

MERCY HANDS

GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

Introduction

The Gender Equality Policy defines Mercy Hands' (MH) explicit commitments to support gender equality. It is written for the benefit of all MH staff and volunteers and sets out mechanisms and minimum common standards for both internal management and employee conduct within the organization, and the conduct of staff and volunteers towards beneficiaries and other external parties.

MH is an equal opportunity employer. It is publicly opposed to any form of discrimination on the grounds of disability, gender, marital or parental status, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religious belief and sexual orientation in all aspects of its work. It promotes and values the diversity of its staff and partners, and embraces this principle in its program and organizational culture.

The Gender Equality Policy builds on other MH policies and commitments, strives to make programming efforts more effective and to give a more explicit focus on the role that the promotion of gender equality has on poverty reduction. It draws on recent developments in the gender equality policies of development organizations working on poverty reduction and the promotion of social justice and seeks to increase accountability.

Core statements

Through this policy, MH seeks to promote the equal realization of dignity and human rights for girls, women, boys and men as a key factor in the elimination of poverty and injustice. Specifically, this policy is intended to improve the explicit incorporation of gender into programmatic and organizational practices.

Mercy Hands commits to:

- The promotion of gender equality in line with internationally recognized human rights norms.
- Work to reduce structural barriers to the promotion of gender equality, including creating policies designed to address issues including gender based violence and sexual based violence and abuse.
- Develop policies designed to empower women and girls as a route toward ending poverty, conflict, human suffering and gender inequality.
- Promote policies that encourage commitments by men and boys to work together to

- end gender inequality.
- Create programs which seek to minimize potential risks and harm to women and men, girls and boys.
 - Work closely with partner organizations, government bodies and local communities to develop more effective gender policies.
 - Actively monitor and evaluate programs based on their impact on reducing gender inequality and seek to learn from fellow organizations about successful strategies.
 - Hold ourselves and others accountable to gender equality standards.
 - Ensure that key organizational policies, systems and practices including but not limited to budgeting, human resource recruitment, training and management, and decision making support women's rights and gender equality.
 - Apply these commitments across MH operations and use appropriate gender monitoring information tools to ensure best practices are followed.

Procedures

All MH staff and volunteers are required to meet the following standards as part of our commitment to end poverty and to protect the dignity of all people.

1. Key organizational policy, planning and programs will:
 - Incorporate gender analysis into policy planning.
 - Record data on the gender of beneficiaries and follow up on instances of gender imbalance where necessary.
 - Ensure budgets include sufficient resources to meet gender equality target and seek to anticipate extra costs associated with overcoming structural constraints.
2. Human Resources policies and practices will seek to ensure that internal practices do not discriminate along gender lines
 - All job openings should be advertised to all candidates regardless of gender (except when an employee's gender is an essential component of the role).
 - All staff should have equal opportunity for advancement within MH regardless of gender.
 - Management should encourage a diversity of voices to be heard and take steps to ensure that both male and female staff are empowered to take extra responsibility.
 - All staff should commit to creating an inclusive and diverse working environment and take responsibility for identifying and reporting instances of harassment.
3. MH executive and senior management should monitor gender diversity of the staff and volunteers and share information about gender diversity when requested by donors, beneficiaries and staff.
4. Each MH staff member and volunteer should be responsible for ensuring that gender equality rules and principles are adhered to and should actively work to make MH a tolerant and welcoming environment for everyone.