

QUAKER SERVICE AUSTRALIA LIMITED
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POLICY STATEMENT ON GENDER EQUALITY

QSA recognises that sustainable development and poverty reduction can best be achieved with the active participation of as many stakeholders as possible. It seeks through its project selection, design and implementation, to promote the human rights and dignity of all involved, to enhance gender equality and address gender imbalance in all aspects of the project. In line with its **Development Effectiveness Principles**, QSA seeks to promote equality of all genders, acknowledging the different needs, concerns and experiences of women and men, girls and boys and those who identify beyond the binary definition of gender. While supporting all genders to work together to address development goals for everyone, there is an emphasis on equality of access and opportunity leading to the full participation by women and girls, recognising that for many, they regularly face discriminatory gender norms and stereotypes within patriarchal societies. This is an **increasingly significant cross-cutting issue for QSA**, that shapes all sector project designs and outcomes and attempts to avoid the siloed approach which could increase vulnerability and decrease access to human rights and opportunities for community leadership. As such, QSA supports project partners to integrate equality principles and practices for all genders into their organisations, activities, and partnerships and to continuously strengthen its own knowledge and skills. Also, QSA is aware that traditional binary gender roles may have religious and cultural roots and be deeply entrenched in the community, requiring understanding and sensitivity in addressing them.

QSA understands development to be a process whereby the conditions for a community are improved in a sustainable and self determined way; that addresses the causes as well as the symptoms of the issue; and involves all of the community in the planning, design and implementation of the development process in keeping with QSA's Statement of Purpose. Gender equality requires a contextual analysis and understanding of gender within households and families, communities, organisations, institutions and society alongside the social, economic, cultural and political factors that perpetuate gender inequality. This includes developing an understanding of power and decision making norms and dynamics, and informs the development of activities and approaches to tackle issues of disadvantage, marginalisation, protection and inequality due to a person's gender. It requires a focus on empowering women and girls and strengthening positive and equitable relationships between women, men, boys and girls, and those who identify beyond the binary definition of gender.

QSA acknowledges that it needs to continuously develop its own capacity and understanding of gender and gendered power dynamics within Australia and globally to keep informed about new evidence-based practices and approaches. Through its work with project partners and other stakeholders and networks, QSA works to deepen its understanding of the challenges and good practices and approaches which are positively tackling gender inequality. QSA will ensure that it enacts good practice as a gender equitable organisation in its policies, processes and procedures.