

Atlas Alliance gender equality policy

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1. Purpose of this policy and manual

The Atlas Alliance is committed to understanding and addressing the different situations that arise when girls, boys, women and men with disabilities are denied their rights and discriminated against. This policy aims to rejuvenate and refocus the work in this area within the Atlas Alliance and to ensure a systematic approach across the alliance. To do this it is necessary to assess all barriers to full participation through a gender lens and address the issues that arise from such an analysis.

The purpose of this policy is therefore to ensure that the Atlas Alliance, through the projects it supports, contributes to interventions that promote a fair treatment of girls, boys, women and men, and that address inequalities that leads to discrimination based on gender.

In order to do this it is necessary to focus efforts on empowering girls and women to claim their rights, on making gender relations between men and women fairer as well as transforming discriminatory institutional structures and legislation. This policy will serve as the common platform for such efforts for the Atlas Alliance's initiatives.

The policy is a tool for the Atlas Alliance secretariat and Atlas Alliance organisations. It provides guidance on how to conduct a gender analysis, and identify appropriate interventions. In addition, it includes lists of questions to support the organisations and their partners in working towards full gender equality.

In early 2018, a plan of action will be developed based on this policy, to ensure that it is followed-up and that the Atlas Alliance delivers on gender equality.

2. Gender, gender equality and gender equity

'Gender equality require equal enjoyment by girls, boys, women and men of socially-valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards'¹

Gender refers to the culturally specific set of characteristics that identifies the social behavior of women and men. It speaks to the social roles men and women perform and to the relationship between men and women. Gender relations are power relations and gender roles are spaces of continuous negotiations, struggles and contestations for control over one's body and life, access to knowledge and resources and having a voice.

Gender is not the same as sex, which refers to the biological differences between women and men. The understanding and enactment of what it means to be female and male is historically specific and changes over time. Women's movements, war and prolonged conflicts, technological advances and government policies have had

¹ <http://web.unfpa.org/gender/resources3.htm#2>

major influences on gender relations and the understanding of gender in different societies.

Gender equality refers to equal access to social goods, services and resources and equal opportunities in all spheres of life for both girls, boys, women and men. However, giving the same opportunities to girls, boys, women and men, does not automatically ensure equal outcomes or gender equality. To bring about true equality, it is not necessarily sufficient to be provided with the same chances in life. Girls, boys, women and men have different needs and experiences, and these differences must be accommodated.

Gender equity is the process where fairness is shown as to how girls, boys, women and men are treated. The different life experiences and needs of girls, boys, women and men are taken into consideration and compensation is made for girls and women's historical and social disadvantages. This also means that in certain contexts and situations, compensation will be given to boys and men if they are disadvantaged. Overall, the lower social status given to girls and women in most societies constitutes a major disadvantage and provisions should be made to redress this inequality before they can take advantage of the opportunities provided. Gender equity serves to level the playing field.

Full gender equality is a human right and empowering women and girls is a goal in itself, as well as an indispensable tool for advancing development and reducing poverty.

3. The rationale for the policy

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (2007) emphasizes gender equality and women's rights as a central concern². Article 6 of the convention recognizes that women and girls with disabilities face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. In addition, that women, girls, men and boys have differentiated experiences of disability based on their gender and the place and status they have in their societies.

Women and girls with disabilities are often amongst the most marginalized and excluded in a society. There is today a substantial difference both between women with and without disabilities as well as gendered differences between people with disabilities.

A recent United Nations report³ confirms this. It shows that the prevalence of disabilities among women is higher than among men. Poor maternal health care is one reason why more women have an impairment compared to men. Another reason is women's longer life expectancy.

² This builds on CEDAW (1980), Beijing Platform (1995) and numerous other UN Conventions and resolutions specifically addressing women's rights.

³ Report of the Secretary-General. 2017. *Situation of women and girls with disabilities and the Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto A/72/227*
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/news/dspd/women-and-girls-with-disabilities-crpd.html>
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In the area of education, girls with disabilities have a higher risk of not going to school or dropping out of school early. Only 41.7 % of girls with disabilities complete primary school compared with 50.6% of boys with disabilities and 52.9% of girls without disabilities. This may be due to lack of reasonable accommodation and the lack of awareness amongst parents, teachers and education authorities on the worth of educating children with disabilities and the possibilities of including them in schooling.

Women with disabilities often engage in non-income generating domestic activities. This puts them at high risk of living in poverty. Women with disabilities have a 19.6% employment rate compared with 52.8% men with disabilities and 29.9% of women without disabilities. Women with disabilities pursuing self-employment also lack access to credit and other productive resources.

Another key area is sexual and reproductive health and rights. Women with disabilities of reproductive age (15-49) are at higher risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes than women without disabilities. However, because of inaccessibility and stereotyping, women and girls with disability are confronted with barriers to sexual and reproductive health services and information on comprehensive sex education.

Women with disabilities are also more likely to have negative health indicators, such as mental stress, obesity and asthma, and have less emotional support compared to women without disabilities.

Finally, on a global level, women are more likely to experience physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence than men are. For women and girls with disabilities, gender based violence is disproportionately higher and in unique forms. Three issues stand out:

1. Women and girls with disabilities experience domestic violence at twice the rate of other women and girls;
2. Women and girls with disabilities experience disability based violence such as isolation, violence in institutions and withholding of medication and mobility, vision and hearing aids;
3. Women and girls with disabilities are at higher risk of experiencing medical treatments and reproductive health procedures without their consent compared to women and girls without disabilities.

4. A rights based approach to full gender equality

Gender mainstreaming is an approach and method often used by development organisations and governments to achieve gender equality. It highlights the situation, conditions and opportunities of disabled girls, boys, women and men. It involves considering their different needs and situations in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all projects and interventions. To achieve gender equality, barriers for exclusion and discrimination must be identified and addressed. Measures addressing multiple discrimination should be included.

Mainstreaming involves ensuring that a gender perspective is central to all activities: in policy development, research, advocacy/dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programs and projects.

At programmatic level, the goal of gender equality is integrated into project cycles from the design stage to the monitoring and evaluation stages. It continues throughout the life of a project or program. At organisational level, achieving gender equality requires an open review of existing (or lacking) policies and of practices on gender equality in how the organisation is set up and run.

The Atlas Alliance will use gender mainstreaming as an approach to work on gender equality issues in all its interventions. To apply gender mainstreaming in the project cycle, a gender analysis must be an essential part of a context/situation analysis before any project is designed, developed and implemented. Any project planning process or engagement with new partners by the Atlas Alliance must always begin by analyzing barriers to inclusion of persons with disability and gender based discrimination.

5. Gender analysis

The Atlas Alliance organisations are responsible for ensuring that all their projects have a gender analysis, identified methods and identified areas of intervention.

A gender analysis should focus on:

- How to achieve gender equal society?
- What are the barriers to achieving this?
- How can we initially reduce and eventually remove these barriers and ensure non-discrimination between the sexes and between the disabled and non-disabled?
- Do women/girls and men/boys with disability face similar or different kinds of discrimination?
- What measures are needed to overcome multiple discrimination?
- Are positive measures targeting women/girls with disabilities needed to change discriminatory structures and systems?

A gender analysis recognizes that every project situation is unique. No individual, family, community or country have the same set of resources to manage the same people, in the same timeframe or with the same constraints. Ideally, a gender analysis should be conducted in the initial stages of the project cycle, but it can also be conducted at any other stage of the project cycle if necessary.

The Atlas Alliance organisations and their partners should recognize that women and men, girls and boys:

- Have different degrees of power and status in society;
- Have different legal and traditional rights;
- Have different control of and access to different resources;
- Have different jobs within the household;
- Allocate their time differently;
- Possess different priorities and goals;

- Are at different risk of experiencing violence, including sexual violence;
- Have different health needs, specifically reproductive health.

As such, a gender analysis throughout the project cycle should take into account:

- Are DPOs consulted throughout the project cycle and are both men and women represented in the DPO? Is there a separate women's wing and are they able to influence the project?
- Activities: Who does what?
- Access and control: Who has what and makes decisions about it?
 - Private resources: Who has what? Who has access to resources and who controls the resources and its use?
 - Public resources: How are they distributed? Who gets what?
 - Benefits: What religious/cultural rules and laws, and political policies influence men's and women's rights of access and control to public and private resources?
- What measures are needed for equal inclusion of disabled women/girls in their societies? Are they similar to or different from measures to include disabled men/boys?
- Are disabled women's/girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights sufficiently cared for in their societies, including sexual education?
- Are disabled women and men subject to violence or at risk of violence? Is this of institutional character? Is there a lack of legislation or lack of access to justice?

For the Atlas Alliance, such an analysis shall be conducted before new framework funding applications in each of the four target countries (Nepal, Uganda, Zambia and Malawi), as well as every time a new program or project is developed. The analysis should serve as a guide for project planning and implementation as well as provide a baseline for reporting.

6. Relevant questions to consider when assessing gender equality concerns

This section lists a set of questions that can help guide the Norwegian Atlas organisations and their partners in mainstreaming gender in their projects. The section has three parts looking at 1) documents, 2) organisations, and 3) projects.

1) Issues to consider when assessing documents: Project documents, proposals, reports, results frameworks, policies and other relevant documents

- Do project documents use gender sensitive language? Words like people, population, and beneficiaries often hide the fact that girls, boys, women's and men's needs are different.
- Does the context analysis have gender perspective incorporated?
- Does the gender analysis include an analysis of barriers for the realisation of the rights of women, girls, boys and men with disabilities?

- Does the results framework include specific targets and indicators on gender (and equality)?
- Is data disaggregated for disabled and non-disabled as well as for women, girls, men and boys? Sex and age disaggregated data is crucial to address gender inequalities.
- Is there an analysis of the division of power between the sexes and between the disabled and non-disabled?
- Does the project budget allocate funds specifically targeting gender issues (for example within the decision power of a women's wing)?
- Do objectives and expected results include gender equality?
- Are the process and result indicators (both quantitative and qualitative) gender sensitive?
- Do the narrative and financial reports include gender issues?
- Do ToRs for reviews, procurements, consultancy teams etc. include a focus on gender issues?

2) Issues to consider when assessing projects: Design, planning, implementation and monitoring and reporting.

- Are key activities in the project relevant for both women and men?
- Does the project have targeted activities that strengthen the position of girls and women?
- Are men's and women's priorities and needs addressed in a fair and equal way?
- Do participants' lists show equal participation of men and women?
- How are women and girls with disabilities included in the project?
- Are there measures specifically targeting women and girls with disability? Do they include one or more of the following issues – control over one's body, advocacy for women and girls with disability, access to resources (including land and non-formal work), inclusive education, access to health services, including reproductive health?
- Does the project include the different experiences and needs of men and women? For example:
 - Do men and women, boys and girls have the same rights (formal legislation as well as realization of rights)?
 - Do men and women have equal access to and control over resources, services and opportunities (e.g. land, property, education, health, communication services etc.)?
 - Are women and men affected differently by environmental and climate change conditions and factors?
- Are there barriers to participation created by formal or informal division of labor (e.g. within the household, community, workplace)? Does the project propose measures to overcome the identified barriers?
- Do both men and women take part in decision-making processes concerning the planning, implementation and monitoring of the project?
- Is gender issues discussed in meetings organized by the project?

3) Issues to consider when assessing organisations: What are we looking for to ensure that an organisation is gender sensitive?

- Do men and women have fair and equal opportunities to participate in and contribute to the organisation including decision-making?
 - Is there an equal division of roles and power between men and women in decision-making structures in the organisation?
 - Are the different positions divided equally between men and women (administrative posts, technical positions, management posts, etc.)?
- Does the organisation have a separate women's wing?
- Does the organisation have both male and female staff? What is the ratio?
- Does the Board (or other decision-making bodies) have both male and female members? What is the ratio?
- Are there adequate financial and human resources allocated to gender equality? Has the staff been trained on gender issues and equality?
- Does the organisation have sufficient capacity on gender issues (staff, organisational structure and guidelines/manuals)? If not, how is this gap addressed?
- Do women and men state that they consider the organisation to be gender equal (that the voices and opinions of both men and women are heard, etc.)?
- Is the organisation actively engaging with women's organisations or networks? Local women's organisations may possess crucial information on gender relations, cultural values and social norms, which could influence the program.

7. Resources

Short on barriers:

In line with the CRPD, barriers for inclusion of disabled women/girls and men/boys can be grouped into four categories:

- *Physical or environmental barriers* — buildings, facilities, paths, water pumps, transport, etc.
- *Communication barriers* — written and spoken information including media, flyers, internet, community meetings etc.
- *Policy barriers* — including departmental and organisational policies, bylaws, regulations and procedures that discriminate against people with a disability, and/or an absence of policies that might otherwise provide an enabling framework.
- *Attitudinal barriers* — including negative stereotyping of people with a disability, social stigma and other forms of overt discrimination. People with a disability often report that attitudes are the most disabling barriers of all.

Reading material:

BRIDGE: <http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/>

BRIDGE provides a fast route to gender information. It is a specialized gender and development research and information service based at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in the United Kingdom.

Eldis: <http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/gender>

This page has information on gender and development. Take your time to look through the menu on the left hand side. It is a knowledge database for numerous topics within development and is very up to date.

The Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities (GPcwd):

<https://www.womenenabled.org/atk/WEI-accountABILITY-Toolkit-overview-Flyer-2016.pdf>

Report to the General Assembly (A/72/227) and other UN related documents:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/resources/general-assembly.html>

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/toolssupportgenmainstreaming.htm>

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gendermainstreaming.htm>

Siyanda: <http://www.siyanda.org/>

Run by the BRIDGE team at the Institute of Development Studies in the UK, Siyanda aims to support development practitioners by providing an ever-growing resource of gender-mainstreaming materials.

UN Women: <http://www.unwomen.org/>

UN Women is the UN organisation dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

The World Bank:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALPROTECTION/>