



SYMBIOSIS Gender Equality Policy

1. Introduction

SYMBIOSIS's vision is to seek a world of hope, tolerance and social justice; where poverty has been overcome and people live in dignity and security. SYMBIOSIS puts gender equality in the centre because we know that we cannot overcome poverty and social injustice until all people have equal rights and opportunities. We recognize that power relations between genders and ages are unequal, and that we must challenge patriarchy and promote gender equality to achieve social justice. Through this policy, SYMBIOSIS commits to ensuring that gender equality is fully incorporated in all our work both as a universal human right and an end in itself, as well as a means to overcome poverty and social injustice more effectively. Working with others, SYMBIOSIS seeks to promote equal realization of dignity and human rights for all genders and ages, and the elimination of poverty and injustice. This policy will be implemented in the context of local legal environments.

SYMBIOSIS recognizes that gender is not binary, and that terms and definitions related to gender and sexuality are diverse and continue to evolve. To facilitate ease of reading within this policy we refer to 'all genders and ages' throughout. This demonstrates our recognition of and ability to work with adults and children and individuals of all sexual orientations, gender identities and/or gender expressions. We recognize that rigid gender norms limit people of all genders and sexual orientations by creating and reinforcing assumptions and systems of privilege (sometimes codified in laws and policies), about their recognition in society and the range of roles and opportunities open to them. These not only limit individuals who identify as girls, boys, women and men as well as identities beyond the binary, but also individuals whose sexual orientations do not conform with dominant norms and expectations of heterosexuality. While rigid gender norms can limit all of us, SYMBIOSIS also recognizes that gender norms and hierarchies are constructed by people and systemically privilege some groups over others. Throughout this policy when reference is made to all genders and ages this includes (cisgender and transgender) women and girls, men and boys as well as people who identify beyond the binary; and people of all sexual orientations.

2. Purpose

This SYMBIOSIS policy represents SYMBIOSIS commitment to take a cohesive and coordinated approach to gender equality. The policy defines SYMBIOSIS explicit intention to support gender equality and the principles expressed in international agreements. The policy includes three core principles and commitments against which all parts of SYMBIOSIS work will be held accountable. These are consistent with other organisational and programmatic standards.

The purpose of the Policy is to:

- Define and communicate clear commitments and consistent messages within SYMBIOSIS and with others
- Continue to strengthen efforts to promote gender equality in our organisation, increasing SYMBIOSIS integrity and credibility amongst donors, partners and allies as a leader in the gender equality space, in both programming and advocacy
- Establish commitments for our development and humanitarian programming and our organisation
- Enable us to work as a confederation and with others building on each other strengths, experience and lessons learned



3. Core Principles

SYMBIOSIS is a rights-based organisation. Gender equality is an explicit internationally recognized human right and SYMBIOSIS seeks to promote equal realization of dignity and human rights and the elimination of poverty and injustice for all genders and ages. Our commitments are founded on the Human Rights Framework and globally agreed principles⁵, such as equality and non-discrimination. They based on international law and regional standards, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), as well as global ambitions set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

SYMBIOSIS recognises that issues of gender inequality intersect with other forms of oppression based on unequal power relations, such as ableism, racism, caste and ethnic discrimination, ageism, sexual orientation and homophobia, religious discrimination, classism, colonial history among others.

SYMBIOSIS works with marginalized women and their allies to address structural barriers to the realization of women's rights and gender equality; social justice, peace, wellbeing and a life free from violence.

4. What we need to do to implement the Gender Equality Policy – Commitments

To enact these principles, SYMBIOSIS will fulfil the following 12 commitments and ensure that they are monitored, evaluated and reported on as part of SYMBIOSIS responsibility of transparency and accountability.

1. Incorporate participatory gender and power analysis and data disaggregated by sex, age, and other relevant diversity factors to inform actions across the programme/project cycle.
2. Articulate how programming works across all domains of a gender equality framework, and apply and learn from gender analysis at every stage of the project or programme cycle to improve our gender transformative potential.
3. Engage men and boys in support of gender equality and women's empowerment when in line with programming and/or organizational objectives.
4. Human Rights Principles include: Universality and Inalienability, Indivisibility, Participation and Inclusion, Accountability and Rule of Law, Transparency, and Equality and Non-Discrimination
5. Identify potential programming risks throughout the program/project cycle and take steps to do no harm and mitigate unintended consequences of backlash and gender-based violence, regardless of sectoral focus, especially in fragile and conflict contexts.
6. Form partnerships with women's rights and/or LGBTIQ organisations and movements to collaborate in the achievement of shared goals and elevate the voice of marginalised people; and engage key stakeholders in the struggle for gender equality including other civil society, government, private sector, public and private donors.
7. Ensure evaluations and reviews do no harm, are participatory and assess progress towards gender equality outcomes. Ensure that they document best practices and challenges, and create mechanisms for cross-learning within communities, within SYMBIOSIS and with partners.
8. Ensure all our human resources policies and practices are developed with a gender lens. Report on gender and diversity balance in staffing and governance structures along with average pay levels.



Implement targeted strategies to redress any evidence of gender inequality in gender and diversity balance and pay levels.

9. Recruit and retain staff with a commitment to gender equality; build staff and partner capacity and skills in gender equality and diversity, and ensure all annual operating plans, job descriptions and performance plans reflect SYMBIOSIS commitment to gender equality.

10. Regularly report to programme participants, donors and the public on progress on gender equality in SYMBIOSIS work.

11. Take all measures to prevent and respond to all forms of sexual harassment and violence, and sexual exploitation and abuse of children and vulnerable adults, promote staff awareness and training, and effective systems for reporting and monitoring.

12. Ensure external marketing, fundraising, advocacy and communications respect and uphold our commitment to social justice and gender equality including being respectful, using inclusive and positive language and images and avoiding stereotypes with particular attention to those based on gender and ethnicity.

13. Systematically negotiate with donors for adequate funding to meet the SYMBIOSIS gender commitments (specifically addressing measures for “do no harm”/gender-based violence prevention measures, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), and organizational gender equity and diversity (GED)).

5. Scope of Application

This policy applies across SYMBIOSIS development and humanitarian programming; to our organization and to all SYMBIOSIS Employees and Related-Personnel.

It is the responsibility of all SYMBIOSIS Employees and Related Personnel to uphold the Core Principles and Commitments of this policy.

Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

The Gender Equality Policy itself

Dedicated resources: commitment of human resources and gender expertise to implement it.

Data collection and monitoring where possible, according to legislation in Greece: sex/gender disaggregated data on personnel and annual reporting based on indicators.

Training: Awareness raising/trainings on gender equality and unconscious gender biases for staff and decision-makers. Areas to be covered and addressed via concrete measures and targets include:

- work-life balance and organisational culture;
- gender balance in leadership and decision-making;
- gender equality in recruitment and career progression;
- integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content;
- measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment.