

Policy on Gender Justice

1.1 Purpose

The aim of this policy is to explain, inform, to set out TLMTI's commitments and/or intents, to guide decision and to achieve outcomes in regard to gender justice within the organisation.

It is TLMTI's policy to promote gender justice and the commitment to change negative perceptions about gender within the organisation. In addition, it is to ensure that gender awareness and gender sensitivity are included and understood in all its work within the organisation.

1.2 Scope

The provisions of this policy will apply to all staff of TLMTI, both regular and on contract, trustees, consultants, visitors, volunteers, and trainees who are engaged with TLMTI.

1.3 What is Gender?

Gender is often confused with sex. Sex refers to the biological characteristics which define humans as female or male. On the other hand, "gender refers to the array of socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to the two sexes on a differential basis." Society draws these perceptions of the two sexes from culture, religion, education, upbringing and media.

1.4 Why is Gender Important?

- a. Galatians 3:28 states "...There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Unfortunately, males and females are not always seen as one (equal).
- b. Decision making, choices, opportunities, potential and social relationships are often constrained by stereotypes.
- c. Gender equality entails the concept that all human beings, boys, girls, men and women, are free to develop their personal ability and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of girls, boys, women and men are considered, valued, and favoured equally. It does not mean that girls, boys, women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born female or male.
- d. Gender inequality is experienced at the individual level and this affects both the individual and the community. This experience differs from person to person, depending on various factors including income, education, age, family background, religion and national policies. Even within the same sex, gender discrimination occurs.

- e. In our experience, women are significantly disadvantaged by leprosy. This is because there are few female health workers to do the skin examination for early diagnosis, therefore women with leprosy suffer more isolation and rejection, and their poor literacy, limited mobility and low status leads to under reporting. However, due to gender variances from region to region, it is not possible for us to have the same gender approach in every area where we work. Moreover, one cannot address the issues or experiences of one sex without looking at the experiences of the other. Therefore, we need to take the time and effort to observe and understand the larger gender dynamics at play in our work as well as the way we work, while understanding the smaller intricacies. This can only be done by interacting with and listening to our stakeholders.

1.5 Affirmation on gender equality

- a. We commit to investigate and resolve the gender dynamics of leprosy.
- b. We commit to be gender sensitive (aware of gender dynamics) and gender responsive (responding to gender dynamics) in all we do.
- c. We commit to promote gender equality, respect and cooperation between men, women, boys and girls.
- d. We commit to change negative gender perceptions through working with both sexes and varied ages.

1.6 Working practices

In all working practices TLMTI will:

- a. Ensure that gender equality obstacles are understood, analysed and addressed in all aspects of TLMTI's work.
- b. Take steps to ensure that gender dynamics are considered at the personal level of individual staff attitudes, priorities and behaviours, as well as in our programme work and negotiation with partners.
- c. Review on a regular basis, the employment policies, procedures and guidelines for gender sensitivity and responsiveness in all we do.
- d. Ensure that all its human resource systems and policies are gender sensitive and responsive, including its recruitment, induction, and staff performance management systems.
- e. Ensure that all staff, trustees and consultants are provided with appropriate training and support to ensure that they have adequate awareness, knowledge and skills with which to concretely address gender inequalities in their work and to demonstrate gender awareness and sensitivity in their behaviour and work.
- f. Ensure that all staff, trustees and consultants are provided with the necessary resources to meet TLMTI's commitment to gender.
- g. Take positive action to minimise the difficulties faced by staff with dependants, and to minimise the discrimination that women may face in employment because of their roles in society.

I.7 In our work

TLMTI will:

- a. Raise awareness of and challenge the structures (e.g socio-cultural) that maintain gender inequalities in societies both through the materials it produces and its ways of working.
- b. Use stories, images and language that challenge gender stereotypes and present alternatives.
- c. Develop appropriate systems and procedures to challenge gender stereotypes.
- d. Include and present a clear gender perspective in all its policy and advocacy work; and will raise the issue of women's and girls' rights wherever appropriate.

I.8 In our work with partners

When working with partners TLMTI will:

- a. Develop appropriate mechanisms in consultation with partners to support and to learn from the experience of our partners in addressing gender inequalities.
- b. Support projects that actively promote gender justice - including equal access to resources, equal opportunities for education and employment, equal wages and labour rights, equal participation in decision making and democratic processes and structures.
- c. Seek out and support projects and programmes that make a positive contribution to improving gender equality and equity.
- d. Challenge and help new and existing partners (where they are not already doing so) to analyse the gender relations of their own organisation and of communities with whom they work. We will assist them to illustrate clearly how their programmes (both development and emergency) address the specific gender needs and interests of the women, men, girls and boys of the communities with whom they work.
- e. Support partners in their efforts to increase their awareness, knowledge and skills in relation to gender issues through the provision of appropriate capacity building and resources.
- f. As a Christian organisation working with churches, TLMTI has a commitment to work with both secular and church partners. TLMTI recognises that partner organisations from different traditions will have differing approaches to gender. While respecting these, TLMTI's commitment to build partners' capacity in relation to gender issues remains the same for all partners. A commitment to positively addressing poverty and inequity, due to gender imbalances, is sought as a core principle of all TLMTI partnerships for development, policy and/or advocacy. Where this commitment appears to be lacking, the partnership will be reviewed.
- g. Support partner organisations to do advocacy on gender issues.

I.9 Implementation and accountability

- a. Each Unit Head will develop implementation strategies that ensure that gender justice, and the principles outlined in the policy, are incorporated into all of TLMTI's work.
- b. The Head of all units will ensure that employees and consultants within his/her department implement these strategies.
- c. All staff, trustees and consultants of TLMTI will be required to demonstrate gender awareness and sensitivity in their behaviour and work.

I.10 Continuous improvement

- a. TLMTI will continue to monitor its organisational culture and promote a working environment that promotes gender justice.
- b. TLMTI will regularly review progress made on gender equity in internal and external policies and practices, acknowledging that changes in gender relations depend on the political willingness to allow more balanced participation by men and women in decision - making processes. It will ensure that it learns from these reviews and incorporates lessons learned into efforts to improve both policy and practice.