



Norwegian People's Aid

# GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

– FOR THE INTERNATIONAL WORK  
OF NORWEGIAN PEOPLE'S AID









Photo: Torunn Aaslund

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Design: Oktan Oslo

# POLICY STATEMENT

**NPA's vision is solidarity in action and NPA stands for equal rights for all, irrespective of sex, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and social status. NPA's principles establish that we will promote human rights, equality, and a just distribution of power and resources between all individuals, including women and men. Given the increasing concentration of power and resources in the hands of a few, NPA considers that strong popular participation and organisation are crucial to change power relations. Women's influence and organisation must increase to participate on equal terms with men, while men's participation in gender equality efforts needs to increase in order to realise these goals. NPA establishes partnerships with organisations that share our values, including gender equality goals.**

This policy lays out NPA's commitments to strive for a world free from discrimination based on gender, and where every human being can fulfil their potential unhindered by discriminating laws, economic and social structures. The policy sets out NPA's commitments and principles for our gender equality work. The policy applies to NPA's international work; all programmes, our policy, advocacy and communication work, and not least within NPA.



Photo: Erik M. Sundt

## **Gender**

The term “gender” refers to the social and cultural construction of femininity and masculinity and the relationship between them, as opposed to the biological definition of the sexes. Gender identities and relations are not an expression of human nature, but results from social constructions evolved over time. This social character implies a possibility for change through political and social action, and gendered roles and relationships are both dynamic and changeable.

## **Gender Identity**

Gender identity is a person’s individual concept of identity in terms of gender, whether it is being a man/boy, woman/girl, both, or neither. Gender identity is not necessarily linked to the sex of a person.

## **Gender Mainstreaming**

“Gender mainstreaming” is defined as: “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 perpetrated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality. As such, gender equality is the overarching and long-term development goal, while

gender mainstreaming is a set of specific, strategic approaches as well as technical and institutional processes adopted to achieve that goal” (ECOSOC agreed conclusions, 1997/2). Gender mainstreaming was established as a global strategy through the adoption of the Platform for Action at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995.

NPA’s main approaches for gender mainstreaming are:

- Integration of gender equality as part of all programs for development, mine action and humanitarian assistance,
- Targeted action for specific groups, often women
- Dialogue with partners on gender equality goals and implementation.

## **Gender Analysis**

A gender analysis highlights the differences between and among women, men, girls, and boys concerning distribution of resources and power, opportunities, and constraints in a given context.

The analysis needs to seek information about:

- Division of labour in productive work, child rearing, and community work
- Gendered roles and responsibilities, to understand how men and women, girls and boys interact, what they do, can do, and are expected to do, including distribution of power
- Access to and control of resources (material, financial, human, social, political, etc).

Photo: Mariella Furrer





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## GENDER EQUALITY AT THE CORE OF NPA'S WORK

NPA firmly believes that gender equality needs to be at the core of our work for democratic societies with a just distribution of resources; action against global inequality; and to protect civilians from explosive weapons. We recognise that women and men are still treated differently and given different tasks, responsibilities, opportunities, and privileges in most societies. More often than not, men are given systematically superior positions compared to women. Most societies practice to different extents discrimination against women economically, politically, sexually, and culturally. Discrimination harms individuals, communities, and countries. It hampers development and economic growth. Gender equality is a fundamental feature of a better world for everyone.

NPA recognizes that women, men, girls and boys experience, influence and are affected by development processes, armed conflicts, and crises in different ways. This is also the case with explosive weapons, therefore our work to protect civilians must take this into account. Equally, humanitarian crises affect women differently from men, and women have other barriers than men to gain influence and participation in democratisation processes. Women have in general less economic resources than men. NPA will take these differences into account in our work.

### **Layers of discrimination**

Systematic discrimination is not limited to the relationships between men and women, boys and girls. Gender alone is not the only factor underpinning power relations and unequal positions. Social class, ethnicity, age, ability, sexual orientation, and gender identity impact and structure unequal relationships in different ways in different social, cultural, and political contexts. Few persons identify with only one identity marker. Understanding and acting upon these different roles and relationships constitutes a challenge for any actor working to promote and assist social, political, and economic change.

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## NPAS WORK FOR GENDER EQUALITY

NPA will strive to ensure that all persons can fully access and enjoy their rights without discrimination on the basis of their gender identity including women on an equal basis as men, enjoy the rights, opportunities, and actual possibilities to participate on their own terms in all fields of society: socially, economically, politically, and culturally. To ensure that our international work contributes to this, NPA will implement the measures described below.

### **Democracy - women's participation**

Women constitute 23% of the parliamentarians in the world, varying between 17% in the Pacific region to 28% in the Americas, and women Heads of State constitute 7% (UN Women & Inter-Parliamentary Union, June 2017). The global proportion of women elected to local government is still unknown, which constitutes a major knowledge gap.

It is impossible to tell the share of women in civil society organisations but we know that women are very active, at the same time as they face many barriers to participation. We also know that women's movements and organisations play a vital role in building power, in changing attitudes towards women's roles in society, and in increasing their influence on public debate and policy. Both women and men who defend rights or mobilise for social and political change face risks of harassment and intimidation; however, the risk is also gendered and women and other individuals on the basis of their gender identity, face specific threats because they challenge gender norms.

Violence against women and girls, and other forms of gender-based violence is one of the most systematic and widespread human rights violations and impedes women's participation in society. 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence (UN Women, Global Database on Violence against women, 2017).



Photo: Kimberly McCosker



### 3.1 IN THE NPA ORGANISATION

NPA aims, through recruitment and training, to develop a staff dedicated and prepared to apply a gender perspective in the work, and represent NPA's gender sensitive values whether off or on duty.

NPA has personnel policies and other tools to secure a gender sensitive staff, e.g. ethical guidelines for our staff members that include the prohibition of sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation. NPA will in our own organisation worldwide:

- Keep track of the male/female composition in NPA at all levels.
- Enhance women in management positions and promote gender balance.
- Provide for working conditions that suit the needs of women as well as men.
- Promote a working culture of respect; free from sexual harassment, avoid that power and entitlement create a culture of abuse.
- Create an inclusive, tolerant, and accepting environment welcoming the expression of individual gender identities and non-discrimination on a gendered basis for those that do not conform to a gender binary.
- Secure measures to identify sexual harassment and implement clear follow-up routines of whistle blowers.
- Eschew silent complicity and create an atmosphere conducive to discussion and internal debate on gender based discrimination, including violence.
- Ensure competence and awareness on gender issues and violence against women within the organisation. Make a special effort, to involve men in taking increased responsibility for strengthening the gender perspective of NPA.

### The Legal and Normative Framework

NPA's gender policy rests on international law and practice, as articulated in treaties and resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council. These include, but are not limited to:

- United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Covenants on Human Rights
- The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its General Recommendation 19 on Violence against Women
- UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace, and Security and its subsequent resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, and 2242 (until Nov 2017)
- The Conventions on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- Beijing Declaration & Platform of Action (1995)

To facilitate the implementation of these norms and initiatives, NPA benefits from the broad range of analyses and recommendations developed by international human rights organisations and institutions, women's organisations, and humanitarian organisations.



Photo: NTB Scanpix - AFP PHOTO / STEFANIE GLINSKI



## 3.2 IN PROGRAMME WORK

With a good understanding of gender relations we are better equipped to contribute to closing the gender gap in power and resources. Gender equality is instrumental in reaching our goal of contributing to the development of resilient societies before, during, and after armed conflict. In mine action, gender equality contributes to equality and inclusion in the communities where we work.

### 1) Analysis and practice:

- Programmes shall be based on strong gender sensitive contextual analysis, including a power analysis. The analysis should seek to understand gender roles and relations in each specific context relevant to the programme.
- Gender analyses will influence every stage of programme work: baselines and surveys, programme planning, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation.
- All programmes shall secure sex- and age-specific information and performance indicators are in place, in qualitative as well as quantitative terms.
- We will strive to uncover power relations and advocate for change in unequal power relations that, intentionally or unintentionally, harm women, men, boys, or girls or any persons on the basis of their gender identity.
- NPA will ensure that programmes to protect civilians against explosive weapons are gender sensitive and contribute to gender equality through all phases of programme work.

- Demining activities shall not be implemented in a manner that discriminates on the basis of the sex or gender of people living in or close to a contaminated area.
- In countries with armed conflict and post- conflict NPA will promote implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and its subsequent resolutions.

### Understanding context

NPA recognises the importance of understanding local conditions and cultures and respect for local organisation. However, cultures are not static, but continuously changing. Within one society there often exist many cultures, where the dominating is the culture of the groups holding power. Often oppressive customs, expressions, and behaviours, including forcing a binary view of gender, are explained and accepted as “culture”. NPA will never accept culture as an excuse for abuse and will support people and organisations who struggle for changes in traditions and practices that oppress and harm women, men, boys, or girls.



## Women, Peace and Security

The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was the first UN resolution to address the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women. The resolution was a milestone and has put women's rights on the agenda in relation to armed conflict, as well as the need for women's participation to achieve sustainable peace.

Research has found robust support for a relationship between gender inequality and internal armed conflict. Countries that display higher levels of gender inequality are more likely to become involved in civil conflict, the violence is likely to be more severe, and post conflict peace appears to be more fragile compared to countries where women have a higher status.

NPA's strategy for the implementation of Resolution 1325 is anchored in our partnership with local organisations in the country during or after an armed conflict. We support broader and more inclusive peace processes, encompassing civil society organisations, grass-root organisations, labour unions, and academia. These processes aim at making the peace process more inclusive, promote people-to-people understanding, and advocate for the inclusion of broader societal issues on the peace process agenda, including gender equality. It is crucial to respect the local interpretations, strategies, and priorities of our partner organisations to allow them to have the ownership of the process. NPA's task is to enable women to appropriate the spirit of 1325 in ways they see fit. Resolution 1325 also directly mentions mine action in "Emphasizing the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes take into account the special needs of women and girls" (UNSCR 1325, 2000). In order to optimise our results and be efficient and professional, it is key to understand how gender relations impact the particular risk, loss of opportunities, and hampering of development that might occur in mine-affected contexts due to gender inequalities.



Photo: Charles Lomodong

## 2) Participation:

- All programmes must identify gendered barriers to participation, decision-making, and control of resources and identify measures to address these.
- All programmes must ensure that women and any individual facing gendered discrimination have real influence and meaningful participation. In order to achieve this, we will find ways to secure dialogue with women and affected individuals as well as with men.
- All programmes must analyse and take into account time constraints which may be placed on women's time, due to their traditional domestic and caring responsibilities.
- NPA will find ways to engage men and women in the work for gender equality, starting from women's and men's own definition of problems, and their analysis and strategies.
- NPA will strive to ensure a gender balance in survey and mine clearance teams.
- NPA will support women's organising, as it is often key to change gender relations.

## 3) Dialogue and Organisational Development:

- NPA will engage in dialogue with all partners on gender equality policy and practice, respecting each partner's capacity, pace, and strategy for change.
- Gender equality will be included in organisational development support to partners based on the priorities and needs of each partner organisation.

## 4) Learning:

- NPA will seek to learn from partner's experience, knowledge, and ideas concerning political context, organisation, political influence, and gender. Many

- of NPA's partners are highly qualified in gender equality work. NPA will seek to utilise this competence to improve our own efforts and facilitate useful cooperation among partners, where feasible.
- When evaluating programme work, NPA will include questions with respect to gender differences in participation as well as gender differences in the impacts of our programme work.

### «Dialogue and Organizational Development»:

In organisational development, NPA's support to partners may include organisational capacities that may enhance gender equality, such as:

- knowledge and understanding of gender relations as power relations;
- capacity to analyse the different powers, and roles and responsibilities of men and women in society;
- capacity to formulate gender sensitive policies, planning, and monitoring capacity that differentiates needs and interests between women and men;
- capacity to mobilise women for their own interests or influence in society;
- capacity to recruit and include female members in male dominated organisations;
- capacity to identify measures needed to achieve gender equality in the organisation;
- capacity to recruit, develop and maintain female personnel;
- and leadership capacities of women



Photo: Charles Obel



### 3.3 IN POLICY, ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION WORK

NPA will always strive to enhance our work for gender equality in our policy, advocacy, and communication work.

- We will use experiences and examples of gender equality to advocate for change of laws, policies, and practices with the aim to create change that reaches beyond our programme work.
- We will contribute to participation of women and girls, and use dignified and gender-sensitive language when we advocate for change.
- We will use sex-disaggregated data whenever possible, including to show:
  - how the humanitarian consequences of explosive weapons may be different for women, men, girls and boys
  - how armed conflict and humanitarian crises affect and involve women and men, girls and boys differently
  - differences in women and men's participation and influence in democratisation processes
  - differences in women and men's access to resources.





Photo: Colin Bent



Photo: Norwegian People's Aid



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## IMPLEMENTATION

This policy guides NPA's work for gender equality. Our vision, commitments, and principles should be guiding for all NPA staff. We will work to implement this policy through:

- Committed resources to improve our work for gender equality and to fulfil the ambitions of this policy
- Incorporation in annual plans in Head Office (HO) and each country office
- Identification of needs, development of tools, and training of staff
- Dedicated time in HO to follow up on commitments and ensure sufficient support for implementation.

This is a living document and will be updated and revised based on our experience and external and internal changes.



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**This document was approved February 2018**