there an opportunity to go beyond empowerment and tackle discriminatory policies, laws, attitudes, behaviours and practices? For example, if you are working in a refugee/IDP camp setting, is there an opportunity to challenge the notion that women are responsible for collecting firewood and water, a responsibility which frequently exposes them to the risk of sexual assault and other forms of GBV.

### Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

- Are you collecting sex, age and disability disaggregated data where possible?
- Are GESI considerations reflected in the theory of change and logical/results framework, including in outcome and output statements?
- Are there specific indices to measure whether the programme is responding to the needs and priorities of women, girls and marginalised groups?
- If relevant, are their indices to measure the participation and leadership of women and marginalised groups, and any increase in their assets, capabilities and resources?
- If relevant, are there indices to measure changes in power relations and discriminatory laws, policies, attitudes and practices?
- Are community, feedback and complaints mechanisms in place, and are these accessible to women and marginalised groups?

If you would like technical support with the design and implementation of your programme, please contact Laura Martineau-Searle, Principal Consultant for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, at:

[laura.martineau-searle@crownagents.co.uk](mailto:laura.martineau-searle@crownagents.co.uk).

<sup>3</sup> There are many more concepts and terms relevant to gender and inclusion, but this introductory guide includes the key concepts and terms most relevant to Crown Agents' field of work. Please note that

## GENDER AND INCLUSION GLOSSARY

This glossary provides clear and concise definitions of the key concepts underpinning work on gender and inclusion in the context of international development.<sup>3</sup>

### Social Inclusion

Social inclusion refers to the process by which efforts are made to ensure that everyone can enjoy and exercise their human rights and participate in, contribute to, and benefit from all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life. Such efforts include the design of inclusive laws, policies and institutions, and interventions to transform power relations and shift harmful and discriminatory social norms, attitudes, behaviours and practices.

### Social Exclusion

Social exclusion refers to a process by which certain groups are systematically marginalized and disadvantaged due to prejudice and discrimination based on various identity characteristics and contextual factors. Social exclusion is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon and the composition of these characteristics and contextual factors will vary from context to context. However, people may be vulnerable to prejudice and discrimination based on their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, disability status, mental health and other considerations, such as poverty and location. Social exclusion often hinders people's ability to enjoy and exercise their human rights fully, participate in, contribute to, and benefit from all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life.



### Sex

Sex refers to the biological categorization of a person as male, female, or intersex. Sex is commonly assigned at birth based on biological indicators, such as external genitalia, internal reproductive organs, hormones and chromosomes.

the definitions used by other organisations may vary slightly, but this glossary is firmly grounded in a review of the latest sectoral thinking on best practices.

## Gender

Gender refers to socially and culturally constructed ideas about the capabilities of men and women and boys and girls and what constitutes appropriate roles, responsibilities and behaviour. Gender norms and expectations greatly influence the rights, resources, and opportunities available



to men and women and boys and girls. Gender norms and expectations are not fixed but a form of socially learned behaviour which can and should change. The pressure to conform to gender norms and expectations and the sanctions

for failing to do so greatly hinder people's ability to exercise and enjoy their human rights.

### Gender Identity and/or Expression

Gender identity refers to a person's sense of gender, e.g., whether they are a man/boy or a woman/girl or another identity beyond this binary. A person's gender identity may not align with the biological sex they were assigned at birth. When it does align, such a person is referred to as cisgender. When a person's gender identity does not align with the biological sex they were assigned at birth, they are referred to as transgender. Gender expression refers to how people convey their gender identity through appearance and behaviour, among other forms of expression.

### Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation refers to a person's emotional, physical and sexual attraction to others. Among other orientations, a person may identify as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual depending on whether they are attracted to a person of the opposite sex and/or gender identity, the same sex and/or gender identity, or both sexes and/or gender identities. Expectations about gender influence norms and expectations about sexual orientation. The pressure to conform to such norms and expectations and the sanctions people incur for refusal to do so can greatly hinder their ability to exercise and enjoy their human rights.

## Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to the need to recognise that gender norms and expectations may intersect with other aspects of a person's identity, such as age, race, ethnicity, caste, religion, social class, disability status, to intensify their experience of marginalisation and vulnerability to harm. Men, women, boys and girls and people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics are not homogenous groups. An intersectional approach strives to acknowledge and better understand the differences within these groups and how these differences can create power imbalances which render some more marginalised and vulnerable than others.

### Gender Relations

Gender relations refers to the socially constructed power relations between people based on their sex and/or gender identity. This involves exploring how gender norms and expectations impact people's perceived capabilities, roles and responsibilities, and access to opportunities and resources. Historically, gender norms and expectations have privileged men and boys with greater power and privilege than women and girls, thus creating a gender hierarchy and disparities, inequalities and inequities that continue to exist today.<sup>4</sup>

### Gender Bias

Gender bias refers to prejudicial thoughts which may influence how someone relates to or interacts with people of a particular sex and/or gender identity. Gender bias can be conscious or unconscious. Gender bias can lead to unequal and unfair treatment and impact the roles and responsibilities and opportunities and resources available to men and women, boys and girls, and people with diverse gender identities, sexual orientations, gender expressions and sex characteristics.

### Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination refers to any distinction, restriction or exclusion made based on a person's sex and/or gender identity, rather than that person's capabilities. Direct gender discrimination refers to situations where the distinction, restriction, or exclusion is based explicitly on gender norms and expectations. Indirect discrimination refers to situations where a law,

<sup>4</sup> Please note that men and boys whose behaviour does not conform to gender norms and expectations may also be disadvantaged.

policy, intervention, or practice appears to be neutral, but has a discriminatory effect. Gender discrimination can result from individual behaviour or be systemic. Systemic gender discrimination describes situations where policies, behaviour and practices of an institution create or perpetuate disadvantages based on sex and/or gender identity.

### **Gender Based Violence**

Gender-based violence is an umbrella term used to refer to violence directed at an individual based on gender norms and expectations. Gender-based violence includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, emotional, and economic harm and threats of such acts. Historically, gender norms and expectations have privileged men and boys with greater power and privilege than women and girls, thereby enhancing women and girls' vulnerability to harm. It is also important to acknowledge that people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions can experience gender-based violence due to their perceived failure to conform to gender norms and expectations.

### **Gender Equality**

This concept alludes to a state where men, women, boys and girls and people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics have equal enjoyment of rights, opportunities, resources and rewards. It does not mean everyone is the same, but rather that life chances should not be governed or limited by sex, gender identity or gender expression. Gender equality is widely recognised as a fundamental human right and a precondition for sustainable development.

### **Gender Equity**

This concept alludes to the need to recognise that men, women, boys and girls and people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics have different histories, needs and priorities, and these differences should be acknowledged and addressed in the spirit of fairness. For example, special measures may be necessary to compensate for past injustices and existing inequalities that prevent individuals from otherwise operating as equals.

### **Women and Girls' Empowerment**

This concept alludes to the need to transform power between relations between men and women and boys and girls, so that women and girls can exercise more agency and control over their lives.

This involves expanding women and girls' access to resources and opportunities, raising their aspirations and their voices, and preventing, mitigating, and responding to the endemic problem of violence against women and girls.



## SOME ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

**Organisations at the forefront of efforts to advance gender equality and women's empowerment and efforts to end GBV include:**

The Global Women's Institute: <https://globalwomensinstitute.gwu.edu/>

UN Women: <https://www.unwomen.org/en>

Womankind Worldwide: <https://www.womankind.org.uk/>

Girls Not Brides Coalition: <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/>

Raising Voices: <https://raisingvoices.org/>

AkinaMamaWaAfrika: <https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/>

FEMNET: <https://femnet.org/>

Arab Institute for Women: <https://aiw.lau.edu.lb/>

Abaad: Resource Centre for Gender Equality: <https://www.abaadmena.org/>

Action Aid: <https://www.actionaid.org.uk/>

SDDirect: <https://www.sddirect.org.uk/>

UK Gender and Development Network: <https://gadnetwork.org/>

### Inclusion

**Relevant books and papers include:**

Robert Chambers, *Whose Reality Counts: Putting the Last First*, 1983

DFID, *Reducing Poverty by Tackling Social Exclusion: A DFID Policy Paper*, 2005 <https://gsdrc.org/document-library/reducing-poverty-by-tackling-social-exclusion-a-dfid-policy-paper/>

UNDP, *What does it mean to leave no one behind: A UNDP Discussion paper and framework for implementation*, 2018

[https://www.undp.org/sites/q/files/zskqke326/files/publications/Brochure\\_LNOB\\_web.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/q/files/zskqke326/files/publications/Brochure_LNOB_web.pdf)

DFID, *Leaving No One Behind: Perspectives and Directives from DFID Multi-Cadre Conferences*, 2019:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d9b3ff240f0b607f3e6793d/EIR014\\_Leaving\\_No\\_One\\_Behind\\_Perspectives\\_and\\_Directions\\_from\\_DFID\\_Multi\\_Cadre\\_Conferences.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5d9b3ff240f0b607f3e6793d/EIR014_Leaving_No_One_Behind_Perspectives_and_Directions_from_DFID_Multi_Cadre_Conferences.pdf)

**Other great knowledge hubs and sources of information on inclusion include:**

Institute for Development Studies: <https://www.participatorymethods.org/>

Overseas Development Institute: <https://odi.org/en/about/our-work/gender-equality-and-social-inclusion/>

GSRDC Applied Knowledge Services: <https://gsdrc.org/category/social-development/inequalities-exclusion/>

### Age Inclusion

**Organisations at the forefront of age inclusion include:**

UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/>

Plan International: <https://plan-international.org/>

Help Age International: <https://www.helpage.org/>

### SOGIESC (aka LGBTQI+) Inclusion

**Organisations at the forefront of SOGIEST (aka LGBTQI+) inclusion include:**

SDDirect: <https://www.sddirect.org.uk/>

Edge Effect: <https://www.edgeeffect.org/>

Stonewall: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/international/international-resources>

## Disability Inclusion

**Organisations at the forefront of disability inclusion include:**

Sightsavers: <https://www.sightsavers.org/>

Humanity and Inclusion: <https://www.humanity-inclusion.org.uk/>

CBM: <https://www.cbmuk.org.uk/>

The International Disability Alliance: <https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/>

Leonard Cheshire: <https://www.leonardcheshire.org/our-impact/our-international-work>

Another great source of information and inspiration is the DFID Disability Inclusion Strategy published in 2018: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfids-disability-inclusion-strategy-2018-to-2023>. Also, the Disability Inclusion Helpdesk funded by the FCDO has produced a suite of knowledge products on what works to advance inclusive development and humanitarian action. Find out more about the programme and access the resources here: <https://www.sddirect.org.uk/project/disability-inclusion-helpdesk>

## Faith Inclusion

Kathryn Kraft and Olivia J. Wilkinson, *International Development and Local Faith Actors: Ideological and Cultural Encounters*, 2020

World Jewish Relief: <https://www.worldjewishrelief.org/>

Islamic Relief: <https://www.islamic-relief.org.uk/>

Christian Aid: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/>

CAFOD: <https://cafod.org.uk/>

## Safeguarding

**Other organisations at the forefront of safeguarding include:**

The Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub: <https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/>

Core Humanitarian Standards Alliance: <https://www.chsalliance.org/about/>

Keeping Children Safe: <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/>





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**Contact details**

Laura Martineau-Searle, Principal Consultant – Gender Equality and Social Inclusion  
[laura.martineau-searle@crownagents.co.uk](mailto:laura.martineau-searle@crownagents.co.uk)