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# Policy on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

## Introduction

CRED acknowledges that gender equality and social inclusion essentially contribute to eradicating poverty and fostering peace and economic growth. Thus, gender equality and social inclusion are important means for achieving CRED's aim of creating economic opportunities for jobseekers, the self - employed and enterprises.

While gender equality itself is one dimension of social inclusion, this policy on "gender equality and social inclusion" recognizes that gender is a highly structure determining category which then has differentiated impacts on people according to their ethnic identity, social position, sexual orientation, disability, among other things. In combining gender equality with social inclusion issues, we prevent bypassing vulnerable and disadvantaged groups because of an exclusive focus on gender, and at recognizing that women and men are highly heterogeneous groups that can be grasped only in relation to other dimensions of social differentiation, inequality and exclusion.

This policy builds the basis for a gender implementation guideline and the tools that will be used to implement it.

## Definitions

**Gender** is a socially constructed definition of roles, behaviours and power relations between women and men, not to be confused with sex (the biological characteristics of women and men). Our organisational stance in support of gender equality is based on the recognition that women and men have equal rights, and should also have equal opportunities and equal responsibilities in realising their potentials. This often entails changed power relations within households, working places, communities and society at large. However, gender equality does not always mean striving for equal numbers of men and women in all activities, or treating men and women in the same way. Men and women often have different needs and priorities, face different constraints, have different aspirations and contribute to development in different ways. It is important to recognise, respect and work with both feminine and masculine perceptions. Furthermore, gender relations are often strongly interlinked with other power relations based on difference, such as ethnicity, age and education, and need to be addressed in a holistic, context specific manner: in our project activities, in our collaboration with partners, and in our workforce.

**Social equity** can be understood in different ways in different contexts, but we take it to encompass the upholding of human rights and the combating of social injustice. We seek to reduce or remove the unequal life chances that prevent poor and disadvantaged individuals and groups from playing an active role in their personal, community and societal development. Such inequalities may relate to the individuals themselves, in terms of their health, education and skills; to social practices that discriminate particular ethnic groups, castes or religions, women or persons of different sexual orientation (including those of "third gender"); and to ways of community organisation and political systems that are dominated by elites and allow little or no room for the voice of others. Another important aspect of social equity is supporting the socially marginalised in gaining secure access to natural, financial and other resources.

## Objectives

CRED's aim of promoting gender equality and social inclusion is to achieve:

- Equal access to resources (economic, social, cultural), assets (skills), economic opportunities, and political/public representation.
- Equal agency regarding decision making power over income, time, workload, and leadership.
- Equal rights to ownership, mobility, income, and political participation.
- Positive impact on gender norms, roles, institutions, social recognition, reduction of violence and wellbeing.

Achieving these aims in our understanding depends on:

- Market driven and occupational skills;
- Access to assets, services and resources including social networks;
- Ability to make and act on decisions;
- Control over resources, profits and time (including the distribution of house chores and care work);
- Gender norms and roles that are based on equality, including social recognition;
- Public and private institutions that aim at gender equality;
- Market system with growth opportunities;
- Laws and regulations that recognize equal rights of women and men, as well as access to legal services, advice on work issues, harassments and rights.

## Principles

CRED integrates the gender issues as part of the organization, in gender mainstreamed projects and gender specific projects. Social inclusion is being mainstreamed in the organization and all of its projects. In all these areas, CRED relies on the following principles:

- **We strive to include the marginalized and excluded:** We inform ourselves about locally and wider power dynamics, seeking to ensure that who have the least spaces to develop their own developments initiatives benefit the most from our interventions.
- **We are sensitive to local culture whilst respecting human rights:** In raising awareness about socially embedded cultural practices and norms that are gender biased or otherwise discriminatory in natural, we seek to understanding the rationale behind them and to find nondiscriminatory responses that uphold human right.
- **We intervene in a focused manner:** In working with women and other poor and disadvantaged individuals or groups, we aim to support them to build their human capital, promote their economic empowerment and increase their voice (agency or social and political empowerment).
- **We acknowledge the needs and opinions of men and women:** We are aware that changes in gender relations require a changed perception of social norms and expectations amongst both men and women. Furthermore, we acknowledge the fact that men's and women's knowledge and opinions are often different and together provide a more comprehensive picture; we seek to build on this wherever possible.
- **Our partnerships are based on shared values:** We are selective in our choice of cooperation partners – government, private and NGO – endeavouring to work with those that share our values with regard to gender equality and social equity as set out here and in CRED organisational strategy, and to support them in building their capacities accordingly.
- **We seek to highlight gender equality and social equity in development policy debates:** We intervene in a targeted manner in policy discussions and campaigns supporting gender equality and social equity in the context of development cooperation.

- **We uphold gender equality and diversity in our internal organization:** Our human resource policy supports gender equality and workforce diversity, and we aim for as gender balanced a workforce as possible, especially in middle and senior management as well as in our Board of Directors.
- **In monitoring and evaluating our efforts, we seek to learn and improve:** Through our planning, monitoring and evaluation procedures we seek to continuously learn from experience and improve our performance in promoting gender equality and social equity also sharing with and learning from others working in the same field.

## Implications

CRED commits to the following 7 point agenda to ensure gender equality and social inclusion within the organisation and in its projects:

### 1. Gender equal and diversity driven internal policies and practices

CRED ensures that its internal policies and practices are gender equal and inclusive. In particular, this includes human respurce, security, communication policies and practices and budgeting. We therefore:

- Expect from all our staff to uphold the policy on gender equality and social inclusion and consider this in recruitment and promotion.
- Train staff at CRED and all project teams in being sensitised for gender issues and diversity.
- Aim at achieving workforce diversity, a gender balanced middle and senior management team (40% women or men) and seek to reduce gender inequalities in hiring and payment.
- Seek for a balance between work and family life for our employees.
- Invest in capacity building of gender focal points and gender advisors.
- Regularly report on gender and diversity issues within the organisation. Thematic advisors together with communities of practice lead the institutional process of defining, collecting and analysing gender related internal data.

Promote that project and communication materials are prepared in a gender equal way.

### 2. Gender and context analysis in projects

Local norms, inequalities and power dynamics need to be kept in mind when designing projects. This means that norms, barriers and obstacles as well as the intersection of different types of discrimination, disadvantage, and opportunities need to be firmly understood at the outset of a project (e.g. intersectionality between gender, ethnicity, religion, poverty, etc.). Each project will include resources for a thorough context analysis that explores gender and diversity and recognise the heterogeneous needs, interests and obstacles of women and men in the field of intervention. The analysis identifies vulnerable and excluded groups and delves into the reasons for their exclusion and vulnerability regarding access, agency and rights. Context analysis is being conducted and aligned with a systemic perspective, which means that opportunities, obstacles, access, agency, participation, norms, regulations and services are considered. A gender analysis is being conducted either separately, or as part of the baseline assessment and produces quantitative as well as qualitative data. Results of the gender analysis feed into the planning of interventions, result chains, the definition of indicators and monitoring and measurement instruments, and the selection of strategic partners.

### 3.    Strategic partnerships

CRED creates strong strategic partnerships with organisations that have a common understanding of gender equality and social inclusion. Complete with qualified professionals, they are anchored in the systems we work with, reinforce positive outcomes and impacts social and economic empowerment and enhance structural change and policy debates. CRED identifies potential partners, develops targets, conducts due diligence processes and provides tools and instruments for partners who are vehicles in creating gender positive impact. In addition, CRED trains and sensitises project service partners to guarantee high quality in gender equality and social inclusion outcomes.

### 4.    Affirmative activities

Experience has shown that in some cases, projects need to consider specific affirmative actions and tailor products for certain target groups. This means that in some cases measures of equity need to be taken to achieve equality. These are specific incentives, interventions and products for vulnerable or excluded groups in the particular context of the programme, even if they are not the primary target of the programme's interventions. To design such specific action, we apply a life cycle approach and are sensitive towards local cultural norms. Our work is based on a human rights based approach and affirmative actions aim at gender transformation and follow as a minimum requirement, the principle of "do no harm".

### 5.    Involving the community

CRED works closely with actors on community, regional and state level. Men and boys explicitly need to be engaged in gender equality issues and women economic empowerment interventions.

### 6.    Equal participation of men and women

CRED designs projects in a way that they enable equal participation of men and women in project activities and project benefits are distributed equally to men and women. In addition, we analyse and integrate, as part of our adaptive project management, the way "how" specific groups participate and what the impact of the project on the relation between men and women is. To create gender positive and transformative outcomes and impacts, projects must consider affirmative actions regarding access to resources, opportunities and rights that are aligned with our project goals and activities.

### 7.    Gender sensitive monitoring, reporting and evaluation

Sex disaggregated data are crucial to monitor projects and to measure outcomes and impacts regarding gender equality. We collect sex disaggregated data in all our projects for all indicators on all levels and aim at further disaggregation based on social status. In addition, we measure change with quantitative and qualitative indicators defined by each project. Based on reporting regarding gender and social exclusion, we continuously adapt our project interventions and document our experiences.