

# Save the Children's Policy on Gender Equality



**Save the Children**

*The International Save the Children Alliance is the world's leading independent children's rights organization, with members in 28 countries and operational programmes in more than 100.*

*We fight for children's rights and deliver lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.*

Published by:  
Save the Children Sweden  
SE-107 88 Stockholm, Sweden  
info@rb.se  
www.rb.se/bookshop

© 2009 Save the Children  
ISBN: 978-91-7321-392-9  
Code no: 10462  
Author: Frances Sheahan  
Project management: Tina Hyder, Duncan Trotter, Lene Steffen, Moncia Lindvall  
Production: Ulla Ståhl  
Graphic Design: Annelie Rehnström

Save the Children's Policy on  
Gender Equality



# Contents

About this policy .....	7
Global commitments to gender equality .....	9
Save the Children's policy on gender equality .....	11
Linking the policy with Save the Children's priority areas of work .....	17
Putting the policy into practice .....	25
Appendix One - Web-based Resources .....	31
Appendix Two - Gender Analysis Tools .....	33



## About this policy

### The process for developing this policy

The process for developing this policy has, so far, involved extensive consultation within the regional and head offices of Save the Children Sweden and Save the Children UK and within the head office of Save the Children USA. It has included consultation with partner organisations in Latin America.

### Save the Children and Gender Equality

Save the Children fights for children's rights and aims to deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide. It works for a world which respects and values each child, which listens to children and learns from them and where all children have hope and opportunity.

Save the Children's work is founded upon the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which defines universal principles and norms for children and includes the right not to be discriminated against as one of its four guiding principles. Save the Children challenges all forms of discrimination especially when based on sex, age, social class, disability, HIV status, sexual preference, religion, race and ethnicity. Save the Children recognises that gender equality is a critical component of the organisation's overall commitment to diversity and works to promote gender equality in societies at all levels.

**For Save the Children, gender equality means ensuring that all human beings – women, men, girls and boys – are considered equal and treated equally in terms of their rights, obligations and opportunities.**

Save the Children already does a great deal to achieve gender equality for girls and boys and in 1999 the organisation produced a Gender Equity Policy which was distributed, with accompanying guidelines, throughout the Alliance. The 1999 Gender Equity Policy has been an invaluable tool but now needs updating in order to help the organisation to do better. This Policy includes the lessons that we – and others – have learnt since 1999. In particular it reflects the following developments:

- Engaging more with men and boys – in partnership with women and girls – directly on issues of gender equality.
- Examining more closely the intersection of gender with other elements of children's identity such as disability, caste, religion, economic status, ethnicity etc.
- A renewed interest in gender equality from donors stimulated in part by the Millennium Development Goals.

**GENDER** social and/ or cultural interpretations of biological sex; definitions of what is considered to be feminine and masculine in particular cultural and social settings, and expectations of women and men, girls and boys with respect to these definitions; social, economic and political relationships between females and males in specific societies. Gender identity, roles and relations can and do vary and change as a result of ideological, political, economic and/or cultural influences. Some forms of cultural identity and expression - for example specific ideological creeds as well as religious beliefs and interpretation - in interaction with restriction of resources may play a major part in patterns of extreme gender inequality.

**SEX** biological and physiological features and characteristics of females and males, and the differences between them based on differences in female and male reproductive systems. These are universal and normally fixed and unchangeable.

**GENDER EQUALITY**

when one sex is not routinely privileged or prioritized over the other; that is, when women and men, girls and boys have equal rights, obligations and opportunities to security and good health, to a viable livelihood and to remunerative work, to participate in the care of home and dependent family members, to take active part in public and political life, and are recognized, respected and valued for their capacities and potential as individuals and as members of society. Gender equality refers to the absence of discrimination on the basis of sex.

**GENDER EQUITY** aspects of parity between females and males in terms of fairness and justice in the distribution of resources, benefits and responsibilities. This concept recognizes that girls and boys may have different needs and negotiating power; and that these differences should be identified and addressed so as to rectify imbalances between the sexes.

**GENDER DISCRIMINATION**

any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of socially constructed gender roles and norms which prevents a person from enjoying their full human rights.

- Looking more at discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation as a facet of gender discrimination.
- The promotion of child participation has led to a further emphasis on gender equality, since boys and girls often raise the issue of gender discrimination as a matter of concern to them within their own organisations and child led initiatives.

## What are the objectives of this policy?

This policy on gender equality is not intended to provide a blueprint for practice throughout the organisation. A handbook exploring how to implement the right to non-discrimination will be produced to accompany this policy in due course and this will include detailed guidance on how to mainstream gender equality in the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

The key objectives of this policy are:

- To provide a clear vision of what Save the Children as an organisation is aiming to achieve in terms of gender equality framed within the context of the organisation's programmes and policies and ways of working as well as within the wider context of the international arena.
- To develop a common understanding throughout Save the Children of what gender equality means and how to relate it to the organisation's priority areas of work.
- To renew and refresh Save the Children's commitment to gender equality and to be a resource to inspire and empower Save the Children employees and partner organisations to work towards promoting gender equality in societies at all levels.
- To influence the institutional culture within the organisation so that all employees are gender aware and put this into practice in all aspects of their work.
- To inform external actors (partner organisations, donors, governments, the media, the private sector) of Save the Children's perspective on gender and to provide an 'entry point' for discussion of gender with them.

## *Global commitments to gender equality*

Gender equality is a key element of the human rights system established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. The UDHR states that rights and freedoms shall not be limited by a person's sex: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". Other important milestones are the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979, the CRC in 1989, the outcome documents from the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994 and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995 as well as the outcomes from follow up meetings (Beijing plus five and plus ten).

Save the Children's work is framed by these international instruments and global declarations. Furthermore, the organisation acknowledges the importance of the commitment to gender equality contained within the UN Millennium Declaration (2000) which includes the following resolution: "To promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable." This is reflected in several of the Millennium Development Goals and in particular in Goal 3: "Promote gender equality and empower women."

This commitment is reiterated in the World Fit for Children document produced by the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children (2002) which calls for no child to be left behind: "Each girl and boy is born free and equal in dignity and rights; therefore, all forms of discrimination affecting children must end." The UN Study on Violence against Children (2006) calls on states to "promote and protect the human rights of women and girls and address all forms of gender discrimination as part of a comprehensive violence-prevention strategy."

**Together these global commitments constitute a framework for Save the Children to integrate an overarching gender perspective into its work and they represent the foundations of Save the Children's policy on gender equality.**



# Save the Children's policy on gender equality

## I. Achieving gender equality is fundamental for the realisation of children's rights

The concept of children's rights provides children throughout the world with a universal standard against which the treatment of individuals and groups by governments, civil society and community institutions is measured. The CRC underpins everything that Save the Children does and is the platform and basis for its work. Article 2 of the CRC outlines the principle of non-discrimination and is one of four guiding principles which form the building blocks of the CRC. In short, Article 2 means that all of the rights in the CRC apply to all children without exception. The other guiding principles are: the best interest of the child (Art. 3); survival and development (Art. 6); and participation (Art. 12).

### **Article 2 of the CRC specifies:**

States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

The right to non-discrimination is relevant to all of the substantive articles in the CRC including those relating to violence (Art. 19), health (Art. 24), education (Art. 28), standard of living (Art. 27) and the protection of children. Discrimination has to be addressed immediately; for example a gender bias in school cannot be defended with arguments of limited resources. It is important to note that Article 2 does not mean that all children must be treated the same. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recognises that all children do not start in the same place and has suggested that proactive or 'special' measures are sometimes necessary in order to counter disparities effectively.

The CRC establishes the following duty-bearers for guaranteeing children the enjoyment of their rights, including the right to non-discrimination: i) The State (Arts. 2.2, 3.2 and 37); ii) Parents, legal guardians and individuals legally responsible for children (Art. 3.2) and iii) Institutions, services and facilities for the care

and protection of the child (Art. 3.2). Throughout the CRC, the state is defined as the main duty-bearer and is responsible for guaranteeing the rights of the child.

The state is obliged to take certain steps to ensure implementation of Article 2. Gender specific vulnerabilities or obstacles to achieving rights for girls and boys must be identified so the state has an obligation to collect data on the situation of children which is disaggregated by sex so that gender discrimination can be identified. The state must put into place the means to ensure girls and boys are protected from any form of gender discrimination and must also take positive action to promote all of their rights free of gender discrimination.

This might include the following steps: conducting a review of legislation to ensure that it promotes gender equality; allocating the budget equitably between girls and boys; establishing a system of self monitoring at all levels and complemented by an independent review mechanism, for example an ombudsman, or monitoring by civil society. An information strategy should be developed to foster tolerance, but also to expose past violations, the media should be encouraged to avoid stereotyping and prejudicial expressions, opinion leaders and people who are strong role models, including for children, should be encouraged to stand up publicly against gender discrimination, education policies should be reviewed in order to combat gender discrimination in schools and effectively develop attitudes of tolerance and understanding, school curricula should include human rights and peace education, and the spirit of the rights of the child should influence the life of the school. The state should also work closely with civil society and children themselves to promote gender equality.

Save the Children believes that the state is the primary duty-bearer for ensuring gender equality for girls and boys and that an important element of this is its duty to support parents, guardians and other individuals responsible for the care of the child, in the performance of child-rearing responsibilities. Save the Children works to hold states accountable for their obligations under the CRC and to support their will and capacity to fulfil their obligations. It also advocates with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to ensure that it monitors states parties' progress in promoting gender equality.

## 2. Gender equality is about the relationship between women and men, girls and boys.

Laws, culture, social structures and family relationships all play a central part in defining gender roles and relationships. Gender roles are neither static nor universal but vary between cultures, over time, between generations and in relation to other social identities such as social class, socio-economic status, ethnicity, caste, sexuality, religion, HIV status, ability or disability.

Girls and boys are socialised into differentiated gender roles that place them within unequal structures of power. Girls and boys do different types of work and families have different expectations about their future according to whether they are male or female. Girl's roles and responsibilities are usually associated with their future role as wives and mothers while boys are brought

up in their role as bread winners. In many cultures children marry young and there is often a lower age of marriage for girls than for boys. In some countries, girls cannot choose whom they will marry and after marriage become subject to the control of their husbands. It is not in the best interest of girls to marry early as their education may be interrupted and the health risks associated with early pregnancy are high as their bodies are not physically mature enough to bear children. Girls often have less access to education than boys because they are primarily seen as future wives and mothers.

Save the Children believes that the rigid socialisation of boys and of girls limits their ability to reach their full potential and inhibits the full realisation of their rights as defined in the CRC and other international human rights instruments. Save the Children is committed to addressing gender inequality by ensuring that boys and girls are not discriminated against and have equal access to adequate food, education, healthcare, shelter, leisure, emotional support and respect. It will promote activities to enhance girls' self-esteem, their information and knowledge about their rights and their participation in activities and decisions that affect their lives. Experience has taught us that it is important to focus on the positive aspects of social values and norms and use them to challenge the negative values.

The organisation is committed to working with boys and men – in partnership with girls and women – to challenge the root causes of gender discrimination. Boys and men should not be viewed solely as the source of gender discrimination but as part of the solution. Positive examples of boys and men not conforming to their allocated roles should be encouraged and built upon. Save the Children believes that it is critical that men and boys are involved in this process of change, including in situations of violence, unrest and conflict in order to attain real and sustainable change in values, attitudes and practices.

### 3. Gender inequality arises because of poverty and unequal power structures in society.

Gender inequality is entangled with power relations, with issues of who defines cultural values and practices, and with the wider framework of social relations between families and communities such as racial, ethnic, caste and social class inequalities. Poverty plays an important role in perpetuating gender inequality; the gap between girls and women and boys and men in terms of access to health, education, resources, assets and decision-making, is greater in poor countries than in richer ones.

Furthermore, a greater proportion of women than men live in situations of poverty. The relationship between gender inequality and poverty is hugely complex and contingent on context. However, there is ample evidence to suggest that greater gender equality in resources such as education and access to employment can reduce the likelihood of a household being poor. Female labour force participation, in particular, has been shown to play a key role in

**CULTURE** is comprised of values, attitudes, norms, ideas, internalized habits and perceptions as well as of the concrete forms or expressions they take in, for example, social roles, structures and relationships, codes of behaviour and explanations for behaviour that are to a significant extent shared among a group of people. Children learn culture and also contribute to its continuity as well as to its transformation. Social identities are manifestations of culture and are also gendered. They are forged through a number of social relationships in which girls and boys take part. They are also a result of the cultural meanings attached to children's status relative to various adults and to other girls and boys. Socialization ideas and practices are a key part of a people's culture, and adults use 'culture' to explain or justify child-rearing and socialization practices, and even practices involving unequal treatment, abuse, etc.

cushioning households from the impact of macroeconomic shocks and keeping households from falling into poverty.

At the same time, barriers to female labour force participation remain significant in some countries. Barriers frequently identified include: the time burden associated with child-rearing and other domestic tasks, low educational levels compared with boys and men in some regions of the developing world that make girls and women less competitive for quality jobs, the role of existing male-female wage gaps in generating an 'underinvestment' in female education and laws and customs that inhibit women's participation in labour markets. Furthermore, girls and women's involvement in unpaid work within households not only drastically limits their opportunities for education and income earning opportunities, but also their ability to take time off for government programmes, social exchanges or play, and their possibilities for acknowledging their own needs for rest, recuperation or health care.

Save the Children is committed to challenging unequal power structures and focussing on those who are most discriminated against.

#### 4. Gender intersects with other aspects of children's identity such as religion, caste, disability and ethnicity.

It is important to acknowledge all aspects of a child's identity and not to view them through the lens of gender alone. For example, a girl with a disability may not be sent to school and may not be trained to be economically self-sufficient; as an adult she may not marry or inherit property and consequently her 'double discrimination' may result in her being amongst the poorest in her society. Her other 'identity' as a child with a disability interacts and impacts on her experience of being a girl and therefore on the degree to which her rights are upheld or violated. Save the Children believes that it is vital to take a holistic approach towards girls and boys and to be aware of and respond to all aspects of their identity.

#### 5. Both men and women must be supported in taking responsibility for childcare and children's development

The CRC states that the family has a key responsibility to ensure children's fundamental rights, as it is the main setting within which children are cared for and protected, and the primary place where children's first significant relationships develop. These relationships provide the foundations for children's future development. The CRC also asserts the obligations of State Parties to support parents and families to ensure children's rights. The family is the unit most recognised for providing basic emotional, physical, spiritual and eco-

conomic support to children, and the process of socialisation starts within the family. Yet parents and communities often reinforce societal prejudices and discrimination on the basis of gender. Furthermore, parenting roles are often gender-stereotyped. Mothers are seen as the primary caregivers and fathers are valued for providing material resources for basic needs, as well as administering discipline and passing on skills to children.

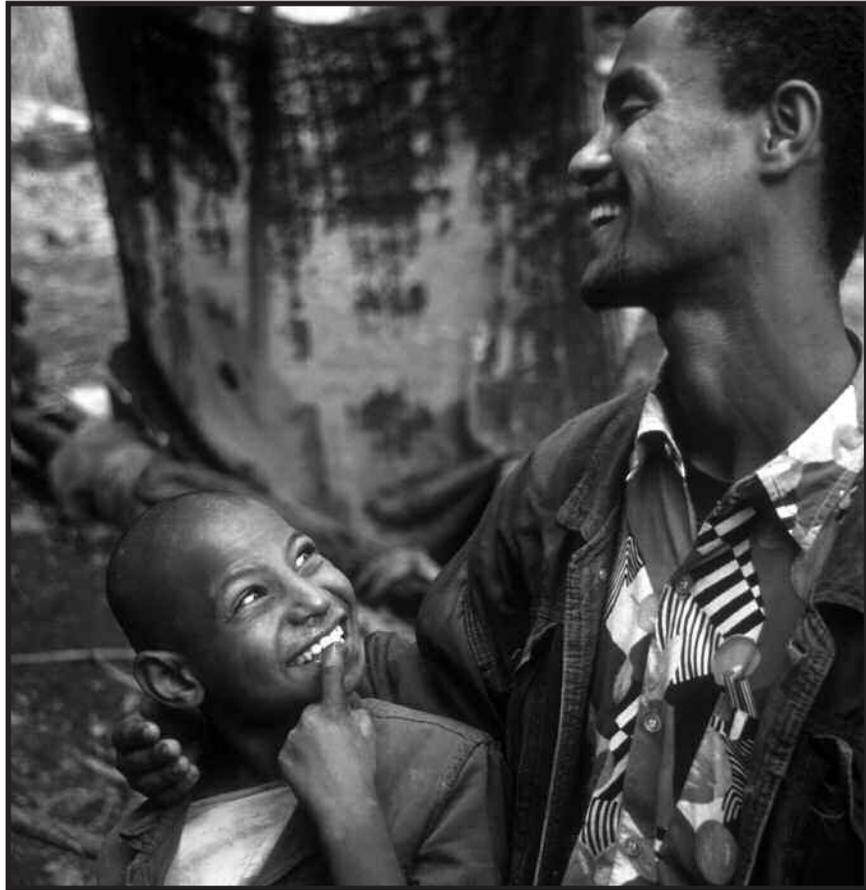
Save the Children identifies parents and caregivers as a strategic group for promoting gender equality and emphasises the importance of working with families to support more inclusive concepts of fatherhood and motherhood so that societies can accept fathers taking on the primary caregiver role for their children and mothers can play a greater role earning the financial resources and/or in educating their children. Efforts must be made to create an environment where men and women assume equal responsibility for childcare and children's development. Save the Children believes it is time for governments to break the stereotypical model of working only with women on parenting. Working with men and young men on issues of fatherhood and parenting education is crucially important as well.

## 6. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is a facet of gender inequality

Traditional gender roles almost always include male attraction to females and vice versa. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans-gendered young people don't usually conform to these expectations. They are penalised by gender norms and in many parts of the world are marginalised, discriminated against and excluded. Save the Children is committed to combating discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in all aspects of its work.

## 7. Girls and boys must be actively involved in preventing and responding to gender discrimination

Article 12 of the CRC gives the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child. The views of the child are to be given due weight, in accordance with the child's age and maturity. The active involvement of girls and boys is necessary to prevent and respond effectively to gender discrimination. Save the Children will work at different levels of society, including at community level, to raise awareness of the importance and benefits of girls' and boys' participation in decision-making about their lives. When opportunities are created for them to influence decision-makers, for instance in evaluating the gender equity in government budget allocation, boys and girls are usually good advocates on their own behalf. By listening to children, adults can better understand the impact of gender discrimination on their lives and see how to address it.



## 8. Save the Children must foster an organisational culture that promotes gender equality

Save the Children has to address gender discrimination within the organisation itself by fostering an organisational culture that promotes the equitable participation and distribution of power, access to and control over resources and equitable number of women and men at various levels both within the organisation and within the partner organisations Save the Children supports. Gender sensitive management is essential. The goal is for all staff to be gender aware, and for all management to take responsibility for implementing this gender policy and making resources available for gender training where required.

The organisation aims to create a working environment that promotes diversity and stamps out inequality and prejudice. It aims to provide guidance and opportunities for dialogue to enable employees to be clear about what is expected regarding gender equality, supported by up to date policies, practices and procedures. Its recruitment procedures and terms and conditions actively encourage applications from men and women. Save the Children should also support its partner organisations to adopt equality plans and to be trained.

## *Linking this policy with Save the Children's priority areas of work*

The following section looks at the implications of promoting gender equality within Save the Children's nine priority areas of work: Education, Child Survival, Nutrition, Health, Child Rights Governance, Child Protection, HIV/AIDS, Livelihoods and Emergency Response.

### Education

Save the Children believes that all children should have equal access to quality education in an inclusive, gender sensitive and protected environment which involves children, their families and communities in its operation. Training teachers plays a part in this but it is essential to promote gender equality in education through a holistic approach which embraces teaching methodologies, the curriculum, relationships within schools and the wider school community. Save the Children therefore advocates for gender issues to be mainstreamed throughout educational planning and practice from infrastructure planning to changes in curriculum content, teaching methodology, school structures and government policies and strategies, in order to promote education that is gender sensitive and accessible to all.

Education is a right in itself but can also be a powerful and transformative tool for addressing deep-rooted gender inequalities. If schools can provide girls and boys with the tools to question their gender roles and responsibilities and devise strategies to overcome disparities, then transformation can take place.

#### **Child participation to create a safe space for girls in schools**

Many parents in Nepal refuse to send their daughters to school, fearing them to be at risk of 'inviting abuse' and affecting their and their families' reputation. Save the Children in Nepal facilitated research by children to address this. Boys and girls carried out the research themselves which revealed that many girls felt vulnerable in school owing to teasing, verbal abuse from boys and over-familiar behaviour from male teachers. These children then developed an action plan for girls to take back their 'space' by working towards: parents recognising the importance of girls' education, eliminating early marriage and gender discrimination amongst castes and encouraging girls to speak up publicly about their abilities and strengths.

## Child Survival

Inequality and exclusion on the basis of gender are central to why some children die before they reach the age of one. Although boys are more at risk than girls before and just after birth, in some areas of the world greater numbers of girls than boys die during pregnancy and immediately after. Selective termination, abandonment, plus care-giving choices that lead to prioritisation of health care for boys rather than girls are at the root of this difference in survival.

A focus on gender is central to Save the Children's approach to work on child survival. In communities where women and girls have an equal political and social voice in both the personal and political spheres, they can more easily negotiate safer sex, access to sexual and reproductive health care and information, and maternal health services and household budgets. All of the above impact on children's chances of survival. Equally, women and girls who are literate are more able to access information about reproductive rights and are able to access health and nutritional information and negotiate on behalf of their children. The implications for Save the Children's programming and policy work on child survival is that action to tackle gender discrimination and to empower women and girls so that their voices are heard, is essential.

## Nutrition

The links between gender discrimination towards women and child nutrition rates are as follows. If a girl/woman is malnourished her children are likely to be of low weight at birth. Low birth weight has been identified as the most important predictor of child survival. Equally, practices such as females waiting to eat after males may explain why many women, in parts of the world where this is common practice, experience anaemia, again negatively affecting the health of the child during pregnancy. Discrimination interferes with exclusive breastfeeding and women's access to and control of resources to feed and educate their children.

Save the Children's approach to nutrition not only addresses the symptoms of malnutrition, but also addresses the causes. This means focusing on food and livelihood insecurity and the inadequate care of women and children. Our approach acknowledges the fact that the status of women is a determinant of child malnutrition. The effectiveness of programmes to improve children's nutritional status, and improve child health must be linked to programmes to tackle gender discrimination and improve the status of women.

## Health

Considerations of gender are central to successful approaches to child health. Primarily this is because girls' and women's empowerment has a direct impact on maternal and child health. The links are as follows: education for girls will lower the risks girls and women face in pregnancy. Girls who receive an edu-

cation are more likely to delay starting a family and to space their births. Furthermore, better educated mothers are more likely to immunise their children and know more about nutrition, and aim to ensure equal access to health services for girl and boy children. It is also vitally important to educate men and boys about maternal and newborn health.

Child marriage, female genital mutilation and violence in the home and community towards women and girls all pose serious health risks. Therefore it is essential to ensure that our health work aims to empower women in the household and beyond. What a commitment to gender equality means in practice, is illustrated as follows. Save the Children aims to ensure that data is disaggregated to provide a clear picture of the gender dynamics of childhood morbidity and mortality. Put more simply this means ensuring that we have data about women's access to pre-natal care, coverage and quality of maternal health provision and information about numbers of boys and girls accessing health services; and at what age. Similarly, we also aim to ensure that governments collect gender disaggregated data about health service use. This data is particularly important in countries where girls may experience discrimination because of the preference for sons.

Furthermore, it's important that some form of gender analysis is undertaken to understand how gender relations impact on care-taking behaviours experienced by girls and boys. It's also important to understand the links between poverty and gender – poorer children are likely to experience more ill-health - and those households that are the poorest are likely to be headed by lone women who are also illiterate. It is also essential that health services personnel are gender sensitive and this sensitivity is communicated in all information, as this will impact on the number of males and females who access health services. Adolescent sexual and reproductive health services must be built on an understanding of gender roles and other forms of social relations if they are to be effective. An understanding of masculinity, its links to sexuality and power and how this dynamic is played out in the attitudes towards sex between young people, will impact on the uptake of services by young women and men.

## Child Rights Governance

Key attributes of good child rights governance are that institutions and processes should build on the principles of the CRC in decision making, uphold the rule of law, be accountable, open, effective and responsive and give space for equal and meaningful participation by girls and boys, men and women. Poor child rights governance can result in widespread gender inequality when it fails to encourage girls and women to participate in public life, it does not allocate a fair share of resources to girls and women and it fails to include their interests in policy decision making processes.

Save the Children's approach is to hold governments accountable by, for example, monitoring resource allocations to ensure that they are equitable and by promoting the independence, sustainability and gender focus of Human

Rights Commissions, Ombudspersons or similar structures. Save the Children might support governments' will and capacity to allocate the budget equitably between girls and boys, to develop child rights legislation and policy which promotes gender equality and to actively encourage the participation of girls and women in public life. It might also support the development of legislation which includes the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans-gendered young people and work to include boys and girls in developing gender sensitive legislation and policies. It will also advocate with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to ensure that it monitors states parties' progress in promoting gender equality.

## Child Protection

The goal of child protection is to promote, protect and fulfil children's rights to protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. Promoting gender equality is central to ensuring child protection since violence and abuse both reflect and reinforce gender inequalities. During emergencies or periods of social change, the underlying factors which lead to abuse and violence may be exacerbated. Corporal and other forms of humiliating and degrading punishment is the most common form of violence against children, and affects girls and boys regardless of ethnic, social and economic status. While physical punishment is more often inflicted on boys, girls suffer enormous amount of psychological abuse to force them to conform to traditional gender stereotypes. Assumptions that boys are stronger than girls and that physical abuse helps them grow as proper men underlie these differential expressions of gender based violence.

Particular forms of gender-based violence, such as sexual exploitation, occur disproportionately against girls. Dowry related abuse, acid throwing, and early marriage affect girls and women, as do the most harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation. Certain forms of violence, such as the recruitment of boys into armed groups and drug gangs, involve a greater proportion of boys as both victims and perpetrators. The murder of street children carried out by police or death squads mainly affects boys. Although there are many contributing factors to the violence in these examples, gender norms and values are important root causes and determine how violence affect girls and boys differently.

Save the Children will work to prevent violence and abuse in the long-term and to respond to violence and abuse that has already occurred. It will work with boys and men to encourage them to reflect on the dynamic and consequence of violence and to explore how conflict can be resolved without recourse to violence. At the same time advocacy at local, national and international levels is required to ensure that acts of exploitation, violence and abuse against children, and the contexts that allow these acts to occur, are eliminated, and that those who are guilty of violence, exploitation and abuse, or who allow such acts to take place, are held accountable. Save the Children will

encourage the recognition of non-violent norms and values through working with positive male role models among local leaders (including religious leaders), cultural and sports figures in co-operation with the media, and will encourage community members to learn to read the signs of violence and abuse towards children in the home and other settings and to take affirmative action. Save the Children is committed to ensuring that the recommendations in the UN Study on Violence are implemented in full.

## HIV/AIDS

Gender inequalities are a key driver of the epidemic. Gender norms related to masculinity can encourage boys and men to have more sexual partners and older men to have sexual relations with much younger women. In some settings, this contributes to higher infection rates among young women (15–24 years) compared to young men. Girls and women often do not have access to information about HIV and AIDS which they need to protect themselves.

Violence against girls and women increases their chance of infection. Forced sex can contribute to HIV transmission due to tears and lacerations resulting from the use of force. Girls and women who fear or experience violence, lack the power to ask their partners to use condoms or refuse unprotected sex. Fear of violence can prevent girls and women from learning and/or sharing their HIV status and accessing treatment. Lack of education and economic security affects millions of women and girls, whose literacy levels are generally lower than those of men and boys. Many women, especially those living with HIV, lose their homes, inheritance, possessions, livelihoods and even their children when their partners die. This forces many women to adopt survival strategies that increase their risk of contracting and spreading HIV. Educating girls makes them more equipped to make safer sexual decisions.

Save the Children recognises that gender inequality is a root cause of the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS. It will work with men and boys, and women and girls, to tackle damaging norms and definitions of masculinity. It will ensure that girls and women as well as boys and men are educated and knowledgeable about the causes and effects of the disease through life skills education and age specific sex education. Save the Children will emphasize the importance of addressing parents and teachers and strengthening their skills and capacity in communicating with children of all ages about sexuality.

## Livelihoods

Girls and boys and men and women have different roles, responsibilities and resources available for making a living. The ability of girls and women to earn an income and be protected from poverty is undermined when gender inequalities affect pay, access to credit, ownership of land, decision making in the home over income and equal access to labour markets. Girls and women's property rights are frequently violated and it is not uncommon for customs in some

### Working with boys and young men in Ethiopia

*I hope I will be an advocate of women rights in my future career and married life and also be a good husband and good father'.*

17 year old member of Boys Group

Save the Children works with partner organisations in Ethiopia to provide a forum for boys and young men and girls and young women to discuss issues surrounding gender inequality, gender-based violence and the transmission of HIV and AIDS and to promote the idea of positive change within their communities. Partnership with boys and young men in an inclusive manner is encouraged, supporting those who do not wish to 'act out' damaging behaviours in terms of sexuality and violence and encouraging them to be committed agents of change within their communities. The groups have enhanced their members' knowledge of sexual reproductive health and promoted positive attitudes towards risk free practices. They have encouraged boys and girls to speak out about how they feel about gender inequality, about gender-based violence and about HIV and AIDS. The members have increased self-confidence in expressing themselves, the knowledge and skills needed to act as agents of change within their community and fostered tolerance and respect towards other members of the group.

countries to forbid the ownership of land to women. Women have a smaller chance of being in regular, salaried employment than men. They are also much more likely to be involved in the informal sector (including 'sweatshops' where they make up to 90 % of the labour force in some countries) where there is little, if any, employee protection and benefits. If they are in regular, salaried employment discrimination often occurs whereby men are paid more money than women for the same work.

Save the Children aims to enhance the inclusion and productivity of girls and women in economic activities and to counteract discriminatory legislation and practices based on sex. It will contribute to removing barriers to poor women's equal participation in the economy and will highlight access to resources – such as land, tenure, credit, financial resources, facilities and information – when promoting balanced power relations and gender equality.

## Emergency Response

The incidence of abuse against boys and girls often increases during and immediately after emergencies because of the breakdown in social structures and protective mechanisms normally provided by the state, community and family. Sexual exploitation and gender-based violence is a common feature of the emergency landscape and adolescent girls tend to be the primary victims. Sexual abuse and exploitation of women and girls by humanitarian employees and peacekeepers has also emerged as a threat, caused by the power differential created by humanitarian dependence. The recruitment of girls and boys by armed actors remains a widespread problem. The vast majority of children associated with armed forces are boys. However, girls too are recruited in large numbers as combatants, cooks, porters, messengers or for sexual purposes and forced marriage.

There are also significant gender inequalities in terms of disaster response, rehabilitation, recovery preparedness, risk reduction and overall in terms of vulnerability to disasters. The daily routines of girls and women place them differently at risk to disaster: they are often over-represented in agricultural and informal sectors which are more vulnerable to disasters. They are also less mobile and more likely to be confined to the house and have less decision-making power. All of this contributes to their lack of access to information regarding potential hazards and lack of opportunity to receive early warnings and reduce risks. During or after disasters (such as long periods of drought), girls are more likely to drop out of school to reduce household expenses by saving on school fees or to assist in the household with domestic tasks. Lower levels of education in turn reduce the ability of women and girls to access information and resources regarding disaster risk reduction.

Save the Children aims to create opportunities for all children to influence and shape emergency preparedness plans and engage meaningfully in emergency responses and peace processes. When implementing emergency programmes, special care will also be taken so that girls and boys at risk and under-supported groups will be informed, invited and included, including children at risk of being recruited into armed forces, gender-based violence or sent for trafficking. Save the Children will seek to reduce the underlying factors of vulnerabilities and capabilities of boys and girls to minimize harm from disasters. Emergencies present an opportunity for building interventions where boys and men – in partnership with girls and women – can take action against gender discrimination and gender-based violence.

### Reintegrating girl soldiers in Sierra Leone

*“When I first returned [from the war], I wasn’t at school and I wasn’t doing anything, but with the help of Save the Children I went to workshops, and saw other children doing training.”*

Hawa, Sierra Leone

Although it was well-known that girls and boys had been associated with the armed forces in Sierra Leone, the majority of girls were prevented from formally demobilising and accessing reintegration benefits. As a result, girls formerly associated with the armed forces lived in isolation due to their experiences in conflict, facing the stigma of having been involved in a sexual relationship with a former fighter. Save the Children worked with a group of former girl child soldiers to support re-integration into their communities, through family tracing and re-unification, facilitating peer support networks and access to education and training, as well as building better relationships with the communities in which the girls live.

## Putting the policy into practice

This section is a brief overview of how a gender perspective can be integrated into Save the Children's policies, programmes and ways of working. It is not supposed to be prescriptive in any sense but to give an idea of how gender equality can work in practice.

### Mainstreaming gender equality

Working towards gender equality requires a creative, holistic and strategic approach to programming at multiple levels to bring about widespread change in laws, policies, attitudes, perceptions and practices. Gender equality needs to be mainstreamed throughout Save the Children's work. Mainstreaming is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of both girls and boys an integral dimension of the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of all of Save the Children's programmes so that they benefit equally and so that the programme itself does not perpetuate gender inequality. Components of mainstreaming include: performing gender analyses (see below), undergoing gender training, ensuring that gender analysis is systematically included within monitoring and evaluation of programmes and having the support of a gender specialist or focal person within the organisation. It should be kept in mind that mainstreaming cannot anticipate every situation nor provide a blueprint for action; rather it should guide us through a learning process and enable us to creatively and proactively adapt our ways of working so that we integrate a gender perspective at every level of our work.

### Gender analysis

Understanding gender is the key to developing strategies to end discrimination. The starting point for any child rights programming is to conduct a child rights situation analysis and a gender analysis should be conducted as an integral part of this child rights situation analysis. This analysis will determine the key duty-bearers and the extent to which children's right to gender equality is being violated. The analysis will also include an "actor analysis" to identify who is doing what to prevent and respond to gender discrimination and will influence and inform Save the Children's planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

Any gender analysis is incomplete if it does not include children's voices. Information should be collected through listening directly to the experiences of girls and boys in order to gain awareness of the extent, nature and impact of gender discrimination on their lives. It is also important to collect information from those who discriminate. See Appendix Two below for more information on gender analysis frameworks that can be used to deepen our understanding of gender.

### CHILD RIGHTS PROGRAMMING

Child rights programming means using the principles of children's rights to plan, implement and monitor programmes with the overall goal of improving the position of children so that all boys and girls can fully enjoy their rights and can live in societies that acknowledge and respect children's rights.

### MAINSTREAMING

a strategy for promoting gender equality that is based on the fact that equality is a key social and developmental issue, not just a 'women's issue', and that therefore a gender perspective and gender analyses must be incorporated into all Save the Children's work, both institutionally and in terms of operations, and including policy dialogue, country and thematic programming, projects and programmes.

### GENDER ANALYSIS

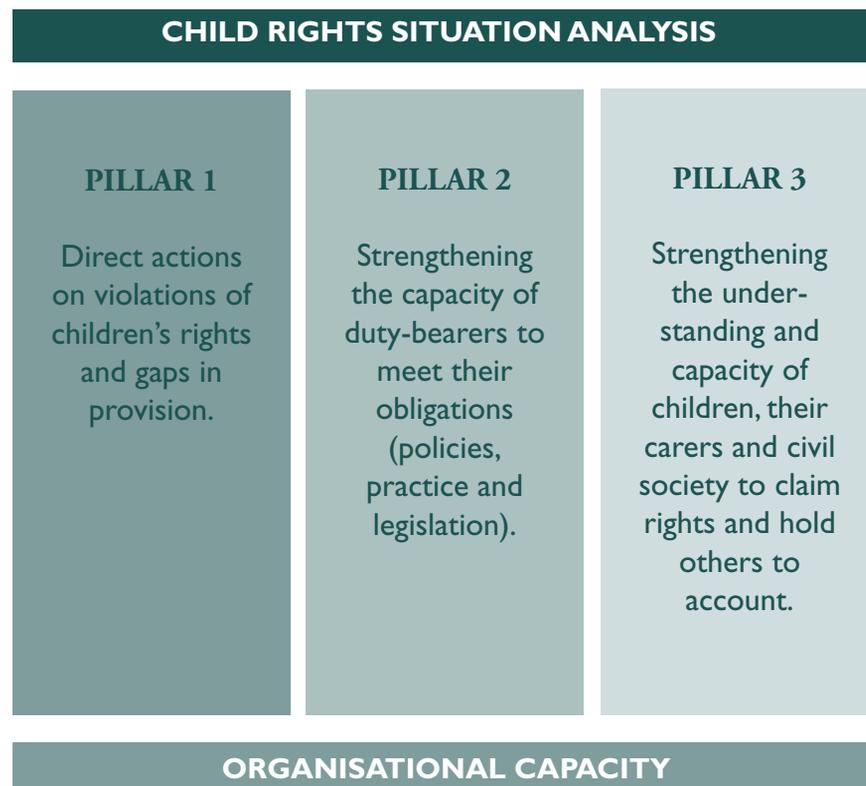
A gender analysis will systematically gather and examine information on gender differences and social relations between women and girls and men and boys in order to identify, understand and address existing inequalities which affect their ability to enjoy their rights. The building blocks of a gender analysis include looking at: attitudes and practices at community and household level; how children are socialised; men and women's and girls and boy's activities, roles and responsibilities; men and women's, girls and boys' access to, use of and control over resources.

## Child rights programming

Save the Children's work is implemented by following the principles of child rights programming. A fundamental element of child rights programming is the process through which duty-bearers (such as state officials, family and community members) meet, and are held to account for, their obligations, and through which rights-holders (children) are empowered to claim their entitlements.

Boys and girls need to be empowered and strengthened as rights-holders in order to claim their right to gender equality whilst duty bearers need to be held to account and supported to fulfil their obligations. It is often the lack of participation of rights holders and the lack of accountability of key duty-bearers that perpetuates and reinforces gender discrimination.

The three pillars model below shows the essential components of a child rights-based programme. All programmes taking a child-rights perspective should contain a mix of these different approaches. The following is an overview of how a gender perspective can be incorporated into a child rights-based programme<sup>1</sup>.



1. Getting it Right for Children: A Practitioners' guide to child rights programming Save the Children 2007

## 1. Practical actions to address gender equality

Direct actions create an evidence base to influence other practitioners and give credibility to advocacy work. Activities under this pillar could include:

- Building confidence and skills to empower those who experience gender discrimination to realise their rights.
- Removing barriers which exclude girls and boys from mainstream society and services.
- Protecting girls and boys from harm caused by gender discrimination.

### **Removing barriers to girls' education in southern Sudan**

In southern Sudan, girls are not traditionally encouraged to go to school and widespread low levels of education contribute to under-development and poverty. Save the Children started the Accelerated Learning Programme for child ex-combatants in 2001 and quickly found that this more flexible programme of learning was especially popular with girls who had missed out on education. The programme developed a focus on removing barriers to girls going to school. Strategies included: creating children's social advocacy teams to reach out to girls, their parents and communities to convince them to send girls to school; providing teacher training for women to increase numbers of female teachers in schools and strengthening parent teachers associations to support quality education, including girls' enrolment.

## 2. Strengthening the capacity of duty bearers to guarantee gender equality

This pillar emphasises the responsibilities of the state as main duty-bearer to guarantee gender equality, and calls for actions that bring about improvements in legislation, policies and practice, structures, mechanisms and resource allocation. Activities under this pillar could include:

- Providing training and capacity building on gender issues and mentoring support with state service providers, local authority officials, community and religious leaders and partners.
- Analysing existing legislation to remove gender discriminatory legislation and ensure that legal and policy implementation addresses and protects girls and boys from gender discrimination.
- Analysing budgets to ensure that resources are allocated fairly between girls and boys and that resources are also allocated to respond to gender discrimination.
- Supporting state efforts to collect data which is disaggregated by sex to identify how policies and legislation are impacting on children at different stages in their lives.

### **Civil society in Zambia empowered to work with boys on sexuality and masculinity**

In Zambia, Save the Children has built the capacity of master trainers (men and women with in-depth skills on the concepts of children's rights, sexuality, gender and masculinity). These master trainers have supported Zambian civil society organisations to enhance their understanding of how to work with boys for gender equality taking into account their perceptions of sexuality and masculinity. Based on this knowledge, which also seeks to challenge deep rooted prejudice related to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, children's organisations are now working with boys and girls to change their attitudes and behaviours thereby preventing the spread of HIV and high levels of violence against children.

### 3. Strengthening the understanding and capacity of children, their carers, civil society and other actors to claim children's right to gender equality

It is vital that children themselves participate in programming to promote gender equality; for example through children's groups or organisations. Save the Children must ensure that boys and girls' participation in programming challenges unequal power relationships and encourages values of inclusion and diversity to be respected.

*"We discussed how 'girls wear pink, boys wear blue, boys have to play football, girls have to play with dolls ...' It really changed the way I saw things. When I have to do something now I just do it – I don't care if it is a 'woman's thing.' For example, I used to be part of a dance group and I like dancing a lot. People would say: 'that's not for men, that's what girls should be doing.' ... Before when people said I'm gay, I felt very bad, like I was handicapped. Now I feel normal, like a real person."*

Jose Aranja Prata, aged 17, Brazil, participant in a Save the Children programme to challenge stereotyped perceptions of young people's sexuality and to build girls and boys confidence and self-esteem to enable them to realize their sexual and reproductive rights through exploring racial, sexual and gender identity in terms of discrimination and power.

An important way to achieve gender equality for children is to strengthen civil society actors. They can be supported to perform their roles as change agents within their society and to carry out advocacy work, constituency building and direct actions promoting gender equality. They can also be given training on gender equality. Save the Children also has a role to play in linking up child rights organisations concerned with gender equality at national and international levels and to provide support to *gender networks* for joint monitoring, reporting and advocacy activities.

Other activities include working with *parents and local communities* to develop their awareness of gender issues, reduce stigma and build their capacity to support those facing gender discrimination and advocate on their behalf.

### Challenging stereotypes of parenting

In Brazil, Save the Children supports a partner organization called “Instituto PROMUNDO.” It has been implementing a project which aims to raise awareness among boys and young men about the importance of their role as fathers. This programme is designed to foster a culture of care and respect and to promote gender equality by coordinating a photography contest on fatherhood, community events, and community mobilization activities in a low-income community in Rio de Janeiro to promote greater male-involvement in fatherhood and care giving as well as gender equality. Six community members (3 mothers and 3 fathers) are trained and work as promoters of engaged fatherhood within the community. The photo contest (“Father of son, Father of daughter”) and the exhibit of the winning photos is the culmination of the project.

It is important too to liaise with the media in promoting children's rights. The media should be encouraged to become strong spokespersons for gender equality giving boys and girls equal opportunities to influence the media agenda and they should be sensitised about the dangers of gender stereotyping and how to address discrimination based on sexual orientation.

### **Children's rights and media monitoring in southern Africa**

Save the Children supports a South African organisation called Media Monitoring Africa which is working with the media to improve its portrayal of boys and girls. The project has produced national research in South Africa and Zambia on how children are represented in the media which highlights the fact that the media tends to support negative gender stereotypes about girls as passive victims, appearing mostly in sexual abuse stories, while boys are shown as active and aggressive. These findings have been integrated into trainings and interactions with editors and journalists.

Save the Children also views the private sector as an important actor for promoting and advocating for the rights of boys and girls. Working with the private sector involves advocating for a strong gender equity analysis in corporate social responsibility policies and programmes as well as assisting in implementation.

# Appendix one

## Web-based Resources

The following is a non-exhaustive list of the most comprehensive and up to date web hubs offering extensive access to information on gender equality.

**<http://www.menengage.or>**

MenEngage is an alliance of NGOs that seek to engage men and boys in effective ways to reduce gender inequalities. Their website has extensive resources on this issue including the Rio Declaration for achieving gender equality. Save the Children is a member of Men Engage.

**<http://www.siyanda.org/>**

Siyanda is an on-line database of gender and development materials from around the world. It is also an interactive space where gender practitioners can share ideas, experiences and resources.

**<http://www.wougnnet.org/Links/aboutwomen.html>**

Website of the Women of Uganda Network with links to many resources concerning gender in Africa and elsewhere.

**<http://www.gwsafrica.org/>**

Gender and women's studies in Africa – a project of the African Gender Institute based in South Africa.

**<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/>**

Information and resources on gender equality and empowerment of women.

**<http://www.gadnetwork.org.uk/>**

UK based Gender and Development Network.

**<http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/index.html>**

BRIDGE supports gender advocacy and mainstreaming efforts by bridging the gaps between theory, policy and practice with accessible and diverse gender information in print and online.

**<http://www.igwg.org/pubstools/systemaletizing/system-gbv.htm>**

Interagency gender working group website which has a comprehensive list of resources relating to working with boys and young men to combat gender discrimination.

**[www.sida.se](http://www.sida.se)**

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency has an extensive section on promoting gender equality in development cooperation.

**<http://genderindex.org/>**

Contains the OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index which ranks non-OECD countries according to gender discrimination based on social institutions.

**<http://www.iglhrc.org/cgi-bin/iowa/home/index.html>**

The International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission provides rights-based information related to LGBT.

**[http://www.ungei.org/resources/1612\\_1763.html](http://www.ungei.org/resources/1612_1763.html)**

United Nations Girls' Education Initiative which contains various resource relating to gender and education.

## Appendix two

### Gender Analysis Tools

There are several frameworks available to help you carry out a gender analysis and some have been adapted to include a child focus. They could also be adapted to analyse other aspects of diversity. Each has different strengths and weaknesses. It is up to you to select the one that seems most useful for your context. The following are some links for finding out more about these frameworks.

Gender Roles Framework (Harvard Analytical Framework)

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/mdtmanila/training/unit1/harvrdfw.htm>

Women's Empowerment Framework (Longwe Framework)

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/mdtmanila/training/unit1/empowfw.htm>

Gender Relations Framework (Moser Framework)

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/mdtmanila/training/unit1/moserfw.htm>

Social Relations Approach (Kabeer)

[http://www.devtechsys.com/gender\\_integration\\_workshop/resources/review\\_of\\_gender\\_analysis\\_frameworks.pdf](http://www.devtechsys.com/gender_integration_workshop/resources/review_of_gender_analysis_frameworks.pdf)

Gender Analysis Matrix (UNIFEM or Parker)

<http://www.gdrc.org/gender/framework/matrix.html>

Gender Budget Analysis Tools

[http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/11279431651Tools\\_for\\_Gender-sensitive\\_Analysis\\_of\\_Budgets.pdf](http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/11279431651Tools_for_Gender-sensitive_Analysis_of_Budgets.pdf)

The Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA) Programme

[http://www.fao.org/sd/seaga/main1\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/seaga/main1_en.htm)





