



War Child Canada– HR –Gender Equity and Inclusion Policy

Policy Owner:	Human Resources
Authorized By:	Executive Team
Effective Date:	March 2025
Next Review:	March 2028

Position Statement

War Child Canada is unwavering in our commitment to put people at the heart of our interventions. This dedication drives us to integrate gender equity and inclusion into every facet of our work. Our goal is to ensure that all individuals we support can fully enjoy their rights and actively participate in the decisions that shape their lives, families, and communities.

In alignment with War Child Canada’s child-centred approach, which focuses on the systems of relationships that children, young people, and women experience and the barriers they face, we believe that integrating gender equity and inclusion must start with placing children, young people, and women at the centre of our programming. It is essential to ensure that their rights and needs are addressed at the household and community levels and ultimately reflected in national government policies and international frameworks.

We recognize that forced displacement, statelessness, and other socioeconomic factors affect individuals differently based on their age, disability, nationality, gender, and identity. To develop an effective response, it is crucial to understand and analyze how these intersecting personal characteristics shape people's experiences.

To ensure effective and accountable participation and responses, it is essential to ensure: 1) continuous and meaningful engagement with staff, program participants, communities, and all other stakeholders; 2) understanding the needs of staff and program participants and protection risks; 3) building on the existing capacities of program staff and participants; and 4) pursuing protection, assistance, and solutions that consider their perspectives and priorities.

Scope

The purpose of this policy is to establish a **clear vision, direction, common language, and consistent message to operationalize and communicate our commitment to the promotion of gender equity and inclusion**. The policy is meant to ensure that programming standards within War Child Canada are actively promoting the achievement of gender equity and inclusion outcomes and the realization of dignity and human rights for all women, girls, boys, and men. It is supported by War Child Canada's existing policies and procedures.

Background

Gender equity and inclusion is integral to all aspects of our work. Our efforts are driven by the imperatives of promoting gender equity, empowering women and girls, and upholding the best interests of children, young people, women and persons with disabilities. We hold ourselves accountable to our participants by ensuring that the perspectives of women, men, girls, and boys from diverse backgrounds shape our interventions and programs.

Women and girls play significant roles in their communities and families, contributing to protection and solutions. Yet, negative gender roles often lead to substantial barriers, including limited resources, socioeconomic status, power and decision making, influence, and heightened risks of discrimination and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Men and boys can serve as catalysts for promoting rights, including advancing gender equality and preventing SGBV. Displacement exposes them to various protection risks, such as trafficking, forced recruitment, and certain forms of violence, including SGBV.

This policy commitment is inspired by global frameworks; Convention for Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Policy Statement

War Child Canada will actively confront, and challenge discrimination and human rights violations based on gender, including gender-based violence and other forms of exclusion. We work to dismantle stereotypes and address unequal power relations between women, men, boys, and girls to promote gender equity and inclusion. Our organizational culture embodies and exemplifies our commitment to gender equity and inclusion, aligned with recognized global frameworks.

Our Commitment to Women and Girls:

Equitable Access to Services: Women and girls will have equitable access to all of War Child Canada's services. War Child Canada will strive to increase the proportion of women as primary recipients of assistance within households and communities

Access to Education: War Child Canada is dedicated to ensuring that women and girls have equitable access to quality education. Our education programs are designed to address specific barriers that women and girls face, prioritizing initiatives that provide safe and supportive learning environments. This includes where relevant, scholarships, creating girl-friendly learning spaces, and engaging out-of-school girls and young women with tailored programs.

Economic Opportunities: Women and girls will have equitable access to economic empowerment opportunities, including access to vocational skills training and dignified work. By focusing on building the capacities of women and girls, and enhancing their skills, we aim to provide support to achieve economic independence and improving their livelihoods. Programs are designed to address the specific economic challenges faced by women and girls, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to their communities

SGBV Prevention and Response: Women and girls will have access to comprehensive services for the prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). War Child Canada operations will adopt standard operating procedures for SGBV, ensuring the operationalization of the four primary referral pathways: safety/security, legal, medical, and psychosocial support.

Protection and Access to Justice: War Child Canada is dedicated to protecting the rights of women and girls and ensuring their access to justice. Our programs will provide legal assistance and advocacy to support women and girls in navigating legal systems and securing their rights. We work to strengthen community-based protection mechanisms and raise awareness about legal rights and protections.

Application:

1. Gender Equity and Inclusion Programming

War Child Canada will design, implement, monitor, and evaluate high-quality, gender-transformative, and inclusive development and humanitarian programs. Execute long-term strategies for social norm change to end injustice, challenge unequal power relations, and address the root causes of discrimination.

2. Participatory Approaches

War Child Canada's country operations will employ participatory methodologies throughout the project cycle management, ensuring that the priorities of women, men, girls, boys and persons with disabilities (PWDs) from diverse backgrounds are integrated into protection, assistance, and interventions.

3. Feedback and Response

War Child Canada's operations will establish and promote feedback and response systems, including safe, accessible and confidential methods for program participants to share their experiences, suggestions or complaints, which will be used to continuously improve our programs.

4. Organizational Learning and Capacity Building

War Child Canada's programs and strategies will be adjusted based on input from participants. We will also focus on capacity building for our staff to adopt and implement best practices in gender equity and inclusion, fostering an organizational culture that reflects our commitment to these principles.

5. Resources

Budget and commit to adequate resources to War Child Canada's gender and inclusion commitments, specifically addressing measures for sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) prevention.

These areas of engagement form the framework for achieving accountability to our participants within a gender equity and inclusion approach.

Gender Equity and Inclusion through the Project Cycle

1. Assessment: War Child Canada will consistently collect and analyze data disaggregated by age, gender, and diversity. This involves actively engaging project participants to comprehensively understand and assess their rights, needs, risks, priorities, and the root causes of their challenges.

2. Planning: Project participants will be sought to provide input during the program design phase to ensure their perspectives are integrated into decision-making processes.

3. Implementation: Project participants will be actively consulted during program implementation. This ensures that implementation approaches and interventions align with their priorities and capabilities and address the varied risks, needs, and capacities of diverse women, men, girls, and boys.

4. Monitoring: Project participants feedback will inform whether programs are progressing towards anticipated impacts and outcomes. Monitoring will involve collecting and analyzing data disaggregated by age, sex, and other inclusion factors with clearly developed gender indicators. This data will be used to make necessary adjustments to implementation and inform future planning.

5. Reporting: Reporting will document target achievements for various age, gender, and diversity groups and analyze implementation challenges. This process ensures transparency and keeps stakeholders and participants informed about progress and how their feedback influences programming decisions.

6. Evaluation and Learning: Diverse and representative groups of participants will be consulted as respondents alongside staff in the development and deployment of evaluations. Their perspectives will be sought to assess the specific impact on various demographic groups. The results will be thoroughly analyzed to understand how different segments of the population are affected.

Approaches and Key Terms to Gender Equity and Inclusion

2SLGBTQI+: Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, plus individuals encounter intricate challenges, threats, and barriers, often experiencing discrimination, abuse, prejudice, and violence based on sex, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity. Displacement exacerbates these issues, intensifying discrimination, isolation from family and community, and the severity of harm inflicted. In many countries, other terms may be preferred by 2SLGBTQI+ people to self-identify.

Disability results from the interaction between an individual's impairment and various barriers, including attitudinal and environmental obstacles, hindering full participation in society and access to opportunities. Persons with disabilities (PWDs) often face exclusion from programs, lack support networks, and are sidelined from decision-making processes, leading to heightened protection risks and limited access to humanitarian assistance and services like education, livelihoods, and healthcare. Understanding the diverse needs and capacities of women, men, girls, and boys with disabilities informs programming, facilitates barrier removal, and promotes equitable access and inclusion.

Discrimination: Individuals belonging to national or ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, or indigenous groups often confront discrimination and marginalization. They are frequently excluded from participation and encounter obstacles to expressing their identity, challenges compounded in displacement scenarios. These individuals are likely to be affected by both immediate displacement events and the enduring legacy of discrimination.

Diversity encompasses a range of values, attitudes, cultural perspectives, beliefs, ethnicities, nationalities, sexual orientations, gender identities, disabilities, health statuses, socioeconomic statuses, skills, and other personal characteristics, making each individual unique. War Child Canada acknowledges the importance of recognizing, understanding, respecting, and valuing these differences in every context and operation to effectively address the needs of all beneficiaries. Respecting diversity involves creating an inclusive, non-discriminatory environment where everyone's rights are upheld.

Empowerment is a strategy designed to enhance girls' control over their own lives and their ability to influence the relationships and social and political conditions that impact them. A lack of power is a significant barrier preventing girls and young women from realizing their rights. This barrier can be overcome through a holistic and sustainable empowerment strategy that involves girls, boys, and young people in transforming gender norms for the benefit of all. Gender-based empowerment aims to promote simultaneous change in norms, attitudes, and behaviours; social and economic resources and safety nets; and policy frameworks and budgets. It is a core strategy in promoting gender equity and inclusion. While empowering girls and young women is crucial for advancing their rights, it is also essential to engage boys and young men as partners and co-beneficiaries in achieving gender equality. Although gender norms and stereotypes often privilege boys and young men, their behaviours and decision-making are also constrained by rigid social and cultural expectations. Men and boys can play a vital role in overcoming gender inequality and discrimination, both as power holders and as beneficiaries of change.

Exclusion is the process that prevents certain individuals or groups from fulfilling their rights. It is caused by inequality in the distribution of resources and power, by the unequal value assigned to different groups, and by social norms that perpetuate these disparities. These causes are interlinked and compound each other. It is often those who are not valued whose rights are not realized. For instance, girls, boys, and youth with disabilities are frequently stigmatized and undervalued. Schools are often not designed to be accessible, and teachers may lack adequate training to address their specific needs, resulting in the denial of their right to an education.

Gender Analysis is the process of collecting and processing information about gender in order to ensure development benefits and resources are effectively and equitably targeted to both women and men.

Gender equity refers to the fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits, resources, and opportunities among individuals of different genders. Unlike gender equality, which emphasizes identical treatment, gender equity recognizes that different genders may have different needs and starting points. Therefore, policies and programs aimed towards achieving gender equity strive to address these differences and ensure fair treatment by providing specific resources and opportunities tailored to meet these unique needs. This principle involves both the formulation and implementation of laws and policies that actively correct historical and structural disadvantages faced by women and girls. It includes measures such as targeted educational programs, equitable access to opportunities such as training or employment, and initiatives to eliminate gender-based violence. By focusing on gender equity, policies aim to create a level playing field where everyone, regardless of gender, can achieve their full potential, thereby fostering a more inclusive and just society. Equity leads to equality.

Gender equality, the equal access to rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all genders, is central to combatting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, challenging negative stereotypes, and systemic prejudice. War Child Canada's commitment towards achieving gender equality ensures the acknowledgment of the interests, needs, and priorities of all genders.

Gender Mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and social spheres, such that inequality between men and women is not perpetuated.

Gender roles, socially constructed norms dictating behaviors for women, men and non-binary people, are pivotal in self-perception and societal definitions. These roles, both learned and adaptable, shape the duties, constraints, and opportunities for individuals within and across cultures.

Inclusion is about bringing people into a process in a meaningful manner. It is the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society and to fully enjoy their rights. It requires addressing the root causes of exclusion and understanding how intertwined the roots of different forms of exclusion are. Inclusion involves improving the opportunities available to girls, boys, and youth, in particular those who are vulnerable and excluded, including children with disabilities, who are excluded on the basis of the social groups they identify with or are associated with, as well as respecting their dignity.

Violations or Breach of Policy

Violating this policy is a fundamental breach of the employment relationship and is subject to progressive disciplinary action, possibly leading to termination of employment.