
	POLICIES AND PROCEDURE		
	Title: Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Policy		
	Policy No. SI-12	Effectivity 4 February 2024	Approved by Board 4 February 2024
			Supersedes all previous guidelines on SOP

GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY, AND SOCIAL INCLUSION (GEDSI) POLICY

Samdhana Institute

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I. Background

The concept of gender equality is part of international human rights law by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948. This historical document recognized that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” and that “everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, ... birth or other status.” Gender equality, besides being a fundamental human right, is essential to achieve peaceful societies, with full human potential and sustainable development.

Women and girls represent half of the world’s population and, therefore, also half of its potential. Unfortunately, there is still a long way to go to achieve full equality of rights and opportunities between men and women. In many parts of the world, women still face multiple forms of gender violence and obstacles in securing equal access to quality education and health, employment, and economic resources, as well as participation in decision-making at all levels.


In 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which is often described as an International Bill of Rights for Women. In its 30 articles, the Convention explicitly defines discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. The Convention is the first human rights treaty to affirm the reproductive rights of women.

The general definition of “discrimination against women” in Article 1 of CEDAW embodies a broad principle of equality. The full text of Article 1 of CEDAW states that:

“For the purposes of the present Convention, the term ‘discrimination against women’ shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam are parties to CEDAW and various core international human rights treaties. Acting on these commitments, these countries have enacted relevant policies and programs at the national and sub-national levels and have made important advances in gender equality over the past 25 years.

Nevertheless, official reports demonstrate that these countries continue to face gender inequalities at varied contexts. A series of problems and challenges in achieving gender equality in the fields of education, health, employment, and protection from violence against women and discrimination of vulnerable groups continue to occur. All of these creating barriers to women’s equal participation in the cultural, economic, and political life at different levels (at the community and village level, sub-national level, and at the national level). All of these limited the achievement of inclusive and sustainable development. In addition, there

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are a series of other problems in the important components of national development and regions that have a significant impacts on gender equality and women empowerment namely: legal framework and law enforcement, money-driven politics, not pro-poor economy, industry-driven infrastructure, exploitation and extraction of natural resources, and the neglect of environmental consideration.

Above series of problems toward realizing gender equality and women empowerment is coupled with the continuing problems of public services and the emergence of problems relate to intolerance, extremism and terrorism, as well as climate change crisis. Each of these problems has gender dimension that intersect with various sociocultural aspects. These problems are threatening efforts to realize gender equality and empowerment of women as well as efforts for human development and national development in Indonesia.


Meanwhile, academic institutions and civil society organizations globally along with UN Women and relevant UN organizations have been examining the intersection between gender inequalities and other socio-cultural-economic-political inequalities. Moreover, they have been paying close attention on how gender overlaps with other sociocultural factors such as disability, race, caste, ethnicity, religion or belief, class, health, status, age, gender identity, etc.

The attention on the interlinkages of these aspects lead to the development of the concept of gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI). This concept is seen as a fundamental aspect of human rights and social justice. It is also considered a precondition to improve the development process by putting social concerns at the forefront of interventions.

II. Rationale

Samdhana Institute is an independent institution established in 2003 by a group of activists and development practitioners who constituted the first Samdhana Fellows. Samdhana has been managing small grants mechanism and networking throughout Southeast Asia, which include Indonesia, the Philippines, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Timor Leste, Thailand, and Vietnam. In its work with indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) Samdhana has developed a reputation as an organization that is engaged, people centric, responsive and creative.

As stated in the document of Samdhana's Strategic Plan of 2019 - 2028, Samdhana vision is a region where natural, cultural and spiritual diversity are valued and where communities have access, control and responsibility over their territories and well-being. Samdhana's mission is for communities to have clear and secured rights to manage their territories/places, adequate access to information, recourse to the law, leadership and organizing skills,

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information/media, and funding and technical support for their own development and well-being.

Gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) refers to efforts to ensure people from all backgrounds, including women and gender diverse people, people with a disability and people facing another form of marginalisation, can equitably access, use, contribute to, influence and benefit from the design, development and governance of a policy, program, or project.


Samdhana has gone through the process of GEDSI audit in July – September 2022 that was carried by a team of GEDSI consultant. This GEDSI audit aimed to assess the status of GEDSI integration in its policies, strategies, structures, systems, programs, and projects. The GEDSI Audit has found the Samdhana Philippines organization as highly GEDSI-sensitive in its vision, mission and goals as well as in its programming and staffing but has not yet fully mainstreamed GEDSI in all management areas, and was particularly weak in the areas of Research, Monitoring and Evaluation, Learning (MEL) and in Knowledge Management.

While the GEDSI Audit said a lot of positive developments and organizational strengths in terms of pursuing GEDSI mainstreaming, it has also identified critical areas for improvement and/or recovery. Among the concerns put forth in the Audit is the need for staff development on GEDSI guided by a strategic Action Plan to direct the whole organization to collaborate, learn and work together in the realization of the organization's GEDSI plans and targets. With the backing of the institute's hierarchy, Samdhana Philippines has embarked on the process of planning for key action areas that will enable the organization to comprehensively pursue GEDSI mainstreaming in all fields of endeavor.

The GEDSI Audit of Samdhana Institute has resulted that several critical points as follows:

Samdhana is now poised to take on the challenge and continue what it started, integrating social inclusion in its mainstreaming efforts.

- The strengths and advantages of Samdhana lie on the political will of its Board and Management Team to implement the organization's mandate to mainstream GEDSI. It also has the financial capacity to mobilize resources as well as a learning-centric organizational culture open to new ideas, especially on GEDSI concepts and perspectives.
- The gaps and challenges confronting Samdhana revolve around the Institute's limited technical capacity in integrating GEDSI; concerns on the cultural sensitivity and appropriateness of GEDSI mainstreaming concepts and approaches with IPLCs; and varying levels of appreciation among the staff on the relevance of GEDSI in their work. Despite the

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gaps and challenges, opportunities are available within and outside of the organization that Management can tap in support of its ongoing efforts to mainstream GEDSI


Moving forward, the priority actions that Samdhana may undertake are the following:

- Formulation of GEDSI Mainstreaming Framework and GEDSI Action Plans per department and program unit that would effectively guide its mainstreaming efforts at the organizational and program/project levels
- Formation of GEDSI Mainstreaming Action Team led by the GEDSI Officer in order to fast track the formulation of the GEDSI Mainstreaming Framework and GEDSI Action Planning processes
- Development of a comprehensive capacity-building program on GEDSI, for integration with existing training programs and staff development, including capacity building of IPLCs
- Learning sessions and capacity building on the following topics, well suited for the Institute that is emerging to be GEDSI-responsive in the months and years ahead:
 - ✓ GEDSI analysis as a tool and process for GEDSI-responsive planning and programming
 - ✓ Gender-fair language and gender-sensitive communications and reporting
 - ✓ Collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data
 - ✓ GEDSI impact assessment

III. Definition

Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female. These attributes and opportunities are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are socio-cultural context/time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. Gender is also a product of socio-cultural construction where class, ethnicity, religion or belief, age, education and other social factors contribute to it.

Gender equality as stated by international conventions, national constitution and relevant human rights policies refers to the equal rights, power, access, decision-making, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys, as well as equal consideration of the interests, needs and priorities of women and men and girls and boys, recognizing the diversity of different groups.

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Disability as stated by the the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities refers to persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.


Disability-inclusive approach provides opportunities for people with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others and realise their full potential. Disability-inclusive approach adopted by institutions enables institutions to harness the potential contribution of all people involved (DFAT, 2021).

Marginalized groups refer to people who are typically denied full access to legal protection or social and economic participation and programs (such as police protection; political participation; access to healthcare, education, or employment) in practice and/or in principle, for historical, cultural, political, or other contextual reasons.

Social exclusion refers to “a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole” .is defined by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations as the involuntary exclusion of individuals and groups from society’s political, economic and societal processes, which prevents their full participation in the society in which they live.

Social inclusion refers to “the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society, and the process of improving the ability, opportunities, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), according to target 10.2, aims to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity , origin, relation or economic or other status” (GFC, 2018).

Gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) refers to efforts to ensure people from all backgrounds, including women and gender diverse people, people with a disability and people facing another form of marginalisation, can equitably access, use, contribute to,

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influence and benefit from the design, development and governance of a policy, program, or project.

IV. Objectives

The objectives of Samdhana’s Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion Policy are:


- Enhance gender equality, disability, and social inclusion within the governing structure of Samdhana Institute and day-to-day operations
- Promote the creation of an atmosphere of work without discrimination, subordination, marginalization, stereotyping and all forms of violence based on gender, disability, and other intersecting aspects (ethnicity, religion or belief, health, age, class, etc.).
- Ensure the full cycle of programs and grant-making process adopting the principles of gender equality, disability, and social inclusion
- Advocate for mainstreaming of gender equality, disability, and social inclusion for partners and grantees

V. Goal and Commitment

Samdhana Institute recognises that the integration of gender equality, disability, and social inclusion leads to more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable outcomes. The goal of this GEDSI Policy is that Samdhana Institute actively supports, and provide significant contribution toward a positive difference to, gender equality, disability, and social inclusion in all of Samdhana’s work in developing and strengthening the equal, inclusive, and sustainable management of natural resources by local and indigenous communities.

Therefore, through this GEDSI policy Samdhana Institute should have the following commitments:

- Samdhana Institute will build awareness of, and commitment to, principles of gender equality, disability, and social inclusion throughout its work.
- Samdhana Institute will be proactive and deliberate in ensuring participation and decision making reflects its commitments to gender equality, disability, and social inclusion.

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- c. Samdhana Institute’s approaches to gender equality, disability, and social inclusion will be tailored to the contexts in which it carry out programs, projects, and related activities.
- d. Samdhana Institute will track, analyse, measure and report on progress towards its gender equality, disability, and socially inclusion commitments.


VI. Guiding Principles

- a. Human rights-based approach; Samdhana Institute recognizes critical and important contribution of human rights to sustainable development and in ensuring fair distribution of development opportunities and benefits. Therefore, Samdhana Institute fully supports “universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all”.
- b. Equal and inclusive consensus building; Samdhana Institute recognizes that the equal and inclusive decision-making process at institutional and program/project levels can be made through equal and inclusive consensus building.
- c. Equal and inclusive stakeholders engagement and consultation; Samdhana Institute recognizes that every individual, including those who has disability, and who is member of marginalized and vulnerable groups and communities should have an equal and equitable opportunity to be fully and effectively engaged in inclusive, genuine and meaningful consultations and decision-making throughout the full life cycle of Samdhana’s core activities.

VII. Scope of Application

The objectives of Samdhana’s GEDSI Policy as well the commitment of Samdhana in implementing it apply across threefour interconnected levels:

1. At the institutional level: a) adopt, implement and document the gender equality and social inclusion approach by paying attention to social and cultural diversity in the day-to-day governance, operations and procedures, as well as in measuring performance of human resources; b) allocate the necessary resources to support this approach
2. At the program/project level: a) consider, address, and eliminate gender inequality and social exclusion in the program/project design, planning, implementation, monitoring

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and evaluation; b) ensure equal and inclusive participation of women and members of marginalized groups in the program/project cycle.

3. At the stakeholder level: contribute to equal and inclusive engagement of diverse groups that serve as stakeholder of Samdhana Institute

Samdhana Institute will develop an institutional culture and enabling environment that integrates gender equality and social inclusion across diverse stakeholders and relevant policy processes, frameworks and initiatives on good governance.

VIII. Policy Requirements


8.1. Responsibilities of Samdhana Institute

8.1.1. Responsibilities at the institutional level

- a. Dedicating financial, human and other resources as required to implement the GEDSI Policy
- b. Ensuring the creation of a working atmosphere that provides equal and inclusive opportunities for each individuals, including those with disabilities and who belong to marginalized groups.
- c. Ensuring the development of an institutional culture and rules on zero discrimination, zero violence, and zero social exclusion.
- d. Organizing trainings on gender equality, disability and social inclusion that include practical skills on how to apply and implement it.
- e. Facilitating a forum for internal discussion and sharing about gender equality, disability, and social inclusion related issues.
- f. Ensuring that various publications issued by Samdhana Institute should not conflict with Samdhana's commitment to the principles of gender equality, disability, and social inclusion.
- g. Providing gender-sensitive, disability-sensitive, equal and inclusive office facilities for all staffs and guests.

8.2.1. Responsibilities on human resources management

- a. Regulations on human resources of Samdhana Institute must be in accordance with Samdhana's commitment to promote gender equality and social inclusion.


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- b. The principle of equal and inclusive opportunity must be adopted and applied in terms of recruitment and promotion.
- c. Awareness and understanding on gender equality and social inclusion shall become one of the main topics in the induction program for new staffs.
- d. Samdhana's staffs shall understand and commit to Samdhana's rules of zero tolerance to discrimination based on gender, disability, and other socio-cultural-political dimensions, violence and social exclusion.
- e. Samdhana shall have certain mechanism to seriously address various forms of discrimination and all forms of violence including gender-based ones such as sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and sexual harassment committed by the staffs.

8.3.1. Program/Project Level Requirements

8.3.1.1. At the Program/Project Designing Stage

- a. Identifying ways to conduct consultations with women's groups, group of people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups during the program designing and planning processes.
- b. Identifying the possibility of collaboration with women's NGOs at the local level and community organizations established by women, people with disabilities, and/or other vulnerable groups, as well as identify the pattern of cooperation that will be built.
- c. Identifying ways to ensure broad participation of women, men, and other gender identities, including those who are from group of people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in society, so that they can be involved in decision-making in the program planning process.
- d. Identifying consistent mechanisms to ensure equal and inclusive opportunities to participate in capacity building activities (training, workshops, comparative studies, internships, etc.).
- e. Designing program strategies and activities to achieve gender equality, disability, and social inclusion that can be measured.
- f. Designing program/project with at least 30% participation of women and marginalized groups.
- g. Ensuring gender equality, disability, and social inclusion analysis and indicators are adopted in the design, planning, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a program or a project developed and managed by Samdhana and its partners.
- h. Designing program/project that has zero form of discrimination based on gender, disability, and other socio-cultural-political dimensions, violence and social exclusion

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- i. Designing grant-making component of programs/projects that adopts and applies gender equality and social inclusion principles.
- j. Designing communication and knowledge management of each program/project that are gender-sensitive, disability-sensitive, equal and inclusive information.

8.3.1.2. At the Program/Project Planning and Budgeting Stage

- a. Preparing baselines, targets and indicators disaggregated by sex age, and other social factors needed by the programs/projects.
- b. Developing a work plan related to efforts to build the capacity of national and local actors to promote gender equality and women's empowerment using local approaches that have socio-cultural sensitivity.
- c. Developing plan of activities for gender-specific activities or other related activities with time allocations that are in accordance with the situation in the program area/location in the work plan.
- d. Involving certain parties as responsible for gender-specific, disability-specific and social inclusion-specific activities and or other related activities in the work plan.
- e. Allocating budget specifically for gender equality, disability, and social inclusion analysis that include activities for collecting gender disaggregated data and other intersecting data.
- f. Allocating sufficient budget for the implementation of gender specific, disability specific, and social inclusion activities.

8.3.1.3. At the Program/Project Implementation Stage

- a. Identifying the entire process of program implementation preparation by considering GEDSI aspects.
- b. Considering recruiting someone to be in charge of GEDSI mainstreaming in program implementation.
- c. Ensuring that the mainstreaming process of gender equality, disability, and social inclusion becomes an inherent part of the program.
- d. Involving women, people with disability, and marginalized as well as vulnerable groups actively by adopting certain specific approaches that are appropriate to their situations.
- e. Considering the risk of gender inequality in the implementation of the program from the start and considering measures to reduce this risk (for example: considering the possible impact of holding three full days of training activities for female participants, especially women with families and women with young children).

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- f. Identifying potential mentors with strong understanding on gender equality, disability, and social inclusion who will support community organizers
- g. Identifying potential team members for policy advocacy that has strong understanding on gender equality, disability, and social inclusion as well as advocacy-related skills that are gender sensitive and social inclusive if the project to be implemented is policy advocacy, both at the regional and national levels.


8.3.1.4. At the Program/Project Monitoring and Evaluation

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Mainstreaming Tool in M&E and Reporting shall:

- a. Ensure that program/project outputs and outcomes promote equal benefits for women and men, including those from group of people with disabilities, vulnerable and marginalized groups within them.
- b. Ensure that gender-based and disability-based inequalities as well as social exclusion are not supported or even strengthened by the program/project.
- c. Relate to a process of regular collection and analysis of gender sensitive indicators to identify shifts or progress made using a gender perspective.
- d. Be used regularly, from the time of preparing the work plan to the implementation of the work plan.
- e. Be used to fill out routine reporting templates (if any).
- f. Have gender sensitive indicators that are sex disaggregated indicators designed to show changes in the relationship between women and men in a given society over a certain period of time in which the program/project is implemented.
- g. Consider the consultation process with social groups in the community in the program/project location area and other stakeholders in developing gender sensitive and social inclusive indicators in order to reflect the gender context of a particular region, and or a particular community.

IX. Key Priorities for the Operation of GEDSI Policy

Samdhana Institute has identified several priority areas of effort, through which it will make a positive difference to gender equality, disability, and social inclusion and in doing so meet its strategic and policy goals and commitments.

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1 People

- a. Strengthen the capacity of Samdhana Institute staff and governance bodies to be able to consider gender equality, disability, and social inclusion in their work;
- b. Ensure specialist expertise is available to support Samdhana Institute staff and governance bodies

2. Systems and Processes

Samdhana Institute will integrate gender equality, disability, and social inclusion throughout its operations. For this purpose, Samdhana Institute will focus on the following four key areas of work:

- a. Human Resources Management
- b. Finance and operational management
- c. Monitoring and Evaluation System

An informed team is essential for Samdhana Institute to implement this policy, and gender, disability and social inclusion also needs to be firmly embedded in the business systems and processes.

3. Core activities


The key work of Samdhana Institute is to conduct projects and other activities that contribute to Samdhana Institute 's vision and mission. Paying close attention to and considering the gender equality, disability, and social inclusion aspects in Samdhana's projects and activities is critical toward achieving Samdhana's vision and mission in equal and inclusive ways.

The core activities of Samdhana that will pay attention to GEDSI and apply its principles are as follows:

- a. Grant making
- b. Livescsape
- c. Policy Support
- d. Thematic areas

In order to apply GEDSI perspectives in its core activities, Samdhana Institute will carry out the following steps:

- a. Integrate gender equality, disability, and social inclusion within the Samdhana Institute's processes for deciding on, briefing for, implementation of and reporting on activities;

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- b. undertake gender, disability, and social inclusion analyses to feed into activity identification, designs, budgets, and implementation plans;
- c. include specific and appropriate strategies and actions within all activities to enable inclusive participation and decision making;
- d. develop gender equality, disability, and social inclusion guidance for activity development and management;
- e. establish accountability mechanisms to ensure the activity delivers on the gender equality, disability, and social inclusion objectives; and
- f. ensure there is appropriate gender and disability and social inclusion expertise within activity implementation teams or is made available through established relations with external expertise.


4. Partner capacity

In order to develop and strengthen partner capacity with GEDSI perspectives, Samdhana Institute will carry out the following steps:

- a. strengthen the awareness and commitment of Samdhana Institute's partners to design and implement activities that will effectively consider and support gender equality, disability, and social inclusion outcomes
- b. encourage and support Samdhana Institute partners to engage with relevant representative organisations of women, disabled people's organisations (DPO), and other potentially marginalised groups in the local context of activity implementation;
- c. facilitate a network (online and in person) of gender equality, disability, and social inclusion champions in Samdhana Institute partners and other agencies; and
- d. ensure GEDSI experts are included in the Samdhana Institute's partner capability listing, including publication of profiles on Samdhana's website.

5. Communication, learning and knowledge sharing

In order to ensure the consideration of GEDSI perspectives within communication, learning, and knowledge sharing, Samdhana Institute will communicate its work and seek to learn and share its experiences by:

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- a. communicating to all partners the expectations of Samdhana Institute to address gender equality, disability, and social inclusion, as set out in this policy;
- b. facilitating regular gender equality, disability, and social inclusion learning events, for staff, governance bodies and partners to learn from practice and to reflect on the evidence generated through the monitoring and evaluation system;
- c. preparing appropriate communication materials to build awareness of Samdhana Institute achievements in gender equality, disability, and social inclusion and to facilitate knowledge sharing;
- d. ensuring that all Samdhana Institute's communications products emerging from Samdhana Institute and its activities actively reflect the Samdhana's commitment to gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (including through use of accessible communications formats); and
- e. empowering partners to share their gender, disability and social inclusion efforts and insight