



# Gender Equality Policy<sup>1</sup>

**Biblical and theological background:** "Now there is no longer a Jew or a Greek, a slave or a free man or woman. All of you are one in Christ Jesus." (Galations 3:28)

**Background:** In many societies around the world, men and women are discriminated against because of their gender. Gender is seen as the socially constructed differences between men and women, as opposed to the biological differences.

Gender equality means that women and men have the same status and opportunities to fully live in accordance with their human rights and their potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development and also to receive the results of this. . Equality means fair treatment of women and men. In order to ensure justice, measures are often needed to offset historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from acting as equals. Justice leads to equality.

Previously, the attitude in social policy circles was that equality could be achieved simply by giving women and men the same opportunities. But equal treatment did not necessarily appear to produce equivalent results. Today, the concept of equality presupposes that women and men may sometimes need different treatment to achieve similar results due to different living conditions or previous discrimination.

Therefore, by gender equality is meant "equal value from society to both equality and differences between men and women, and the different roles they play".

**Approaches:** The Salvation Army is in line with SIDA, which advocates that gender equality is a priority issue in development cooperation and that gender equality goals are included in collaborative strategies. The reason for this is generally that as equality increases, poverty decreases.

The Salvation Army believes that men and women are equal. The Salvation Army understands that both men and women have central roles in social and economic life. Women must fully have an equal place in development work, otherwise progress will fail. Raising women's status by improving their education, health and living and working conditions is not only a humanitarian issue, it is necessary to achieve economic and social progress. The development process must include women's needs in planning if development is to be equal and sustainable. Despite the progress achieved today, women are still disadvantaged. This can undermine development efforts. However, treating women as an isolated group ignores the real problem, which continues to be their inferior status to men in many parts of the world. When developing measures to "help" women in development work, the focus should be on gender relations.

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<sup>1</sup> Approved in 2015.

<https://parleportalen.salvationarmy.org/wikis/home/wiki/SWE%20PP%20Detta%20%C3%A4r%20Fr%C3%A4lsningsarm%C3%A9n/page/!%C3%A4mst%C3%A4lldhetspolicy%20vid%20internationellt%20arbete%20inom%20Fr%C3%A4lsningsarm%C3%A9n>

The Salvation Army actively encourages and supports women's participation in all aspects of the administration of our international organization. Within the organization, women are given the same status as men in roles of decision making, planning, participation, contribution and reception. Within the Salvation Army's development program, socio-economic, political and cultural processes of development include women as much as men. In each country where the Salvation Army is located, female administrators receive equal status and specific programs are developed specifically to involve and encourage women in the community.

The Salvation Army is aware of and responsive to the different roles women play in different cultures and while advocating for equality, we take these differences into account in planning and executing development efforts. Because of this, the Salvation Army believes that reproductive work is also productive. To talk about work only as what can be measured in money is to simplify reality too much.

**Principles:** The Salvation Army strives to ensure that:

- Women's and men's needs are taken into account at all stages of planning and implementation
- Both men and women participate in all aspects of development work
- Project staff (national and international) understand their responsibility in ensuring that both men and women participate in, and can benefit from, the development efforts.

In the performance of needs assessment intervention planning, the Salvation Army considers that women's health and health care (especially maternal care and children's health) are of paramount importance, as well as vocational training, reading and writing education and technical education. The Salvation Army Sweden and Latvia are aware that women are generally responsible for more work than men, work longer days and that girls work more than boys. With this in mind, it is our policy to advocate women's access to loans and savings programs in addition to access to natural resources.

It is our policy to encourage the launching of local committees and agreements with the local community to ensure that women are involved in planning and decision making. It is our policy to advocate for women's human rights by supporting reforms of the law.

We also support the work to prevent violence against and exploitation of women.