

# EDC'S COMMITMENTS TO GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION



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## PURPOSE

Establish and implement a shared vision for the operationalization of EDC's programmatic and organizational commitments to promote gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) across EDC's international projects.

systemically marginalized populations. We work with communities, teachers, students, parents/caregivers, youth, service providers, and the private sector to promote gender equality and inclusivity and are committed to ensuring that gender integration is a key component of EDC's programming, not an afterthought.

## VISION

EDC upholds that working toward gender equality<sup>1</sup> and social inclusion<sup>2</sup> is integral to physical, social, and economic development and important to improving project outcomes across sectors, including in education, health, and workforce development.

Building on [EDC's Equity Principles](#) and the Guiding Principles for Gender Integration, EDC commits to designing and implementing programs that are equitable and inclusive, challenging discriminatory practices and harmful gender norms, and seeking to protect and empower the most historically and

## PROGRAMMATIC COMMITMENTS

All projects should endeavor to uphold the commitments. However, we recognize that projects vary in size and scope, and thus the depth of integration of gender equality and social inclusion may vary. However, even small projects and those with limited scope can integrate gender in a meaningful way, and EDC's Gender Working Group (GWG) is a resource for supporting projects to implement EDC's Commitments to Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) within their parameters.

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1. *Gender equality* is the goal, while *gender equity* is the minimum practice and often necessary for achieving gender equality. *Equality* means each individual and group of people is given access to the same resources and opportunities. *Equity* recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates resources and opportunities based on fairness and respective needs. See also [USAID's Gender Terminology](#).

2. *Social inclusion* aims to improve people's participation in society by mitigating issues of access to opportunities and resources and ensuring their needs and perspectives are given equal importance, along with respect for their rights in accordance with laws and policies. Adapted from: United Nations. (2016). *Leaving no one behind: the imperative of inclusive development* (p. 20). New York. Retrieved January 20, 2023, from <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/rwss/2016/full-report.pdf>.

## Identify Power Imbalances and Challenge Harmful Gender and Social Norms

EDC advocates for the rights and inclusion of socially excluded groups, including people with disabilities; religious and ethnic minorities; refugees and internally displaced persons; people with very low income; people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and others (LGBTQ+), and women and girls. We also acknowledge the intersection of gender<sup>3</sup> with other social identities and the need for thoughtful and targeted programming, which requires evidence and appropriate levels of funding. To identify the most marginalized groups and to design interventions effectively, projects must conduct or utilize an existing gender analysis or a GESI analysis to identify context-specific vulnerabilities, power imbalances, and gender inequalities, as well as to draft recommendations or a gender strategy for how to address these through project work. Ideally, a GESI analysis should be conducted during start-up (or an existing and relevant one should be utilized) regardless of donor requirements because it leads to better programming and results. However, current projects should

consult with senior leadership and the GWG as to whether any new gender research should be conducted or existing research used to inform programming.

## Design and Implement Gender Transformative Programming

EDC designs and implements programming with a gender transformative approach. A gender transformative approach promotes gender equality by critically examining, challenging, and transforming the underlying causes of gender and social inequality. In practical terms, this means the following:

- Conducting a robust GESI analysis, within the parameters of individual projects, that seeks to identify and understand the root causes of gender and social inequality and examines how gender intersects with other social identities to further marginalize or benefit individuals or groups of people
- Considering girls, boys, young women, and young men in all their diversity and at all stages of their life cycle when designing, implementing, and measuring interventions

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3. *Gender* is a social construct that includes norms, behaviors, roles, and relationships, which varies from society to society and can change over time. It is important to note that we are utilizing a binary definition of gender but acknowledge that gender also encompasses different gender identities and sexual orientations. We aim to be inclusive in our programming while also adhering to the Do No Harm principle. Adapted from: World Health Organization. (n.d.). Gender and health. Retrieved January 20, 2023, from [https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender#tab=tab_1)

4. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention. (n.d.). The Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Prevention. Retrieved January 20, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/about/social-ecologicalmodel.html>

- Challenging existing gender norms and seeking to redistribute power in relationships, communities, society, and policymaking, while adhering to the Do No Harm principle
- Designing interventions that empower women and girls while engaging men and boys as allies for gender equality
- Using a conceptual framework to design interventions, such as the Socio-Ecological Model,<sup>4</sup> which examines and addresses gender at the individual, interpersonal, system, organizational, community, and public policy levels
- Designing programs with the understanding that gender inequality looks different in different contexts, and solutions should be context-specific as well as evidence-based
- Understanding that positive shifts and sustainability in attitude and behavior change and shifting power dynamics require intentional and prolonged investment

## Engage Men and Boys for Gender Equality

Everyone suffers from inequality, but women, girls, and LGBTQ+ individuals are especially disadvantaged. Powerful men and boys are often gatekeepers in their families and communities, but gender inequality is also a detriment to men and boys. Gender norms encourage men to be strong and

self-sufficient, which can deter men from developing emotional competence and forming deep relationships with their children, their partners, families, and other men. In addition, men who adhere to traditional gender norms are less likely to seek health care and prioritize their own well-being, as well as that of their family.

With the aim of creating more equitable and inclusive societies, we challenge harmful, traditional masculinities and engage men and boys as beneficiaries of services, as well as change agents, and work with them to raise awareness about the benefits that gender equality will have for everyone. EDC also commits to designing projects to empower women and girls to make informed choices about their physical, mental, social, and economic well-being, while working with men and boys as gatekeepers in the family, community, and broader society to tackle underlying gender stereotypes, discrimination, and violence that hinders their development and progress.

## Do No Harm

EDC adheres to the Do No Harm principle. Once a project conducts a gender analysis or GESI analysis and identifies issues to be addressed, regular project monitoring should examine how interventions affect men, women, girls, boys, and all marginalized groups to avoid exacerbating and/or perpetuating existing gender and social inequalities.

EDC staff should also receive basic training on gender equality and gender transformative programming, as well as sexual harassment, to ensure there is an understanding of organizational commitments and policies. interventions affect men, women, girls, boys, and all marginalized groups to avoid exacerbating and/or perpetuating existing gender and social inequalities. EDC staff should also receive basic training on gender equality and gender transformative programming, as well as sexual harassment, to ensure there is an understanding of organizational commitments and policies.

## Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence

We take responsible measures to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV) in all our programming, including interventions to address school-related GBV, child marriage, and female genital mutilation/cutting, by ensuring that information on resources and services is accessible to survivors, as a minimum standard. As GBV is a widespread, complex problem that is also context-specific, an analysis (GESI analysis, Rapid Education and Risk Analysis, Safe Learning Environments Assessment, etc.) should be conducted to understand the key drivers of violence and risk factors to design interventions that protect and empower survivors and align with overall gender interventions.

Based on the findings of the analysis, and in alignment with local policies and laws, we work with key stakeholders across sectors, as well

as project participants, to ensure beneficiaries have safe access to services and follow-up support with a focus on well-being, equity, and inclusion.

## Measure Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Impact

While it is important to ensure women and girls have increased access to education, health services, and job and training opportunities, it is not sufficient to track participation rates alone. Indicators and quantitative data must be disaggregated by sex as well as other relevant identity markers, such as age and ability. EDC also acknowledges the importance of qualitative research to delve deeper into the *why* of the numerical data and in asking questions about this data for women *and* men, girls *and* boys in all their diversities and identities.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Our goal is for EDC to be more intentional about gender transformative programming, tracking, and measuring impact for improved project outcomes. These expected outcomes include the following:

- All projects complete or refer to a gender analysis or GESI analysis, resulting in concrete recommendations for a gender action plan or a gender strategy, as appropriate within project parameters.

- All projects integrate gender recommendations (from a gender analysis or GESI analysis or gender action plan/strategy) prominently into their annual work plan and MELP, as appropriate within project parameters.
- All projects have an assigned gender focal person (technical assistance or short-term technical assistance) or a full-time gender specialist, as appropriate within project parameters.
- All projects engage regularly with the GWG, with the approval of the project director and chief of party, and seek guidance and quality assurance support as needed and appropriate.
- All projects use evidence-based and innovative interventions to address gender inequalities and to reach the most vulnerable populations.
- All projects collect sex-disaggregated data and include at least one outcome-level gender indicator in their MELP, if possible, to track and improve programming.
- All projects have trained staff on foundational/basic gender transformative approaches and EDC's Commitments to GESI.
- EDC continues to grow its evidence-based gender programming through research and evaluation and disseminate findings for reflection and action.



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