

GENDER POLICY

Approval Date:	October 2019	Next Review Date:	October 2022
Issued/Updated by:	Executive Director	Approved by:	ALWS Board

1. RATIONALE

ALWS strives for life-changing programs that restore human dignity, alleviate poverty and build just and sustainable communities. The protection and promotion of the human rights of both women and men is fundamental to sustainable development. ALWS celebrates that God has created all human beings in His own image (Genesis 1:27). All people are equally precious in His eyes (Psalm 139: 13-14):

For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.

ALWS supports the inclusion of all people, particularly those who are marginalised by characteristics such as gender¹. ALWS recognises that women and girls suffer discrimination and marginalisation disproportionately in comparison to men and boys. Women have less access to and control over power, wealth, land and other resources. Women are less likely to be represented in decision-making bodies. Women are more likely to experience disability and women who have a physical or mental disability are likely to experience further discrimination and marginalisation because of their disability. Women and men have different roles, responsibilities, needs, interests and capacities. They are influenced by social, cultural and religious factors. Both women and men need to be considered and actively involved in development programs and emergency responses for sustained impact. ALWS recognises that women and girls are not a homogenous group and that men and boys can also experience violence, discrimination and vulnerability.

2. GOALS

1. Support programs to promote and seek gender equality and gender equity in an inclusive rights-based approach that upholds the inherent value and dignity of every human being.
2. Promote the full participation and contribution of all individuals in the work of ALWS and our partners, irrespective of gender.

3. OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure consideration of gender in the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and risk management of overseas programs.
2. To support overseas programs in providing equal access to education, healthcare, employment and economic opportunities, irrespective of gender.
3. To support overseas programs in improving gender balance and increasing women's participation in decision-making, leadership and peacebuilding.
4. To support overseas programs to uphold the human rights of people, including through awareness raising about and protection from gender-based discrimination or violence, and the provision of support for victims of the same.

¹ ALWS Strategic Plan 2015-2020 p.2

5. To provide equal opportunity at ALWS for leadership and professional development, particularly through consideration of gender in ALWS' processes of recruiting, appointing, hiring, supporting, training and decision-making.
6. To support ALWS personnel in their family circumstances in order to minimise any undue disadvantage resulting from the influence of gender perceptions, to the extent that is viable with the mission of ALWS.
7. To ensure inclusive and functioning feedback and complaints handling mechanisms for those in contact with ALWS' overseas and domestic operations.

4. COMMITMENT

ALWS is committed to promoting gender equality and equity. We respect and respond to the needs, rights and inclusion of all people, particularly those who are vulnerable and affected by marginalisation and exclusion. We build an organisational culture that protects staff, governance, volunteers, partners, rights-holders and other stakeholders from any form of discrimination or exclusion, including based on gender, gender identity or sexual orientation. At ALWS, we consider gender balance and gender awareness in our recruitment/appointment, professional development and operational processes. We commit to supporting overseas partners to improve gender equality within their organisations and in the communities they serve through their aid and development programs.

5. SCOPE

This policy applies to all ALWS personnel including Board members, employees, contractors/consultants and volunteers.

6. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this document and discussion by and within ALWS, the following definitions² of key gender-related terms are used:

Gender: refers to the socially constructed differences in norms and practices associated with being male or female, and to the roles and relationships between women and men. These may differ between cultures and contexts and may be learned or change over time. Gender is a part of a person's social and personal identity.

Gender equality: equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities for all people regardless of gender or sex.

Gender equity: fair treatment of all people, regardless of their gender, according to their needs and perspectives, through which gender equality is reached.

Gender identity: refers to self-identification, one's own view or expression of oneself, and what it means to be of a certain gender; also, all the attributes and characteristics that society expects to belong to one of the sexes.

7. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Human dignity: ALWS believes that all people have been created in the image of God and therefore have an inherent and invaluable human dignity.

² The definitions are drawn from the LWF Gender Justice Policy 2013 p 37-38 and the Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance Gender Justice Policy 2017 p3.

Inclusion & participation: ALWS values opportunity and inclusion for all people so that they can fully participate in society, the workplace, homelife and other dimensions.

Non-discrimination: ALWS recognises that discrimination, marginalisation and violence can be based on gender and seeks to minimise these risks and occurrences.

Empowerment: ALWS supports empowerment which enables people to determine and control their own lives.

Justice: ALWS envisages a world where all people live in just and sustainable communities.

Christian love: ALWS believes that God's love is demonstrated through compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience³.

8. IMPLEMENTATION

ALWS will use the following methods to ensure implementation of its Gender Policy overseas and at ALWS. To meet recognised best standards of practice, ALWS' implementation of the policy will ensure compliance with the ACFID Code of Conduct's Quality Principles and Commitments, particularly 2.3⁴, and fulfilment of the DFAT Australian NGO Accreditation Guidance Manual's gender-related criteria⁵.

8.1. External

ALWS will support overseas partners to promote gender equality and improve gender inclusion in their organisations and programs through the following methods:

1. Assessment of partners and projects through the ALWS program management suite and other partnership and project assessment, monitoring and evaluation tools
2. Communication with our partners during monitoring visits and in response to partner monitoring reports.
3. Financial and technical support, as needed, for gender context analyses which explore gender relations, program impact and the identification of strategies to respond to the findings.

8.2 Internal

ALWS will strive for continuous improvement and accountability in achieving gender equality and equity within the organisation through the following methods:

1. Promotion of gender balance within ALWS' composition of staff and Board.
2. Inclusion of gender awareness in recruitment, induction, appraisal and development processes for ALWS staff, Board and consultant positions.
3. Conducting periodic assessments, at least every three years, of the gender equality practices of ALWS and its partners (for example, through self-assessments, peer reviews, evaluations or audits) and developing and implementing action plans to address any areas of weakness

9. Responsibilities

The ALWS Board is responsible for

- approving this policy

³ LCA Standards of Ethical Behaviour, p.2 (taken from Colossians 3:12)

⁴ Commitment 2.3: We promote gender equality and equity.

⁵ Indicators A1.3, A2.4, B2.3, B3.1, B3.6, B4.1

- ensuring review and implementation of this policy at the governance level
- undertaking training and refreshers on gender
- supporting management to nurture an inclusive and non-discriminatory culture at ALWS

The ALWS Management Team is responsible for

- ensuring that ALWS implements the policy.
- nurturing an inclusive and non-discriminatory workplace culture.
- tracking progress and compliance related to this policy, creating opportunities and responding to concerns arising.
- raising awareness and fostering continuous learning on gender related matters.

All ALWS personnel are individually responsible for

- understanding and complying with this policy
- participating in awareness-raising, training and reflection sessions,
- contributing to policy implementation and the continuous strengthening of an inclusive workplace culture

All ALWS personnel are responsible for raising gender-related concerns or feedback with their line manager (for staff) or the Board Chair (for the Executive Director) or the General Church Board Chair (for the Board). Complaints related to gender should be reported to ALWS Complaints Manager in accordance with the ALWS Complaints Management Policy.

The ALWS Program Officer with the role of gender focal point is responsible for initiating, supporting and coordinating the implementation of this policy, including by responding to questions, accessing knowledge and expertise, and representing a gender perspective in discussions and program management.

10. RELATED DOCUMENTS

ACFID Code of Conduct (2017, revised 1 January 2019)
DFAT Australian NGO Accreditation Guidance Manual (2018)
PNG Church Partnership Program Theology of Gender Equality (2016)
DFAT Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy (2016)
ACT Alliance Gender Justice Policy (2017)
The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (2014)
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015)
LWF Gender Justice Policy (2013)
UN Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)

11. REVIEW

This policy is subject to review every 3 years.

11.1 Record of Policy Review and Version History

Version No.	Date Approved	Approved By	Description of Changes
1.0	2005	ALWS Board	
2.0	2012	ALWS Board	Addition of Purpose, Scope, Preamble, Conventions and Obligations, Definitions, Implementation of Policy, and supporting documents.

3.0	1 July 2015	ALWS Board	Removal of Purpose, Scope, Preamble, Conventions and Obligations, Definitions (separate appendix). Rationale, Goals and Objectives apply to both overseas and domestic, separation of implementation between overseas and domestic. New appendix checklist for monitoring.
4.0	Updated June 2019 Approved Oct 2019	ALWS Board	Addition of Guiding Principles, Commitment, Definitions, Scope and Responsibilities. Inclusion of commitment to non-discrimination regarding gender identity, sexual orientation and sexuality. Commitment to ALWS gender training and audit and inclusion of gender awareness in terms of recruitment and appraisal processes. Removal of detailed indicators at 7.1 and 7.2 which sat under the listed methods.
5.0	May 2021	Executive Director	Minor Revision to align procedure with the updated Complaints Policy and other minor formatting changes.