



CPA

Without Borders

POLICY OF EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN – RIGHTS AND DIVERSITY

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INTRODUCTION

In 2021, the implementation of our *Policy on equality between women and men – Rights and diversity* responds to our deep conviction of the importance of recognizing that many variables can complicate the discrimination to which women and girls are faced, particularly regarding ethnocultural affiliation, social class, caste, age, living with a disability of a physical or intellectual nature, sexual identity or orientation, or any other factor of inequality.

It is in line with *Canada's new Feminist International Assistance Policy* and is consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals, including Objective 5, namely: "*Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.*"

Through this *Policy*, CPA Without Borders (CPAWB) commits itself, with its volunteers, its aid workers and its partners, to mobilize institutionally in favor of equality between women and men (EFH). In our programs and in our organization, we advocate concrete implementation and monitoring measures aimed at supporting the rights of women and girls, at recognizing their role as agents of social change and at strengthening their power to act, by considering the diversity of the conditions they face.

At CPAWB, it is now everyone's responsibility to take action and translate the principles of equality and equity underpinning our *Policy* both in our programs and projects and in our daily management. promote it and remain vigilant in the face of possible setbacks.

The Board of Directors of CPAWB undertakes to ensure the implementation and monitoring of this *Policy* and that the entire organization acts in compliance.

Section 1 – Context

INEQUALITIES: A MAJOR BRAKE TO HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY

While there are multiple forms of inequality across the world, inequality between women and men, girls and boys, remains the deepest and most widespread. It marks the social, economic and political relations of all societies and represents a challenge for the entire planet. Undeniable progress has been made, particularly in education, health and in terms of political representation. But achieving equal rights still remains, in 2021, "A tough fight" according to the OECD¹. UN-Women reminds us that, in the face of the significant gaps that persist, "women's rights will only become a reality if they are an integral part of broader actions"², aimed at justice, the common good and peace.

Equality between women and men, the empowerment of women and girls and the determination to combat all forms of discrimination based on sex are central elements of our conception of fair and sustainable development and effective fight against poverty and exclusion. Our *Policy on equality between women and men – Rights and diversity* is based on the following principles:

EQUAL RIGHTS between women and men is a fundamental principle, in accordance with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*.

EQUALITY IS BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION, including the rejection of any form of exclusion based on sex, ethno-cultural affiliation, social class, caste, age, living with a physical or intellectual disability, sexual identity or orientation, as well as any other factor of inequality. These factors, when they intersect in the same person, are called intersectional variables.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN ALL THEIR SHAPES ARE UNACCEPTABLE. They represent a global scourge and a violation of human rights.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS ARE UNIVERSAL AND INDIVISIBLE. The principles of equality and equity between women and men apply to all human beings, without exception.

¹ OECD, *The pursuit of Gender Equality: An uphill battle*, 2017.

² UN Women, *Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2018.

RECOGNITION OF DIVERSITY of women and girls, according to their personal situation and their socio-cultural and geographical context, is essential for an effective fight against poverty and for equal rights.

WOMEN AND GIRLS MUST BE BOTH BENEFICIARIES AND ACTRESSES FOR desired social, political, and economic transformations. Their full participation is central to development and good governance.

THE WHOLE OF SOCIETY benefits from equality between women and men. Faced with persistent inequalities.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IS A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE, but not sufficient. Equity requires specific action, considering intersectional variables, in order to remove the legal, economic, political, social and cultural barriers that women and girls still face today.

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS AND FEMINIST NETWORKS play a key driving role in changing discriminatory social norms and practices, particularly through their outreach work in awareness, mobilization, and advocacy.

Our mission: Offer free professional services in recognized areas of expertise of CPAs to our field partners, in conjunction with the development of local skills.

Section 2 – Our *Policy of equality between women and men – Rights and diversity*

A participatory process is essential for the sustainable advancement of peoples. It must, while taking local cultures into account, take its source in the will for change of the populations. The place and role of women and men in these changes are fundamental. This active participation and the inclusion of the specific needs and interests of women provide the basis for democratic life, as well as the emergence and strengthening of civil society.

Our *Policy* is based on the conviction that women and girls should benefit equitably from the benefits of development, while being involved in actions and projects.

The discrimination they face reduces their access to, among other things, education, health and decision-making power, and the violence they suffer threatens their power to act. This discrimination is an obstacle to their full participation. This is why our approach, while closely involving men as allies and co-beneficiaries of equality between women and men, favors the strengthening of both individual and collective capacities of women.

Women already play an essential role in building a fairer, more equal, and more equitable world. Recognizing and valuing this contribution continues to be a constant concern for us.

Violence against women and girls in all its forms is taking on endemic proportions, and rape as a weapon of war subjects hundreds of thousands of women around the world to profound physical and mental wounds. It is estimated that one in three women globally has been or will be a victim of violence in her lifetime.³

OUR OBJECTIVE

The *Gender equality, rights and diversity policy* aims for inclusive, equitable and sustainable development, transforming unequal power relations between women and men, girls and boys. CPAWB thus affirms the need to consider the issues of equality and equity at all levels of its organizational structure.

³ WHO, *Global and regional estimates of violence against women*, 2013.

OUR APPROACH

Our approach is comprehensive. It acts on social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental relationships that may present obstacles to the participation and empowerment of women. It prioritizes the promotion of equality and aims to transform the power relations between women and men, girls and boys.

Development projects and processes can have different effects on women and men who occupy a different position in society. It is therefore essential that each person be able to participate fully in the decision-making process, in order to benefit equitably from the impact of the interventions. The recognition of these different effects as well as the fact of supporting women and girls as agents of social change contribute according to CPAWB to a more inclusive sustainable development.

OUR INITIATIVES

CPAWB works for sustainable development. In the implementation of our actions, we are concerned about the impact of activities, projects and programs on the situation of women and men by ensuring that their distinct priorities and needs are taken into account by the various institutional actors and partners in presence. On the other hand, we respond to the specific needs and interests expressed by women and girls, and act on discrimination that hinders their power to act, in a way to:

CONTRIBUTE TO RESPECT fundamental rights of women and girls in their diversity.

REDUCE INEQUALITIES between women and men, girls and boys, in access to knowledge (training, information) and control of resources (material, financial).

STRENGTHEN AUTONOMY economic development of women, and work to make market systems more inclusive for them.

SUPPORT FULL PARTICIPATION women in decision-making processes, concerning the development of their community and their society via their business ventures

BUILDING CAPACITIES institutions of state and non-state bodies to consider the needs and interests of women and girls in the development of policies, programs and practices.

DEVELOP A FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTED APPROACH to speci-community and ensure that men feel fully concerned by the values of equality and equity, by associating them closely as allies and co-beneficiaries of the promotion of equality and the rights of women.

SUPPORT WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS AND FEMINISTS local, regional, and international NETWORKS that contribute to the ability of women and girls to act collectively to defend and join in their rights.

ENSURE THAT OUR ORGANIZATION’S APPROACHES AND PROCESSES use the intersectional approach to foster the development and implementation of projects that consider the interweaving of different systems of inequality and oppression and their discriminatory effects.

INTEGRATING EQUALITY AND EQUITY at all levels of our organization by strengthening our capacities in this area, by encouraging the participation of women in management positions and committees and by ensuring the leadership of women in relations with our partners.

For CPAWB, equality between women and men will benefit everyone. Women and girls will benefit because they will have the power to make their own decisions, they will have better access to education and health services, and they will no longer be subjected to violence of any kind. Men and boys will benefit because they will no longer be subject to rigid and nefarious norms of one masculinity based on the domination of the other. Societies and entire countries will benefit because they will have the capacity to generate sustainable, rights-based economic growth if the barriers to women's economic empowerment are removed.

Section 3 – Our engagement

IN ITS PROGRAMS, PROJECTS, AND INTERVENTIONS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND IN VOLUNTARY COOPERATION

CPAWB AGREES TO:

SUPPORT AND FOLLOW A PROCESS aimed at citizen participation, respect for human rights, and the right to decision-making autonomy of women and men in all development processes implemented by CPAWB.

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IMPLEMENT MEASURES facilitating the meaningful participation of women and girls, as well as considering their specific needs and interests, taking into account the various intersecting exclusions they may face.

DEVELOP BOTH A CROSS-CUTTING APPROACH, integrating the issues of inequalities between women and men in all the goals and desired results of policies, programs and projects, **AND A SPECIFIC APPROACH**, targeting the strategic interests of women and girls according to their conditions, as well as organization and business practices perpetuating inequalities between women and men, girls and boys.

DEVELOP MONITORING AND EVALUATION MECHANISMS measuring the impact of its *Policy* and its interventions on women and men, girls and boys, and making visible the cross effect of the various exclusions.

PROMOTING OPEN DIALOGUE with its partners in order to develop a common understanding of the objectives of its *Policy*.

WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

CPAWB AGREES TO:

PROMOTE meaningful participation of all women, at all levels of the organizational structure of CPAWB.

INFORM and sensitize its members, volunteers, contractors, cooperators, and partners to the approach put forward by this *Policy* and make each person accountable for its implementation.

ENSURE that the CPAWB values of fairness, respect, cooperation, integrity, and commitment be fully integrated and put into practice by its members and all its volunteers. This commitment requires "zero tolerance" to any inappropriate behavior of harassment or violence.

PROMOTE the development and dissemination of information and analysis tools to staff and partners and fostering approaches to systematize and share lessons learned in the promotion of equality and women's rights.

DEVELOP human resources policies and organizational practices that make it possible to reconcile personal and professional life, for both women and men.

ESTABLISH staff recruitment and integration mechanisms aimed at appropriating this *Policy* and anchoring it in the organizational culture.

SET-UP staff accountability mechanisms in the implementation and monitoring of this *Policy*.

WITH ITS PARTNERS

CPAWB AGREES TO:

ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIP RELATIONSHIPS with organizations working for the promotion and defense of women entrepreneurship rights by promoting their strengthening.

ENSURE THAT ALL PARTNERSHIPS projects and programs are committed to equality between women and men, maintain a constant dialogue, and support the improvement of their policies and practices.

