



ADER-COV

**ACTION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESILIENCE
ECOLOGIES AND VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES**

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GENDER POLICY

Context

Vision

As an organization dedicated to the advancement of women, animals, the environment, and child education, ADER-COV strives to ensure that its programs proactively contribute to overcoming disadvantage, prejudice, discrimination, and unequal power distribution in a given context. All humans have the right to flourish and fully exercise their rights, which requires a shift in how ADER-COV approaches the concepts of gender and diversity.

This policy defines the organization's commitments and guiding principles regarding gender and diversity across all of its operations and internal functioning. It provides a clear framework for the organization to create a more inclusive work environment and to systematize the integration and monitoring of gender and diversity in its operations. For its programs, ADER-COV is committed to applying a responsive approach to gender and diversity and, where possible within the framework of specific projects, to aiming for a transformative approach.

This version of the policy represents a first step towards achieving this objective. It provides a reference and guidance for specific strategies and concrete measures to be implemented at all levels of the organization and encourages the strengthening of ARAF's capacity to apply a gender and diversity-sensitive approach. The second phase, which will require an update and revision of this policy, will consist of making gender and diversity a central cross-cutting theme.

Frame of reference

In its Vision, ADER-COV recognizes the importance of gender equality as a cross-cutting issue. The organization's Strategic Plan emphasizes the need to raise awareness about gender, diversity, and social inclusion in order to improve the quality of the organization's programs and develop capacities both at headquarters and in the field. In some delegations, these initiatives constituted an important source of information for the development of this policy.

This policy is aligned with the Global Code of Conduct, international human rights instruments, thematic policies, and recognized sectoral standards for development and humanitarian response, as

well as the global commitment to ensuring that interventions are guided by a human rights-based approach.

Scope of application

This policy applies to all levels of the organization, whether at headquarters or in the field. All staff members (employees, interns, volunteers) and consultants, regardless of their status, contract type, or percentage of work, are responsible for understanding its content and implementing its commitments in the course of their work. It applies to both development and humanitarian aid.

Definitions

- Gender refers to the socially constructed and learned roles, behaviors, responsibilities, and opportunities associated with being a boy, girl, man, or woman. These vary from culture to culture, over time, and are subject to change. In addition to the categories of male and female, there are many different gender identities and expressions of these identities. Sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men, women, or intersex people. Sexual orientation and gender identity or expression stem from a person's personal preference and experience, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.
- Diversity refers to the variety of differences among members of a group. It includes the different social backgrounds and identities that make up a population. A comprehensive analysis is necessary to identify, in any context, which forms of diversity could constitute a vulnerability and lead to marginalization and rights violations. ADER-COV recognizes that certain diversifying factors are present and must be taken into account in all contexts, including, but not limited to, age, gender, disabilities, and minorities.
- Equality and Equity: ADER-COV recognizes the existence of biases, prejudices, and inequalities inherent in all societies and will strive to address them through responsive and transformative programming. Equality refers to the goal we seek to achieve: that everyone can enjoy equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities in life. This means that individuals are empowered to develop their interests, needs, and priorities without the limitations set by stereotypes associated with their gender or diversity. Equity refers to how ADER-COV approaches and implements its interventions, ensuring that strategic planning and service delivery recognize and take into account individual conditions and specific circumstances, and addressing them through positive action. Focusing on equity means that we recognize that a given system in place leaves traces and that we actively provide means and resources so that the rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities for all those involved are considered in equivalent terms.

Gender inequality is the most widespread form of inequality worldwide and a pressing human rights concern. It affects everyone, but primarily women and girls, who constitute the majority of those affected by poverty and crises. Harmful, socially constructed gender norms often present a dominant view of what it means to be a woman or a man and perpetuate a binary and exclusive view of gender. They lead to discrimination and marginalization, resulting in less access to resources, less power, less influence in decision-making, and an increase in gender-based violence.

ADER-COV recognizes the intersectionality of gender and diversity. The way a person's sexual or gender identity is linked to and intersects with another part of their identity can lead to and create multiple forms of discrimination. For example, a child with a disability from an ethnic minority may be particularly marginalized. Intersectionality is a complex and powerful phenomenon of exclusion that differs depending on the context. A person's experiences are influenced by a multitude of interacting or overlapping identities, and this policy aims to ensure that these concepts are addressed together.

Guiding principles:

In accordance with its fundamental values, ADER-COV seeks to promote gender and diversity within the organization based on the following principles:

- **AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE:** ADER-COV works with a wide range of stakeholders, including families, communities, and local/national authorities. As the organization's stakeholders and beneficiaries represent a very diverse group, it is essential that this diversity is reflected within its staff. ADER-COV believes that a diverse workplace represents a deeper pool of knowledge, skills, life experiences, perspectives, and expertise.
- **A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH:** A human rights-based approach is at the heart of ADER-COV's work. Human rights determine the relationship between duty-bearers and individuals or groups in accordance with international human rights law. For ADER-COV, this means understanding and transforming the power relations and inequalities that lead to discrimination and prevent individuals and groups from enjoying their rights.
- **INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION:** Placing women at the center of their own recovery and development is an essential element of a safe, dignified, appropriate, and sustainable response. In this context, this means ensuring that all people, regardless of their gender or diversity, have the opportunity to meaningfully engage and participate throughout the program and project cycles. By enabling caregivers and relevant stakeholders to analyze their situation, improve their knowledge and resources, and build their capacities, ADER-COV helps empower them to act and claim their rights.
- **COLLABORATION AND LEARNING:** Collaboration and continuous learning are key conditions for achieving greater impact in ADER-COV's interventions. It will seek strategic partnerships at the global and local levels to continuously improve its understanding and skills in gender and diversity and to widely share lessons learned both internally and externally.
- **DO NO HARM AND SAFEGUARD:** Protecting target populations, particularly those most vulnerable to abuse of power, is central to ADER-COV's mission. By integrating a gender and diversity approach, ADER-COV will help mitigate the risks of harm resulting from the organization's actions, including abuse and exploitation. Harm includes physical or psychological harm to individuals or groups, as well as harm to the environment (economic, social, political, climatic, etc.) that could otherwise affect individuals or groups.

Commitments

In order to implement a gender and diversity-sensitive approach throughout the organization, ADER-COV makes the following commitments.

Institutional commitments:

- Apply inclusive gender and diversity considerations in developing the organization's internal organizational culture. Ensure fair treatment and meaningful participation of all employees by strengthening collaborative and inclusive working methods and practices.
- Apply inclusive communication best practices by using language and images that do not reinforce existing stereotypes, but rather promote diversity, inclusivity, and respect for all.
- Implement measures to strengthen gender equity and diversity in the organization's teams and promote equal opportunity and inclusion in recruitment, orientation, promotion, retention, and duty of care. Particular attention will be paid to balance in leadership and management positions.

- Value and strengthen the knowledge, skills, and experiences of the organization's employees from all backgrounds and origins. Enable cross-functional learning, respecting each individual's ability to engage using different methods and approaches. Collect and share best practices.
- Build capacity and raise awareness among all staff on gender and diversity issues at all levels to strengthen a gender- and diversity-sensitive approach.
- Seek collaborations with partners and stakeholders who share ADER-COV's commitment to working towards gender equity and diversity.
- Integrate the considerations of this policy into the development of partner selection criteria and the future Partnership Policy.
- Promote and implement the whistleblowing procedure to report any type of action that violates this policy or the Global Code of Conduct.
- Allocate financial, human, and organizational resources to implement the commitments made under this policy.

Operational commitments:

- Integrate gender and diversity objectives aligned with this policy into its future strategic plan, program theory of change, and action plans that implement the organization's strategies.
- Integrate gender analysis into the situation analysis (country/program/project level).
- Adopt a gender scale in the organization's programs and commit to ensuring that all projects are at least reactive, with a commitment, wherever possible, to move toward a transformative approach.
- Develop appropriate approaches, including the systematic use of qualitative and participatory methods and data disaggregated by sex and age.
- Use appropriate approaches and tools to ensure that girls and boys, as well as other target groups, have equal opportunities to participate in, influence, and benefit from the organization's programs.
- Programs and Operations fulfill their duty to protect against sexual abuse and exploitation and to prevent gender-based violence, by integrating and promoting reporting procedures to report any type of action in violation of this policy or the Global Code of Conduct.

Responsibilities

The overall implementation of this policy is described in more detail in its operationalization plan. Accountability mechanisms and deliverables will be articulated in each department's internal action plans. Ultimately, it is everyone's responsibility to uphold, live, and work towards ADER-COV's gender and diversity ambitions. However, specific responsibilities apply as follows:

Board

By approving this policy, the Board of Directors sets the standards by which all ADER-COV employees embody and promote the principles, values, and commitments of gender equity and diversity within the organization. In doing so, it undertakes to reflect these standards in its functions and in the organization's representation. It also informs and raises awareness of the Foundation Board on this subject.

Director General

The Director General monitors the progress of this policy and its operationalization plan in all departments through an annual review of the indicators in the institutional dashboard. They also strive

to ensure the cohesion and integration of the gender and diversity dimension in institutional policies and strategic documents. The Director reviews and allocates adequate resources (human and activity) dedicated to the effective implementation of this policy and its action plan. Members play a proactive role in implementing the policy within the ministry they lead and in promoting the policy in external and internal communications.

Department heads

All department heads are responsible for implementing the commitments for which they are responsible and for allocating the necessary human and financial resources. All department heads are also responsible for supporting the implementation of all commitments as they relate to their department.

Individual responsibility

All employees are expected to promote and protect the gender and diversity principles set out in this policy within their respective teams and to work with their partners and stakeholders. Each employee is responsible for reporting any incidents or inconsistencies in accordance with organizational procedures.