



**Integrity Action**

# **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy (GESI) Version 2<sup>1</sup>**

**2016-2021**



<sup>1</sup> In 2017, Integrity Action revised some indicators from the initial version to make them more measurable. Therefore, the GESI Strategy Version 2 is the most up to date version. The rest of the document remains unchanged.

## 1. Why a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy?

We know that up to 25% of aid, humanitarian and government funds in developing and war-torn countries is lost due to corruption, fraud and mismanagement, thereby affecting basic human rights<sup>2</sup> and vital development outcomes such as access to healthcare and social services. Failing or failed development projects disproportionately affects marginalised groups, for example those living in poverty, with a disability, and those who are illiterate and unaware of their rights and entitlements<sup>3</sup>. And since corruption, mismanagement and waste hits poor, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups the hardest, women are also more likely to bear a heavier burden as they are often marginalised and over-represented among the poorest<sup>4</sup>. According to the UN, an estimated 70 per cent of the world's poor are women<sup>5</sup>.

As defined by the United Nations, **gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys**<sup>6</sup>. **Social exclusion 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**<sup>7</sup>. Gender equality and social inclusion are seen as not only a fundamental aspect of human rights and social justice, but also a precondition to improve the development process by putting social concerns at the forefront of interventions.



Exclusion and inequality come at a high cost. Without the equal participation of all people, including individuals at risk of exclusion, society has less of an opportunity to reach its full potential, both in terms of its economy and its level of governance. In other words, gender equality and social inclusion are social goods, more than simply being something we intrinsically feel is *'the right thing to do'*. In fact, not only inclusion has a positive impact on those who are excluded, it also positively impacts the economy and governance for the benefit of the whole society<sup>8</sup>.

Research shows that inclusive political settlements are crucial to avoid the recurrence of violent conflict and to lay the foundations for more peaceful political processes. Over the long term, states and societies with more open and inclusive institutions are more resilient and tend to be better

<sup>2</sup> The Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Articles 25 and 26: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>

<sup>3</sup> SIDA Gender Briefing Tool Gender and Corruption <http://www.sida.se/contentassets/3a820dbd152f4fca98bacde8a8101e15/gender-and-corruption.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Transparency International (2014) Gender, Equality and Corruption: What are the Linkages? Policy Brief No 1/2014.

<sup>5</sup> UN Women Facts and Figures, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/publications/measuring-social-inclusion.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Gender Equality and Economic Growth, is there a Win-Win?, IDS Working Paper Volume 2013 No. 417 <http://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/Wp417.pdf>

governed. On the whole, they tend to be more democratic, more legitimate, wealthier, and less unequal.<sup>9</sup>

The idea of good governance, in which institutions are effective, accountable and inclusive at all levels, has been included as a specific, standalone goal among the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>10</sup>. What is more, the commitment to ‘leave no one behind’ is a cross-cutting feature of all SDGs. At Integrity Action, we passionately believe in the idea that ‘no goal should be met unless it is met for everyone’<sup>11</sup>; it is therefore crucial that groups at risk of exclusion, including women and girls are made central to our approach. If they are empowered to act with and demand integrity, they will actively take part in building institutions to promote a state that is open, accountable and responsive to their needs and expectations.

## 2. Rationale

Through local Civil Society Organisations, Integrity Action helps communities take ownership of local development projects and supports constructive engagement between citizens and public officials to work together on improving the provision and performance of public services and infrastructures. Our mission is to empower citizens to act with and demand integrity, actively taking part in building institutions to promote a state that is open, accountable and responsive to their needs and expectations. Our vision is for a just and equitable world, where citizens are empowered and integrity is central to vibrant societies.

For the past ten years we have strived to engage all groups within the societies in which we operate and we have obtained good results. However, what we have learned is that to effectively increase social inclusion and gender equality we need a more strategic direction and focused effort.

Integrity Action believes that the route to long term sustainability goes through supporting Civil Society Organisations take the lead and building local ownership and in the years we have built considerable experience. This comparative advantage makes us well positioned to be an enabler organisation, which creates the conditions for our partners to increase equality and inclusion and meet the agreed objectives under this strategy. Together we are committing to reaching this strategy’s objectives, and monitor and assess if outputs are converting into short/medium/long term outcomes of increasing gender equality and social inclusion.



<sup>9</sup> Alina Rocha Menocal, Political Settlements and the Politics of Inclusion, DPL, 2015  
<http://publications.dlprog.org/PoliticalSettlementsSOTA.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg16>

<sup>11</sup> Leaving no one behind, how the SDGs can bring real change, Clare Melamed, ODI Briefing Papers  
<https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9534.pdf>

This document sets a **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) strategy for Integrity Action for 2016-2021**. With this Strategy Integrity Action want to ensure that gender equality and social inclusion are integrated into every aspect of our work and that our partners are supported to reduce inequalities and exclusion. This document provides strategic guidance to Integrity Action's staff to mainstream gender equality and social inclusion. To operationalise the strategy, a yearly action plan is developed and agreed at the beginning of each financial year (i.e. in September). Activities under the action plan will be regularly assessed against this Strategy's objectives using a set of indicators. At the end of the financial year the action plan will be evaluated with lessons learned taken into account to form a new action plan for the next financial year. Integrity Action will conduct an independent evaluation of the implementation of the GESI strategy, 2016-2021, upon its completion.

### 3. Theory of Change

Our overall goal is to empower women, girls, and all individuals at risk of exclusion within the communities in which Integrity Action works to act with and demand integrity, actively taking part in building institutions to promote a state that is open, accountable and responsive to their needs and expectations.

Our impact will be generated if we can prove that thanks to this strategy:

- Women, girls and people at risk of exclusion are **enabled** to have access to information on and claim their rights
- Public authorities at community level have **enhanced** relationships with and are more responsive to the demands women, girls and people at risk of exclusion

The following outcomes are expected as a result of this strategy and its annual Plan of Action:

- IA and partners have **mainstreamed GESI** in their organisations and programmes
- People at risk of exclusion, especially women and girls are **engaged** in monitoring activities within their communities
- Women, girls and people at risk of exclusion are **empowered** to be monitors and confidently voice concerns and needs, and influence decisions as individuals and as part of a collectivity

Overleaf is the strategy's Theory of Change and list of indicators, which will be used to track progress in achieving the above outcomes. These are a mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators that will be adjusted to represent country and community contexts and realities.

Figure 1 Theory of Change

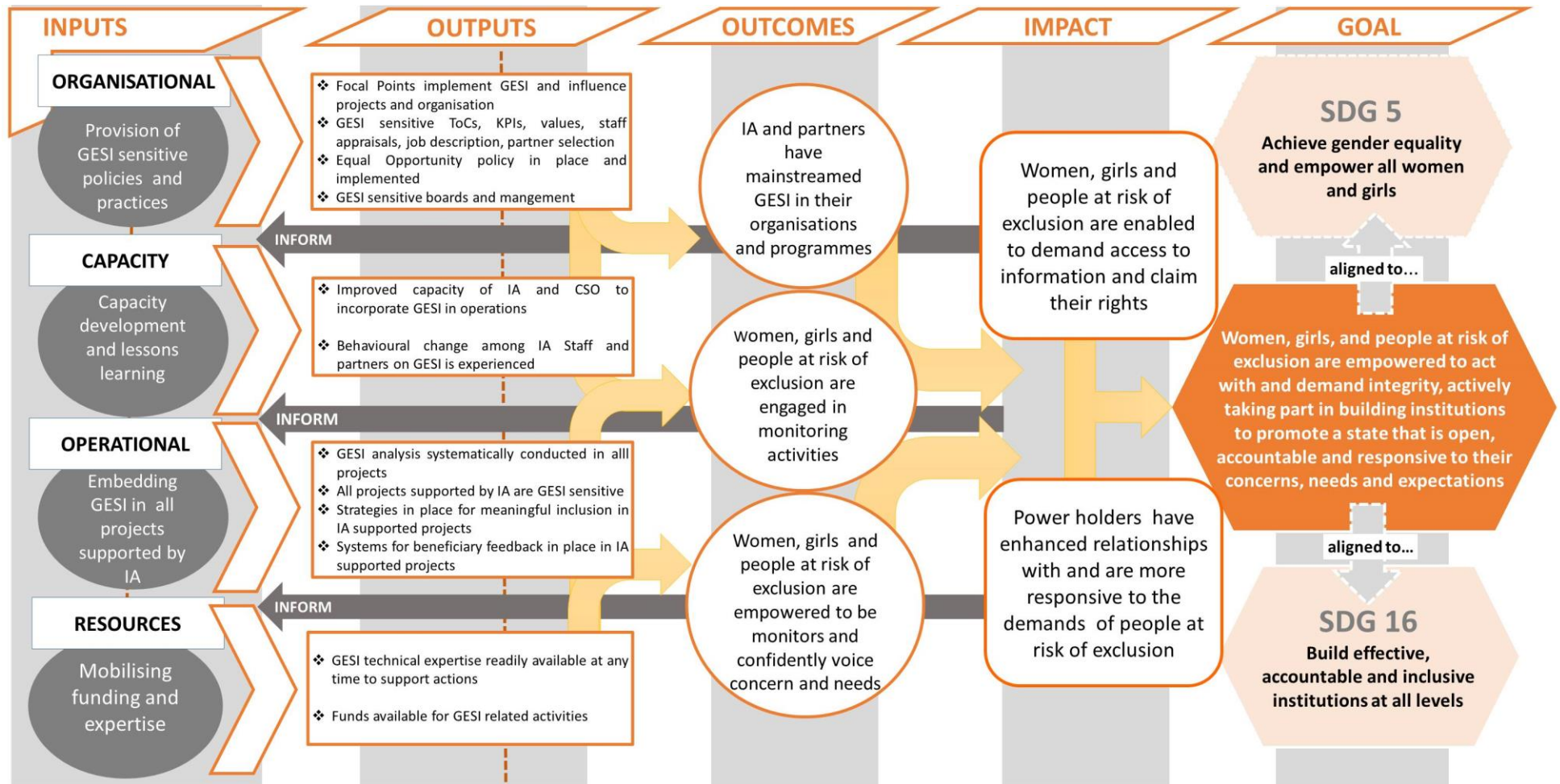


Table 1 Impact, Outcomes, Outputs and Indicators

Impact level	Indicators
Women, girls and people at risk of exclusion are enabled to demand access to information and claim their rights	# and % of engaged people at risk of exclusion who report greater understanding of integrity
	# and % of engaged people at risk of exclusion who demonstrate greater understanding of integrity
	# and % of engaged people at risk of exclusion who know who the duty bearer of a specific right is and the role the duty bearer should play
	# and % of engaged people at risk of exclusion who know how to raise an issue of concern with the authorities
Power holders at community level have enhanced relationships with and are more responsive to the demands of people at risk of exclusion	# and % of engaged people at risk of exclusion reporting improved access to services and infrastructure as a result of community monitoring
	# and % of engaged people at risk of exclusion who say they have improved relationships with power holders
	# and % of engaged people at risk of exclusion who say that power holders are more responsive to their needs
Outcomes	Indicators
IA and partners have mainstreamed GESI in their organisations and programmes	# and % of CSO partners with a GESI strategy in place
	# and % of IA supported projects which are GESI sensitive
Women, girls and people at risk of exclusion are engaged in monitoring activities within their communities	# and % of people at risk of exclusion actively targeted to be trained as monitors
	# and % of monitors from categories at risk of exclusions selected and trained as compared to the whole monitoring group
	# and % of people at risk of exclusion volunteering to become a monitor
	# and % of trained people at risk of exclusion who are still monitors 6 months in the project
Women, girls and people at risk of exclusion are empowered to be monitors and confidently voice their communities' concerns and needs, and influence decisions	# and % of monitors from categories at risk of exclusion who say they have influenced decisions that affect their community
	# of people at risk of exclusion reporting improved attitude at community level towards them
	# and % of monitors from categories at risk of exclusion reporting improved levels of confidence
	# and % of monitors from categories at risk of exclusion who exhibit positive behaviour change which demonstrates integrity
	# and % of monitors from categories at risk of exclusion who exhibit positive attitudinal change which demonstrates integrity
Outputs	Indicators

Organisational	# and % of CSOs partners who have GFP in place and evidence that they have a meaningful role in the organisation as GESI advisors
	# and % of CSO partners who have included GESI aspects in their KPIs, ToC, values, staff performance appraisal, trustee manual, induction manual, job descriptions, partners selection and/or due diligence
	# of CSO partners where people at risk of exclusion are in Board
	# and % of CSO partners who have Equal Opportunity and Diversity policies in place and where there is evidence that they are implementing them
	# of CSO partners where people at risk of exclusion are in active leadership roles
Capacity	Improved IA and CSO staff knowledge and attitudes towards GESI
	# IA and CSO partner staff that can describe specific changes they have made to their practice to make it GESI sensitive
	# and description of cases where IA and CSO partners staff have applied learning back in the workplace
	# and % of supported CSOs reporting improvements in their confidence and capacity to deliver GESI sensitive projects
Resources	# of successful bids which include budget for GESI activities
	# and description of external human resources employed to advance GESI
	# of partnerships with other NGO/CSOs to advance GESI
Operational	# and description of community activities addressing stigma and discrimination
	Increase in the capacity of CSO partners to engage with and influence power holders on issues affecting people at risk of exclusion
	# and description of community activities targeting people at risk of exclusion
	# and % of proposals and projects demonstrating GESI analysis and strategies to increase inclusion and equality
	# and % of CSOs who incorporate a GESI focus into each stage of the project cycle
	# people at risk of exclusion included as respondents in the beneficiary questionnaire used by monitors
	# and description of techniques used by CSO partners to increase the leadership potential of people at risk of exclusion
	# and description of projects monitored that reflect the priorities of people at risk of exclusion
	# and description of techniques used by CSO partners to target people at risk of exclusion to become and remain monitors

## 4. Who is our target?

The GESI strategy has two main components in it: gender equality and social inclusion.

We understand gender as being a socially constructed system of attributes, relationships, roles, and opportunities associated with being male and female, which leads to a power imbalance between men and women. For this reason, we will address this imbalance by targeting women and girls on the one hand, while making sure that boys and men are involved and engaged, and understand the benefits of gender equality and the negative impact of maintaining an unequal gender order in societies.<sup>12</sup>

For the gender equality component we will target women and girls TOGETHER with boys and men.

For the social inclusion component of this strategy our target are women and girls, as well as groups at risk of exclusion within our focus countries. Specifically, we aim to target groups who:

1. Have inadequate representation and/or participation in decision making;
2. Are discriminated because of their religion (or lack of), ethnic or social background, social illnesses or poor health, disabilities, sexual orientation and gender identity, age;
3. Are unable to exercise their guaranteed rights and able to access protections services
4. Have restricted rights, for example over mobility;

Groups at risk of exclusion include (but are not limited to) ethnic/religious minorities, women and men with disabilities, boys and girls, older women and men, women and men living in remote areas, non-educated women and men, the very poor, the LGBTQI community.

We recognise and address the issue where marginalisation is further exacerbated when people belong to more than one of the above categories. For example, an educated woman might face marginalisation due to her gender, but can still be relatively advantaged compared to other individuals thanks to her social status; on the other hand, a poor transgender individual living in a difficult to access area faces at least three dimensions of marginalisation (poverty, gender and remoteness). As these dimensions all interact with each other in different ways to shape the opportunities of an individual, marginalisation needs to be understood in a holistic way; for this reasons, despite the strategy is made of two components, activities will tackle gender equality and social inclusion altogether. This holistic approach of intersecting inequalities has been recognised as the way forward by many international development actors, and it features in the 'leave no one behind' principle.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality, Women 2000 and beyond – December 2008  
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/w2000/W2000%20Men%20and%20Boys%20E%20web.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> 'Leave no one behind' and the challenge of intersectionality: Christian Aid's experience of working with single and Dalit women in India, Jayshree P. Mangubhai & Chiara Capraro, 2015 <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13552074.2015.1054206>



We will work closely with our partners to identify the specific target groups according to each context. GESI analysis will be carried out systematically and for each of our projects and in collaboration with our partners to identified groups at risk of exclusion.

## 5. Applying the ‘Do No Harm’ Principle

Experience from the development and humanitarian sector tells us that activities aimed at increasing gender equality and social inclusion may have a negative impact on the lives of people<sup>14</sup>. Societies are based on power relations between genders, social classes, ethnic, religious and other groups. Empowering specific groups in a community means often reducing the influence of other groups who withhold power. We therefore understand that there is a risk that the implementation of this strategy may create tensions in the communities and backlash against the intended beneficiaries of the strategy itself.

Integrity Action and partners will ensure that we ‘do no harm’ by considering both the intended and unintended consequences of our intervention. To do that we will:

- Use a ‘conflict sensitivity’ approach by obtaining in-depth knowledge of the contexts in which we will operate and the interaction between the intervention and the context, and then to act upon this understanding, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximize positive impacts<sup>15</sup>.
- Undertaking regular conflict sensitivity analyses which consider the negative impacts of our interventions, and the measures to be adopted to avoid or mitigate these negative impacts
- Ensure that our partners use a conflict sensitivity approach and undertake regular conflict sensitivity analyses
- Protect the intended beneficiaries and avoid to expose them to any unnecessary risks
- Ensure that men, boys and groups withholding power are sensitised, involved in the intervention, and understand the value of equality and inclusiveness

## 6. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

Integrity Action will regularly monitor activities under yearly action plans and assess results against this strategy’s objectives using the set indicators (see page 6-7). At the end of the financial year the action plan will be evaluated and lessons learned will be taken into account to inform a new action plan for the next financial year.

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<sup>14</sup> See for example, a situation in which a development initiative has resulted in negative outcomes in Gender and State Building in Fragile and Conflict-affected States, OECD, 2013, Pag. 49: “In 2010 CARE Rwanda assessed men’s attitudes about their female partners’ participation in microcredit initiatives. It found that some men responded by retaining more income for their personal use and that gender-based violence apparently increased as a result of shifting household dynamics and men’s perception that their wives had received the additional income through selling sex”. [http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/development/gender-and-statebuilding-in-fragile-and-conflict-affected-states\\_9789264202061-en#page48](http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/development/gender-and-statebuilding-in-fragile-and-conflict-affected-states_9789264202061-en#page48)

<sup>15</sup> Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding: A resource pack (International Alert and Saferworld, 2004)

Integrity Action will require partners to ensure that disaggregated data gathered in the field are based on technically sound, agreed and harmonised measures and available for regular analysis.

When designing a new project, Integrity Action will work with our partners to make sure that GESI strategy informs the new intervention, lessons learned are taken into account and that a conflict and gender analysis is carried out.

As part of this Strategy attention will be given to building a network specifically focused on activities that address gender inequality and social inclusion. Integrity Action will on the one hand facilitate peer learning among our partners and, on the other, take part in existing networks currently engaged in work of this nature, including the Gender and Development Network<sup>16</sup>. This will allow us to acquire experts feedback on our activities, obtain new ideas and inputs, increase efficiency by learning what has worked and what has not, and access invaluable resources and knowledge.

Integrity Action will take into account gender equality and social inclusion as a central measure of success in future evaluations of our overall work. We will conduct an independent evaluation of the implementation of the GESI strategy - 2016-2021, upon its completion.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://gadnetwork.org/>