



Gender Equality Policy

Organization of literacy support for independent Afghanistan

2025

OLSIA GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

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Board Approval

The board of director of OLSIA, by resolution duly adopted by unanimous vote at a meeting duly called and held and not subsequently rescinded or modified in any way, has duly determined that this policy is workable and fair to and in the best interests of OLSIA, the board, approve this policy, recommended for use and directed that the amendment be submitted for consideration by OLSIA board members and ED at the OLSIA board meeting.

Each member of the board agrees to perform such further acts and execute such further documents as are necessary to effectuate the purposes hereof. This policy manual shall be understood and enforce in accordance with and governed by the laws of the government of Afghanistan.

The OLSIA Board Approval constitutes approval of this policy manual undersigned.

Abdul Qaum Almas

Signature

Fazal Rabani

Signature

Abdul Jabar Ameri

Signature

Farhad Naderi

Signature

Haroon Ahmadi

Signature



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Policy Update

In order to provide flexibility and operate within this policy, the gender equality policies and procedures in this manual are subject to review and updates on regular basis. This policy was created in March 2024 and reviewed in June 2024. The changes in rules and regulation, and implementation of new child protection practices are subject to changes in regulations and the existed processes or policies of OLSIA will need to be modified accordingly.

Added this, it's important that any best practices or 'lessons learned' are regularly incorporated into the policies and procedures for continual improvement in regards to gender equality. Any changes and updates will be incorporated in this manual on annual basis and will be effective for implementation after the approval of the OLSIA board. The next review of the policy will be performed in March 2027

Policy Implementation

The Executive Director, supported by the administrative and as well as program management heads are responsible for developing, reviewing and implementing gender equality policies and procedures, as well as monitoring existing function and policies. OLSIA believes that all relevant staff receive access and regular training on gender equality policies and procedures of the organization, so the benefits the document creates can be realized. Also, a regular and consistent enforcement of the policies across all levels of the organization is in place to minimize and mitigate the risks falling out of compliance with the policies.

In due course, the OLSIA board has a fiduciary duty to the organization to ensure that its staff understands and takes into consideration the proper use of the document and its implementation in practice. This includes making sure that there are good documented policies and procedures to protect human rights as relevant to gender and management of OLSIA is responsible for ensuring these policies and procedures are communicated, followed, monitored, and corrected as needed.

Policy Orientation

The purpose of this policy is to provide safeguard and promote the welfare of human by ensuring safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and donors' requirements to align steps with the overall mission of the organization.

This manual includes policies and rules that govern the gender equality activities and align with the overall goals of the organization that are written with enough clarity to be understood by individuals throughout the organization. It is important that all relevant staff understand the policies and procedures adopted in this document. To effectuate, OLSIA program department head is responsible to conduct an orientation about the policy and all the updates and changes incorporated in this manual.

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Background of the Organization

The Organization of Literacy Support for Independent Afghanistan (OLSIA) was founded in 2024 with the conviction that education is the cornerstone of lasting peace, economic stability, and social inclusion in Afghanistan. Grounded in the belief that every person—regardless of age, gender or circumstance—deserves the opportunity to learn and grow, OLSIA is committed to building a brighter future for Afghan communities.

From its inception, OLSIA has positioned education as “first and for all,” directing its efforts toward increasing access to literacy, computer skills, vocational training and the English language. By mobilizing educated Afghan youth and partnering with local communities, OLSIA strives to overcome barriers that have long limited opportunities, especially among women and underserved populations.

Operating across multiple provinces, OLSIA implements projects that combine classroom learning with practical skill-building: establishing computer learning centers, delivering soft-skills training, and facilitating vocational pathways. These initiatives are designed not only to educate but to empower learners to participate meaningfully in the economy and society.

OLSIA’s vision is of a united and prosperous Afghanistan where development opportunities are accessible to all, thereby fostering social inclusion and stability. Its mission centers on building a collective movement of educated Afghan youth who champion education for all ages and all genders—with no discrimination. The ultimate goal is to enhance livelihoods, create economic opportunities, and contribute to the country’s long-term development.

Through transparent governance, community-centered design and partnerships that link education with employment, OLSIA seeks to ensure that every Afghan has a chance to unlock their potential. We believe that when people lead their own learning and development, the benefits ripple outward—strengthening families, communities and the nation.

Our Vision:

A united and prosperous Afghanistan where education and development opportunities are accessible to all, fostering social inclusion and stability.

Our Mission:

We aim to build a collective movement of educated Afghan youths to support education above all, education for all ages and all genders without any discrimination of any kind.

Goal

To improve access to education, vocational skills, and economic opportunities, enhancing the livelihoods of Afghan communities and contributing to the country’s long-term development.

Humanitarian Principles:

OLSIA is committed to the principles that are central to establishing and maintaining the provision of humanitarian response to the affected people in natural disasters and complex emergency situations

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and/or implementation of human development interventions. The main humanitarian principles defined by UN have been adopted by OLSIA. The four core principles are:

- Humanity
- Neutrality
- Impartiality and,
- Independence

Policy Statement

Gender equality is high on the agenda of most donor organization. Gender equality is linked to the primary goal of the New Consultancy and Relief Organizations, which is to reduce economic and social disparities in the postwar countries. Men and women must have equal rights and opportunities in all areas of the economy and society for a real sustainable economic and social development. On the other hand, gender discrimination is a violation of fundamental human rights. It is obvious that not all projects will lead to a maximum impact on gender equality. However, the inclusion of gender equality in the financial mechanisms acknowledges the fact that including gender equality considerations are effective in the grants.

Scope

This document provides guidance as how the activities carried out under the mechanisms shall contribute to furthering gender equality. This document as with the other cross-cutting policy documents and checklist is intended to give implementers a better understanding of the cross-cutting issues. Together, these documents indicate how gender equality considerations, and the considerations of other cross cutting issues, will be considered by OLSIA in the project implementation both in terms of their eligibility and suitability.

Gender in Humanitarian Emergency Response

Disasters don't affect all people equally because of pre-existing structure and condition. Humanitarian response is based on assumption which is not always true about who died, who survived, whose livelihoods were affected and how, and who needs what now. Take into account the impact of cultural practices, such as restriction on mobility for women and girls.

Analysis gender roles and responsibilities

OLSIA conducts Gender analysis before actually designing the project, gender analysis provides the opportunity to analysis the impact of a humanitarian crisis on women, girls, boys and men. Gender analysis examines the relationships among males and females of different ages: what are their different roles, who has power and who makes decisions.

- Design services that meet everyone's needs and access to services for women, girls, boys and men is ensured.
- The assessment should provide information on possible physical and human barriers that can affect service delivery for women, men girls and boys of different ages.

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- OLSIA will design the service provision that all group women, men, boys and girls can access the service as per their needs. This may include the service delivery team, which has to be composed of women and men.
- OLSIA takes into account the impact of cultural practices, such as restriction on mobility for women and girls.
- OLSIA considers the composition of service-delivery teams (in terms of male and female) to address barriers in accessing assistance.
- Participation of women and men is ensured
- The OLSIA AAP policy requires participation of all group of community in the response process, this policy emphasize more on participation of women in this process, which make the OLSIA teams to include women in the response considering all cultural barriers Address gender-based violence
- During the humanitarian response project OLSIA staff will be alerted on GBV cases to report Referral will be provided
- The distribution location and timing will be appropriate to ensure people can reach home safely
- OLSIA project team will collect, analyze and report sex-/age-disaggregated data
- To understand coverage and gaps, OLSIA collects and analysis data on sex and age who is receiving the service.
- OLSIA ensures that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms can ascertain if the different needs of women, girls, boys and men have been met in the humanitarian response.

HIV/AIDS in Emergency

Situation analysis

1: In an emergency civilian may be subject to

- Mass displacement
- Human right abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Poverty and commercial sex
- Behavioral change due to interruption of social networks
- Economic vulnerability
- Disruption of preventive and curative health services

Afghanistan context:

Use of Drug

Culturally and as per traditions Afghan communities supposed to be less vulnerable to HIV/AIDS conviction. But things are changing as situation emerges with new phenomena which one of them is the use of drugs which makes Afghan communities more vulnerable to conviction of HIV/AIDs. The use of drug in emergency will be attractive, which itself is crucial vulnerability.

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Health and hygiene sector not secure

In an emergency health and hygiene will not be secure because of limited resources, commitment and control from the responsible.

Possible intervention

Assessment to find vulnerability

OLSIA will collect data on the existing HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in both the displaced populations and the surrounding communities

Gap analysis;

- OLSIA will identify priorities for HIV prevention, treatment and care, and practical and social support, this will be done in consultation with health experts.
- Inclusion of HIV elements into humanitarian planning and appeals processes

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- Awareness
- psychosocial services
- Advocacy
- Preventing HIV/Transmission in health care
- Dispose properly waste generated in health Care centers

During conflict and after emergency

The intervention addressing HIV/AIDS vulnerability will be implemented during conflict and will continue after emergency until the situation becomes stable and communities will be safe against conviction to HIV/AIDS.

Gender equality – definition

In respect to OLSIA policy application, the term 'gender equality' to mean: "That all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by strict gender roles; that the different behavior, aspirations and needs of women and men are equally considered, valued and favored". Implementing gender equality fully requires equal representation and participation of both men and women in the economy, decision-making, as well as in social, cultural and civil life. Only in this way will men and women reach their full potential in society. It implies a fair distribution of resources between men and women, the redistribution of power and carrying responsibilities, and freedom from gender-based violence. Closely linked to the concept of gender equality, is that of gender mainstreaming. Gender equality cannot be achieved by dealing with the issues of one gender seen in isolation from those of the other, nor from those of society as a whole. Hence, gender mainstreaming is used in order to ensure that gender issues are dealt with at all levels and at all stages. It involves all general policies and measures, so that they may specifically bring about equality by actively and openly taking into account, at the planning stage, their effects on the respective situations of women and men in implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

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Key dimensions of Gender equality

Considerable progress has been made regarding gender equality in the OLSIA projects beneficiaries, however formal rights do not necessarily reflect actual rights in practice. This consideration - combined with persistent under- representation of women in politics and economic leadership, as well as cultural restrictions of women - shows that despite the legal framework, structural inequalities persist. Although the dimensions of gender equality often contain overlapping elements and may be divided in different ways, for the purposes of the financial mechanisms they have been broadly grouped as following;

- Economic and social rights
- Human rights
- Prevention of violence
- Participation and decision-making

The overlapping characteristics of the categories listed naturally results in the outcomes not being linked to a specific category of gender equality, but rather that activities in one area are likely to have outcomes in one or more of the others.

Economic and social rights: The essence of the economic rights element of this dimension of gender equality is that women and men must have the opportunity to participate equally in economic development. It entails the full integration of women into the economy and is therefore very closely linked to social rights.

The economic dimension of gender equality is also found to some extent in both of the other two categories of gender equality listed below. Failure to protect social rights relates directly to the feminization of poverty, which emerges as a result of dated models that do not take into account the family role.

This can be due to career breaks, part time work, lack of education and training, etc. By its very nature, there is a wide range of activities relating to economic and social rights in gender equality. Initiatives that may contribute to the inclusion of gender equality issues into the economic dimension include:

- eliminating gender gaps in the labor market,
- Equal pay for equal work,
- Access to education,
- Provision of day-care facilities, more flexible work environments, etc.

Initiatives that promote gender equality in social rights may include such initiatives that take into account parental leave, maternity protection, working time, part-time and fixed-term contracts, and particularly those that impact women's daily life such as public transport, public health, etc.

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Human rights

As affirmed at the UN Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1992, and reaffirmed at the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, women's rights are human rights; they are not a special category of rights. Hence this dimension of gender equality relates to the issue of the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Participation and decision-making: This dimension includes representation and participation in decision-making both at a political and an economic level. The political level encompasses the equal participation and representation of women in the societal systems and local decision-making processes, including elections. Decision-making at an economic level relates to the step from education and training into working life, including recruitment and career development aspects.

Gender Equality

In OLSIA Projects Promoting gender equality has shown that it is insufficient to work only with gender equality-oriented projects. Gender equality issues must be a part of entire processes, policies and actions. Care must also have been taken to secure the focus on gender equality throughout the project cycle. Therefore, gender equality is defined as a cross-cutting issue that is evaluated in all project applications of the financial mechanisms. However, the notion of gender equality may also exist as the key focus of a project; an element without which the project would not exist.

As a cross-cutting issue

Gender equality is one of four cross-cutting issues identified for projects. The crosscutting issues are:

- Sustainable development
- Good governance
- Gender equality
- Bilateral relations

Gender equality is inextricably linked to the other cross-cutting issues. On a broad level, without gender equality, sustainable development cannot be achieved. Moreover, gender equality is an inherent component of good governance, without which there would be an inefficient use of a country's resources and good governance could not be achieved.

The involvement and the full and equal participation of both women and men are crucial aspects of economic and social development, if effective and sustainable development is to be achieved. The related issues of 'poverty and social exclusion' and 'economic and employment exclusion' tend however to be more significant problems for women than for men, and have led to a feminization of poverty. The link between women and poverty/social exclusion is so strong that without the focus on gender equality, one cannot expect reductions in poverty levels.

As a cross-cutting issue, gender equality will be covered and followed up throughout the project cycle. This starts with the preparation of the application, continuing with the appraisal and decision processes, as well as throughout project implementation and evaluation. Gender equality considerations have been incorporated into all areas of the project cycle.

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In projects

A key aspect of the success of any gender equality policy is to translate it into action. In the financial mechanisms this primarily entails its incorporation into projects and the project cycle, starting at the project application stage. In essence, the potential and actual impact of the inclusion of gender equality must therefore be assessed both in project appraisal and followed up within project monitoring.

In assessing the inclusion of gender equality of each project, a gender equality checklist has been developed. The checklist is meant as a tool throughout the process of project development, appraisal, monitoring, and result evaluation. It is one of a number of tools, including discussions with appraisal agents and project monitoring, that will be used to ensure the inclusion of gender equality.

The checklist must be used in a flexible way, declaring the 'not applicable' questions as such, and focusing on the relevant ones. When developing the gender equality element of projects, a number of elements should be considered in order to give an indication of its potential impact on gender equality issues. In particular, the applicant should address how the project takes the following issues into account.

General methodology

How does the project take into account gender specific needs and address gender specific conditions?

- How does the project take past experiences and/or current gender equality activities in the country into account?
- How does the project address the gender equality issues and targets relevant to the project?
- How does the project provide qualitative information on gender issues where necessary?

Economic and social rights

- How does the project encourage lifelong learning and access by women to the labor market?
- How does the project enhance the income earning opportunities of women?
- How does the project strengthen social rights and/or contribute to participation in civil life by women? • How does the project reduce the social exclusion of women?

Human rights

- How does the project contribute to strengthening organizations and public institutions working to improve the opportunities and rights of women, including NGOs?

Prevention of violence

- How does the project support awareness-raise actions and campaigns empowering women?

Participation and decision-making

- How does the project contribute to participation by women in decision making at both a political and an economic level?
- How does the project involve male and female stakeholders in the consultative process?
- How does the project promote women's participation within the project, for example as project staff, members of steering committees?

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Monitoring throughout the project and ex-post evaluation are necessary elements for assessing the actual impact of a project, and are key elements in securing the inclusion of gender equality in projects. To facilitate monitoring, data must be sex disaggregated, reporting requirements must include gender equality considerations, and ex-post evaluations must not only measure impact, but also provide lessons learned and suggest possible future improvements.

Gender balance within Organization

Gender balance

Gender balance is a human resource issue. It is about the equal participation of women and men in all areas of work (international and national staff at all levels, including at senior positions) and in programs that agencies initiate or support (e.g. food distribution programs). Achieving a balance in staffing patterns and creating a working environment that is conducive to a diverse workforce improves the overall effectiveness of our policies and programs, and will enhance agencies' capacity to better serve the entire population. The number of women employed with OLSIA is less than the 25% of the total number of staff of the organization including project based employees. The requirement is 25%. As per the international NGOs requirement in a geography same as Afghanistan the total number of women employee should be 25%.

In order to meet this requirement OLSIA is planning to give preference to women applicants in future recruitment. This preference will be to the extent where the performance of the newly hired employee will not affect negatively the performance and eventually the objective of the organization and the project. The future announcement for recruitment will include a clause encouraging women to apply.

Gender at Programmatic

OLSIA addressed Gender issues during developing as cross cutting issues, which may include producing and publishing gender awareness material, that both men and women must be treated equally, to meet their demands, encourage families to let their children both boys and girls to go to school.

Implementing the gender equality policy

The implementation of the gender equality policy has to address the entire project cycle:

1. When projects ideas are developed by the potential project promoters
2. When the beneficiary state government makes their prioritization of the projects
3. When the projects are appraised
4. When the grant decision is made
5. When the project is implemented and monitored

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This gender equality policy must therefore be implemented in all parts of the project cycle based on the following principles and activities:

- This policy is an integrated part of the grant policy adopted by the donors and they will thereby be committed to include gender equality assessment as an important decision criterion.
- The cross-cutting checklist must be used in each appraisal. The recommendation for grant decision will be based on sustainable development.
- The checklist shall also be referred to in the external project monitoring manual in order for the implementation also to be checked for the same criteria.
- The Gender equality policy and guide and the checklist will be presented and thoroughly discussed with all the focal points in order for them also to consider the same criteria in their future assessment.

End.