

BDRCS Gender Policy

(Approved on 14 May 2005)

A. Introduction:

The rationale for integrating a gender perspective in the activities of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) lies in the Red Cross and Red Crescent humanitarian mandate: *to prevent and alleviate human suffering without discrimination*. Women are a vital resource for the Movement and the BDRCS as volunteers, in the governing bodies, as staff and managers. Gender equality ensures that BDRCS will utilize all its resources and that there is no sex-based discrimination in the allocation of resources or benefits, or in access to services.

The purpose of this policy is to define the main approach of BDRCS for addressing gender issues within the BDRCS, both in its programming and human resource practices.

B. Scope:

The BDRCS focus is on gender, rather than specifically on women. Gender refers to the roles, responsibilities, needs, opportunities, interests and capacities of both men and women. These are influenced by social and cultural factors. Therefore the term “gender” does not replace the term “sex” which refers exclusively to biological differences. Man and women often play different roles in society and accordingly they have different needs. A gender perspective is required to ensure that men’s and women’s specific needs, vulnerabilities and capacities (set in the broader context of class, ethnicity, race and religion) are recognized and addressed.

This policy establishes the basis for the BDRCS to ensure that the gender differences are taken into account and dealt with in relation to core programmes as defined in Strategy 2010, such as disaster relief, disaster preparedness, health and promotion of humanitarian values.

C. Statement:

With regard to gender issues, the goal of the BDRCS is to ensure that all BDRCS programmes benefit men and women equally, according to their different needs; and with the input and equal participation of men and women at all levels within the National Society.

BDRCS is committed to taking the necessary steps towards achieving this goal, particularly recognizing that:

1. Natural disaster, conflicts, social and political instability may affect women differently and that BDRCS emergency response and long-term humanitarian assistance may also have a different impact on men and women;

2. The integration of a gender perspective into BDRCS action is an important strategy towards the fulfillment of the RC/RC Movement humanitarian mandate to improve the lives of the most vulnerable;
3. The BDRCS operates in wide variety of cultures, as such it needs to take a culturally sensitive approach with regard to mainstreaming a gender perspective in it's work;
4. The participation of both men and women in all BDRCS actions not only ensures gender equality, but also increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the organization;
5. Although the primary task of the BDRCS is to ensure gender sensitivity in their existing programmes, they also implement projects to assist groups of men or women, if local situations so require.

D. Responsibilities:

To achieve its goal, **BDRCS** shall formulate an Action Plan including:

1. Put in place institutional procedures which ensure that the needs of boys, girls, men and women are all met equitably in disaster preparedness and response, vulnerability reduction and the provision of health and other services;
2. Design strategies for capacity building in gender mainstreaming as part of institutional development programmes with special attention to training on gender analysis skills;
3. Formulate measures to ensure that gender-specific vulnerabilities and capacities of men and women are systematically identified and addressed;
4. Ensure that data on beneficiaries is disaggregated by sex for needs assessment; programme planning and gender analysis is integrated into programme design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation;
5. Ensure that reporting and accountability mechanisms for activities and results in gender mainstreaming are put in place. This includes performance evaluations, budget allocation analysis and actions to enable the full participation of men and women on an equal and meaningful basis in all the activities of BDRCS at all levels;
6. Ensure that all workshops, training and seminars have a gender awareness component;
7. To create a Gender Cell at the BDRCS National Headquarters to monitor the implementation of the Gender Policy and formulate a Gender Guideline.

E. Senior Management is responsible for:

1. Increasing awareness and skills of staff and volunteers at NHQ and Units in considering the social differences between vulnerable men and women when designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes;
2. Conducting a systematic review of the institution's procedures to put in place gender analysis as part of programming or improving the existing systems;
3. Enabling a gender balance in the different levels of the structure within the organization, in particular to involve more women in decision-making at all levels;
4. Ensuring equal opportunities among female and male staff members and volunteers in the areas of recruitment, promotion, benefits, training and working conditions.
5. Ensuring gender balance in BDRCS management.

F. Governance is responsible for:

1. Assessing the implications of their policies and decisions for men and women, and thus ensuring that all BDRCS policies and programmes are gender balanced.
2. Ensuring gender balance of Board Members and Unit Executive Committees.
