


GENDER POLICY

	CROSS-CUTTING POLICY		
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	Latest Revision	November 25, 2023	Rev. 03
	Original Creation	October 18, 1997	

POLICY *World Accord (or WA) will strive to achieve the full participation of all genders including women, men, transgenders, gender neutrals, gender queers and all non-binary people as agents and equal partners in determining and directing their own development.*

Policy details

The responsibility to advance the rights of women, gender minorities and gender equality is the responsibility of all. This policy applies both to WA’s role as both an employer and as a non-profit organization, and to its mission, which includes supporting its partners. As such, this Policy applies to all WA staff, Board and volunteers, and to the programming and policy work of the organization. It also applies to WA partners, funders, contracted parties and representatives, when they are interacting with, engaged by, or working with or for WA. All are expected to be aware of this Policy and Code of Conduct and to comply fully.

Policy background

WA and its partners accept and promote the basic principles found in the Cooperation Canada Code of Ethics, including that development should “foster and promote the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms” and “should reflect the concerns, perspectives, and experience of women...”. Within this vision, the realization of gender equality and the rights of women and gender minorities are not only goals in and of themselves, they are also crucial for the achievement of other development objectives. Achieving gender equality has cross-cutting implications that reaches far beyond gender-specific initiatives and programming, and underscores the importance of achieving gender equality as a priority as well as alongside other areas of focus.

Furthermore, in the United Nations’ Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, gender equality is acknowledged as central to sustainable development. This is clearly demonstrated by Sustainable Development Goal 5 on Gender Equality and the targets that cut across all 17 goals.

A commitment to gender equality and to challenging all kinds of systemic oppression, grounded in a feminist, human rights and intersectional approach, is integral to realizing sustainable and people-centered development. This is particularly true in the current global context. There is a tremendous opportunity for Canada to advance such a commitment to gender equality, especially in line with the [Feminist International Assistance Policy](#)’s thematic areas of impact. Yet this is also a time of backlash and organized resistance against feminism and gender equality, and shrinking space globally for civil

society, including the rights of women and gender minorities and feminist organizations and movements.

Internationally, concepts, approaches and practices towards realizing equality for women, gender minorities and historically oppressed peoples have evolved. Feminist approaches now bring an intersectional perspective: deconstructing established hierarchies; drawing attention to multiple forms of discrimination; recognizing that the experience of women and gender minorities varies differently based on the intersection of multiple identities; and avoiding simplistic or inaccurate gender binaries and dichotomies. The inherent rights of women and gender minorities, gender equality organizations, and feminist activists continue to articulate a positive vision for the future. They push for change, hold governments accountable for their international commitments and build the capacities of civil society organizations and social movements to work towards equality and justice. They work to build movements for the independent and inclusive rights of women and gender minorities, and advocate for gender equality and rights within other global movements. And they bring gender equality issues and analysis to discussions of development, humanitarian assistance, trade, debt, the environment and peace and security.

WA recognizes that gender inequalities are intersectional, complex and interwoven with various other systems of power and oppression. Work on this issue is inherently and unavoidably political as well as personal, socioeconomic, and programmatic. An organization's approach to the rights of women and gender minorities and gender equality must include attention to issues of diversity and power across all forms of identities, acknowledging that identities coexist and intersect. We value these perspectives and work to ensure that these lived experiences inform our policies, recognize the value of the emotional labour involved, and arrange fair compensation where appropriate for undertaking this work and sharing experiences.

Objectives

1. To create gender sensitivity and commitment to gender transformative. This includes:
 - a. Addressing root causes of gender inequality through an intersectional power analysis addressing the root causes of structural and systemic inequalities and transform systems of power, many of which are grounded in social constructions of gender and patriarchal attempts to control women's bodies and choices.
 - b. Central to the implementation of this approach are: intersectionality, agency and process. In the latter case, feminist process implies integrity, contextualization, learning, collaboration, participation, inclusivity and responsiveness. [Source: Adapted from *A Feminist Approach to Canada's International Assistance*, Inter Pares, Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights and Oxfam Canada, July 2016.]

Organizational Practices

WA will ensure a supportive, equitable and inclusive work culture through appropriate organizational decision-making and human resources policies and practices. In support of this objective, WA will strive to:

- Pursue an organizational environment and decision-making processes that include and value varied perspectives, voices and priorities.

- Ensure that a positive work environment, free of all forms of harassment, abuse and discrimination, is upheld by all management, staff and volunteers. This will include reinforcing existing mechanisms in [WA's Personnel Policy](#) as well as [WA's Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy](#), which enable and encourage those who experience or witness misconduct to come forward, and to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable and prevented from causing any further harm.
- Ensure that staffing and human resources management decisions related to hiring, training, and promotions are grounded in a concern for gender equity, as well as other systemic workplace inequalities.
- Ensure that WA's policies and practices are responsive to and reflect WA's priority to promote a healthy work/life balance and a family-friendly work environment for all, including in relation to physical, emotional and mental health.
- Ensure that any and all WA-led activities strive for gender equity in terms of presenters, partners and participants.

Governance

WA will ensure that its governance structures facilitate and reflect its commitment to gender equality and the rights of women and gender minorities. In support of this objective, WA will strive to:

- Promote gender equity in Board membership, including with respect to the selection of the President and Vice-President.
- Identify and strive to remove or reduce barriers that prevent or discourage the participation of people on the basis of gender in WA's Board and staff.
- Encourage a governance culture that honours, includes and facilitates a diversity of voices and ways of participating for all genders. This includes ensuring that decision-making processes enable a range of styles of participation that are suited to the issue at hand, and to the diversity of perspectives and styles of all Board and staff members, regardless of gender, orientation or cultural background, with particular attention to the perspectives of women and gender minorities of colour, Indigenous women and gender minorities (including 2 Spirit Indigenous people), members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, and others who have not been traditionally included in decision-making processes.
- Build the capacity of Board members and staff to ensure that they demonstrate and work towards gender-sensitive, and even gender-transformative, attitudes and behaviours.
- Ensure that gender equity dimensions and consequences of governance discussions and decisions are given due consideration.

Programming

WA will strengthen its internal capacities and work to strengthen those of its partners to carry out gender and feminist analysis in policy and programming processes and activities, and to advance gender equality and gender transformative outcomes. In support of this objective, WA will strive to:

- Provide training for WA staff to enable them to bring deeper gender-transformative analysis to their work, and to integrate findings into effective programming and policy work.
- Analyze partners' needs and recommend resources, in particular in the context of the [Feminist International Assistance Policy](#).

- Strengthen gender analysis to incorporate on-going and explicit attention to the rights of women and gender minorities and intersectional perspectives, and to realize gender transformative outcomes in the programmatic work of WA and partners. This should include ensuring that goals, objectives and activities for all programmatic work explicitly demonstrate at a minimum a gender-sensitive approach, and ultimately a gender-transformative one.
- Support organizational practices among its partners that promote the rights of women and gender minorities, support the creation of ally networks, and contribute to greater gender equality,
- Support organizational practices related to the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment, and other forms of sexual misconduct and gender-based violence, as per [WA's Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy](#).