

## GENDER EQUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

FIND's vision is of a world where diagnosis guides the way to health for all people, regardless of race, ethnicity or nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, colour, disability, or religious or political beliefs.

FIND embraces its responsibility to make conscious and continuous efforts to address gender equality, both in the workplace and through the projects it supports. FIND recognizes that gender roles and norms may result in unequal access to diagnosis and treatment, and may unjustly expose men and women to higher risk of disease, particularly if they are poor. Gender and cultural barriers may inhibit women in some countries from seeking care, leading to poor diagnosis rates. WHO (2003) reports that the diseases that FIND addresses – notably malaria and tuberculosis – are amongst the leading causes of death in women. In parts of Southeast Asia, men are at greater risk of malaria due to their work in forested areas, and men who work in mines, such as those in southern Africa, are at greater risk of tuberculosis.

As a leading non-profit organization that is dedicated to tackling diseases of poverty, FIND cannot be blind to gender in its work and is committed to addressing equality operationally and programmatically.

Beyond binary definitions of gender, FIND is committed to diversity. We believe that the greater the diversity of backgrounds, cultures, perspectives, skills, and experiences, the greater our impact on global health.

This policy applies to all FIND stakeholders, i.e. all FIND Personnel and Partners, and to all its beneficiaries.



## 1. Purpose

The aim of this policy is to articulate FIND's commitment to gender equality and to provide a guideline for integrating a gender perspective into the organizational agenda and programmatic activities.

## 2. Scope

This is an organization-wide policy that applies to FIND headquarters and all its country offices, including both its Personnel and Partners (see definition of these terms in *FIND Code of Conduct and Ethics*). FIND's senior management plays a significant role ensuring that the subject of gender remains on the organizational agenda; nonetheless, all FIND Personnel and Partners have a role to play in promoting equality. This Policy should be read and applied in conjunction with FIND's *Code of Conduct and Ethics* and *Employee Handbook*.

## 3. Definitions

FIND has adopted WHO definitions<sup>1</sup> for sex and gender. Sex is defined as the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women. Gender refers to the socially constructed attributes, which have health considerations in the background. Definitions of gender are further elaborated here:

3.1 Gender: socially constructed characteristics of women and men, such as norms, roles, and relationships of and between groups of women and men. The definition of gender varies from society to society and can be changed or adapted.

The concept of gender includes five important elements: relational, hierarchical, historical, contextual and institutional. While the majority of people are born male or female, and display characteristics and behaviors associated with their sex, they are taught norms and ways of conducting themselves, including how they should interact with others of the same or opposite sex within households, communities and work places. When some individuals or groups do not fit established gender norms, they may face stigma, discriminatory practices or social exclusion – all of which can adversely affect their health.

3.2 Gender equality: equal chances or opportunities for groups of women and men to access and control social, economic and political resources, including protection under the law (health services, education and voting rights). It is also known as *equality of opportunity*. Gender equality is often used interchangeably with gender equity, but the two refer to different, complementary strategies that are needed to reduce gender-based health discrimination.

Through its work to develop and deliver IVD technologies, FIND addresses inequality; however, as the most critical gaps are progressively filled (i.e., those where the overall mortality rates remain unacceptably high), more opportunities to refine focused interventions are likely to arise, and will be taken up by FIND wherever possible.

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.who.int/gender-equity-rights/understanding/gender-definition/en/>

## **4. Approach**

### **4.1. Organizational operations**

#### **4.1.1 Staff composition/representation**

- Adopt equal opportunity practices, applying objective and fair criteria so that staff members are only selected, assessed, promoted and treated on the basis of merit, abilities, and experience relevant to their post.
- Seek to achieve a gender balance at all levels, including senior management, the Board of Directors, and functional committees. Review periodically and take steps to address imbalances without diminishing organizational expertise and capabilities.
- Streamline practices across offices and ensure common accountability mechanisms, as well as monitor gender equality against targets and transparency requirements.

#### **4.1.2 Workplace**

- Provide a safe and secure workplace for women and men, free from sexual harassment, and address all concerns raised in the event of complaints and/or escalations of conflicts.
- Make merit-based decisions on new placements and respect salary bands based on position and experience only.
- Regularly assess wage equality between men and women within the organization, including a gender variable.

### **4.2. Programmatic activities**

- Where possible, include, in landscape assessments, a component to identify gender dynamics that affect the disease and its control that will better enable the creation of innovative solutions.
- Provide disaggregated data for all interventions to indicate if/how gender impacts outcomes (e.g., by differentially assessing outcomes by sex and age groups).
- Use these data to move “from knowledge to practice”, i.e., to inform access programme activities.
- Aim to ensure that all capacity building activities supported by FIND include balanced target groups.
- Sensitize project teams to ensure appropriate responses to discrimination, harassment and abuse, if encountered in project settings, and mobilize their support towards gender balance.
- Strengthen linkages with groups (e.g., advocacy, civil society) that work to address gender disparities in FIND’s target populations.

### **4.3. Capacity building**

- Ensure that all internal and external trainings facilitated by the organization are gender-responsive, including specific trainings on FIND policies (Code of Conduct & Ethics, Gender Equality, and Safeguarding).
- Strive for equal participation in field-level meetings and trainings.