

## ACT – CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION (CSO)

### ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (OD) GUIDE

#### MAINSTREAMING GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION - GUIDELINES

##### Introduction

For CSOs to mainstream Gender and Social Inclusion (G&SI) it is important to integrate considerations of G&SI into all aspects of the CSO's strategy, policies, systems, programmes, projects and external communications to ensure that they are always inclusive and do not perpetuate discrimination, inequality, or exclusion.

##### How to mainstream G&SI – Steps for CSOs

- 1 Understand G&SI:** Start by ensuring there is clarity and understanding across all levels of the CSO as to what G&SI really means. Gender inclusion is about ensuring that both genders, male and female, have access to equal opportunities and benefits. Social Inclusion extends this to encompass people from all backgrounds, irrespective of their disability, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.
- 2 Commitment and Leadership:** CSO leadership commitment is essential. Leaders at all levels of the CSO, or in the context of managing a programme or project, should publicly demonstrate their commitment to G&SI. They should advocate for these principles and demonstrate their importance in all that they do.
- 3 Policy and Strategy development:** Develop strategies, policies and guidelines that explicitly state the commitment to G&SI. These documents should outline the objectives, principles and approaches for achieving G&SI, they should be made accessible internally and externally. (Internal organisational policies should also demonstrate their commitment to G&SI in the workplace.)
- 4 Capacity Development:** Ensure that all employees, volunteers, interns and stakeholders are aware of the importance of G&SI to project and programme sustainability. Provide training, coaching and mentoring support to equip them with the necessary understanding and skills.
- 5 Data Collection and Analysis:** Collect and analyse data to understand the existing disparities and challenges related to G&SI within the CSO, programme or project. This data will help the CSO to set benchmarks and to track progress.

- 6 **Engage stakeholders:** Involve relevant stakeholders in planning and decision-making processes, ensuring full inclusion in line with the CSO's G&SI principles and policies. Their perspectives are critical to designing inclusive policies, programmes and projects that are rooted in their real needs, issues and diversities at community level.
- 7 **Budget allocation:** Allocate resources specifically for G&SI initiatives. Ensure that the funding is available to support these efforts effectively.
- 8 **Measure impact:** Regularly assess the impact of policies, programmes and projects on G&SI. Make the necessary adjustments based on feedback and monitoring results.
- 9 **Communication and awareness:** Raise awareness within your CSO and among your target audience and stakeholders about the importance of G&SI, at every opportunity. Use all available communication channels, newsletters, meetings, conferences, reports, social media, etc, to promote G&SI.
- 10 **Legal frameworks and Regulations:** To ensure sustainability, adopt a Rights-based Approach - be aware of the local and national legislative frameworks that legitimise the CSO's demands for G&SI. Comply with existing laws and regulations. Where possible, advocate for relevant legal reforms and CSO regulations that promote G&SI.
- 11 **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL):** Develop an MEL system for all programmes and projects that include progress towards G&SI efforts. Mainstreaming should ensure that G&SI is integrated across project indicators for regular monitoring and reporting.
- 12 **Learning and adaptation:** Continuously learn from experience and adapt the CSO's strategies based on what works and what doesn't work. Be open to feedback, positive and negative, and be willing to make changes when needed. Use peer learning opportunities to share, learn from others, influence others, and to strengthen G&SI mainstreaming.
- 13 **Partnerships:** Collaborate with other CSOs and government agencies that have experience of G&SI. Sharing knowledge and resources can be mutually beneficial.
- 14 **Fundraising:** Ensure that all funding proposals reflect the inclusive policies and processes adopted by the CSO.

Remember that mainstreaming G&SI is an ongoing process and may require cultural shifts within a CSO. It is essential to be patient, persistent and committed to creating a more inclusive society where everyone can thrive and develop.

**For further information and support, please see the ACT Toolkit on G&SI:** [https://www.justice-security.ng/sites/default/files/act\\_toolkit\\_gender\\_and\\_social\\_inclusion.pdf](https://www.justice-security.ng/sites/default/files/act_toolkit_gender_and_social_inclusion.pdf)

#### Find out more

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