

Introduction

Practical Action believes that everyone, irrespective of gender, age, ethnicity or ability, has basic human rights, including access to an adequate standard of living, health and education. Women and men should have the means and freedoms to achieve their rights, including being able to choose and use technologies that assist them in leading the kind of life they value.

Practical Action recognises that gender relations and inequalities are fundamental causes of poverty. Women and girls do not enjoy the same status, power or access to and control over resources as men and boys and the benefits and costs of science and technology are not equally shared by women and men.

Practical Action further recognises that men and women are not themselves homogenous groups and that this disparity of status, power and access to and control over resources is further influenced by other factors such as ethnicity, age and ability.

In pursuit of its Vision and Mission, Practical Action is committed to ensuring equitable access to technological options for all women and men, advancing gender equality and women's empowerment through all of its work including programmes, knowledge sharing, advocacy and external communications, and through its own organisational development.

Programmes

Practical Action will seek to ensure the full participation and empowerment of women and men in all areas of its work by:

- Ensuring programmes and projects actively seek to include women and marginalised groups.
- Incorporating gender analysis that considers both the practical and strategic gender needsⁱ of beneficiaries into the design of programmes and projects, and acting on that analysis in programme and project plans by including relevant activities that contribute to gender equity.
- Ensuring project teams have the capacities and skills to implement these activities effectively and that project proposals include adequate financial resources for activities, monitoring and any necessary capacity building on gender.

- Using gender disaggregated indicators for programme and project monitoring, and evaluating gender outcomes in all projects.
- Documenting the gender analysis and outcomes of Practical Action's programmes and projects.
- Developing a greater understanding of the different technological needs of women and men through implementation of special projects and activities.
- Assessing partnerships and alliances on the basis of their commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Policy and Advocacy

Practical Action will incorporate a gender perspective into its policy analysis and advocacy by:

- Understanding the different impacts of existing policies and institutions on women and men

- Challenging the existing situation, where appropriate, by promoting policies and institutions that recognise the differing practical and strategic needs of women and men
- Supporting approaches to ensure the voices of marginalised groups, including women, are heard in policy and regulatory or institutional debates.
- Encouraging and supporting our partners, be they civil society, government or private sector institutions, to incorporate a gendered analysis in their own work.

Communications

Practical Action will seek to ensure that the external presentation of the organisation and its work reflects the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women to the elimination of poverty, by:

- Being gender sensitive in the use of language and images in all of Practical Action's informing and influencing material.
- Ensuring fundraising proposals and appeals reflect and contribute to this policy's objectives on gender equality and the empowerment of women.
- Being gender sensitive in the way knowledge is shared, recognising that women and men have different information needs and different ways of accessing information, and using appropriate means and tools to ensure women and girls have access to information.

Organisational development

Practical Action is committed to implementing an equal opportunities policy. As part of this commitment the Group will actively work towards:

- Addressing gender imbalances at all levels within Practical Action.
- Strengthening staff awareness and capabilities to understand gender issues and use gender-related analysis, providing financial resources for staff development where necessary to achieve this.
- Developing gender sensitive organisational policies and procedures.

- Ensuring its organisational structure facilitates the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, and provides sufficient resources to do this effectively.

Implementation

Implementation of the policy is a responsibility of all members of staff, who will be expected to show a gender perspective in their work by putting the above commitments into action.

Directors in the head office and country and regional offices will be accountable for implementation of the policy.

The Gender Working Group will support implementation of the policy and be responsible for developing and overseeing a monitoring system to review the implementation process. Implementation will be reported on annually by the Gender Working Group to the SLT. The terms of reference of the Gender Working Group will be agreed from time to time by the SLT, and directors will ensure that members of the Gender Working Group are enabled to contribute to its work.

ⁱ *practical* and *strategic* gender needs can be defined as follows:

Practical gender needs are the needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. Work on practical gender needs may improve the life of women by, for example, improving water supply or introducing clean cook stoves, but does not itself challenge the gender divisions of labour.

Strategic gender needs are the needs women identify because of their subordinate position in society. They vary according to particular contexts, but may include such issues as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages, and women's control over their bodies. Meeting SGNs assists women to achieve greater equality and change existing roles, thereby challenging women's subordinate position.