Gender in On-going Projects

In Nepal, a vocational education programme ensures that women and representatives of marginalized groups participate in the trainings by offering the training providers an incentive for being inclusive in the trainee selection. This way, half of all trainees are women and around 80% come from disadvantaged groups. The trainings provide relevant and practical skills which are sought on the labour market and are no longer than 3 months, to ensure that women are able to participate.

Conventions Promoting Gender Equality

Instrumental in bringing the government and public’s attention to the need to address women’s subordinate position have been the UN Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979, ratified by 180 countries) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995).

Gender equality is also a key element of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), where it states that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”.

At the UN Vienna Conference in 1993, steps have been taken to recognize women’s rights as human rights and to acknowledge violence against women as a violation of women’s human rights. Furthermore, the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women have been integrated into the UN Millennium Development Goals (Goal 3) in 2000. SDC has formulated its first gender policy in 1993 and is committed to promote a gender balanced development, which is in accordance with the Swiss equality law (1981) and the Swiss Government’s ratification of CEDAW in 1997.

Tools and Resources: Reference List


Contact

For more information please contact gender@helvetas.org or consult the website www.helvetas.ch.
Gender is understood as the socially constructed identities of women and men in a given society, context and time. Gender is hence determined by the notion of tasks and roles attributed to women and men in society, both in public and private life. These roles are constantly being shaped, redefined and reproduced at family, household or societal level.

In many instances personal relationships between men and women are characterised by power imbalances which still hamper the progress of human development at large. Often women have less decision-making power than men, lower access to information and knowledge and hence less recourse to legal recognition and protection.

Additionally, women in many developing countries spend a tremendous amount of time on domestic activities such as household work, child education and care work, besides their engagement in subsistence agriculture. This “double load” from occupation and family further limits their ability to generate income and to participate in community or national decision-making resulting in women’s poor representation in politics and business. This systematic discrimination leads to women’s increased vulnerability to poverty, violence and diseases and results in their disproportionate high representation of the world’s poor.

The gender-disaggregated statistics of UNDP 2010 confirms that:

- Of the world’s one billion poorest people, three-fifths are women and girls.
- Of the 774 million adults in the world who cannot read, two thirds are women.
- 54 percent of the 72 million children who are out of school are girls.

On average, only 17 percent of parliamentarians worldwide are women. Women spend at least twice as much time as men on unpaid domestic work.

Almost all recent armed conflicts have been characterized by systematic sexual violence against women.

In many countries HIV/AIDS spreads more rapidly among women than men. In sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, 57 percent of those living with HIV are women, and young women aged 15-24 are at least three times more likely to be infected than men of the same age.

**VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Helvetas has the vision of a society, which grants everyone, both men and women, the right of self-determination and enables them to participate in shaping their social and political environment.

It is commonly understood that the integration of gender issues makes a key contribution to the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of any development intervention. Helvetas recognises the different gender roles and needs and access to and control over resources of both women and men and therefore promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty and to facilitate a development that is sustainable.

In order to strive for gender equality, Helvetas advocates the following guiding principles, which are in line with the Foreign Programme Strategy where gender is included in the cube as one of the five transversal working approaches.

1) **Problem Identification/Gender Aware Analysis**

A gender aware analysis at the beginning of any new intervention helps to avoid interventions that may not only ignore gender differences, but might actually make them worse. Gender aware analysis need to bring an understanding of at least the following three dimensions of the way power in gender relations is articulated:

- the division of labour
- the access to and control over resources
- and the felt needs and perceptions of both men and women

2) **Implementation**

Helvetas strives to ensure that both men and women are participating equally in the decision-making processes and are treated with equal respect.

3) **Monitoring**

Gender-sensitive indicators are essential in measuring an intervention’s expected results by gender group. Indicators include quantitative as well as qualitative disaggregated data, which allow for the monitoring of men’s and women’s participation as well as the effects on power relations and give feedback of experiences, allowing for learning and adapting the intervention strategies, where necessary.

4) **Evaluation**

Engendering the Terms of Reference ensures the integration of gender issues in the evaluation’s objectives. The evaluation team is gender sensitive and, whenever possible, composed in a gender balanced way.

**ENGENDERING THE ORGANISATION**

Engendering the organisation means the institutionalisation of gender concerns within Helvetas itself. It is relating to taking account of gender equality in administrative, financial, staffing and other organisational procedures with the aim to contribute to a transformational process of the organisation. Terms of procedures, attitudes and culture. To that end Helvetas has appointed Gender Focal Points (men and women) in all country programmes which formulate Gender Action Plans, supervise their implementation and regularly meet and exchange (last in a Workshop in Burkina Faso in 2010). At Head Office the Gender Group brings up issues of interest. Policies against sexual harassment and mobbing are in place, staff and partner receive training on gender issues and awareness raising events are regularly staged at Head Office. The web based Community of Practice “Gender in Helvetas” enables Helvetas staff to share good experiences, relevant reading and digital stories with regard to gender issues.

**ENGENDERING THE PROJECT CYCLE**

Engendering all steps and processes of the Project Cycle Management (PCM) aims at involving women as well as men in setting goals and in planning so that development activities meet priorities and needs of both men and women.