



DCA POLICY:
GENDER EQUALITY

December 2022

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Abstract

Gender equality and women's empowerment is a long-term strategic priority for DCA and integral to our Human Rights based approach. The purpose of this gender policy is to set out the core principles for DCA's work with gender as a cross-cutting commitment, through dedicated gender programming and gender mainstreaming across DCA's four global goals.

DCA is committed to addressing the underlying norms, structural inequalities and unequal power relationships that underpin gender inequality by scaling up a gender transformative approach and ensuring gender responsive programming across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

DCA is strongly committed to promoting women's economic empowerment, gender responsive climate and environmental action, supporting women human rights defenders, and promoting women's political and civic participation at all levels.

DCA promotes inclusive localisation by enhancing partnerships with women-led and women's rights organisations and increasing direct funding and support to these actors. DCA prioritises partnerships with private sector partners, faith-based actors and key stakeholders in Denmark and programme countries who promote gender equality and women's leadership.

DCA advocates to influence policy and practice to enhance gender equality, investment in women's leadership, combatting gender-based violence and strengthening the voices of women and people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE).

Definitions

Gender

Refers to the economic, political, and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female as well as the socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, values, attitudes, behaviours, power, and influence that society ascribes to men, women, boys, girls or people who identify beyond the binary. Many cultures use a gender binary, where people are considered either men/boys or women/girls, and those who are outside these groups may fall under the term non-binary. However, many societies also have other specific genders besides male and female (see more below under SOGIE/SOGIESC).

Gender equality

When all people, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, have the same rights, opportunities, freedoms, access to and control over resources, access to participation, influence on decision-making and freedom to decide over their lives and bodies.

Gender responsive and gender transformative approaches

Gender responsiveness is the recognition and reaction to gender inequality through designing and implementing interventions that address gender-based barriers, advance gender equality and seek to close gender gaps. A gender transformative approach goes even further and challenges the root causes and norms that drive gender inequality, gender discrimination and gender-based violence.

Gender-based Violence (GBV)

Gender-based violence (GBV) is any type of harmful act directed against a person based on their gender. GBV can be physical, psychological, sexual and economic, and can occur in public and private. Examples include but are not limited to: physical assault, including domestic and intimate partner violence; coercion, verbal offenses, controlling behaviours and controlling reproductive life; sexual assault and rape; trafficking; child marriage and forced marriage; unwanted sexual advances or sexual harassment, stalking and verbal harassment; demanding sexual relations in return for benefits or to avoid retaliation; restricting access or service; online harassment, stalking, threats, defamation, and sharing of private images or videos; economic violence, including restricting ownership, control of earnings, access to financial resources, education, or the labour market.

Diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expression (and sex characteristics) (SOGIE/SOGIESC)

SOGIE is an acronym for sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, and SOGIESC also includes sex characteristics. All individuals have SOGIE characteristics. Diverse SOGIE is an umbrella term generally used to refer to diverse (i.e., non-heterosexual, non-cisgender or non-binary) sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions. The term LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and other gender identities) is commonly used to refer to diverse sexual orientations, gender identities or gender expressions. However, because a wider array of local variations of sexual and gender identity exists than the acronym LGBTQIA+ can fully accommodate, SOGIE/SOGIESC have emerged as the more inclusive terms. To ensure inclusivity and accuracy, SOGIE-related acronyms should be applied with careful consideration to the individuals or populations being referenced. Throughout this policy, the term SOGIE will be used.

Empowerment

Empowerment refers to an increased level of autonomy and self-determination for individuals or groups to represent their interests, control their own lives, make decisions and know and claim their rights.

Women-led/Women's rights organisations (WLO/WRO)

Women-led organisations are formal or informal organisations and movements primarily led by women, which is the case if the CEO is a woman and a minimum of 50% of staff are women. Women's rights organisations are organisations and movements that have a declared objective of promoting women's rights with no requirement for staff or management composition.

1. Introduction

Human rights are under increasing pressure globally, and not least women's rights. Despite positive developments in recent years, for example in the health and education sectors, in all DCA programme countries women remain politically, economically and socially marginalised. Human rights defenders (HRDs) are under immense pressure from restrictive systems and authorities, and women HRDs are particularly vulnerable and marginalised. Crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic, climate disasters, conflict, and displacement are hitting women and girls as well as other marginalised groups the hardest, thus exacerbating existing gender inequalities.

Women and girls are in many contexts systematically marginalised, lack equal access to and influence on decision-making spaces, information and training, have less access to income and financial inclusion and have less ownership of and control over land and productive resources. The gender gap in political empowerment persists, with only 26% of parliament seats and 22.6% of Ministerial positions being held by women worldwide in 2021. All these aggregated factors mean that women face serious constraints in achieving political, economic and social empowerment, in having meaningful participation and leadership, and in influencing decisions that affect their lives. At the same time, it is broadly recognised and documented that development and economic growth is seriously hampered by gender inequality, so promoting gender equality is both the right and the smart thing to do.

Women's sexual and reproductive rights are seriously violated in many countries. According to the WHO, in 2018, 1 in 3 women around the world had been subjected to physical or sexual violence, a problem which increased further during the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite improvements in access to safe childbirth, millions of women around the world lack sexual rights, have no access to family planning, safe abortions or sexual education, and lack basic menstrual hygiene. People with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions (SOGIE) are particularly affected by gender inequality in many country contexts due to gender norms imposed through custom, law, marginalising systems and violence. Globally, people with diverse SOGIE have lower education outcomes due to discrimination, bullying and violence, higher unemployment rates and lack of access to adequate services. Studies show that people with diverse SOGIE have elevated risks of violence, with women from these groups being more likely to be victims of violence than men. Homosexuality was by 2021 still penalised in 67 countries.

During humanitarian crises, structural impediments faced by women and girls are exacerbated by insecurity and displacement, and women and girls are specifically targeted for sexual violence and face mobility restrictions and reduced access to basic services. At the same time, women often play a crucial role in response to humanitarian crises, climate action and resilience building, often as 'first responders'. But they are left out or occupy the margins of decision-making and leadership spaces, and women-led actors and institutions lack access to funding, especially in humanitarian action.

While gender inequalities and gendered norms primarily lead to marginalisation of and rights violations against women and girls, men and boys are also negatively affected by gendered norms and inequalities. For example, men are often in the forefront of armed violent conflicts and unsafe migration due to masculinity norms and gender roles.

In this context, it is as important as ever to address gender inequality and promote women's empowerment. Though there are global efforts to enhance gender equality, many interventions fail to address the strategic needs of women and underlying gender power relationships. The purpose of this gender policy is to set the core principles for DCA's work with gender as a cross-cutting commitment which covers both dedicated gender programming and gender mainstreaming across all four global goals of saving lives, building resilient communities, fighting extreme inequalities and creating engagement. The policy provides the overall framework for integrating gender as a core

priority across DCA's humanitarian, development and peace programming, and highlights DCA's key strategic focus areas for gender in the coming 5 years.

Intended users of DCA's gender policy are managers, advisors, all staff at country office (CO) and headquarter (HQ) levels, partners, public supporters, consultants, and any other stakeholder who is responsible for integrating gender equality and women's empowerment into DCA programming and engagement. The policy should guide DCA strategies and action planning and be used in dialogue with partners. The policy can be contextualised into CO level action plans and strategies to respond to the specific contexts and needs of programme countries.

DCA Values

In DanChurchAid, our four values are our compass at all levels of the organization, which guide the priorities, decisions and daily actions and behaviour of both management and staff. In relation to our commitment on gender equality, DCA interprets the values as follows:

Compassionate: We respect and welcome differences and are obligated to support and empower everyone, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. We walk that extra mile with all people in need and encourage dialogue whenever possible. We work hard to ensure that everyone has equal rights and is treated equally, by promoting gender equality wherever we work.

Proactive: We create positive change towards gender equality by taking action when needed, creating space for innovation, and we are constantly curious about new ways of working. We seek engagement with others to break new ground in combatting gender discrimination and gender-based violence.

Responsible: We are transparent, accountable and gender responsive in all actions and create sustainable solutions. We inspire trust by leading by example and integrity. We consider the bigger picture and develop solutions that will lead to sustainable and gender transformative outcomes for women, men, boys, girls and people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.

Respectful: We respect the wishes and preferences of all the people we support and work with, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and we act with fairness in all activities. We learn from our colleagues and partners and promote women, men, boys and girls in all their diversity as agents of change.

2. Policy Purpose and Scope: DCA's overall commitment on gender equality and women's empowerment

Gender equality and women's empowerment is a long-term strategic priority for DCA and integral to our Human Rights based approach and Christian value base. DCA has worked on gender equality for decades, for example by promoting systemic and sustainable change to support the social, political, and economic empowerment of women, by enhancing women's opportunities for leadership and decision-making, by addressing gender norms and by engaging with men and faith actors as agents of change for gender equality. DCA works across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, in contexts which are characterised by shrinking civic space, climate change, displacement, conflict and human rights violations in online and offline spaces. Our approach to working with gender equality and women's empowerment must reflect and address these rapidly changing contextual issues and set clear commitments and minimum standards to continuously improve and develop in this area.

2.1 DCA's contribution and adherence to global frameworks and commitments

In DCA's commitment on gender equality and women's empowerment we adhere to **global conventions, agreements and frameworks** and seek to contribute to their implementation and fulfilment. These include: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, and The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Gender equality is a key element of DCA's **Human Rights-Based Approach**. Human rights are the foundation for all our work, and it is clearly established in human rights norms that everyone, regardless of gender or SOGIE, is entitled, on an equal and equitable basis, to the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. DCA recognises that gender rights are human rights and not special privileges. We aim to address and remove the barriers to the full enjoyment of human rights by women, men, boys, girls and people with diverse SOGIE. DCA applies the Human Rights-Based Approach through the PANEL+ principles (Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination, Empowerment and Legality), where the + stands for a crosscutting focus on enhancing gender equality across all five principles. Addressing gender inequality is thus a fundamental approach for addressing the root causes of discrimination and inequality.

DCA commits to the **Charter for Change** and **Grand Bargain**, where DCA has been a leading actor in promoting gender responsive and inclusive localisation. DCA is certified against the **Core Humanitarian Standards** on Quality and Accountability (CHS). Included in these global standards is a strong focus on ensuring the equal inclusion and local leadership of men and women and ensuring that humanitarian interventions are designed in a way that protects the rights of, and does no harm to, all people who are affected by poverty, disasters, conflicts, or other crises, regardless of their gender, age, sexuality, minority status, ethnicity, or any other factor. DCA has also endorsed the **Locally Led Adaptation Principles** which entail addressing gender-based, economic, and political inequalities at the core of adaptation action and encouraging vulnerable and marginalised individuals to meaningfully participate in and lead climate adaptation decisions.

DCA is committed to living up to and supporting the implementation of **International Humanitarian Law**, all relevant treaties and conventions on humanitarian action, and SPHERE standards with a gender approach. DCA supports the implementation of United Nations Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security as well as resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security by strengthening and supporting young men's and women's role in reducing conflict and contributing to social cohesion at

all levels. DCA is further committed to implementing and endorsing the **ACT Alliance Gender Justice Policy**, which outlines fundamental principles for ACT members to contribute to gender justice.

Through our commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment, DCA strives to contribute to the achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals**, and particularly **goal number 5**: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. DCA does this for example through combating gender-based violence and harmful practices, promoting women's leadership, decent work and financial inclusion, and promoting gender responsive legal frameworks.

2.2 Scope of the Gender Policy

This policy specifies DCA's commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment across our **international programme work**, our **engagement and partnerships** both globally and in Denmark, and our **communication** and media presence. Inclusion, diversity, non-discrimination and gender equality are fundamental values which are integrated in DCA's institutional practices at HQ and country offices. DCA's organisational practices are not within the scope of this policy but are covered in the **Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (DIB)** policy, which is under development, as well as in relevant documents that guide HR policies and practices, to which this policy is aligned. DCA's general commitment to ensuring equal opportunities and non-discrimination in all our interventions and processes is covered by the Human Rights policy.

DCA recognises that gender is not binary, and that concepts, categories and definitions related to gender and sexuality are diverse and change over time. DCA is committed to protecting the rights and equal opportunities of women, men, girls, boys, and people who identify beyond the binary, in all their diversity, regardless of **sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (SOGIE)**. DCA applies an integrated focus on gendered risks and rights violations against persons with diverse SOGIE as part of our gender and human rights-based approach.

DCA strives to apply an **intersectional approach** by recognising and addressing the many intersecting and overlapping categories of identity that can cause and multiply discrimination and marginalisation and exacerbate risks and vulnerabilities. These include but are not limited to: gender, sexuality, age, race, ethnicity, class, caste, religion, disability, socio-economic status, indigeneity, and citizenship status. Addressing these intersecting categories must always be done with great care to do no harm or disclose any sensitive information.

Gender concerns are related to the lives of women, men, girls, boys and people with diverse SOGIE as well as the interactions between them. Working for gender equality thus involves working with women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity to bring about changes in attitudes, behaviours, roles, responsibilities and power relationships in all spheres of society. It is with this understanding that this policy will address gender issues. Nevertheless, where DCA works, women and girls are often the ones who are most marginalised, vulnerable and negatively affected by gender norms, and hence the policy will have a strong focus on our commitment to women's empowerment and leadership and to reducing and addressing their increased risks and vulnerabilities.

3. Specific commitments on gender equality

3.1 Promote gender equality and women's empowerment in DCA programming

DCA will continue its commitment to promoting gender equality in the programmatic work through a twin-track approach consisting of both dedicated gender programming and gender mainstreaming. DCA will scale up the gender transformative approach and strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment across the triple nexus. DCA has an overall commitment in all our work of ensuring

women's and men's equal opportunities to be **agents of change** and to have leadership and influence in the design and implementation of DCA programming.

3.1.1 Dedicated gender programming and gender mainstreaming

DCA is committed to ensuring that **gender is mainstreamed** in all our work through systematic and well-integrated practices across all four global goals. Principal practices and approaches for gender mainstreaming are: a) any programme or larger project is informed by a gender analysis, b) risk assessments address gendered risks, including risks that the project itself may produce and the risks of people with diverse SOGIE, c) gender considerations are integrated in partner selection, staffing and budgeting, d) activities are planned so that they address gendered barriers, e) women are not only targeted as beneficiaries but fully participate as actors who have leadership, capacity strengthening and opportunities to be for example entrepreneurs, service providers, political leaders, technical specialists and first responders, f) gender norms are addressed in project intervention areas and with key stakeholders whenever possible, g) direct funding for women led and women's rights organisations is transferred and tracked through DCA's financial system, and h) MEAL systems are gender sensitive, for example by measuring meaningful participation and empowerment and gender-disaggregating all data.

Any DCA project, in accordance with the context and resources available, should apply as many as possible of the approaches for gender mainstreaming. DCA is committed to ensuring that all new country programmes developed from 2023 onwards are informed by a gender analysis conducted in the design phase or during the first year of implementation. When relevant, additional context-specific gender analyses will also be conducted to inform specific projects.

DCA further prioritises **dedicated gender programming** in the form of projects with a primary aim of enhancing gender equality or with specific and ambitious objectives aimed at gender equality integrated into broader projects. DCA has committed to a minimum of 30%¹ of all projects having at least one specific and ambitious gender outcome by the end of 2026. Gender outcomes focus for example on women's economic empowerment or political participation, on enhancing legal or policy frameworks for gender equality, on addressing the rights of people with diverse SOGIE, on transforming gender norms, or on GBV prevention and response.

DCA projects and programmes **promote women's leadership** within all steps of the programme and project cycle and promote equal access of men and women to capacity strengthening, funding, training, skills and opportunities within the intervention, so that women have increased opportunities to be agents of change. DCA promotes gender balance in teams at project level, ensuring that teams are diverse and representative and include men and women of diverse backgrounds with adequate capacity to engage with people of all categories at all levels, including community level, in a gender and diversity sensitive manner.

3.1.2 A gender transformative approach

Gender Inequality is deeply rooted in societal structures and systems as well as in norms, practices and beliefs, from the individual to the community, national and global spheres. DCA is committed to **addressing the underlying norms and systemic, structural inequalities** as well as **unequal power relationships** between women, men and people with diverse SOGIE by applying a gender transformative approach. Central to this is engagement with men and boys as agents of change and positive role models to transform gender norms, roles and power relationships. For DCA, youth empowerment is a crosscutting commitment and strategic priority, and within the gender transformative approach, DCA will work strategically to empower young women and enhance their

¹ The baseline for the extent of dedicated gender programming across all DCA's projects will be established during the annual reporting process for 2022, which takes place in the first half of 2023. When the baseline is known, the target may be adjusted to ensure that the target for 2026 is ambitious yet realistic.

opportunities for employment, influence and control over resources. DCA will support local partners working with young men and women to transform gender norms, stereotypes and unequal roles and division of labour, in dialogue with other generations and norm-setting actors at all levels.

Engagement with faith actors to address their positive or negative influence on norms, practices and beliefs is also central. DCA over many years has learned from engaging in **dialogue with faith actors for transformative change**. DCA is committed to continue facilitating alliances and dialogue with faith actors as well as between faith actors and secular stakeholders, including women's rights organisations. In fragile and conflict contexts, DCA advances gender transformative work by addressing and challenging the underlying norms, traditions and power imbalances that underpin gender inequality, discrimination and protection risks, hereunder GBV.

Transforming gender inequalities and supporting women's empowerment involve challenging deep-rooted roles, norms, practices and power relationships. This may lead to harmful reactions and backlash particularly from those whose power is challenged, including violence, further exclusion or other types of retaliation. DCA will strive to mitigate any such risk of unintended consequences of our interventions that could harm the people and communities we seek to support. A key strategy is to engage closely with communities and multiple stakeholders to ensure buy-in and reinforce an understanding of human rights and the value of gender equality for communities, households, and societies. Furthermore, DCA will monitor for unintended consequences from our interventions.

3.1.3 Protecting and promoting women's social, political, economic and environmental rights

DCA is strongly committed to promoting **women's economic empowerment**. This is a fundamental strategy to enhance gender equality, ensure women's full and meaningful participation economically, socially and politically and reduce GBV risks. At the same time, the strategy contributes greatly to enhancing local economic growth and resilience. DCA supports female entrepreneurs and strengthens women's access to business opportunities, skills building, leadership training, financial inclusion and markets, and links these approaches to women's broader participation and empowerment in households and society. DCA is aware that enhancing women's economic and civic participation can lead to an overburdening of women, due to women's continued role in domestic and care work, as well as other gendered risks. DCA is committed to addressing this issue for example by analysing and addressing gender norms and roles, ensuring women's full participation in designing interventions and working with both women and men to dismantle harmful gender norms, roles and stereotypes.

DCA is committed to promoting gender responsive **climate and environmental action** by documenting gender differentiated impacts of climate change and environmental degradation, reducing barriers to women's full leadership in climate action, protecting women environmental defenders and mainstreaming gender responsiveness in climate projects. DCA is committed to a just green transition that promotes women as leaders and change agents in designing solutions, analysing and addressing gendered inequalities in ownership and management of land and natural resources and ensuring women's access to green income opportunities. DCA advocates and works to ensure that an increased focus on climate and greening in development programming is in favour of and not at the expense of gender equality and women's empowerment.

DCA is committed to empowering and supporting **women human rights defenders** by acknowledging and challenging the specific threats and risks they face both online and offline. DCA actively promotes space for women human rights defenders and civil society actors that work for gender equality, women's rights and freedom of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, supporting them in putting pressure on duty-bearers to recognise their rights. DCA is also committed to challenging opposition to gender equality as well as harmful narratives against women, girls and people with diverse SOGIE. This includes an increased focus on online and digital challenges and opportunities. DCA promotes **women's political and civic participation** by addressing systemic and normative barriers for equal access to influence and to assume and stay in political office. DCA

addresses and promotes legal frameworks for all people's rights to political and civic participation, regardless of gender or SOGIE.

3.1.4 Gender responsive nexus programming

DCA is committed to ensuring that men, women, boys and girls in all their diversity are targeted and protected and have equal influence in all interventions across the triple nexus. In humanitarian programming, DCA has a particularly strong focus on promoting gender equality and mitigating risks of gender rights violations and gender-based violence in **cash programming, protection work, conflict prevention and peacebuilding** as well as **humanitarian mine action**.

DCA will enhance our focus on preventing all forms of **gender-based violence** in development and humanitarian contexts and increase our capacity to prevent, address and refer cases of GBV. DCA ensures that all our interventions, at program, project and operational levels, mitigate risks of GBV, including integration of measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) as part of our approach to **do no harm**. DCA adheres to protection mainstreaming obligations, including the use of protection risk analyses to inform project design, and promotes gender equality and women's empowerment in the humanitarian working groups and cluster coordination mechanism in which we participate. In humanitarian mine action, we follow UNMAS guidelines by applying a gender lens as part of a comprehensive and inclusive approach to planning, implementing, and monitoring interventions to ensure protection for all and that no one is left behind. DCA promotes gender responsiveness in all aspects of mine action, including recruitment of teams and planning and implementation of education efforts regarding land mines and explosive remnants of war.

In our **conflict prevention & peacebuilding work**, DCA ensures that gender dynamics are analysed, integrated and addressed through conducting gender, age and diversity sensitive conflict analyses and addressing gender power relationships that influence violence and conflict. DCA recognises that gendered power dynamics among conflict affected stakeholders may negatively impact emergency response, resilience building and peacebuilding efforts. We are therefore committed to promoting and budgeting for women's equal and meaningful participation in these processes, especially at community level. Since exclusion and discrimination are often key drivers of conflict, DCA is committed to addressing the multiple and intersecting causes of discrimination and exclusion in conflict contexts. DCA also addresses the gender norms and roles at play in conflict contexts that negatively affect women, men, boys and girls in all their diversity. DCA also acknowledges that climate change is a threat multiplier for conflict and migration as well as for gender inequality. DCA will therefore integrate the close connection between climate, conflict and gender issues in our programming.

3.2 Partnerships that contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment

DCA is committed to strengthening and advancing **inclusive localisation** by enhancing partnerships with diverse local actors, including **women-led and women's rights organisations (WLO/WROs)**, enhancing survivor and community-led interventions and response (sclr) with a focus on the role of women, and advocating for increased direct funding and support to local actors, including WLO/WROs. DCA is committed to enhancing strategic partnerships with and capacity strengthening of WLO/WROs in DCA programme countries, including informal social movements and networks. By 2026, 30% of DCA partner-implemented projects will be implemented in partnership with at least one women-led or women's rights organisation. Furthermore, DCA commits to transferring 8%² of its total humanitarian and development budget directly to WLO/WROs by 2026.

DCA commits to promoting equal influence, governance and leadership of men and women in locally led interventions as well as mitigation of unintended gendered risks from this approach. DCA works strategically to ensure that localisation and sclr will promote women's empowerment and voice, and we strive to ensure and document the positive outcomes of localisation on gender equality as well as learn from any negative experiences.

DCA assesses **existing and potential partners' capacities and commitments to gender equality** on an ongoing basis and contributes to strengthening partners' capacities to promote gender equality and women's empowerment through tools, frameworks, training and dialogue.

In our **private sector partnerships**, DCA prioritises partnerships that promote gender equality, diversity and human rights as well as women's economic empowerment and leadership. DCA will enhance partnerships with women-led businesses and promote private sector role models for gender equality. DCA is committed to promoting UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights with a gender focus together with our strategic private sector partners, including joint engagement in key advocacy agendas and holding duty bearers accountable for implementing their commitments in this area.

In our **Danish partnerships**, DCA engages actively with stakeholders who share our values and strategic direction of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. DCA promotes female role models by engaging female ambassadors and advocates within, among others, business, sports, religion and culture as role models and thought leaders both for gender equality and for strengthening women's leadership and voice on DCA's strategic priorities, such as climate change and responding to the increasing global food crisis. This includes partnerships with Danish stakeholders that can serve to break down gender stereotypes and raise gender issues in various fora and with the Danish public. DCA is committed to connecting Danish role models and ambassadors for gender equality with partners and gender champions in programme countries for joint engagements.

DCA engages in strategic partnerships with various stakeholders in **Danish civil society** to strengthen joint documentation and advocacy and take leadership in influencing gender responsive policy and practice in Danish development and humanitarian assistance. DCA is committed to scaling up strategic cooperation with likeminded CSOs that can strengthen our gender work and whose competencies we can mutually complement.

DCA is strongly committed to continuing and further strengthening our engagement and dialogue with **faith-based actors** to support gender equality and women's empowerment to address and challenge negative gender norms and prevent and reduce GBV. DCA recognises that faith actors can be important influential actors in reinforcing and maintaining negative gender stereotypes, norms and

² DCA commits under the Grand Bargain to transfer a minimum of 25% of the humanitarian and development budget to national partners. Our ambition is that approximately 30% of partner-implemented projects are implemented with WLO/WROs and therefore a financial target for direct transfers to WLO/WROs of 8% has been established which corresponds to approximately 30% of the 25% of direct transfers to partners.

inequalities because these are deeply embedded in culture, traditions and beliefs. At the same time, faith actors can be among the most important drivers of positive change in challenging and dismantling these same norms and stereotypes. DCA engages with a wide range of faith actors, including formal faith leaders and organisations and informal faith-based groups and actors, of which many are women-led or have strong female representation. DCA also engages globally, regionally and nationally through the **ACT Alliance** with other faith-based organisations and actors through ACT Forums and communities of practice, as well as in networks like the World Council of Churches and PaRD (International Partnership on Religion and Sustainable Development).

DCA is committed to enhancing fundraising for gender equality by promoting the integration of budgeting for dedicated gender programming in DCA fundraising strategies. DCA engages in **donor relationships** that can enhance our gender responsiveness. We are committed to living up to our strategic donors' expectations and minimum standards on gender equality and diversity and where relevant to raise the bar for gender responsiveness among donor agencies. As a strategic partner to Danida, DCA is committed to contributing to the ambitious goals on gender equality and women's empowerment of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) by ensuring strong and ongoing dialogue and cooperation with the MFA on this agenda. DCA engages in strategic long-term relationships with private donors and loyal contributors in Denmark, to whom we provide knowledge and learning from our programme work on the challenges and opportunities for enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

3.3 Ensuring organisational capacity development on gender integration

DCA is committed to continuously strengthening and expanding the **capacity of DCA staff and partners** to design and implement gender responsive programmes and projects. DCA will ensure the availability of guidelines and tools as well as training and support for DCA colleagues and partners to implement DCA's commitments and objectives on gender equality. From 2023, all new DCA colleagues will participate in a mandatory online gender **induction/onboarding** training module, and a more in-depth training module will also be available on demand to DCA staff and partners.

DCA has dedicated capacity on gender equality and women's empowerment at head office as well as at many country offices, and DCA is committed to further investing in gender capacity strengthening in country offices and head office through training, support and tools. DCA is further committed to strengthening partner capacities on gender equality by supporting their institutional gender integration and analysing and responding to training needs.

Exchange of experiences and learning, best practices, challenges and opportunities between country offices on gender responsive programming and advocacy opportunities is crucial for DCA to be able to deliver on our gender commitments. This is ensured through for example global and regional seminars, online training and experience sharing, visits to country offices and communities of practice.

DCA is committed to continuously strengthening the knowledge, reflections and dialogue on diversity, non-discrimination and gender equality, including specific challenges and opportunities for people with diverse SOGIE in DCA programme countries. This is ensured through ongoing dialogue and learning, both internally in the organisation and with partners and external stakeholders. A key strategy for ensuring this is the ongoing process on strengthening DCA's strategy and commitments on **diversity, inclusion and belonging (DIB)**.

3.4 Gender responsive communication and media visibility, in Denmark and globally

DCA is committed to ensuring that our communication and media visibility, both in Denmark, in programme countries and globally, is gender responsive. DCA will promote **equal representation of women's and men's voices, ideas and opinions** and will select interviewees and case material with gender balance. DCA communicates strategically about positive role models and experiences that contribute to challenging gender norms and stereotypes. DCA strives to show non-stereotypical images of men and women, whenever possible, to contribute to dismantling negative gender norms and prioritises the collection and use of material that shows both men and women as equals.

Whenever possible, DCA will use **gender inclusive language and images** for example by mentioning and representing both men and women as well as people with diverse SOGIE. DCA will to the greatest extent possible avoid showing the people we work with as victims but rather as rightsholders, who may be vulnerable and in need but who have capacity and a voice to address their needs and rights. However, we also strive to show people in their actual circumstances, and this can in some cases include showing people who are marginalized or exposed. DCA will ensure that communication staff have access to training and guidelines for gender responsiveness.

In our communication, whenever possible, DCA promotes learning and case examples that **demonstrate our commitment to and advances towards gender equality** and women's empowerment in the countries where we work. We link gender responsive communication to our programmatic and advocacy focus areas and communicate case stories with strong female activists, local leaders, entrepreneurs, decision-makers, people with diverse SOGIE, faith leaders, human rights defenders, and role models within sustainable development.

DCA acknowledges the right to **protection of data** of all the rights-holders we work with as well as the risks that many DCA partners and beneficiaries live with. DCA will ensure transparency and correct data management of any image or information that DCA shares to protect the rights and the safety of men, women, boys, girls and people with diverse SOGIE.

3.5 Advocacy for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

DCA is committed to using our role and mandate in programme countries, in Denmark and globally, to advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment, to **influence policy and practice to enhance gender equality**, ensure investment in women's leadership and meaningful participation at all levels, and enhance the voice of women and people with diverse SOGIE. As a significant and influential voice in many of the fora we engage in, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to use these spaces for promoting key agendas related to gender equality and women's rights. DCA brings our vast knowledge and documentation of gender inequality and gender rights violations into play through knowledge-based advocacy to put pressure on decision-makers, donors and the general population to promote women's empowerment and act against gender inequality, discrimination, and GBV.

DCA advocates gender equality and women's rights at multiple levels and fora. Globally, we engage for example in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and Universal Periodic Review (UPR) processes, in Grand Bargain and C4C and other global spaces. Regionally, we are active in fora such as the EU and SADC. In Denmark, we engage in dialogue with the MFA, political parties, the private sector and other CSOs, as well as the general Danish public. In programme countries, DCA and partners advocate at multiple levels, including formal political decision-making levels, in communities, cluster coordination mechanisms and working groups.

DCA promotes and works to **strengthen platforms and networks** for women and women's rights activists to advocate for their rights and raise their voices locally, nationally, regionally and internationally.

As a faith-based organisation, DCA has a unique role and opportunity to engage actively with and promote dialogue with faith-based actors at multiple levels to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Through DCA's active participation in the ACT Alliance, we conduct joint advocacy to strengthen our messaging and influence on these issues. Through advocacy efforts, DCA seeks to influence multiple types of duty-bearers, be it the national state, people in positions of power or influence, policy-makers and implementers, service delivery institutions, national police, or informal duty-bearers at all levels, including donor agencies, faith actors, and local leaders and norm-setting actors. DCA monitors and documents the impacts of our advocacy efforts to promote gender equality, especially under the global goal of fighting extreme inequality.

3.6 Documentation and knowledge on gender related issues

DCA contributes to **knowledge sharing, learning and data collection** on gender inequality, violations of the rights of women, girls, men, boys and people with diverse SOGIE as well as best practices in gender responsive programming.

DCA's **monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) practices** are gender responsive. All project beneficiary data is gender-disaggregated and reporting systems ensure that beneficiaries have the opportunity to identify beyond the binary or to not disclose their gender identity.

In order to capture, analyse and learn from our efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, DCA finds it crucial to qualitatively measure outcomes related to: a) fulfilment of the rights of men, women, boys, girls and people with diverse SOGIE, b) reduction of gender gaps and harmful norms and practices, c) changes in policies and duty bearer behaviour that differentially affects women, men, girls, boys and people with diverse SOGIE, and d) influence on decision-making and control over resources and income. DCA therefore commits to prioritising **outcome level monitoring and evaluation with a gender lens** and to documenting learning and best practices through case studies from across programme countries. When measuring increased participation of target groups, DCA will ensure the possibility of measuring meaningful participation through perception surveys with target populations.

DCA contributes to learning on gender issues by conducting **analyses and research** across our strategic focus areas and global goals, and we contribute particularly to enhanced knowledge of the synergies between the promotion of gender equality with other key DCA strategic areas, including the human rights-based approach, engagement with faith-based actors, climate and sustainability, and nexus programming.

DCA supports partners in enhancing their capacity to apply gender responsive and inclusive MEAL practices and collect data that enables gender mainstreaming across all DCA intervention areas and country contexts. Collecting, analysing and addressing data and knowledge is a crucial way to understand and address the root causes of gender inequality and discrimination in the contexts in which we work. Research and knowledge thus enable DCA and partners to design and implement sustainable, relevant, contextualized and participatory actions to promote gender equality and enhance the empowerment of women, girls and people with diverse SOGIE.

4. Implementation of the policy

Implementation of this policy is guided by DCA Global Strategy 2023-2026 as well as by strategic tools and guidelines. Monitoring of progress is ensured through the Global Results Framework and documented in the Global Annual Report. The gender policy will be adhered to and implemented by DCA head office, country offices and partners.

The implementation of the policy at various stages of the programme and project management cycle will also be facilitated and guided by templates and tools integrated into the DCA online Programme & Project Manual (PPM).

First approved/Last revised: 5. December 2022

Effective date: 1. January 2023

Next review required by: End 2026

Policy Manager: Kira Ugaz-Simonsen

Unit & Department: Programme, Advocacy & Learning, International Department

5. References and related resources

Related DCA Policies and guidance documents

DCA Human Rights Policy: [Human Rights Policy](#)

Introduction to Do No Harm & Conflict Sensitivity: [Learning site: A DCA Introduction to Conflict Sensitivity & Do No Harm \(fabo.org\)](#)

Data Protection Guide: [DCA Data Protection Guide for DCA HO and COs June 2020.pdf](#)

Action Guide, Gender Equality: [PPM - ActionGuide GenderEquality.pdf - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

External Resources

World Economic Forum 2021: Global Gender Gap Report

ODI 2022: Women's economic empowerment: supporting transformative change

Un Women 2020: UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women Annual Report 2020

The World Bank 2021: Equality of Opportunity for Sexual and Gender Minorities

Care 2021: Time for a Better Bargain