

Gender and Diversity Policy for the International Department



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Introduction

Gender inequality and all forms of discrimination remain a global challenge; it negatively impacts human development and economic growth. It contributes to unfair treatment and exclusion from access to resources, public services, education, healthcare services and employment, and to gender-based violence. Gender inequality and discrimination take many forms and are rooted in unequal power relations.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' (IFRC) Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues (2013-2020) provides a common reference for addressing gender and diversity issues for National Societies, including an operational guide on how to mainstream gender and diversity perspectives into programming.

Norwegian Red Cross' mission and objective

Norwegian Red Cross (NorCross) is part of the RCRC Movement. Its mission is to “reveal, prevent and alleviate human suffering and distress”.¹ The purpose of this policy is to provide direction to NorCross' international work to ensure that its actions are non-discriminatory towards women, girls, men and boys and to promote gender equality and respect for diversity throughout all of its work.

The overall objective of NorCross international work is to strengthen the resilience of communities exposed to disasters, crises and underlying vulnerabilities.² Gender and diversity are key considerations in ensuring that the full scope of the efforts as humanitarian actors actually reaches the most vulnerable people with the greatest needs and that sustainable community resilience is built. Investments in gender equality contribute directly to reducing vulnerability to disasters and enhancing access to health and education. These investments also yield some of the highest developmental returns such as reduced maternal mortality, better educated and healthier children, higher household incomes and stronger economic growth – all of which collectively help in developing safer and more resilient communities.³

Statement

NorCross confirms that all human beings are of equal worth and should have the same opportunities and rights independent of their gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, HIV status, socio-economic status, religion, nationality and ethnic origin (including minority and migrant groups).

Overall objective

Strengthen the resilience of communities exposed to disasters, crises and underlying vulnerabilities by meeting the needs and basic rights – and build on the capacities and

¹ NorCross International Strategy 2015-2020, p.2 <https://www.rodekors.no/Global/HK%20-%20Hovedkontoret/Internasjonal/Dokumenter/Strategy/9.3%20NorCross%20International%20strategy%202015-2020.pdf>

² NorCross International Strategy 2015-2020, p. 6

³ Explanatory note to the IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues, p. 14

<http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/71047/Explanatory%20note%20-%20IFRC%20Strategic%20Framework%20on%20Gender%20and%20Diversity%20Issues-English.pdf>

resilience – of women, girls, men and boys, without discrimination and with respect for diversity⁴.

Expected outcomes

1. Systematic incorporation of gender and diversity in all programmes, services and tools (covering the full management cycle from assessment to planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting).
2. Improved gender and diversity composition at all levels.
3. Reduced gender inequality, gender discrimination and gender-based violence (GBV) through the active promotion of fundamental principles and humanitarian values.⁵

Gender refers to the social differences between females and males throughout the life cycle that are learned and, though deeply rooted in every culture, are changeable over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures. 'Gender' determines the roles, power and resources for females and males in any culture.

Diversity means acceptance and respect for all forms of difference. This includes, but is not limited to, differences in: gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, HIV status, socio-economic status, religion, nationality and ethnic origin (including minority and migrant groups). Gender interacts with other aspects of diversity as there is an important interrelationship between discrimination on the basis of gender and discrimination on the basis of other forms of diversity.

(IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues 2013-2020)

Strategic approach

All programmes, services and tools must systematically mainstream gender and diversity issues. Targeted actions must also be taken to ensure that programmes reach the most vulnerable and that marginalised groups are included in their communities and in efforts to build community resilience without discrimination.

In recent years, there has been a shift from needs-based (equity) approaches towards those which are rights based (equality) to address gender and diversity issues by humanitarian organizations. While equitable approaches to humanitarian and development assistance can improve the distribution of its benefits to those disadvantaged due to their gender or other characteristics, they rarely contribute to reducing the unequal power relations – and, therefore, access to resources and opportunities – of these groups.⁶ Achieving social justice or inclusiveness for women, girls, men and boys from all backgrounds has been found to be an equally important element of building the longer-term resilience of households and communities to disaster, health and other shocks. This requires measures to address the root

⁴ Adapted from IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues (<http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Documents/Secretariat/201412/IFRC%20Strategic%20Framework%20on%20Gender%20and%20Diversity%20Issues-English.pdf>) and the Overall Objective from NorCross' International Strategy

⁵ From the IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues

⁶ Explanatory note to the IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues, p. 9

causes of vulnerability or inequality and discrimination, as well as of the unequal distribution of power and unrealized rights that make socially marginalized women, girls and boys especially vulnerable to disasters, violence and other threats.⁷

Channels

NorCross operates inside the framework of the RCRC Movement.⁸ Within the RCRC Movement, NorCross works to achieve the outcomes through different channels⁹:

- NorCross provides support to HNSs to enable them to integrate gender and diversity effectively in all responses to humanitarian needs in their own countries. NorCross supports activities that are mainly carried out by volunteers, while paid staff acts as catalysts, facilitators, ensuring quality control and programme support. NorCross' support can be provided bilaterally, i.e. directly between NorCross and the HNS; or multilaterally, where it is channeled through the Federation or the ICRC.
- NorCross supports and cooperates with the ICRC and the Federation, with the aim of strengthening the RCRC Movement's gender and diversity integration in all humanitarian action.
- NorCross may directly implement emergency response and recovery activities after disasters and crises based on the consent of the host National Society. In these situations, NorCross deploys under the auspices of the Federation, the ICRC, or the HNS.

Operationalisation

This policy will be reviewed continuously in line with changes to IFRC guiding documents, NorCross' Long-Term Plan of Action, the Main and International Strategies. The policy will be implemented through regular and time specific Implementation Plans which describe priority areas, strategies and work methods, responsibilities and bench marks through indicators. The Implementation Plans will be incorporated into the International Department's annual Plan of Actions.

⁷ Explanatory note to the IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues, p. 10.

⁸ NorCross International Strategy 2015-2020, p. 1

⁹ NorCross International Strategy 2015-2020, pp. 11-12