Danish Red Cross
International Department
Guide for Dealing with Gender Equality
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Abbreviations

AIDS Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DAC Development Assistance Committee
DRC Danish Red Cross
ECOSOC The Economic and Social Council
HIV Human Immune Deficiency Virus
IFRC The international Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
NGO Non Governmental Organisation
NS National Societies
PRSP Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RC Red Cross and Red Crescent
UN United Nations
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
VCA Vulnerability and capacity assessment
1. **Background**

The General Assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) adopted the IFRC gender policy in October 1999. The gender policy aims to ensure that all Red Cross and Red Crescent (RC) programmes benefit men and women equally according to their different needs and with the input and equal participation of men and women at all levels within national societies (NS) and IFRC. The policy recognises that:

- natural disasters and conflicts, social and political instability may affect men and women differently and that RC emergency response and long-term humanitarian assistance may also have a different impact on men and women.
- the integration of a gender perspective into RC action is an important strategy towards the fulfilment of IFRC’s humanitarian mandate to improve the lives of the most vulnerable.
- IFRC operates in a wide variety of cultures; as such it needs to take a culturally sensitive approach with regard to mainstreaming a gender perspective in RC work.
- the full participation of both men and women in all RC actions not only ensures gender equality, but it also increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the organisation.
- although the primary task of national societies is to ensure gender sensitivity in their existing programmes, they may also implement projects to assist special groups of men or women, if local situations so require.

Danish Red Cross (DRC) is committed to the IFRC gender policy. However, experience has shown that gender equality is not always properly integrated into DRC supported programmes. Furthermore, where gender equality has been dealt with, it is not always clearly documented and visible in programme implementation.

DRC’s experiences are in line with experiences of other organisations. A Danida study conducted in 2001 showed that the good intentions stated in gender policies and strategies have in many cases not translated into programme implementation. Compared to the past, women are more involved in Danish supported programme activities; however, it is not always ensured that the women enjoy the benefits from the activities and little attention has been given to women’s political rights and their participation in the development process. In response to this problem, Danida has developed a new Danish Strategy for Gender Equality. The Danish strategy advocates support to gender equality through mainstreaming and prioritisation, and through support to special measures for the advancement of women. Some programmes are more people oriented, and priority is given to these programmes where gender equality is likely to have a higher importance. The support is focused on equality in terms of rights, resources and voice.

DRC has developed the present guide with the aim to ensure that DRC programmes properly address gender equality. The aim of the guide is to be a practical tool assisting DRC, partner national societies and their networks in mainstreaming gender equality in programmes. The guide shall also be a tool for DRC’s prioritisation and focus when dealing with gender equality.
The guide includes the following sections:

1. Background
2. What is gender equality
3. How to deal with gender equality
4. Translating the policies for gender equality into practice
5. Creating commitment to gender equality

2. What is Gender Equality

2.1 The International Commitment to Gender Equality

It is globally recognised that gender equality is a matter of human rights and social justice, and that it is also critical for achieving the goals of poverty reduction and sustainable development. Poverty in its wider sense is being deprived of income and basic capabilities including education, access to health services and basic rights. Many of the world’s poor are women and their poverty is linked to their position as women. Unequal gender relations also reduce opportunities for overcoming poverty, and as such gender equality can support development. In many places in Africa women have less access to inputs and technical advice when farming. A study from Burkina Faso showed that women’s plots have significantly lower yields than those of men due to inefficient allocation of labour, manure, fertilizer, etc. The study also showed that with a more even distribution of available fertilizer across the fields of women and men, production would increase by 10 to 20 percent. (World Bank 1999)

2.1.1 CEDAW and the “Platform of Action”

The international commitment to gender equality is stated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and in the document “Platform for Action” from the fourth world conference for women held in Beijing, 1995. Gender equality and women’s rights are also dealt with in international human rights instruments including: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention of the Political Rights of Women; the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict.

CEDAW, adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. The Convention provides the basis for realizing equality between women and men through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life - including the right to vote and to stand for election - as well as education, health and employment. Till date (June 2003), 174 countries - ninety percent of the members of the United Nations - are party to the Convention and an additional 3 have signed the treaty, binding themselves to do nothing in contravention of its terms. States parties agree to take all appropriate measures, including legislation and temporary special measures, so that women can enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms. (http://www.un.org/womenwatch)

The Platform of Action addresses equality between women and men as a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and also as a necessary and fundamental prerequisite for equality, development and peace. The Platform of Action calls upon Governments, the international community and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to take strategic action amongst others in relation to:
• Inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to education and training.
• Inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to health care and related services.
• Violence against women.
• The effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation.
• Inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels.
• Persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child. (http://www.un.org/womenwatch)

2.1.2 The Millennium Goals
As shown below, gender equality is also prominently reflected in the international millennium goals.

The overall aim of the millennium goals is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, the aim being to halve the proportion of people whose income is less than one USD per day. The millennium goal number three is to promote gender equality and empower women.

• Target number 4 is to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015.
  Other targets relevant to gender equality are:
• To reduce the maternal mortality rate by three-fourths in relation to the 1990 level by 2015
• To give access to reproductive health services for all individuals of appropriate age as soon as possible and not later than in 2015

UNDP 2003

2.1.3 Emergencies and refugees
The Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict amongst others states that women and children belonging to the civilian population and finding themselves in circumstances of emergency and armed conflict in the struggle for peace, self-determination, national liberation and independence, or who live in occupied territories shall not be deprived of shelter, food, medical aid or other inalienable rights in accordance with international human rights instruments.

“.. becoming a refugee affects men and women differently and [ ] effective programming must recognise these differences. ….”

Traditional roles are often disrupted and then either undermined or reinforced by the refugee situation. It is, therefore, essential that organisations working with refugees recognise that special initiatives must often be taken to ensure that all refugees have the opportunity to contribute actively.

UNHCR Policy on Refugee Women 1991
The protection of refugees against sexual and gender based violence is specifically addressed by the Humanitarian Accountability Project hosted by IFRC (see also section 5). UNHCR has also developed “Guidelines for Prevention and Response” May 2003 to address this issue.

**Guiding principles for prevention of and response to sexual and gender based violence**

Principles which guide development, implementation and monitoring of programmes:

- engage the refugee community fully;
- ensure equal participation by women and men, girls and boys in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes;
- ensure coordinated, multi-sectoral action by all actors;
- strive to integrate and mainstream actions;
- ensure accountability at all levels.

Principles which govern protection and assistance for individuals who are victims/survivors of violence:

- ensure the physical safety of the victim(s)/survivor(s);
- guarantee confidentiality;
- respect the wishes, the rights, and the dignity of the victim(s)/survivor(s), and consider the best interests of the child, when making any decision on the most appropriate course of action to prevent or respond to an incident of sexual and gender-based violence.
- ensure non-discrimination

*UNHCR 2003*

2.2 **Gender Equality**

For DRC, gender refers to the roles, responsibilities, needs, interests and capacities of both men and women and the relations between men and women¹. These are influenced by social and cultural factors, they change over time and can be changed.

Gender equality is the result of equal opportunities and equal rights for women and men to participate in society and to benefit from development. “Gender equality requires equal enjoyment of women and men of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Gender equality does not mean that women and men become the same, but that their opportunities and life chances are equal” (DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development-Cooperation).

To achieve gender equality, a focus on economic development is important but not sufficient. Economic development may help to reduce disparities, but it is equally

¹ IFRC’s policy on gender equality refers to roles of men and women only but DRC has decided to include the relations between men and women when dealing with gender equality also.
important that men and women experience the same rights to participate and influence the development process. Gender equality can be described as the equal opportunities and benefits of women and men in relation to rights, resources and voice.

- **Rights** are to be improved to offer a foundation for equality in opportunities and participation for women and men. These may be legal rights, but also rights in a wider sense, such as freedom of movement, the right to privacy, sexual and reproductive rights, etc.
- More and better access to **resources** is needed to improve women’s income earning capacity, but also their human capabilities which will improve their lives beyond the economic spheres.
- Women as well as men also need to get the opportunity to have their voices heard. **Voice** refers to women’s equal participation with men in decision making at all levels, and to influence the course of development through the right to vote and be elected, through freedom of expression, and through participation in decision making from the household to the national level.

*World Bank, Engendered Development 2002*

### 3 DRC’s Approach to Gender Equality

DRC aims to support gender equality through their emergency and development programmes. The approach pursued by DRC in achieving the objective of gender equality encompass three aspects:

- Focus;
- Mainstreaming; and
- Flexibility.

#### 3.1 Focus

When addressing gender equality, DRC works within the framework of rights, resources and voice: DRC will in the design of programmes consider and, where relevant, address gender equality in terms of:

- women’s and men’s legal rights and rights to privacy and sexual rights;
- women and men’s access to resources and control with benefits;
- women’s equal participation in decision making from household to the national level.

The framework of equality in form of rights, resources and voice will help DRC to focus its interventions to effectively support gender equality.

#### 3.2 Mainstreaming

The overall DRC strategy is to mainstream gender into DRC supported programmes and projects. In accordance with the international agreements, DRC uses the term “mainstreaming” to describe the integration process in programmes and projects.
Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming is defined as “… the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.”

(ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2)

Mainstreaming means that rather than building women’s components into larger projects, the objectives and priorities of the projects and programmes themselves should include the overall goal of equality\(^2\). The starting point for programme planners and implementers, therefore, is to analyse existing roles and powers of women and men and to assess how interventions may impact on women’s and men’s possibilities to enjoy socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards.

As part of the overall DRC strategy to mainstream gender, DRC may also support special interventions targeting the advancement of women, if deemed necessary. An example could be advocacy for women’s sexual and reproductive rights in relation to HIV/AIDS, or advocating against violence against refugee women. DRC may also specifically support special interventions addressing problems of men. In the former Soviet Republics, men face severe problems with unemployment, alcohol misuse and violence, and men’s life expectancy is dropping dramatically. Interventions specifically targeting the advancement of women may in many situations include men as the target group. When advocating the sexual rights of women in a male dominated society like Bangladesh, men in general and male political leaders in particular also need to be addressed.

3.3 Flexibility

The IFRC policy states that a culturally sensitive approach shall be followed with regard to mainstreaming of a gender perspective in RC work. DRC will pursue a culturally sensitive approach, and DRC will support NS gender policies. The DRC supported interventions should always in the long perspective support the objective of gender equality, however, DRC will enter into a dialogue with national partners and will take this dialogue as a starting point.

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\(^2\) DAC sourcebook on concepts and approaches linked to gender equality. OECD 1998
4 Dealing with Gender Equality in Development Programmes and Disaster Situations

If the programme is well designed, then gender equality is embedded in programme objectives and form an integral part of the programme strategy and of programme implementation. The DRC programme cycle contains five steps a programme goes through from its identification to its completion. The linkages between gender equality and the different steps are depicted in figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Gender equality in the DRC programme cycle

4.1 Gender Situation Analysis at Country Strategy Level

The existing gender situation analysis at country strategy level establishes the context in which programmes and projects will be implemented. These analyses therefore form the starting point when DRC decides how to deal with gender equality in a programme.

DRC develops a Country Strategy in countries where it supports national societies. Country Strategies include a vulnerability analysis. DRC will ensure that the vulnerability analysis also includes gender equality.

Some national societies have conducted a vulnerability and capacity assessments (VCA)\(^3\). The VCA process aims to heighten the awareness of communities and aid organisations before a disaster strikes and using the capacity in communities to mitigate the risk. VCA is also used to determine vulnerabilities and capacities of beneficiaries of development programmes. VCA reveals the risks and problems which vulnerable people perceive to be most threatening, and VCA concentrates as much on the capacities of exposed communities as on their needs and vulnerabilities.

Where the VCA includes a gender analysis, this analysis should, together with the analysis in the DRC Country Strategy, form the background for how to address gender equality in terms of rights, resources and voice in DRC supported programmes.

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\(^3\) Reference is made to world disaster report 2002 chapter six, and Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment, an International Federation Guide IFRC 1999
4.2 Programme Identification.

When identifying a new programme, a first question in terms of gender equality is whether priority should be given to gender equality in the programme. The following three questions will guide programme officers when deciding which priority to give to gender equality in a programme. The VCA and the Country Strategy should be used as a reference when answering the questions.

**Checklist for prioritisation**

- Is it relevant to describe the development and immediate objectives of the programme in terms of change in the roles and opportunities of women and men?
- Is the programme likely to influence the roles and opportunities of women and men?
- Are there any existing disparities between women and men which have to be overcome for the programme to be successful?

In programmes where the response to one of the above questions is positive, DRC will conduct a gender equality situation analysis. The situation analysis shall help DRC to decide how to address gender equality in the future programme. Through the gender situation analysis, DRC aims to understand men’s and women’s roles, responsibilities and opportunities for development in terms of rights, resources and voice within the area of intervention. The situation analysis shall be short and shall build on existing documentation.

**Programme Specific Gender Situation Analysis**

1. Gender equality in the PRSP and national sector policies
2. Gender equality in NS policies and strategies
3. Gender disparities in the area of programme interventions
   a. Roles and relations between women and men
   b. Women’s and men’s access to and control with resources and benefits
   c. Equality in rights; reproductive and sexual rights and property rights
   d. Equality in voice; participation and influence on decision processes
4. Identified priority areas for gender work in the sector in relation to equality in rights, resources and voice
5. Identified needs for special measures for the advancement of women, if needed
6. Identify needs for capacity building in NS and its network
7. Identify specific needs for advocacy

DRC emphasises that NS and its network takes ownership to programmes. In most cases, programme formulation includes stakeholder consultations. If a workshop is

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4 Relevant documents could be e.g. NS gender analysis, Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes (PRSP), analysis carried out by other donors or international NGOs, Government sector gender strategies.
conducted the problem analysis can include the analysis of gender disparities in the area of programme interventions (point three above).

In disaster programmes time may not allow DRC to conduct a thorough situation analysis, before the programme starts. In this case, the gender analysis should be carried out during programme implementation, and adjustments should be made accordingly.

### 4.2 Programme Formulation

With the situation analysis in place, the next step is to formulate objectives and develop the programme strategy.

**Programme Objectives**

In programmes where gender equality is a priority, programme objectives shall reflect this. The objective should lead to a situation where both women and men will enjoy the goods, opportunities, resources and rewards created.

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**HIV/AIDS programme**

Development objective: The prevalence rate of HIV amongst young men and women (15 – 19 years) reduced by 50% by year 2005.

Immediate objectives:

- NS capacitated to advocate for sexual and reproductive rights for men and women

Young men and women in target area have knowledge and life skills to change sexual behaviour – delay sexual debut and increase use of condoms.

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**Refugee programme**

Development objective: All refugees have the capacity to return to their villages when the security situation allows them to return.

Immediate objectives:

- The human rights of all refugees despite gender, race and age are respected.
- All refugees despite gender, race and age have access to resources to sustain their living in the refugee camp.

All refugees despite gender, race and age participate on equal terms in decision processes in the camp.

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**Programme strategy**

Gender equality forms part of the DRC vulnerability parameter. The programme strategy will address the vulnerability parameter, including gender roles. When designing the programme strategy, the following questions must be asked:

- What are the problems encountered by women and men in the sector/sub-sector?
- What can be done to ensure that the interventions positively affect women and men in terms of rights, resources and voice?
• What can be done to ensure that both women and men enjoy the benefits and opportunities created by the programme?

**When designing a refugee programme, important strategic considerations will be:**

- The change of roles among men and women when people become refugees
- The life styles before flight, particularly roles, how roles have changed since the onset of the refugee emergency
- Particular groups have individual fears, such as threats of sexual harassment, rape
- How to improve the living situations of different categories of refugees (women, men, children, old, sick, etc.) asking how they can be helped to help themselves
- Immediate needs, such as the site layout to protect refugee women and girls, nutritional needs etc.
- Longer term needs including information on legal rights, documentation, registration cards for assistance, information on their refugee status, education and skills training or the provision of economic opportunities
- Specific health needs of different categories of people, such as older people, reproductive health care for women
- The skills refugees have and whether such skills can be utilised
- The implications of who is head of the household

*IFRC Training Pack on Gender Issues, Strategy 2001*

**Outputs and activities**

The outputs and activities in a programme will as mentioned above be determined by the strategy chosen. A gender sensitive strategy will result in outputs considering the roles of men and women and their relations.

**Outputs, HIV/AIDS**

If the immediate objective of a HIV/AIDS programme is to change the sexual behaviour of young men and women, then outputs could be:

- 1,000 young women and 1,000 young men reached by peer education programme
- Information campaign targeted to elder men and male teachers in communities have reached 2,000 men
- Condoms made available in youth friendly clinics and sport clubs
Outputs, refugee programmes

If the immediate programme is to respect the human rights of all refugees despite gender, race and age in the refugee camp, then examples of outputs could be:

- A code of conduct developed with participation of male and female refugees representing different races and different age groups
- Water sources established in open spaces, safe for women
- An income generating programme established where both men and women benefit
- Sports activities for young boys established

Indicators and critical assumptions

DRC use five parameters to determine if programmes successfully contribute to DRC’s overall strategy and policies. The five parameters are: capacity building; vulnerability; effectiveness (including cost effectiveness); sustainability; and advocacy. Gender equality is included in the vulnerability parameter stating that programmes shall reduce the target population’s vulnerability (understood as the capacity to institute ones rights within prevailing social, economic, cultural and political circumstances.

DRC will select one indicator from the programme matrix to monitor if the strategy and the vulnerability parameter is being achieved. DRC will use a gender sensitive indicator, where feasible.

When implementing the programme, it is important to monitor if the programme builds capacity for women and men in terms of rights, resources and voice. Sex disaggregated data are important when monitoring gender equality at objective level. It is also important to have sex disaggregated data at output level, but 50% participation of women is not a goal in itself. 50% participation will not increase equality if women serve tea only and do not participate actively in the discussions.

<p>| Indicators, HIV/AIDS | If the development objective of a programme is to reduce the prevalence rate of HIV amongst young men and women (15 – 19 years) by 50% by year 2005, an indicator could be: | HIV/AIDS sero-prevalence among young girls (14 – 24 years) and HIV/AIDS sero-prevalence among young boys (14 – 24 years). | If the immediate objective of a HIV/AIDS programme is to change the sexual behaviour of young men and women, then indicators could be: | Number of boys reporting to use condoms | Percentage of girls and boys who have not had sex before turning 15 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators, refugee programmes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If the development objective is to reduce the prevalence rate of HIV amongst young men and women (15 – 19 years) by 50% by year 2005, then the indicator could be:</td>
<td>• Percentage of men and women reporting that they have resources and physical and social capacity to return to their village when possible.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| If the immediate programme is to respect the human rights of all refugees despite gender, race and age in the refugee camp, then examples of indicators could be: | • Less than 5\% of female refugees face violence from their partner or other refugees  
• 50\% of members in committee deciding on income generating activities are women. |

### 4.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

DRC monitors programme progress through the selected indicator for the vulnerability parameter and indicators from the programme matrix. DRC’s monitoring of gender equality will follow the reporting format described in DRC’s monitoring and evaluation guide.

During reviews, gender equality will be included as part of the objective of the review and in the assessment of achievements, problems and adjustments of programme strategies. (Reference is made to DRC’s monitoring and evaluation guide section 6.3)

### 5. Accountability – How to Ensure Commitment

According to DAC, the slow implementation of gender equality policies has prompted a call for stronger accountability structures to ensure that staff fulfil commitments their governments and agencies have made to women’s equality⁵.

DRC is associated with HAPI – Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International. HAPI, as it is increasingly known, was the outcome of the Humanitarian Accountability Project hosted by IFRC. It’s basic objective is to strengthen accountability towards those affected by crises situations, and to facilitate improved performance within the humanitarian sector in order to reduce the risks and effects of disasters on marginalized and vulnerable populations. ([http://www.ifrc.org/docs/news/speech03/eg 211003.asp](http://www.ifrc.org/docs/news/speech03/eg 211003.asp)).

DRC has developed a generic list of checkpoints and has established the person responsible for DRC achieving the check point. The list is meant as a tool to hold DRC staff accountable to gender equality. DRC will also use the list as a tool for a structured dialogue between DRC programme staff, NS and other partners involved in design and implementation of DRC supported programmes. In this way the list will be used to decide who will do what, at what time, to ensure that gender equality is addressed in programmes and projects.

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⁵ DAC Source Book on Concepts and Approaches linked to Gender Equality 1998
## Checklist for gender equality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme cycle</th>
<th>Check points</th>
<th>Responsible person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Country strategy | • Gender equality addressed in DRC Country Strategy  
• Supporting the cooperation agreement strategy process, for it to include gender equality  
• Partner NS vulnerability strategy addresses gender equality  
• NS plan for capacity building on gender equality in place. | DRC coord.  
DRC coord./  
NS/IFRC  
NS/IFRC |
| Identification  | • Argumentation clearly stated for not addressing gender equality specifically in a programme or programme specific gender analysis addresses women’s and men’s rights, access to resources and voice. | NS/DRC coord. |
| Formulation  | • Programme objectives reflect the situation for men and women, if relevant  
• The programme strategy addresses women’s and men’s rights, access to resources and benefits and voice in decision processes, if relevant.  
• Indicators are sex disaggregated  
• Support to NS capacity building includes gender equality, if relevant | NS/DRC coord  
NS/DRC coord  
NS/DRC coord  
NS/DRC coord |
| Planning and Implementation  | • Annual work plans reflects priorities in gender strategy  
• Programme strategy on gender equality followed in programme implementation  
• Capacity building on gender equality carried out for NS staff, if relevant  
• Annual reviews address gender equality | NS/DRC coord.  
NS  
NS/DRC coord.  
DRC coord. |
| Monitoring and Evaluation  | • Annual progress reports include an assessment of the fulfilment of the strategy for vulnerability, including gender equality in priority programmes  
• Sex disaggregated indicators are used in progress reports  
• Needs for adjustments addressed if gender equality is not reflected in progress reports | NS  
NS  
DRC coord |

In practice, the development of the DRC Country Strategy and the identification of a programme is often undertaken in parallel processes. It is therefore not a precondition for the further work, that gender equality has been addressed in the DRC Country Strategy for DRC to start formulating the programme. However, gender equality should be included in the process when designing the Country Strategy and the programme.

In most situations programmes are identified and formulated in a partnership between a NS and DRC. The responsibility for addressing gender equality when identifying and formulating DRC supported programmes is therefore shared between DRC and the NS.
All Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies refer to the IFRC gender policy, however, the translation of the policy into practice depends on culture and the national context. Below are a few examples on how DRC could address gender equality in difficult situations.

**Including gender equality during programme identification when the NS does not give priority to gender equality**

A NS may not give priority to gender equality, either because they don’t see gender equality as a problem or because it is tabooed. In this situation it might be a starting point simply to discuss what are the problems and opportunities of men and women in relation to the programme, and how one can best ensure that both sexes benefit from the programme.

Many countries have ratified CEDAW and have national gender policies. These may also be a starting point for a dialogue, in particular if the perception is that gender equality is a phenomenon from developed western countries only. If gender equality has a negative connotation in the society, then the starting point may be to talk about the advancement of women.

**Gender equality in the partnership**

DRC and the NS formulate the Country Strategy and a programme in a partnership. A partnership means that the points of views of DRC and the partner NS are both valid. An open discussion about how the two societies sees gender equality may therefore be a good starting point.

**Dealing with gender equality when the programme formulation is a participatory process**

In a society where men and women from tradition live apart, women’s voice may not be heard in a participatory process like a LFA workshop. Women might be present at meetings, but do not raise their points of views. In this situation, it might be more relevant to form separate groups of women and men and let the two groups identify problems and possible solutions.

The role of the facilitator is important in this respect. It might be necessary to have a female facilitator for the women and a male facilitator for the men.

If the community leadership rests with the elder men, the facilitators may then present the women’s points of view to this forum and make sure that the points of views of the women are included. If culturally acceptable, women representatives may also present the women’s points of views.
References:

- DAC 1998: DAC Source Book on Concepts and Approaches Linked to Gender Equality
- IFRC 2001: Training Pack on Gender Issues
- UNHCR 1991: Policy on Refugee Women
- UNHCR 2003: Sexual and gender based violence against women, returnees and internally displaced persons
- World Bank 1999: Technical Paper No. 428
- World Bank 2002: Engendered Development