

oikos
cooperação e desenvolvimento



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| **Gender Equality Policy**

EQUALITY

GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

1. SCOPE

Whilst promoting dignity and solidarity towards building a fairer world, and seeking to provide and promote tolerance and social justice, Oikos – Cooperação e Desenvolvimento nevertheless acknowledges that it is impossible to break the cycle of poverty and social injustice until equal rights and opportunities are available to all.

The concept of gender equality is widely recognised in the regulatory framework of treaties and other international policies. Oikos recognises the gap between legislative discourse and practice, which leads to discrimination and inequality and makes individuals of different gender identities vulnerable in different walks of life.

The organisation recognises that unequal power relations between genders can only be defeated, within the scope of social justice, by promoting gender equality. This policy seeks to ensure that gender equality is fully embedded in all of the organisation's activities and is also an efficient means to eradicate poverty.

Each person and community should reflect on establishing relations of power between people, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation, and build a more equitable system based on individual dignity and respect for the human rights of all people. While there is no single model to promote change in unequal relations, the object of this policy is to support the construction of an equality-based system and to address issues of gender inequality. Gender difference is understood as being different from sex differences, and is not the same as biological differences, but is rather

a social and cultural construct developed over the years. Oikos recognises that gender is non-binary, and the terms and definitions relating thereto are diverse and constantly evolving. All of the organisation's activities promote the protection of all genders alike, according to the orientation, identification and sexual expression of each individual.



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2. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all employees, partners and third parties related to the organisation's activities.

- 'Employees of the organisation' means all members of the Head Office, including all members of the Executive Management and of the different Departments, and the different Delegations in each country where the organisation operates.
- 'Partners of the organisation' means all entities who share activities and functions under a contract in the various projects and countries in which Oikos operates.
- 'Third parties related to the organisation's activities' means the volunteers, trainees, donors, consultants and other national or international entities other than those included in the aforementioned paragraphs.

This policy applies during and after contracted working hours. Any activity of employees, partners and third parties related to the organisation's activities performed outside contractual working hours that do not follow this policy will be considered a violation thereof.

3. DEFINITIONS

Diversity

Diversity recognises that each individual is unique, meaning acceptance and celebration and finding strength in individual differences such as gender, age, nationality, race, ethnicity, skills, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and religious, political, philosophical and ideological beliefs.

Exclusion

Exclusion is the process that prevents a person or group from upholding their rights. Exclusion is caused by a large mismatch in the distribution of resources and power, inequality in value ascribed to different groups, and by social norms that perpetuate such differences.

Gender Identity

Gender identity is defined as a personal conception of oneself as male, female or both or neither, and their gender identity may or may not be the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. Everyone has an identity and can express their gender in a unique and personal way.

Gender Equality

Gender equality implies that everyone, regardless of their gender, has the same status in society, the same human rights, the same respect within a community, equal opportunities to make choices in their lives, the same capacity and power to shape the results of their choices, and equal responsibilities towards others. Gender equality also recognises different priorities, needs, addressing different constraints and achieving different opportunities, and also means transforming relationships between

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gender identities to create a fairer society for all.

Social and Gender Justice

Social and gender justice means that inequalities between people of different genders cease to exist and implies equality and the end of subordination to a prevalent gender. Any person, regardless of their sex and gender identity, has equal access and control over resources, equal access to centres of power and decision-making, the ability to make choices in their lives and access to services to redress inequality as needed. Commitment to social and gender justice means taking a stand against gender discrimination, exclusion and gender-based violence.

4. PRINCIPLES

Oikos is an organisation based on rights. Gender equality is an internationally recognised human right and Oikos promotes awareness of equality and dignity of human rights, pursuing values such as equality and non-discrimination.

The organisation recognises that problems arising from gender inequality are related with other forms of oppression and unequal power relations such as racism, caste, ethnic discrimination, homophobia, colonialism, religious discrimination, among others.

Oikos works with people of all gender identities and their communities to promote the end of structural barriers and raise awareness for equal rights, social and gender justice, peace, well-being and a life free from any sort of violence.

- Oikos shall always base its discourse and action on gender equality, which is a core aspect of its work, mode of action and public image.
- Oikos promotes an organisational culture that understands and supports gender equality within and outside of the organisation, which is expressed in the behaviours and attitudes of its members and teams.
- Oikos shall promote gender rights and equality in the political, economic, social and cultural dimensions, helping to eliminate stereotypes. Gender equality should be secured throughout the organisation by enforcing equality strategies. To ensure gender equality, Oikos shall establish equality criteria to carry out its analyses and diagnoses, as well as indicators to ensure compliance with this commitment.
- Gender equality is the collective and individual responsibility of the organisation's employees, and also requires specific actions and resources to ensure its implementation. Specific measures should, therefore, be adopted to address the issue of discrimination and counteract the continuation of gender inequality, such as policies, procedures and rules that promote gender equality across the organisation's activities.
- Gender equality can only be achieved by associating different gender identities. To achieve this equality, all parties must

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work together to make the necessary changes in attitudes, behaviours, roles and responsibilities in the public and private spheres – at home, at work, in the community, national institutions, donor institutions and international organisations –, thus improving the living conditions of the whole community. When all individuals and different gender identities share their preferences, the entire society benefits from it.

It is important to empower different gender identities with a view to promoting their participation as agents of change in social and political processes in order to achieve gender equality. These empowerment processes enable them to become aware of inequalities in relations of power, to take control of their own lives, find their voice to overcome inequality and take part in the household, workplace and community, express their needs and interests, and how they view society and influence the decisions affecting their lives.



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5. COMMITMENTS

In order to implement the principles proposed, Oikos pursues a number of commitments, in the context of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the resolutions of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other international agreements on the subject¹, and will ensure that these will be monitored and assessed within the limits of existing capacities.

- Incorporate participatory analyses of gender and power relations in our intervention, as well as disaggregate data by gender, age and other relevant diversity factors (ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, inter alia) in order to guide tailored actions to be developed in the course of the projects.
- Integrate gender equality in all the phases of the project's lifecycle;
- Develop, where possible, in each intervention, tailored strategies to promote gender equality, including the preparation of appropriate training contents that promote gender equality;
- Involve the community in supporting gender equality and female empowerment, in line with the project and the organisation's objectives, strengthening our efforts to influence public policy-makers;
- Identify potential risks in the course of project implementation, ensuring that no harm is done and mitigating the consequences of retaliation and gender-based violence, regardless of the sector, in particular in times of conflict and fragility;
- By working in partnership with organisations and movements for women's rights and/or LGBTQIA+2, achieve common goals and give voice to discriminated persons and engage key stakeholders in gender equality issues, including civil society, governments and other institutional authorities, private sector, and public and private donors.
- Ensure that assessments and analyses do no harm, are participatory and assess the progress for the benefit of gender equality. Best practices and challenges should be documented, creating learning mechanisms in communities with Oikos and its partners.
- Ensure that all human resource policies and practices include a gender

¹ Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1954); Convention to the Consent of Marriage, Minimum Age of Marriage, and Registration of Marriages (1964); Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict (1974); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979); Declaration of the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993); Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA) (1995); CEDAW's Optional Protocol; Maputo Protocol – Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003); A/HRC/RES/17/19 Human Rights Council

resolution - Human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity (2011); Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) (2014); A/HRC/RES/27/32 Human Rights Council resolution - Human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity (2014)

² Acronym standing for the community that includes Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual/Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and all other existing sexual orientations and gender identities representing an individual.

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perspective and, where possible, safeguard gender balance in teams and governance and implement specific strategies to correct any signs of gender inequality. The goal is to have no gender pay inequalities.

- Recruit and, where possible, retain employees with specific expertise in gender equality; build capacity among employees and partners regarding gender equality and diversity, ensuring that this policy is included in the terms of reference of functions and in project preparation and planning.
- Regularly report to the beneficiaries, donors and general public on the progress of the organisation in terms of gender equality;
- Ensure that all communication, fundraising and recommendations are consistent with and uphold the organisation's commitment to gender equality and social justice, using inclusive and positive language and images and avoiding stereotypes.
- Systematically negotiate adequate funding with donors so as fulfil gender equality commitments, preventing gender-based violence and promoting gender equity and diversity at the workplace.
- Ensure that recruitment procedures and selection criteria are regularly updated so that all individuals are treated on the basis of their merits and qualifications;

- Job advertisements must avoid any wording that could discourage groups with a particular characteristic susceptible to discrimination from applying, while taking steps to ensure that vacancies are advertised to a diverse pool of potential candidates;
- All potential employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to provide original documents before the start of employment in order to comply with current immigration legislation;
- The entire recruitment process must involve more than one person, from different functions and departments, in order to prevent potential discriminatory behaviours during the selection process.

6.

RESPONSIBILITY

All employees and third parties related to the organisation's activities share the obligation to uphold and follow the Principles and Commitments set out in this policy.

Managers, supervisors and human resource managers shall ensure that all employees and third parties related to the organisation's activities understand and follow this policy, and are responsible for recruitment and training. As regards human resource managers and supervisors, they are equally responsible for ensuring that this policy is effectively implemented.

Given the foregoing or pursuant to the law in Portugal or in the country where Oikos operates, any employees or third parties

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related to the organisation's activities who feel they are victims of gender-based inequality **must report it to their immediate superior.**

7. COMPLAINT

In the event of a complaint regarding non-compliance with any aspect mentioned in this policy, the complaint process established by Oikos through its Complaint Policy must be followed.

8. MUTUAL RESPECT AND PROTECTION OF STAKEHOLDERS

Oikos – Cooperação e Desenvolvimento promotes and encourages its employees to show ethical behaviour based on respect, responsibility, transparency, confidentiality and non-discrimination.



Oikos – Cooperação e Desenvolvimento is a Non-Profit Association, internationally recognized as a Non-Governmental Organization for Development. We believe in a world without poverty or injustice, where human development is equitable and sustainable at both local and global levels. For this reason, we have assumed the mission of eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities so that all people may enjoy the right to a dignified life.

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