





PROMOTING AWARENESS OF GENDER EQUALITY

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***What is Gender Equality?***

#### Gender equality is achieved when women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society, including economic participation and decision-making, and when the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are equally valued and favoured.

#### This refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women’s issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.

#### Gender: What it is (and what it is not)

#### Gender Equality targets

#### \* End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

#### \* Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

#### \* Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

#### \* Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate

#### \* Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decisionmaking in political, economic and public life

#### \* Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

#### \* Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws

#### \* Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women

#### \* Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

#### Why is gender equality important?

#### 1) Educating women and girls saves lives

#### Did you know that each extra year of schooling that a mother receives reduces the risk of infant mortality by 5 – 10%?

#### In fact, if all women had a secondary education, child deaths would be [cut in half](https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/sites/gem-report/files/girls-factsheet-en.pdf" \t "_blank), saving 3 million lives a year. And if all mother’s completed primary education, maternal deaths would be reduced by two-thirds, saving 98,000 lives.

#### The stats speak for themselves! And saving lives is really just the tip of the iceberg. A quality education for girls would also improve child nutrition, reduce child marriages and teen pregnancies, and reduce the pay gap between men and women. Not to mention offering women a pathway to financial independence.

#### 2) When women can read, their children’s health improves

#### A child born to a mother who can read is [50% more likely](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/international-days/international-womens-day-2014/women-ed-facts-and-figure/) to survive past the age of five.

#### Yet [over 496 million women](https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/oct/20/two-thirds-of-worlds-illiterate-adults-are-women-report-finds" \t "_blank) are illiterate – making up nearly two-thirds of the world’s illiterate adults.

#### We can, and simply must, do better. And not just for the sake of children’s health. The ability to read is a skill that can transform a woman’s life and help her to transform the lives of those around her.

#### 3-When more women work, economies grow

#### Empowering women to work has benefits not just for the individuals, but also for the wider economy.

#### According to a [McKinsey Global Institute report](https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/employment-and-growth/how-advancing-womens-equality-can-add-12-trillion-to-global-growth" \t "_blank), if women were to play an identical role in labour markets to that of men, as much as $28 trillion, or 26%, could be added to global annual GDP by 2025.

#### Yet around the world, women consistently face barriers to accessing labour markets. According to UNESCO, [over 2.7 billion](http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures" \t "_blank) women are legally restricted from having the same choice of jobs as men. And women’s labour force participation rate is 48.5 % compared to a rate of 75% for men.

#### If we want to end extreme poverty, it is essential to address these barriers for women.

#### 4) When women have a say in household finances, the whole family benefits

#### According to the [Clinton Global Initiative](http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/phlntrpy/notes/clinton.pdf), women reinvest 90% of their income back into their families, while men reinvest only 35%.

#### So, as well as providing a boost for the economy, supporting women to earn an income means better health and education outcomes for their children.

#### 5) Gender inequality threatens the lives of women and children

#### Gender inequality is both a major cause of and an effect of poverty and hunger. It is a vicious cycle that threatens the lives of women and children and results in millions of deaths every year.

#### The World Food Programme [estimates that 60%](https://www.wfp.org/content/wfp-gender-policy" \t "_blank) of chronically hungry people are women and girls.

#### And UN WOMEN say that [70% of the 1.3 billion people](http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/commission-on-the-status-of-women-2012/facts-and-figures) in poverty worldwide are women.

#### Globally about [303,000 women](https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/maternal-mortality) die from pregnancy-related causes every year. The global estimated risk of a woman dying from a maternity-related cause is one in 4,900, but that ratio rises to one in 180 in developing countries. And every year, [2.7 million newborns](https://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/newborns/every-newborn/en/) die. That is 7,000 newborn babies dying every day.

#### The tragic reality is that these deaths are nearly all preventable. But we need to break the vicious cycle of poverty hunger and gender inequality in order to prevent them.