



Beroh Malaba-Carpenter/IFRC

IFRC STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK ON GENDER AND DIVERSITY ISSUES 2013-2020

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Saving lives, changing minds.

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



RATIONALE

The basis for the IFRC's gender and diversity work is its humanitarian mandate to prevent and alleviate human suffering without discrimination and to protect human dignity.

Gender equality is critical for the ongoing progressive development of humanity – it is a fundamental human right. The goal of attaining gender equality is not only applicable to organizations, communities and societies but is also essential for all member National Societies and the Secretariat of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Gender inequality remains a global challenge; it negatively impacts human development and economic growth. It contributes to discrimination and exclusion from access to resources, public services, education, healthcare services and employment, and to gender-based violence. Gender inequality takes many forms and is rooted in unequal power relations.

Gender is often incorrectly used as a synonym to refer to issues exclusively related to women. However, men can suffer from gender discrimination and gender-based violence also. The *IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues* is inclusive and takes into account “all those who are vulnerable to inequality, harm and loss of basic rights” because of their gender. Thus, gender refers to the social differences between females and males throughout their life cycles. Although deeply rooted in every culture, these social differences between females and males are changeable over time and are different both within and between cultures. **Gender** determines the roles, power and resources for females and males in any culture.

For the IFRC, **diversity** means acceptance and respect for all forms of difference. This includes, but is not limited to, differences in: gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, HIV status, socio-economic status, religion, nationality and ethnic origin (including minority and migrant groups). Gender interacts with other aspects of diversity as there is an important interrelationship between discrimination on the basis of gender and discrimination because of other forms of diversity.

There is substantial evidence worldwide of the negative impacts on women, girls, men and boys when humanitarian assistance is not gender- or diversity-sensitive. However, when gender equality is actively promoted, it can positively transform and enhance individual lives as well as societies as a whole. By advancing gender equality and embracing diversity, it is possible to reduce the impact of many other humanitarian problems, including violence, inequitable healthcare and the negative consequences of disasters.



The IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues 2013-2020 is aligned with Strategy 2020 and builds on the 1999 Gender Policy, including the recommendations of its 2007 review. The strategic framework is the result of a participatory drafting process carried out by the IFRC Secretariat (Principles and Values department) and a network of 46 National Societies.¹

The IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues is firmly embedded in the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. We cannot remain true to our fundamental principles unless we are able to reach all vulnerable people effectively and in a fair, non-discriminatory and equitable manner. We also need to ensure we are enabling – not disadvantaging – people of all ages from every background in society to contribute towards building the resilience and potential of individuals, their families and wider communities.

1. The following National Societies participated in the development of the IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues: American Red Cross, Argentine Red Cross, Australian Red Cross, Austrian Red Cross, Belize Red Cross Society, British Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross Society, Chilean Red Cross, Colombian Red Cross, Costa Rica Red Cross, Cuban Red Cross, Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Red Cross, Ecuadorian Red Cross, Egyptian Red Crescent Society, Ethiopian Red Cross Society, Finnish Red Cross, Georgia Red Cross Society, Guatemalan Red Cross, Honduran Red Cross, Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraqi Red Crescent Society, Irish Red Cross Society, Italian Red Cross, Jamaica Red Cross, Jordan National Red Crescent Society, Kenya Red Cross Society, Lebanese Red Cross, Malawi Red Cross Society, Mexican Red Cross, Moroccan Red Crescent, Nepal Red Cross Society, Nicaraguan Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Palestine Red Crescent, Red Cross Society of Panama, Peruvian Red Cross, Philippine National Red Cross, Salvadorian Red Cross, Solomon Islands Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross, Swedish Red Cross, Trinidad and Tobago Red Cross Society, Uruguayan Red Cross and Yemen Red Crescent Society as well as the ICRC under the leadership of Canadian Red Cross Society, Irish Red Cross Society, Jordan National Red Crescent Society, Norwegian Red Cross, Palestine Red Crescent and Swedish Red Cross.

2. The IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues' operational guides for the IFRC Secretariat and National Societies, respectively, on pages 6 and 7, are closely aligned to the [IFRC Gender Pledge](#) submitted to the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 2011. The 2011 IFRC pledge integrates as evaluation criteria: signature of the pledge by at least 60 per cent of National Societies and implementation of the IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues by at least 50 per cent of them. A mid-term review of progress on the implementation of the gender and diversity strategic framework will be conducted in line with the evaluation criteria of the IFRC Gender Pledge.

The purpose of the IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues 2013–2020 is to provide specific, strategic direction to the IFRC to ensure that its actions are non-discriminatory towards people of all ages and to promote gender equality and respect for diversity throughout all of its work. The strategic framework applies to the IFRC Secretariat and all Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies. It complements the IFRC Strategy on Violence Prevention, Mitigation and Response 2010–2020, adopted by the IFRC Governing Board in April 2011.

Three overall gender and diversity outcomes form the basis for operationalising the IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues. They are further detailed in the operational guides for the IFRC Secretariat and for National Societies:²

Outcome 1: Systematic incorporation of gender and diversity in all programmes, services and tools (covering the full management cycle from assessment to planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting).

Outcome 2: Improved gender and diversity composition at all levels (governance, management, staff and volunteers).

Outcome 3: Reduced gender- and diversity-based inequality, discrimination and violence through the active promotion of fundamental principles and humanitarian values.

A Gender and Diversity Toolkit is available on FedNet, as is a detailed explanatory note providing information on: the basis of this strategic framework, its conceptual frame and why gender and diversity are important for the IFRC's work, at fednet.ifrc.org/en/resources/principles-and-values---global/gender-issues.

1. Vision

In line with *Strategy 2020* and our fundamental principles and humanitarian values, the IFRC strives for a world in which gender equality and respect for other forms of diversity are pro-actively embraced.

2. Goal

The IFRC and its member National Societies meet the needs and basic rights – and build on the capacities and resilience – of people of all ages, without any gender discrimination and with respect for diversity.

3. Gender and diversity DIRECTIONS in line with Strategy 2020

Strategy 2020

Strategic Aim 1



Save lives, protect livelihoods and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises

1. Potential and actual issues of gender- and diversity-based discrimination, as well as opportunities to promote equality, are identified and acted upon through all programmes, services and tools (covering the full management cycle from assessment to planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting) of disaster/crisis preparedness, response and recovery programming.
2. Specific mechanisms and actions to reduce the incidence and impact of gender- and diversity-based violence are systematically built into disaster/crisis preparedness, response and recovery programming. Risk factors and protective measures are highlighted in communications campaigns, beneficiary communication mechanisms and humanitarian diplomacy.

Strategy 2020

Strategic Aim 2



Enable healthy and safe living

3. Access to primary healthcare services is improved for vulnerable women, girls, men and boys – especially those related to sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and maternal and newborn children’s health.
4. Obstacles to, and opportunities for, building the resilience of women, girls, men and boys and diverse groups are identified and incorporated into the assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation stages of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation programming (e.g., community-based disaster preparedness, mitigation activities, livelihoods or other activities).

Strategy 2020

Strategic Aim 3



Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace

5. Opportunities are created within communities, both specifically and as an element of broader developmental programmes and humanitarian operations, for learning and dialogue to promote gender equality and respect for diversity and to prevent gender- and diversity-based discrimination. This includes engagement with community, indigenous or religious leaders to build support for actions to transform gender relations and promote equality.
6. Programmes are implemented to promote non-stereotypical (open-minded) attitudes towards gender and diversity and to develop interpersonal skills such as critical thinking, non-violent communication and mediation.
7. Opportunities are created to promote the equal sharing of power and participation in political, economic and other decision-making processes for women, girls, men, boys and those from other diverse backgrounds.



4. Gender and diversity ENABLING ACTIONS in line with Strategy 2020

Strategy 2020

Enabling Action 1

Build strong National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

8. National Society gender and diversity focal points are in place and IFRC regional gender and diversity networks are created.
9. The different needs, constraints and motivations for volunteering among women and men are analysed and actions identified to ensure gender and diversity balance among volunteers, and equal access to opportunities.
10. Gender- and diversity-sensitive approaches and learning materials are included in all staff and volunteer capacity-building initiatives at national, branch and community levels.

Strategy 2020

Enabling Action 2

Pursue humanitarian diplomacy to prevent and reduce vulnerability in a globalized world

11. Decision-makers and opinion-leaders are persuaded – through proactive engagement and dialogue by IFRC Secretariat, governance and all National Society leaders – to act, at all times, in the interests of vulnerable people by protecting their equal rights and ensuring their equal access to humanitarian services. This includes addressing the specific needs of women, girls, men, boys, people who are lesbian, gay, transsexual or bisexual (LGTB) and those from other diverse backgrounds.
12. Public policies and practices that exclude and alienate groups based on gender and other forms of diversity are identified, and policies and legislation that address gender- and diversity-based stigma, discrimination and violence are advocated and promoted.

Strategy 2020

Enabling Action 3

Function effectively as the IFRC

13. Accountability mechanisms are put in place in relation to gender and diversity issues within the IFRC. In particular, it is intended for key elements of this strategic framework, including standards for addressing discrimination and gender-based violence in humanitarian action, to be incorporated into the development of any future IFRC accountability framework.
14. A coordinated approach throughout the IFRC to carry out resource mobilization for gender and diversity activities is in place. Funds are allocated to support the gender- and diversity-specific assessment, planning, implementation, reporting and evaluation initiatives within programmes.
15. The IFRC and National Societies' statutes and internal regulations are updated in accordance with the evaluation criteria of the *IFRC Pledge 2023* on Gender of the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (2011).

IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues – operational guide for the IFRC Secretariat

OUTCOMES	Performance INDICATORS – aligned with the evaluation criteria of Pledge 2093 <i>The IFRC Secretary General will report to the Governing Board on the implementation of the strategic framework on an annual basis</i>
<p>OUTCOME 1: <i>Systematic incorporation of gender- and diversity-sensitive practices in all IFRC Secretariat programmes, services and tools.</i></p>	<p>1.1 The IFRC Secretariat has a gender and diversity strategic framework and implementation plan in place</p> <p>1.2 The IFRC Secretariat has a gender and diversity focal point in place</p> <p>1.3 A gender and diversity perspective is integrated into new IFRC policies</p> <p>1.4 The percentage of IFRC Secretariat staff members who have completed the online Staff Code of Conduct training on the IFRC learning platform has increased against a chosen benchmark</p> <p>1.5 Mechanisms for IFRC Secretariat staff to safely file allegations of harassment, discrimination and violence are in place and operational</p> <p>1.6 A: The number of IFRC Secretariat offices that are reported to have hosted a gender and diversity training has increased against a set benchmark B: The percentage of IFRC Secretariat staff members who have completed a gender and diversity training has increased against a chosen benchmark</p> <p>1.7 The percentage of IFRC Secretariat LTPF annual reports that include gender-disaggregated data has increased against a chosen benchmark</p> <p>1.8 The Federation-Wide Databank and Reporting System (FDRS) allows gender-disaggregated ‘staff’, ‘volunteers’ and ‘people reached’ entries</p>
<p>OUTCOME 2: <i>Improved gender and diversity composition at all levels of the IFRC Secretariat (management and staff).</i></p>	<p>2.1 IFRC Staff Regulations have a paragraph specifying that gender and geographic distribution are diversity criteria and are decisive factors in the recruitment and/or assignment of IFRC Secretariat staff, after the fulfilment of the competence criteria</p> <p>2.2 IFRC Staff Rules are to be revised, to mention gender and geographic distribution as part of the principle of diversity and as decisive factors in recruitment and/or assignment of IFRC Secretariat staff, after the fulfilment of the competence criteria</p> <p>2.3 The ratio of women to men in senior- and middle-management positions in the IFRC Secretariat is changing in favour of the underrepresented gender in these positions against a chosen benchmark</p> <p>2.4 The IFRC Secretariat has policies or practices in place to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gender and diversity are taken into consideration in recruitment and assignment decisions • the degree to which managers are taking gender and diversity considerations into account in addition to competence criteria is reflected in the appraisal of their performances • a system of monitoring career progress of talented but underrepresented, in particular female, staff will be put into place • workplace support for specific needs of staff with parental responsibilities • an adjustable work environment for staff members with disabilities </p> <p>2.5 The percentage of IFRC Secretariat emergency response teams that have at least 30 per cent female members has increased against a chosen benchmark</p>
<p>OUTCOME 3: <i>The IFRC Secretariat has contributed to reduced gender- and diversity-based inequality, discrimination, and violence through the active promotion of fundamental principles and humanitarian values.</i></p>	<p>3.1 The IFRC Secretariat engages in humanitarian diplomacy/advocacy tackling stigma, discrimination and violence on the basis of gender and promoting gender equality and respect for diversity</p> <p>3.2 The percentage of IFRC Secretariat staff members trained on the “7 Skills for 7 Principles – skills-based application of the Fundamental Principles” (challenging stereotypes and socially/culturally imposed norms/practices of inequality based on the “Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change” (YABC) initiative) has increased against a chosen benchmark</p>

IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues – operational guide for National Societies

OUTCOMES	Performance INDICATORS – aligned with the evaluation criteria of Pledge 2093 <i>National Societies will report on the progress made in the implementation of the strategic framework through the Federation-Wide Databank and Reporting System and to the General Assembly, when required</i>
<p>OUTCOME 1: <i>Systematic incorporation of gender- and diversity-sensitive practices in all National Society programmes, services and tools.</i></p>	<p>1.1 The National Society has a gender and diversity policy and implementation plan in place</p> <p>1.2 The National Society has a gender and diversity focal point in place</p> <p>1.3 A gender and diversity perspective is integrated into new National Society policies</p> <p>1.4 The number of National Society governance personnel, staff members and volunteers who have completed relevant Code of Conduct trainings applicable for the National Society has increased against a chosen benchmark</p> <p>1.5 Mechanisms for staff and volunteers to safely file allegations of harassment, discrimination and violence are in place and operational</p> <p>1.6 A: The number of gender and diversity trainings that the National Society reports to have run has increased against a chosen benchmark B: The percentage of National Society staff members who have completed a gender and diversity training has increased against a chosen benchmark</p> <p>1.7 The National Society's entries of 'number of people reached' in the FDRS are gender-disaggregated</p>
<p>OUTCOME 2: <i>Improved gender and diversity composition at all levels of National Societies (governance, management, staff and volunteers).</i></p>	<p>2.1 The National Society's statutes and/or internal regulations have a paragraph specifying that gender and geographic distribution are diversity criteria, and are decisive factors in the recruitment and promotion of staff and appointment of governance personnel, after the fulfilment of the competence criteria</p> <p>2.2 The ratio of women to men in senior- and middle-management positions in the National Society is changing in favour of the underrepresented gender in these positions against a chosen benchmark</p> <p>2.3 The ratio of women to men, and youth to adults, in National Society representation in statutory bodies and meetings has improved against a chosen benchmark</p> <p>2.4 The National Society has policies or practices in place to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gender and diversity are taken into consideration in recruitment and promotion decisions • the degree to which managers are taking gender and diversity considerations into account in addition to competence criteria is reflected in the appraisal of their performances • equal pay and benefits for women and men • a system of monitoring career progress of talented but underrepresented, in particular female, staff will be put into place • workplace support for specific needs of staff with parental responsibilities • an adjustable work environment for staff members with disabilities </p> <p>2.5 The National Society's emergency response teams have an improved ratio of women to men in favour of the underrepresented gender</p> <p>2.6 The National Society's 'Staff' entries in the FDRS are gender-disaggregated</p> <p>2.7 The National Society's 'Volunteers' entries in the FDRS are gender-disaggregated</p>
<p>OUTCOME 3: <i>The National Society has contributed to reduced gender- and diversity-based inequality, discrimination, and violence through the active promotion of fundamental principles and humanitarian values.</i></p>	<p>3.1 The National Society engages in humanitarian diplomacy/advocacy tackling stigma, discrimination and violence on the basis of gender and promoting gender equality and respect for diversity</p> <p>3.2 The numbers of National Society peer educators trained in, and implementing, the "Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change" (YABC) initiative (challenging stereotypes and socially/culturally imposed norms/practices of inequality) has increased against a chosen benchmark</p>

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Humanity The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

The *IFRC Strategic Framework on Gender and Diversity Issues* offers strategic guidance to Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies and the IFRC Secretariat on how to work towards meeting the needs and basic rights – and build on the capacities and resilience – of people of all ages, without any gender discrimination and with respect for diversity.

Its operationalization is centred around three outcomes: (1) incorporation of gender and diversity into programmes, services and tools; (2) improvement of gender and diversity composition at

all organizational levels; and (3) reduction of gender- and diversity-based inequality, discrimination, and violence through the active promotion of fundamental principles and humanitarian values.

Gender equality and respect for diversity are critical for the ongoing progressive development of humanity – they are a fundamental human right. The IFRC's gender and diversity work is based in its humanitarian mandate to prevent and alleviate human suffering without discrimination and to protect human dignity.