

Action for Conflict Resolution (ACR)



Tong Ping Area Near Suk Wewe.

Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

Towards a Gendered Organization

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ACRONYMS.

ACR
NNGO
RRC
SGBV.
WASH.

Action for Conflict Resolution
National Non-Governmental Organization,
Relief and Rehabilitation Commission.
Sexual Gender Based Violence.
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.

I. CONTEXT

Global Perspectives

In all development settings, there are persistent as well as emerging challenges that have distinct impacts on women and men and are either eroding or have the potential to erode gender equality

gains. These challenges include the impacts of climate change and disasters; the rise of protracted conflicts; increasing violent extremism; new forms of violence against women such as cyberbullying; discriminatory social norms, urbanization; continuing migration and displacement; and the challenges of the “Fourth Industrial Revolution” with emerging technologies that are impacting all economies and industries. In addition, demographic trends related to a growing ageing population and a large youth population in some regions have gender dimensions that must be addressed.

Despite progress, significant gender inequalities persist, depriving women of rights and opportunities and hampering global progress in all development settings. Political decision-making and governance continue¹ to be dominated by men, with women comprising fewer than 25 per cent of the world’s parliamentarians and 18.3 per cent of government ministers.

Why Should Gender Equality Matter?

Women and girls represent half of the world’s population and therefore also half of its potential. But, today gender inequality persists everywhere and stagnates social progress. Women continue to be underrepresented at all levels of political leadership. Across the globe, women and girls perform a disproportionate share of unpaid domestic work.

Inequalities faced by girls can begin right at birth and follow them all their lives. In some countries, girls are deprived of access to health care or proper nutrition, leading to a higher mortality rate.

Regardless of where you live in, gender equality is a fundamental human right. Advancing gender equality is critical to all areas of a healthy society, from reducing poverty to promoting the health, education, protection and the well-being of girls and boys.²

Gender Inequality in South Sudan.

The society of South Sudan is a patriarchal one that keeps strict gender norms and rigid gender roles in many of its cultures. Disputes on marriage, property, and inheritance are often judged according to customary laws at the expense of women’s rights. Harmonization of customary laws with statutory ones is a major issue. Women’s low status and child marriages cause the high Maternal Mortality Rate in South Sudan, which is one of the highest in the world. Moreover, a lack of medical personnel and facilities, and gender-based discrimination limit women’s access to medical treatment. Gender-based violence is a serious issue in South Sudan. Women and children are targeted for sexual assaults and abduction during cattle raiding as well other armed conflicts.

In South Sudan, women’s political participation and economic participation are relatively strong. Women account for 29% of the National Assembly members and is likely to increase following adoption of 35% benchmark as contained in the current national laws. Nonetheless, their

¹ UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018- page, 2

² www.un.org/sustainabledevelopmentgoals, Goal 5

decision-making power is still limited. The majority of women are engaged in vulnerable employment or engaged in unpaid work.³

South Sudan has the world's highest maternal mortality rate, as well as one of the world's highest rates of child marriage, with more than half of girls marrying under age 18. The ongoing conflict, has exacerbated the issue of SGBV, Women and girls who have experienced SGBV during the conflict are impacted by psychological trauma, furthermore, women and girls in South Sudan are disadvantaged via customary law, and the perpetuation of certain cultural traditions. The frequent application of customary law also can prevent women from accessing more formal systems of justice and can obstruct their right to inheritances as well as in owning land and property. Commonplace forms of SGBV in South Sudan include domestic violence, psychological/ emotional abuse, abduction of women and children during cattle raids, rape and sexual assault, as well as the practice of giving a girl child in compensation for a crime or a wrongdoing committed by her family.⁴

These facts justify the need for this strategy, it is clear that gender equality is a prerequisite for an organization like ACR that is seeking to make a meaningful contribution in society. Gender equality has to form every aspect of the organizations life and culture. This include during, project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects and programs. The gender concept not only should surface in documents and policies that are at most shelved but must practically be translated into action ensuring that there is equal participation of women, men boys and girls in every stage and level of activity the organization commits itself into.

To ensure that gender equality agenda is implemented across the organization, ACR has decided to pursue a gender journey in its organizational culture and activities by developing this strategy to guide its actions.

II. ABOUT ACR.

ACR was formed in 2014, by concerned South Sudanese citizens to mitigate violent conflicts and promote peaceful co-existence amongst divided communities at all levels of society and respond to the dire social and humanitarians needs of conflict affected populations in South Sudan

ACR is a legally registered National Non-Governmental Organization (NNGO) by the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission RRC under registration no **236**.

As a non-political organization, ACR works to bridge the gaps between the government and grassroots communities, in order to enable a durable peace in South Sudan and the region. It believes in collaborating with other stakeholders to enhance peaceful co-existence among the communities of South Sudan regardless of age, gender, and ethnicity. ACR currently work in Unity State, however as needs dictates it will expand its operations to other states of South Sudan.

³ Country Gender Profile, The Republic of South Sudan, Final Report, by Japan International Cooperation Agency- JICA March 2017.

⁴ UNDP South Sudan, Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Strategy 2016-2017

Our work is informed and guided by our beliefs and collaborative approach, we value involvement of stakeholders at state and local community-level decision making in order to build a sustainable peaceful society in South Sudan. We put emphasis on bottom up approach to solve community problems to ensure peaceful co-existence among warring parties

ACR seeks to address justice issues affecting communities; we'll do this through advocacy with other likeminded partners. We'll work closely with law practitioners to promote human rights, and involve women, children, and law enforcement in projects where it is required.

VISION

A peaceful, healthy, accountable and prosperous community based on justice, equality and respect for human rights

MISSION

Deepening peace building, mitigating conflict and advocate along with partners for sustainable development through community engagement.

OUR VALUES

Trust between people is a critical foundation for lasting peace.

Peace is about resolving conflict without violence.

Leadership: We listen to and learn from our community. We address the root causes of community problems and mobilize resources for the community's priorities.

Equity: We strive for equity and we focus primarily, but not exclusively, on people who are vulnerable in the community.

Inclusiveness: We practice and champion inclusiveness in our community. We honor diverse strengths, needs, voices, and backgrounds of all members of our community.

Accountability: We serve as stewards for our community investments and honor the charitable intentions of our donors to meet current and future community needs. We hold ourselves to the highest standards of ethics, integrity, service, and fiduciary responsibility.

Respect for local culture and belief in the power of local capacities, ideas, and solutions.

Participation is a key as active interaction transforms relationships

III. THEMATIC PRIORITIES.

ACR strives to pursue implementation of the following thematic priorities aligned with the vision and mission of the organization.

- i. Peace Building and Conflict Transformation.
- ii. General Protection
- iii. Education
- iv. Food Security and Livelihoods
- v. WASH.
- vi. Governance and Human Rights.

Allowing certain things to flow will be a great idea

iv. THE NEED FOR GENDER STRATEGY.

Recent institutional and donor assessment indicated that there is a gap in gender equality in almost all levels of the organization including at program delivery levels. As such ACR as a peacebuilding and human right organization cannot afford to lag behind this key aspect if it is to be of relevance to all its beneficiaries. The need to mainstream gender in all its work becomes paramount.

Objective(s) of the strategy

- i. To guide and improve programming and results on gender equality within ACR's work
- ii. To enable ACR to promote gender equality and the human rights of all individuals, especially the marginalized women, men, boys and girls in all its project activities.
- iii. To establish institutional gender mainstreaming throughout all units and thematic priorities.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.

The conceptual basis for the Gender Equality Strategy is that of both gender mainstreaming and gender equality-targeted approaches. This dual approach is set out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and is also taken in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which gender is mainstreamed throughout all the Sustainable Development Goals.

“A gender perspective is 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*⁵.

This assessment process is the responsibility of all staff, whatever their function and whatever their grade. In this context, gender mainstreaming plays an essential role in securing the commitment, funding, skills and programmes needed to initiate, support and, where appropriate, adapt or scale up processes of change towards the realization of gender equality

In the Beijing declaration platform for action, it is stated that; *“Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis may be made of their effects on women and men. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 15 September 1995 Mainstreaming”*⁶

PURPOSE AND RATIONALE.

The ongoing crisis, and the fragility of the current peace agreement, makes the situation for women and girls in South Sudan extremely precarious. This strategy is therefore designed to serve as a roadmap for ACR in planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring ensuring that gender is mainstreamed in all these important aspects organizational practice.

Definitions;

*Gender equality means that all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles or prejudice. Women and men have the right to equal opportunities in human resources management processes, including recruitment and promotion, and the right to work in environments that are free from bias, discrimination and sexual harassment*⁷.

Gender Equality Situation in ACR.

Action for Conflict Resolution is operating between nascent and growing organization. It implements limited number of projects with very few number of staff at senior management and at the field level. Despite its scope in terms of structure and operations, the consultant has observed high interest and will for gender equality and gender mainstreaming at the mid-level staff equally at the senior management and have hired service of a consultant to develop Gender

⁵ Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2”

⁶ Beijing declaration platform for action 1995

⁷ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Strategy for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment 2018-2021.

Mainstreaming Strategy to guide its future growth. With such good intentions, ACR is determined to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed in all activities.

Through support of the consultant, an institutional assessment was recently carried out institutional to determine the levels of progress at different aspects of the organization in its quest for gender equality. The following aspects were considered 1: technical capacity, 2. Organizational Culture, 3. Accountability and 4. Political will.

Technical Capacity measures 6 different capacity placement which included presence of a person responsible for gender in the organization, whether staff have been trained on gender awareness, program planning and implementation whether it was that sensitive and inclusive, and whether gender analysis is part of program planning, implementation and evaluation procedures. The rating shows ACR is moving in the right direction in this aspect of gender capacity and mainstreaming, but there remains more work to be done.

Organizational Culture; This was meant to assess whether gender equality is being taken seriously and discussed openly by both men and women about integrity, refutation and competence in gender issues in the organization, improvement of the working condition towards women, staff commitment to advancement of gender equality and whether the institution has made any significant progress in mainstreaming gender in all operations and programs. In this regard, the assessment revealed some level of progress, this might have been related to the interest shown at the level of programming where at least all project documents carry gender disaggregated data, still this have to be verified through the monitoring and activity reports for the various activities held to ensure that those data was actually implemented as it required.

Accountability; This section was meant to determine the aspect of ensuring that data collected during project /programme implementation are disaggregated by gender and that gender impact is monitored and evaluated though the component of evaluation will not be ascertained at this stage. The section also assesses the level of equal participation and benefits to men, women, girls and boys in projects and whether or not gender awareness is included in their job descriptions or job performance criteria. The organization also scored fairly good here, as stated in the preceding section earlier, the project documents, the log frames of the finished and ongoing projects at least indicate disaggregation of this data in those documents which is one step forward. But framework for monitoring and reporting that this is always realized during implementation need to be set up.

Political will; political will looks at the integration of gender equality in programs and project to establish whether it is mandated and that there is existing written policy that affirms commitment to gender equality, other aspects assessed here include senior management support and promotion of gender equality and whether or not there has been increase in the representation of women in senior positions. Among all the aspects assessed, this section has received high rating among other three. The staff sees the organization as achieving a lot in this area when it comes to political will and commitment to make gender equality practical in the entire organization however translating this commitment and will into practical terms have to be followed up by establishment of some frameworks and policy statement that isn't existing. There is no policy statement affirming this commitment at this stage.

v. GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN ACR

1) Establishing a support structure

One of the most important principles behind gender mainstreaming is that all staff members are individually responsible for its implementation in their respective field of activity and that overall responsibility lies with an organization's senior management team. However, practical experience shows that establishing a gender mainstreaming support structure is a critical factor for the successful and sustainable implementation of gender mainstreaming. The introduction of gender mainstreaming is a long-term process of organizational change that needs to be driven by a central team in order to maintain momentum. Furthermore, gender mainstreaming requires both methodological skills and specialist gender expertise, which all staff members in ACR do not necessarily have at the moment.

A gender mainstreaming support structure supervises the introduction of gender mainstreaming and supports its implementation in the long term.

To ensure that a gender mainstreaming support structure fulfil its role and contribute to the successful actualization of gender mainstreaming, it is vital that the exact tasks that the structure is to fulfill are clearly defined. Likewise, resources and competencies need to be adjusted to suit the defined tasks. In keeping with the top-down principle of gender mainstreaming, the management is responsible for providing the conditions needed for the gender mainstreaming • support structure to successfully fulfil its tasks.

Given the situation ACR finds itself in, training is required for the entire staff for the staff to acquire set of skills that allows them implement this strategy. They individually should be able to implement gender equality aspects in their own fields also by doing the following,

- Raising awareness,
- Communicating gender mainstreaming,
- Networking;
- Conceptual tasks, e.g. the development of appropriate gender mainstreaming methods and tools;
- Creating a gender equality competence development plan.

A selected number of staff both at senior management and the field should be organized in a committee or as focal persons to coordinate and monitor gender mainstreaming activities in ACR.

2) Developing gender equality competence

The implementation of gender mainstreaming requires not only accountability, but also methodological knowledge and specialist expertise. Giving all staff members the task of implementing gender mainstreaming must go hand in hand with building their gender equality competence; this will ensure that they are capable of fulfilling the tasks assigned to them. The sustainable development of skills also includes measures to strengthen commitment so that the knowledge and skills learned in theory are actually put into practice.

Effects of gender equality training can fade quickly if they are delivered only as a one-off session or if they are the only measure for introducing gender mainstreaming. In order to support the sustainable implementation of gender mainstreaming, it is advisable to plan and develop the requisite gender equality competencies in a systematic fashion. For this purpose, competence development should be closely synchronized with the overall gender mainstreaming strategy and adapted to the corresponding skill requirements; it should be systematically planned with long-term considerations.

It is important to note that developing gender equality competence is not only about raising awareness but should aim to develop methodological expertise and specialist knowledge and to strengthen commitment. Gender equality competence comprises commitment, methodological expertise and specialist knowledge.

Commitment here refers to the recognition of gender equality as the aim of both the organization and of one's own work; it means taking responsibility for implementation of gender mainstreaming within one's own area of operations.

Methodological skills imply the ability to implement gender mainstreaming using the appropriate *methods and tools*. It also includes the ability to identify and procure the required gender-disaggregated data and to utilize these data in one's own work.

Specialist knowledge comprises both the theoretical understanding of gender as a social construct and an in-depth knowledge of gender relations as social structures. It also covers knowledge of empirical facts about gender aspects within the organization's policy area and sphere of activities as well as the ability to correctly classify and interpret *gender-disaggregated facts and data*.

3) Establishing a gender information management system

Empirical facts about gender dimensions in an organization's specific policy area and fields of activity and gender-disaggregated data are both vital prerequisites to ensure a sound basis for the implementation of gender mainstreaming. The targeted collection and preparation of informative literature can make it easier for staff members to implement gender mainstreaming. Good information management ensures that the necessary facts and data are readily available to the right person at the right time. It also forms a solid foundation for supporting the development of gender equality competence.

When introducing gender mainstreaming, it is important to consider what information (e.g. statistics, research results, practical examples, etc.) will be needed to ensure a sound basis for implementation. A gender information management system helps to collect, process and distribute this information in an effective way.

What is important here is the competent and continuous maintenance of the information management system. Guaranteeing the technical quality of content and ensuring regular updates may be a task that is assigned to the *gender mainstreaming support structure*.

When setting up a gender information management system, it is important to consider which materials are to be collected and how these can best be edited and systematically distributed in order to actively support staff members during the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

a. Collecting and supplying information

This will include but not limited to gender-disaggregated data, results on gender aspects in the respective themes of activity, and experience obtained from projects. Attendance, participation and women led activities should be another source of data for assessing gender mainstreaming performance in the organization. During this process, subjects such as disability and other categories of social discrimination should also be taken into account.

b. Distributing information

During the introduction of gender mainstreaming, it can be particularly useful not only to ensure that relevant materials are readily available but also to actively distribute these among staff members. This can be achieved, for example, through newsletters or mailing lists. This distribution of information increases awareness of the topic, offers staff members additional support and helps communicate which information is important and available.

4) Promote Equal Opportunities within organization's personnel

The gender mainstreaming strategy aims to change an organization's orientation and modes of operation in such a way that the results and effects of the organization's activities support the advancement of gender equality in all the fields of interventions. However, promoting equal opportunities within an organization and its personnel is not least a question of internal and external credibility.

ACR as a public institution must therefore take action in order to ensure equal opportunities among personnel forms part of the core organizational culture. The following aspects are key for ensuring equal opportunities among personnel.

a. Gender balance in staffing patterns and a fair representation of women in managerial positions

The current staff structure of ACR is completely over 95% men with probably women scoring the remaining. Instruments such as equal opportunities plan allow for a systematic approach to improving the gender balance in staffing patterns and monitoring the advancement of equal opportunities within an organization. An equal opportunity plan usually consists of these three parts:

- Analysis of the current situation within the organization differentiated by gender (e.g. positions, fields of work, salaries, participation in professional training programmes etc.);
- Targets (e.g. quotas);
- Planned measures for achieving the targets (e.g. mentoring programmes).

Regular monitoring of progress made and target achievement will be a crucial element of equal opportunities plans. Setting target quotas and regularly monitoring their achievement can be useful. system of incentives for the promotion of equal opportunities may help to increase efforts and strengthen commitment.

b. Gender-sensitive staff recruitment and performance appraisals

To improve the balance of women and men within ACR, it is important to provide fair procedures for staff recruitment as well as a performance assessment scheme that is not awed by (gender) biases. The procedures of staff recruitment and the criteria of performance assessment must therefore be revised to take into account equality; senior managers and human resources staff alike should be sensitized to gender and other biases.

c. Equal pay for equal or comparable work performed by women and men

The undervaluing of women's work is one of the main causes of the gender pay gap in the contemporary world. Due to gender stereotypes existing almost everywhere, women's and men's work is often valued differently, and women thus earn less than men for doing jobs that could also be valued equally. For instance, in a situation where women and men are equally qualified, more value is attributed to responsibility for capital or technology than to responsibility for people.

d. Better reconciliation of work and family for women and men

Facilitating the reconciliation of work and family plays a key role in improving the gender balance in staffing patterns. A better work-life balance also helps to increase staff motivation. There are many ways in which an organization can promote a better work-life balance for its personnel. These include flexible working arrangements, provision of child-care, temporary leave as well as supporting the return to work. It should also be noted here that provision of care not only includes childcare.

An equal share of care work among women and men is both a prerequisite for gender equality and an equality objective in its own right; however, activities to improve the reconciliation of work and family often focus only on women. Particular attention should therefore be paid to addressing the needs of male staff as well.

e. [Fostering a gender-sensitive organizational culture.](#)

Promoting equal opportunities within an organization also means creating an organizational culture that is gender sensitive. Organizational culture refers to the collective behavior and attitudes shaped by a set of tacit values, beliefs and visions. It determines how individuals are expected to behave and how both groups and individuals communicate and interact with each other. Tackling organizational culture is not only a crucial element in implementing organizational change as part of gender mainstreaming, but also for providing a respectful and empowering atmosphere in the workplace, free from any form of harassment. This includes eradicating behavior like sexist jokes and derogatory comments as well as establishing procedures for preventing and dealing with sexual harassment in the workplace.

5) [Communicating gender mainstreaming](#)

As a general principle, communication plays a major role in processes of organizational change. Good communication strengthens staff commitment, creates accountability and helps prevent inefficiency during implementation. Conversely, a lack of communication or contradictory information can cause resistance. It is therefore advisable to plan a communications strategy for introducing gender mainstreaming that creates transparency, raises awareness and strengthens commitment within the organization.

A communications strategy to support the introduction of gender mainstreaming primarily refers to internal communication. However, external communication is also a key aspect in terms of making gender equality part of an organization's identity and culture and establishing credibility.

a. [Internal communication](#)

The aim of a communicating gender mainstreaming is not simply to communicate the relevant tasks and demands to the staff involved. Transparency during this entire process — regarding the reasons for it, its aims and the planned activities — also serves to create greater awareness and strengthen commitment. To ensure good communication and transparency, it is necessary to have a clear *concept of gender mainstreaming* and to pursue a stringent *strategy*.

The manner in which an information is communicated gives signals about how seriously a topic is being taken. Not only what, but also how something is communicated, can thus play a key role within the organization. Therefore, when introducing gender mainstreaming, it is advisable to use the channels and forms of communication customarily available within the organization. These may be formal channels such as standing instructions and internal newsletters or may involve informal practices such as participation of senior managers in certain working sessions or holding speeches at events. It may be particularly helpful to make gender mainstreaming a regular item on the agenda of team meetings. Another useful part of the communication strategy

may be to enable networking among staff members involved in the process and to encourage regular face-to-face contact with *facilitators*.

Using new forms of communication within the organization can serve to generate extra attention for the issue. However, it may also unintentionally lead to reinforcing the perception of gender mainstreaming as a ‘special task. When it comes to introducing gender mainstreaming, innovative forms of communication should be used as an addition to, not a replacement for, regular communication channels.

b. External communication

A communications strategy that also makes gender equality a visible part of an organization’s external identity and self-portrayal clearly emphasizes the importance of this issue for both the organization’s personnel and their respective target group audience. This means explicitly addressing gender equality as one of the organization’s main objectives and clearly highlighting this commitment, for example on the organization’s website or in its publications.

An important signal effect is to review and adjust all of the organization’s public relations activities to ensure the use of gender-sensitive language and to avoid gender stereotypes in images and photos; the impact of this is not to be underestimated. It can also be a good idea to deliver appropriate training to staff members who are responsible for public relations work and to distribute guidelines on gender-sensitive language to all personnel at the organization.

Monitoring, Evaluation.

Systematic monitoring of the gender mainstreaming implementation process will strengthen the organization’s *accountability* and also ensures that the initiated process does not get lost in day-to-day business. Furthermore, the regular review of progress forms a basis for systematic process management. Monitoring helps the organization to establish evidence of how much progress has been made in the process, whether reinforced efforts or new priorities are needed, and whether adjustments should be made to the strategy, for example due to changes in external conditions.

Checking should be done at regular intervals whether, or to what degree, the activities outlined in the *working plan* have been implemented and whether predefined milestones have been reached. This may be done using regular reporting, surveys or other methods. It is important to explicitly set out beforehand — i.e. during the preparation of work plans how and when the implementation of planned activities and the achievement of predefined milestones is to be ascertained and analyzed, and who is responsible for this.

The data gathered can be used to evaluate the procedure’s progress, analyze whether or not the chosen strategy will be successful, and consider how the strategy should be adjusted. This evaluation can, for example, be carried out using regular review meetings. It may also be advisable to commission an external evaluation in order to obtain an in-depth process analysis. This would consider which particular problems and barriers exist, the probable causes for these and what possible solutions might exist.

Monitoring may be included as a task for the *gender main streaming support structure*. The support structure should also be integrated into steering the process of change. However, responsibility for steering the process and the related decision-making procedure still ultimately lies with the executive staff.