



**«APPROVED»
by Minutes No. 2
of the Supervisory Board
of the Charitable Organization
Charitable Foundation ADRA Ukraine
dated November 10, 2025**



**Gender equality and social inclusion Policy
(GESI)
Charitable Organization Charitable Foundation
ADRA Ukraine**

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines and a common approach through which the commitment of the NGO “ADRA Ukraine” to the principles of gender equality and social inclusion, as well as the principles set out in the following international agreements, is implemented and communicated:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (UN, 1951)
- UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1981)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)
- UN Principles for Older Persons (1991)
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992)
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (UN, 1995)
- UN Security Council Resolution No. 1325 “Women, Peace, Security” (2000)
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (2006)
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — particularly Goals 5 and 10, although issues of gender equality and reducing inequalities are reflected in other SDGs as well
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (2007)
- ILO Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (Convention No. 169)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) (2011)
- National Action Plan of Ukraine for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace, Security” (until 2030)
- Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men” (2006)
- 10 Blocks of Gender-Inclusive Recovery of Ukraine (2025)

Scope of the Policy

This document describes the NGO “ADRA Ukraine” Policy on gender equality and social inclusion and applies to all its participants. The policy is mandatory for implementation by everyone falling under its scope, namely: members of the Supervisory Board and executive bodies of the NGO “ADRA Ukraine,” employees, volunteers, interns, contractors, and other representatives of the NGO “ADRA Ukraine.”

Statements

The NGO “ADRA Ukraine” is a humanitarian aid and development agency of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, founded on faith, implementing programs that embody justice, compassion, and love for the most vulnerable people so that every person can live as God intended.

Based on this, the agency upholds a Christian understanding of human rights, recognizing that all people, as bearers of God’s image and endowed with intrinsic dignity, are rights-holders and possess God-given rights that must be recognized, protected, and fulfilled.

Therefore, the NGO “ADRA Ukraine” will oppose all forms of discrimination that lead to exclusion, stigmatization, or marginalization of people, including persons with disabilities and manifestations of gender inequality, in all its programs and activities.

Key Terms in Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Agency:

The capacity of a person to act purposefully — to pursue goals, express opinions, influence, and make decisions without violence or punishment. This concept encompasses autonomy, power, and participation in social life and underpins the empowerment process.

Social Inclusion:

A process aimed at ensuring equal opportunities so that every person, regardless of their background, can realize their potential in life. Such efforts include policies and actions that promote equal access to social services and citizen participation in decision-making affecting their lives (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, cited in IASC, 2019: 9).

This process aims to increase the capability, access, dignity, and opportunities of socially disadvantaged people to participate actively in society. It promotes empowerment, and the strengthening of peaceful and inclusive societies and institutions by changing systems and overcoming harmful norms.

Social Exclusion:

A complex, multidimensional process that involves the denial of access to resources, rights, benefits, and services, as well as the presence of barriers that prevent normal participation in economic, social, cultural, or political life. Social exclusion affects both individual quality of life and the justice and cohesion of society as a whole (Levitas et al., 2007, p. 9).

Disability:

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), disability is an evolving concept encompassing individuals with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

In accordance with the CRPD, the NGO “ADRA Ukraine” applies a human rights-based approach for the inclusion of persons with disabilities, removing physical, communication, legal, and attitudinal barriers they face.

Equity:

A process ensuring fair treatment of women and men, girls and boys, which entails not only equality of opportunity but also equality of outcomes. Gender equity may require temporary special measures to compensate for historical or systemic biases or discrimination. It means different but fair treatment, taking into account gender roles, cultural barriers, and prior discrimination against certain groups (UNICEF, 2017).

Intersectionality:

A concept introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw describing the intersection and interaction of different forms of discrimination (racism, sexism, classism, etc.). Such combinations can increase vulnerability and marginalization, but their impact is individual and not simply the sum of discriminations. An intersectional approach allows for better understanding and elimination of interconnected systems of inequality (Barbelet & Wake, 2020, p. 13).

Marginalization:

A process and condition that deprive individuals or groups of the ability to fully participate in social, economic, or political life. Marginalization arises from power imbalances and discriminatory relationships. People may be marginalized based on gender, ethnicity,

religion, residence, displacement, conflict, or disability. Poverty is both a cause and consequence of marginalization (Alakhunova et al., 2015, p. 2).

Inclusive Development:

The design and implementation of state policies and actions that ensure socio-economic and human development, promoting equal opportunities and rights for all people — regardless of gender, age, social status, physical or mental condition, ethnic background, religion, or sexual orientation — in harmony with the environment (Gatjens, 2007, p. 45).

Sex:

The biological and physiological characteristic that determines a person as male or female.

Gender:

Socially constructed roles, responsibilities, and relationships associated with being male or female. They shape expectations regarding behavior, abilities, and roles of men and women and may vary over time and across cultures.

Gender Equality:

A state in which all people have equal opportunities and access to rights, resources, and socially significant benefits, and can fully realize their potential. It involves expanding freedoms and capabilities, changing gender roles, and improving power relations between genders to enhance overall quality of life.

Gender Transformative Approach:

A policy or program aimed at addressing the root causes of gender and other inequalities through targeted actions to transform harmful gender norms, roles, and relations, with the explicit goal of changing unequal power relations.

The focus goes beyond improving conditions for individuals and targets the transformation of their social status — how they are perceived by society.

Gender- and socially-transformative programming creates an enabling environment for meaningful participation of marginalized groups at all levels — economic, social, political, and cultural — and across all spheres: family, community, organizations, state and religious institutions, schools, and the labor market.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV):

A general term encompassing any harmful act perpetrated against a person's will based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between men and women.

It includes physical, sexual, or psychological violence, threats of such acts, coercion, or other forms of deprivation of liberty.

Gender Mainstreaming:

A process that ensures gender equality is an integral part of the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all policies and programs in political, economic, and social spheres.

Its goal is to ensure that all people, especially women, girls, and other vulnerable groups, receive equal benefits and that inequality is not reproduced.

Commitments

The NGO “ADRA Ukraine” is committed to adhering to the following principles and practices in its activities and programs.

Organizational Level

1. **Creating an Enabling Environment:**

Promote gender equality and social inclusion within the organizational culture through:

- Integration of these principles into internal operations;
- Creating space for meaningful dialogue on inclusion, disability, and gender;
- Recognizing their role in strengthening the organization;
- Developing thinking and actions that reflect diversity of ideas and approaches.

2. **Risk Management and Accountability Systems:**

- Implement mechanisms to track, monitor, and evaluate discrimination, harm, and abuse, as well as the effectiveness of policies and program approaches.
- Adopt policies to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEAH), ensuring protection of women, persons with disabilities, and minorities, and providing safe reporting channels.

3. **Supporting Organizational Culture:**

- Develop HR policies and practices based on human rights principles. Minimum standards include:
- Accessible infrastructure;
- Equal professional development opportunities regardless of religion, gender, disability, or ethnicity;
- Equal pay for equal work;
- Flexible work conditions (modified schedules, remote work, parental leave, lactation rooms, etc.).

4. **Gender Balance and Diversity:**

Ensure representation and gender balance in staff and management structures, and support gender empowerment initiatives where further development is needed.

5. **Resource Allocation:**

Ensure adequate funding and resources to implement inclusion and gender equality principles, including budget, technical support, financial backing, and staff support.

6. **Staff Capacity Building:**

Enhance staff capacity in inclusion, disability, and gender equality in programming, operations, and initiatives.

7. **Inclusive Communication and Advocacy:**

All information materials must be gender-sensitive, reflect diversity, and, where possible, be gender-transformative.

8. **Accountability:**

All staff are responsible for implementing this policy through annual training, onboarding of new staff, and integrating gender equality, diversity, and inclusion requirements into job descriptions and performance evaluations.

9. **Specialist Support:**

Employ specialists in inclusion, disability, and gender equality to promote these principles in policies, programs, and procedures, and provide continuous technical support to staff.

Program Level

1. Project and Program Design (Ensured by Protection Specialist):

- Conduct risk assessments and program impact evaluations.
- Use various assessment tools: GESI Assessment, Gender Impact Assessment, Social Impact Assessment (SIA), Inclusive Development Analysis (IDA), environmental impact assessment, conflict analysis, etc.
- Involve persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, women and men staff, civil society, and other vulnerable groups in Ukraine.
- Prefer participatory approaches — co-design and co-creation of programs with these groups.
- Include research or joint analytical initiatives to fill knowledge gaps and develop support practices.

2. Implementation of Approaches:

- Apply human rights-based approach in all program stages.
- Use gender-transformative programming to:
 1. Build the potential of women, girls, and vulnerable groups as rights-holders;
 2. Challenge social norms and shift power relations in households and communities;
 3. Remove structural barriers to human rights and gender equality.
- Apply Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+), considering intersecting identities beyond sex and gender, including race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical limitations.
- Apply a dual-focused approach ensuring investments are inclusive and non-discriminatory, integrating gender and disability considerations in all program stages.

3. Accountability:

- Use mechanisms that emphasize feedback and learning to improve gender equality and social inclusion practices.
- Examples include internal GESI audits, organizational and project evaluations, GESI action plans, staff training, and linking staff performance to GESI indicators.
- Apply context-specific, community-focused programming, engaging women, girls, ethnic minorities, and other excluded groups in decision-making and project cycle stages.

Project/Program Implementation

1. Community Engagement:

- Support leaders, parents, religious figures, and stakeholders to implement inclusive practices that improve the lives of minorities, persons with disabilities, linguistic minorities, and disadvantaged families.
- Engage men and boys as allies in closing gender gaps, empowering women and girls, addressing discriminatory attitudes, and preventing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

2. Partnerships:

- Prioritize partnerships with local communities, NGOs, service providers, and advocacy organizations supporting marginalized and vulnerable groups.

3. Systems:

- Develop engagement plans with marginalized groups during work planning,

consultations, decision-making, and MEAL processes.

- Ensure feedback mechanisms accessible to children and communities regarding project activities, protection, and safety.

4. **MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Learning):**

- Ensure meaningful disaggregation of data by sex, age (where applicable), and disability.

- Measure empowerment dynamics, including changes in attitudes, behavior, and knowledge.

- Use gender-specific indicators to ensure programs achieve long-term transformative results.

5. **GESI Expertise:**

- Employ specialists to support project managers and technical staff in integrating inclusion, disability, and gender equality throughout the project cycle.

- Collect and report minimum indicators disaggregated by sex and age; provide technical support and training; monitor progress in inclusive practices.

6. **“Do No Harm” Principle, Protection, and Safeguarding Mechanisms:**

- Implement safeguarding policies and reporting mechanisms.

- Budget for staff training in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, protection of vulnerable groups, and prevention/response to GBV.

7. **Budgeting:**

- Allocate project funds to support gender equality and social inclusion programs, including capacity-building, research, monitoring, and evaluation.

Practical Guidelines

1.1 Be Informed:

Board members, staff, volunteers, and management must familiarize themselves with this document and adhere to its principles in behavior and professional activities.

1.2 Be Proactive in Operations:

Partners should develop local-context GESI policies based on ADRA Ukraine’s policy or as a separate document. Conduct periodic gender/GESI reviews to assess effectiveness and inform learning and development.

1.3 Be Proactive in Programs:

All programs directly supported by ADRA Ukraine must comply with this policy, focusing on:

- Enhancing women’s roles in decision-making, leadership, and peacebuilding;
- Promoting women’s economic empowerment;
- Ending violence against women and girls.

To ensure gender-sensitive programs:

- Identify participation barriers for women and men during project preparation;
- Develop strategies to overcome these barriers, set qualitative and quantitative goals, and allocate resources;
- Integrate gender analysis in all project documentation and activities;
- Ensure adequate funding for engagement strategies;
- Promote women’s status and participation in decision-making;
- Ensure equal participation of men and women in project planning, implementation, and monitoring;

- Guarantee equal benefits from project interventions;
- Develop gender-sensitive indicators and monitoring processes, including sex-disaggregated data;
- Assess partners' capacity to implement gender-sensitive projects and strengthen it as needed.

Responsibility

ADRA Ukraine conducts annual organizational GESI audits to assess compliance with this policy.

The policy is reviewed at least every three years and approved by the NGO's Supervisory Board.