

### 1. Introduction

The Leprosy Mission Nigeria (TLMN) believes that the Bible, especially Jesus' teachings, affirms the dignity of women as well as men, and encourages the full development of the gifts of every individual, regardless of gender. TLMN values inclusion and is committed to ensuring equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities for women and men, girls and boys.

Gender equality does not mean that women and men are the same. Rather, gender inequality is a result of unequal power distributions reinforced by discrimination and the failure within legal, political and social systems to recognize the value of all individuals.<sup>1</sup>

Sadly, it is unquestionable that women and girls suffer significant discrimination and injustice in most societies. This is not only a human rights issue but a barrier to development because women generally, and mothers in particular, play a key role in developing the foundations for peaceful, prosperous and sustainable communities<sup>2</sup>.

### 2. Gender and leprosy

Women are significantly disadvantaged by leprosy. This is because there are often few female health workers able to do the skin examination for early diagnosis. Therefore women with leprosy suffer more barriers to access, isolation, and rejection, and together with poor literacy, limited mobility, and low socio-economic status this leads to under reporting.

### 3. Guiding principles

TLMN has a separate Human Rights Policy which covers a wider range of rights than that which is addressed in this Policy. The promotion and protection of human rights are at the centre of The Leprosy Mission's work.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights upholds the rights and dignity of all human beings, without distinction of gender<sup>3</sup>. In consideration of our work in Nigeria, TLMN will operate in culturally sensitive ways, for a more equitable and efficient division of labour, wealth, power, and responsibility in the communities we and our partners serve.

TLMN agrees with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal to achieve equality and the empowerment of women as well as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) position and *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment strategy (February 2016)*,

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, February 2016. *Gender equality and women's empowerment strategy*. Page 3. Accessed May 2018. (<http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment-strategy.pdf>)

<sup>2</sup> UN SDG 17 – 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

<sup>3</sup> Available online at <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

outlined in the section below. TLMN aims to implement DFAT's recommended best practice in gender equality and women's empowerment (See Appendix 1).

#### **4. Aims and objectives**

The Leprosy Mission Nigeria commits to:

1. Being an organisation that upholds the dignity, rights and worth of all people, regardless of gender.
2. Working in line with DFAT's priorities and efforts in promoting gender equality and empowerment (as outlined above), both within TLMN and with our development partners.
3. Recruitment, inclusion and recognition of women.
4. Ensure that within TLMN, women are actively encouraged to fill strategic roles on the Board, in management, and on staff so that they are in a position to influence decisions for the benefit of women and girls.
5. Encourage partners to adopt the approach outlined in Commitment 1 (above) within their structures, and to implement strategies to empower women and girls.
6. Ensure that wherever possible, adequate funding is available for projects allocated to those with a clear focus on empowering women and girls.

To achieve the above, TLMN seeks to:

- Recognise and support the key role of women in our work including health care for the prevention of leprosy and disability.
- Affirm women in partnership with men and encourage and promote the equal access of women to roles and positions traditionally dominated by men, and equal recognition and appraisal of women in these positions.
- Recognise that equality for women in supervisory roles may be limited by their cultural and domestic roles in the community.
- Maximise women's access to leprosy diagnosis, health education, health care, and rehabilitation.
- Strengthen the partnership between men and women in the home, the workplace, the church, and the community, as they work together to overcome the consequences of leprosy and gender injustice.
- Address the particular needs of female leprosy sufferers to increase their capacity to improve their own and their family's social, economic, and spiritual condition, and to promote their standing and rights in the community.
- Give women the opportunity to participate fully in the planning, management, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation of TLMN's own activities, and seek to facilitate this in other programs that it supports.
- Ensure Human Resources' policies and practices adequately incorporate gender equality and inclusion. A minimum of 35% of the TLM-Nigeria workforce, at all levels, should be females.
- Ensure our partners have comprehensive gender equity policies.
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation and progress of gender focused advocacy, inclusion and empowerment activities executed by our international programs.

- Ensure that gender issues are reviewed at every stage of the Project Cycle Management system.
- Prioritise accountability to local people and those directly affected by aid and development activities, prioritising their needs and rights with specific reference to gender. Policy Review

## 5. Policy Review Cycle

This Policy will be reviewed in 5 years.

### Revision History

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Summary</i>
2.0	23/08/2018	Sunday Udo	New draft created for next revision

### Document Approval History

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Approved by</i>
1.0	May 2012	TLMN Board
2.0		

**APPENDIX 1: DFAT’s recommended best practice in gender equality and women’s empowerment**

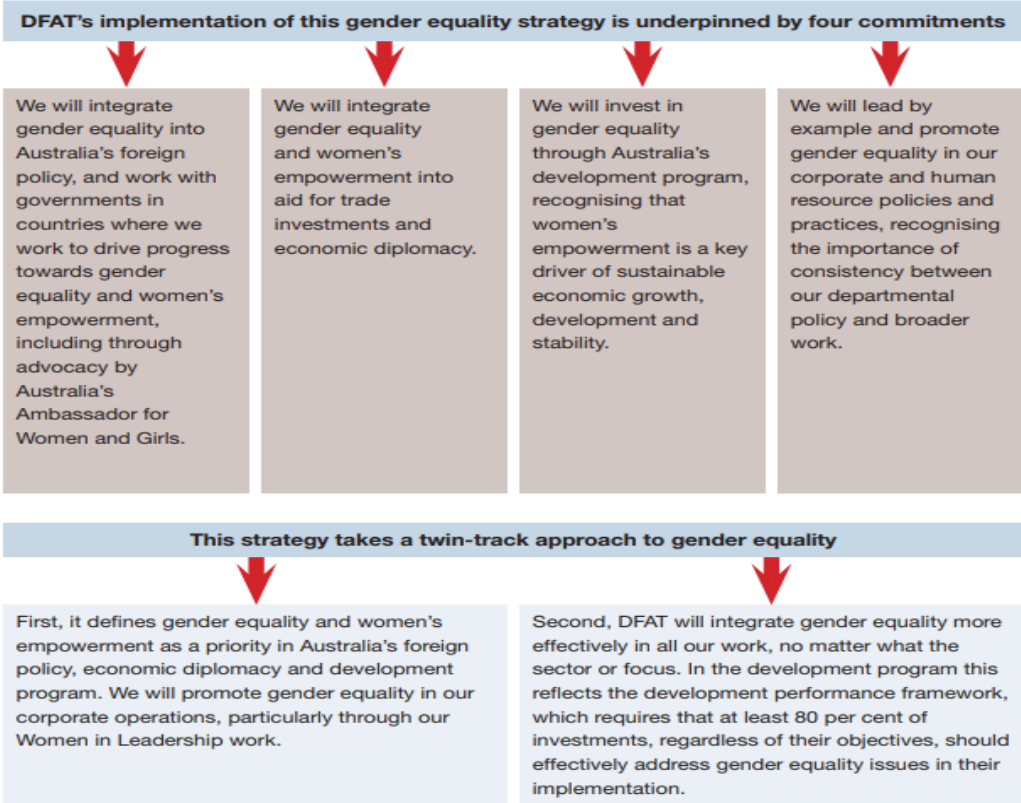
DFAT’s *strategy*<sup>4</sup> specifically targets the areas where progress for gender equality has been slow: women’s economic empowerment, women’s leadership, and ending violence against women.

DFAT’s gender strategy implementation is occurring mainly through the health, education, governance, and development sectors, and revolves around three priorities to improve the lives of women and men, girls and boys in Australia and overseas by:

- 1. Enhancing women’s voices in decision-making, leadership, and peace-building
- 2. Promoting women’s economic empowerment
- 3. Ending violence against women and girls

DFAT’s implementation of gender equality and women’s empowerment includes four commitments:

- 1. Integration into Australia’s foreign policy
- 2. Integrating into aid for trade investments and economic diplomacy
- 3. Investing in gender equality through Australia’s development program
- 4. Promoting gender equality in DFAT’s corporate and human resource policies and practices.



This strategy should be read in conjunction with other relevant departmental strategies.

<sup>4</sup> Available online at <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment-strategy.pdf>

DFAT's aid program and efforts in promoting gender equality focus on:

- working with partner governments and regional organisations to advance their gender equality priorities
- working sensitively within the local context
- supporting women's organisations and coalitions, including women entrepreneurs, women's associations and service providers for women, wherever possible and appropriate, recognising the lead role of the organisations creating change
- working in partnership with the private sector, civil society organisations and other donors, and engaging the media, schools, parliamentarians and local government as gender equality champions wherever possible
- working with men and boys as advocates for gender equality and women's empowerment where that is appropriate, including to address forms of masculinity that hinder progress
- seizing opportunities to promote gender equality and women's empowerment by applying the 'do not harm' principle and identify and mitigate risks
- participating in and supporting global debate and efforts to meet international commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment; and
- raising awareness of gender issues internationally, including through the Ambassador for Women and Girls and in high-level forums
- being prepared to work for the long term to achieve lasting and effective gender equality around the world<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup>Available online at <http://dfat.gov.au/aid/topics/investment-priorities/gender-equality-empowering-women-girls/gender-equality/Pages/australias-assistance-for-gender-equality.aspx>