

GENDER EQUALITY POLICY IN THE SWEDISH TRADE UNION DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION

Introduction

All Swedish trade union development cooperation should have a perspective on gender equality. Equality between women and men in Swedish development cooperation is based on two important statements.

Equality between women and men is:

- a question about democracy, justice and human rights.
- a prerequisite for a fair and sustainable development.

Gender equality means more than to realize the presence of unfairness and differences based on gender. It includes the will to change the unfair conditions, requirements and structures that create inequality and is also about a more even distribution of resources, power and possibilities. This means that equality is a concern for both women and men and the relationships between them.

In an equal society and work-life women and men have equal rights, obligations and possibilities. Increased equality also contributes to better health, higher education levels, better environment, and reduced poverty.

The duty of the LO-TCO Secretariat of International Trade Union Development Cooperation is, according to statute No 4, to build and strengthen independent and democratic trade union organizations in the world. The gender equality perspective should therefore be of central importance.

It is important that the resources benefit both women and men and their respective needs.

Problem Description

In addition to having responsibility for the home, family and children, women in developing countries also have the main economic responsibilities for the family.

Women are often used as cheap labor with poor working conditions, especially in the so called export processing zones.

Most of the trade union members come from the formal economy where the majority of workers are men. Many women, however, work in the informal economy, which is usually not covered by any type of labor laws.

In the informal economy trade union organizations often are missing. Therefore, the number of unorganized female workers is very high in developing countries.

Long Term Objectives

- Equal rights for women and men in working life
- Equal rights in trade union organizations

Short Term Objectives

- Trade unions in recipient countries analyze gender equality to find out what changes are needed
- Trade unions in recipient countries make a plan for how to do the changes
- Trade unions in recipient countries form an equality policy that is used in all their work
- Trade unions in recipient countries attain knowledge and possibilities to influence and monitor the work of promoting equality between women and men
- That ILO's conventions on gender equality are ratified and followed in all recipient countries

Methods

Gender equality is not only about the number of women and men that is reached by trade unions assistance by for example education activities. An analysis of gender equality should be done to find out what is needed to change. A method of gender equality analysis focuses on:

Representation	gender distribution among those involved, which positions /levels women and men have, at work, in groups etc.
Resources	How is money, time and space distributed between men and women, does a pattern of wages remuneration et. Exist depending on gender.
Reality	Are equal needs and interests for both men and women a reality? Is the activity good for both men and women?

The gender analysis should be included in all project applications and reports, for example Activity, evaluation and final reports, as well as when appointing project- and working groups etc. A gender equality analysis should be included in all relevant project documentation.

Appendix

Check-list for Gender Equality Analysis

To do a gender equality analysis in the project, you need to ask yourself the following questions:

- What is the actual situation and what is the explanation behind that?
- How are women and men influenced?
- How can a possible gender inequality be changed?
- Are there any obstacles and if so what are they?

Who receives the money or grant/support? Are certain activities prioritized? Are activities dominated by a certain gender? How are resources distributed between different activities and organizations? What priorities are made?

How are meetings and way of working organized? Can everyone participate? Are times and places of meetings planned so that everyone can join? Whose priorities set the agenda? Whose time is most important? Can recruitment to education activities or routines change gender imbalances?

How are representatives appointed in different structures? Is there an equal division between men and women? What can be done to create balance in an uneven division of gender? What is “competence” and how are different experiences valued? Are there differences in valuing experiences when appointing a man or a woman? In which contexts are women respective men represented? Is there a difference? Why are they in that special context? How are assignments allocated?

How are projects and research initiated? Which are the instructions and how will gender equality be promoted?

Are all statistics divided by gender? How is the gender dimension handled and up-dated in current material? How are women and men represented in the material?

How is the gender equality treated in reports, working groups and applications? Can we suggest other methods that are better? How are gender equality aspects brought forward?

Have the recipient organizations a gender equality policy of their own?