



LIGHT
FOR THE WORLD



POLICY
Gender



Global situation

At Light for the World we strive for accessible eye care services and support inclusive education, empowering persons with disabilities to participate equally in society. Also, we strive to be an inclusive organisation for women and men with and without disabilities. Each of these groups has different needs and challenges which they face in their everyday life.

Where and how we live, as well as our culture and personality influence our development, potential, challenges and needs. Through acknowledging the different experiences of women, men, girls and boys with and without disabilities, Light for the World wants to ensure that women, men, girls and boys with and without disabilities are equally represented and included in all of its key organisational areas: Organisation, Communication and Fundraising, Programmes and Advocacy.

Light for the World considers gender equality and women's empowerment as a human rights issue, a cornerstone of constitutional and legal frameworks, and the chance for sustainable change. There is evidence that investing in women and girls with and without disabilities palpably elevates the well-being for all and is essential to achieving stable democracies based on fairness and dignity.¹

1 http://womendeliver.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Good_Campaign_Brief_8_092016.pdf

Light for the World understands disability as a human rights issue within the framework of the social and human rights model to disability on which the UN Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities² is based. The Convention recognises the diversity of persons with disabilities and their individual experiences due to their disabilities, sex, language, religion, age, origin etc. The Convention, in its preamble and in article 6, states the importance of gender mainstreaming and acknowledges that women with disabilities are subject to multiple forms of discrimination which must be addressed. Gender equality is also explicitly articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Vienna Declaration and Platform for Action and in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Finally, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for gender equality (Goal 5) and to apply the principle of "Leave no one behind" which is core to our mandate.

Based on these frameworks funding partners increasingly perceive gender equality and women's empowerment as guiding principles in many of their programmes: As can be observed through Policies and Strategies of e.g. ADA, DFID, EU, the Swedish Development Cooperation, the European Foundation Centre and USAID.

2 UN (2006) The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Available at: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

Our approach

To mainstream gender throughout its organisation, communication and fundraising, and programmes and advocacy, Light for the World takes an intersectional approach that integrates gender and disability perspectives in complementary and inclusive ways. The purpose of this intersectional approach is to highlight the interaction of gender and disability inequalities producing an effect which is different from what each of those dimensions (either gender or disability) would produce separately. In other words, this intersectionality acknowledges the overlap between sexism and ableism and discrimination based on gender and disability. This approach also recognises the unique experiences which women or men with and without disabilities have, both in Light for the World programme areas and our internal processes.

Statistics related to the intersectionality of gender and disability state that:

- The disability prevalence rate for women is 19.2% whereas it is 12% for men;³
- Although all persons with disabilities face barriers to employment, men with disabilities have been found to be almost twice as likely to be employed as women with disabilities;⁴
- Women and girls with disabilities experience higher rates of gender-based violence, sexual abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation than men and boys with disabilities;⁵
- Women represent about 56% of the world's 36 million blind and 55% of the world's 216.6 million people with moderate and severe vision impairment (MSVI);⁶
- The cataract surgical coverage (CSC) rate may be 1.2 to 1.7 times higher for men than women.⁷

Therefore, it is vital that gender equality and women's empowerment are being mainstreamed in Light for the World's key organisational areas and that intersections with disability inclusion and other elements of a person's identity are addressed. Such an approach implies the integration of strategies that bring gender equality and women's empowerment across disability inclusive interventions (such as from our publication "Towards Inclusion") and towards an inclusive society. For Light for the World it means reaching over the walls that separate gender and disability dimensions and adopting a gender lens to its work. Mainstreaming gender does not mean that Light for the World will not take other characteristics of identity (age, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, nationality, sexual orientation etc.) into account. For Light for the World mainstreaming gender through its work is a strategic choice informed through the prevalence of gender characteristics and asymmetry of gender experiences.

3 WHO (2011) World Report on Disability. Available at: http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report.pdf

4 O'Reilly, A. (2003) The Right to Decent Work of Persons with Disabilities, in: Skills Working Paper No. 14, Geneva: ILO.

5 UNFPA (2007) Emerging issues: sexual and reproductive health of persons with disabilities. New York: UNFPA.

6 Bourne RRA, Flaxman SR, Braithwaite T, Cicinelli MV, Das A, Jonas JB, et al. Magnitude, temporal trends, and projections of the global prevalence of blindness and distance and near vision impairment: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Lancet Global Health*. 2017 Sep 1;5(9):e888-97

7 Lewallen S, Courtright P. Gender and use of cataract surgical services in developing countries. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*. 2002;80(4):300

Priorities for the key organisational areas

Key Area 1: Mainstreaming Gender Perspective through Organisational Practices

DPO's often do not exist on a community level. Disability Inclusion in Community Development supports the development of DPO's and empowerment of DPO's through training on the UNCRPD and joint efforts of local lobby on inclusion, while focussing on the inclusion of all different kinds of disabilities as well as women's empowerment to be able to raise women's voices. In order to ensure integrity with gender equality and women's empowerment throughout its work and partnerships, Light for the World aims to take a gender-responsive approach to its organisational structure and culture, thereby contributing to gender equality among its staff. For an organisation that promotes inclusion and human rights, the process of gender mainstreaming offers an opportunity to harmonise the internal governing principles with its external work, holding ourselves accountable to gender equality commitments. The key actions developed within the Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Action Plan apply to the team, management and the governance bodies:

1. **Tools to measure gender competence in the organisation to be developed**
 - ◆ Disability Inclusion Score Card (DISC) assessment with L-NL;
 - ◆ Diversity budgeting (including gender).
2. **Structured capacity building of staff on gender**
 - ◆ Standardised training on gender.
3. **Gender equality is integral part of the DNA of Light for the World**
 - ◆ Gender balance and disability percentage of staff and the board is being monitored;
 - ◆ Talent search and networking to reach women and men with disabilities;
 - ◆ Encourage women and men with disabilities to apply for jobs and internships.

Key Area 2: Communication and Fundraising

New tasks, such as the implementation of the gender policy need to be amplified and guided using information and communication. We need to understand whether, for example, existing information and communication routes can be used or if additional ones should be developed to ensure a gender-responsive mainstreaming process. What is transmitted through our information and communication channels and the form it takes is crucial to the way gender mainstreaming is perceived by staff of Light for the World and the way the public and donors see the commitment of Light for the World to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment within its organisation and programmes. To ensure a gender responsive communication strategy and to share best practices of gender and disability inclusion, Light for the World aims to take the following actions aligned with the D&I Action Plan:

1. **Our fundraising mirrors Light for the World D&I values**
 - ◆ Encourage selected multipliers to openly speak about diversity;
 - ◆ Identify relevant testimonials from all diversity dimensions;
 - ◆ Funding gap briefs show gender balance
 - ◆ Use guidelines for gender-sensitive communication.
2. **Our international communication mirrors Light for the World D&I values**
 - ◆ Document and communicate about our internal practices;
 - ◆ Actively call for a more diverse and inclusive society;
 - ◆ Showcase good examples and provide inspiration for mainstreaming gender, diversity and inclusion;
 - ◆ Awareness raising for women with disabilities in social media;
 - ◆ Use gender sensitive language by following the Light for the World Guideline.

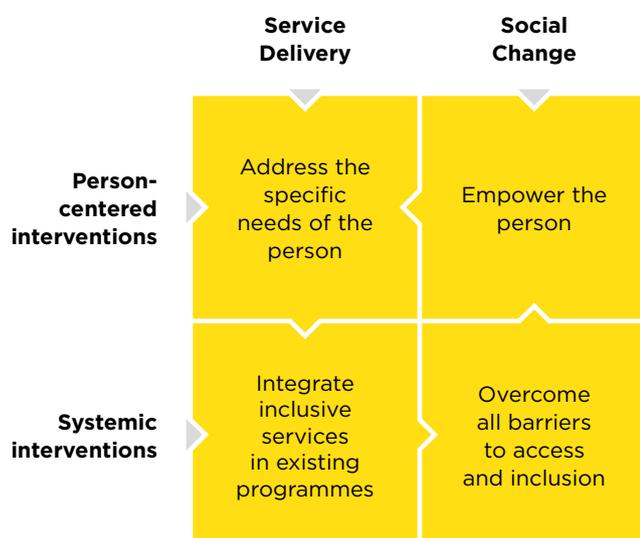
Key Area 3: Programmes and Advocacy

Actions towards the 2020 Targets in Diversity and Inclusion for Programmes and Advocacy are:

1. **Programmes and Advocacy contribute to gender, diversity and inclusion mainstreaming**
 - ◆ Analyse tools to include all relevant dimensions and gender marker;
 - ◆ Work with expert organisations in gender to raise awareness around disability;
 - ◆ Ensure gender parity in advocacy campaigns/ events and address gender issues in our policy work;
 - ◆ Make sure gender is an intrinsic part of our M&E framework;

- ◆ Document best practices in gender in programmes;
- ◆ Develop fact sheets on gender equality for all our mandate areas.

The principles of our theory of change (see illustration) apply to the equal inclusion of men and women, girls and boys with (and without) disabilities into the programme work of Light for the World.



Gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in the 4 dimensions of our theory of change:

- **Address specific needs of women and men, girls and boys with disabilities**
Development and provision of specific services for women with and without disabilities. Including men with and without disabilities in gender equality work as well.
- **Empower women and men, girls and boys with disabilities**
Empower women and girls with disabilities and challenge social norms with women and men, girls and boys with disabilities.
- **Involve women, men, girls and boys with disabilities in ALL programmes**
Involve men AND women in the design and implementation of programmes.
- **Overcome all barriers in society excluding women and men, girls and boys with disabilities**
Address and enable equal access of women and men to services and social events in the community.

Conclusion and summary

Light for the World's commitment to disability inclusion throughout its work, both its own and with partners', is impossible without equal participation and representation of both women and men with and without disabilities. In this sense, gender mainstreaming is important. Consequently, we designed this gender policy with the purpose to improve our work internally and externally through advancing equality between women and men with and without disabilities.

This gender policy aims to outline our organisational commitments for gender equality and women's empowerment and to establish key standards for gender mainstreaming throughout our organisation, communication and fundraising, programmes and advocacy. The policy also helps position Light for the World, both internally and externally, in accordance with its commitments and demonstrate the steps it has made or will make with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Under this policy, Light for the World pursues three overarching outcomes:

- Organisation: Make an internal, organisational commitment to gender equality: adapt gender mainstreaming throughout all our organisational structures and systems.
- Communication and Fundraising: Promote successful examples of women and girls with disabilities. Light for the World will harness best practices to share successful examples of inclusion of women and girls with disabilities whether in its own or jointly developed programmes.
- Programmes and Advocacy: Increase gender-responsive and gender-transformative elements in Light for the World's programmes, partnerships and advocacy.

Light for the World explicitly commits to gender equality within its D&I Action Plan following our 2020 Targets:

Target 1

Selected dimensions of diversity are included in a stringent strategy for becoming a diverse and inclusive organisation: disability, gender, interculturality, and age.

Target 2

Shared understanding within Light for the World about the meaning and effects of being a diverse and inclusive organisation.

Target 3

Aspects of diversity and inclusion implemented into HR policies.

In order to ensure quality standards and sustainability, whilst mainstreaming gender throughout our three organisational areas, we will use the DISC.

We will introduce on programmatic level gender markers and M&E tools for measuring gender equality and women's empowerment.

Annex: Glossary of terms

Ableism: discriminating and harmful stereotypes and practices against persons with disabilities, practices and beliefs which attribute inferior value or ‘abnormality’ to persons with disabilities.

Gender: is a social construct⁸ which defines the social roles and power-relations of persons identifying as women and men or other genders in different cultural contexts. Biological differences can create different needs and capacities for females and males, but these differences do not ‘naturally’ lead to or justify unequal social status or rights for women and men.

Gender equality: means that women and men, girls and boys, enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections. Gender equality is not a ‘women’s issue’ but implies the empowerment of both men and women for their equal representation and positionality within a society.

Gender equity: is a strategy for mainstreaming which aims to provide everyone with full range of opportunities and benefits necessary for their equal participation. In this sense, gender equity is a practice and way of thinking to achieve the goal of gender equality.

Gender mainstreaming processes: aim to ensure that gender perspectives and the goal of gender equality are central to all activities – organisational structure and mission, lobby & advocacy, research, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects.

Intersectionality: a concept to describe the ways in which oppressive institutions/prejudices (racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, (dis)ableism, xenophobia, classism, etc.) are interconnected and cannot be examined separately from one another. (Kimberlé Crenshaw)

Sexism: Prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination on the basis of sex.

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8 The Oxford Dictionary definition of social construct: A concept or perception of something based on the collective views developed and maintained within a society or social group; a social phenomenon or convention originating within and cultivated by society or a particular social group, as opposed to existing inherently or naturally.

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Light for the World
 Niederhofstrasse 26
 1120 Vienna, Austria
 Europe

www.light-for-the-world.org
info@light-for-the-world.org



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