



Gender Policy

for the Office in Basel

Objective of this paper

This paper pursues two aims: on the one hand, it should inform partner organisations, donors and enthusiasts about the principles and aims of mission 21 in pursuing gender issues. On the other, for the staff of mission 21 the implementation should serve as a guideline, with the help of which compliance of activities with the principles and objectives of mission 21 can be reviewed.

This paper on gender policy is primarily to be used within the office of mission 21 in Basel. However, it should also act as an impulse for our partner churches to deal more intensely with issues of gender justice and, where appropriate, to develop their own Gender Policies.

The drafting of the gender policy for the mission 21 office has been concerned not only with language, but with values, social structures and alliances as well as with political attitudes and demands. The paper is based on a European understanding of “gender mainstreaming”, “gender relations”, “equal rights” and “gender-sensitive language” among other things. While these demands must necessarily have global validity, their implementation must be adapted in each case to the specific cultural context and by those directly affected.

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1. Basis of the gender policy

This gender policy is based on the mission statement of mission 21. This stipulates that for mission 21 justice and, in particular, the equal rights of women and men are of central importance.

Mission 21 works on behalf the world's poor, oppressed and those on the margins of society. In particular, this includes women, who are often disadvantaged economically, politically, socially, culturally and religiously. Mission 21 lives out the deep missionary relations with special attention for the issue of gender.

Within its own organisation, mission 21 strives for a transparent use of power and a fair distribution and exercise of power with our partners overseas.

The real justification for the engagement for justice and the equality of women and men is provided by the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. Specific examples are:

“Then God created Adam , the people, as a divine image; as an image of God they were created; male and female has he, has she, has God created them.“ (Gen 1:27 – Bible in Inclusive Language)

“For there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female: all of you are uniquely united in the Messiah Jesus.” (Gal 3:28 – Bible in Inclusive Language)

“Grace and faithfulness come together, justice and peace kiss each other.” (Ps 85:11 – Bible in Inclusive Language)

“Christ is our peace, he has made both of them one and has torn down the wall of enmity, which separated us, through his life and death.” (Eph 2:14 – Zurich Bible, 2007)

On this basis and in this manner, mission 21 is working on the Kingdom of God, which entails justice, also between the genders, and a life in dignity and fullness worldwide (John 10:10).

2. Aim of the gender policy

The gender policy concretises the commitment as set down in the mission statement of mission 21: *“mission 21 supports equal rights for men and women. Both sexes should carry the burden of everyday chores together. We are committed to overcoming sexual discrimination.”*

Women and men work together to fulfil the task of the formation and preservation of creation in Gen 2:15: “Adonaj, that is God, took the human being into the Garden of Eden to work on and supervise him”, and also bear rights and obligations together. This corresponds with the understanding of Gal 6:2: “Carry each other’s loads and thus fulfil the law of the Messiah” (Bible in Inclusive Language). Mission 21 is committed to putting this principle into action.

The reasons for gender-specific injustice are manifold: these include gender blindness, fear of losing power (and, hence, the struggle to preserve power), as well as traditional, cultural and religious legitimisation.

The gender policy takes the roots of this injustice as a starting point and sees the key for their change in equal access to social, material, spiritual as well as cultural goods and resources. Hence, for mission 21, working to achieve equal opportunities for women and men in all spheres of life and to overcoming gender-specific disadvantages and violence is a binding commitment.

Taking into account existing gender-specific differences, women and men should have the same right to self-determination and co-determination. This requires a strengthening of the mutual understanding between women and men, the acceptance of different lifestyles and the recognition of the sexual self-determination of each individual.

3. Methods of implementation

Mission 21 sees itself as a community. The implementation of gender justice can come about only through dialogue within the community. Since gender relations are present in all spheres of life, a gender perspective must be included from the outset in all processes of planning and change.

3.1 Gender Mainstreaming

As a means of consistent implementation, the “gender mainstreaming process” is applied both structurally and programmatically in all issues and working areas. All objectives and activities as well as their impacts are formulated, analysed and executed consciously with regard to women and men. This means:

Mission 21 seeks to achieve the goal of overcoming gender-specific discrimination in its structures and activities and monitors its implementation. As part of the decision-making process at management level as well as for specialist consultation purposes it has set up the Women & Gender Desk and equipped it with the necessary resources.

In all areas and at all hierarchical levels, women and men are perceived as full and equal agents. The increased participation of women at leadership and decision-making levels is promoted, while gender barriers are diminished.

Burdens and obligations are distributed fairly among women and men. In doing so, particular attention is given to possible multiple discrimination in terms of gender, ethnic background, social class, age, religion, sexual orientation etc.

Sensitivity for gender justice is promoted by concrete working instruments for women and men. Through this, culturally, social and religiously influenced gender attribution, in particular, becomes identifiable. Central to this process is the removal of taboos from, and the dealing with, power, as well as the dismantling of physical, psychological and structural power.

The finances of mission 21 are used in all working areas of the organisation in a way that ensures equal opportunities for women and men. Through the method of “gender budgeting”, the focus on this obligation, in particular, is increased and transparency in the use of finances raised.

Through transversal anchorage mission 21 implements the gender approach in all areas of operation. “Gender blindness” is thereby brought to light and, through a specific raising of awareness with the help of “gender glasses”, becomes something that can be experienced first-hand. Awareness of gender mainstreaming is promoted and improved in the equal exchange between all continents.

3.2 Theology of gender justice

Mission 21 is setting up a competence centre for contextual theology. Among other things, it serves to give space to the perceptions of Christians and in the global South and to place them on an equal footing with Western Christianity. At a theological level, this means enabling and empowering women and men, encouraging them to read the Bible with their own eyes in terms of their own circumstances and to connect it with their everyday lives. The identification of a theological non-contemporaneity between Europe and the partner churches as well as the recognition of theological divergences are very important. They lead to the mutual enrichment.

Mission 21 is seeking to further develop feminist and gender-perspective theology in its continental assemblies in discussions on theological issues, and to support existing movements / trends in countries of the global South. This contextual theology from the global South especially considers the problems of the correlation between factors such as ethnic, social, and cultural origin and the degree of economic-political dependency, in order to take action against human-inflicted sufferings. Through this, self-confidence, critical reasoning and intellectual creativity are promoted in the change in thinking and reflection of women and men.

3.3 Empowering the promotion of opportunity – mutual respect

Gender mainstreaming does not replace the empowerment of women, but is intended instead to make it really possible. In order to counteract the existing forms of discrimination against women, mission 21 employs the following strategies of women's empowerment:

- empowerment of women in all areas of society and support in the improvement of the personal, family and economic situations and positions of women;
- creation of the pre-conditions, which give women and men, with their differing realities of life, the same opportunities to freely choose and achieve their own goals;
- developing initial steps to bring about equal rights for women and men, in order to strengthen harmonious cooperation between women and men and overcome gender-specific discrimination. Mutual respect and appreciation of the sexes in their dissimilarity must be promoted.

4. Anchorage in the departments

Mission 21 regards itself as an organism with many members (in accordance with Paul in the depiction of the Body of Christ in 1 Cor 12). The office in Basel with all its various departments forms a whole, which, solely on the basis of networking and close co-operation, serves the worldwide community.

4.1 Department for Education, Exchange, Research

Gender equality is observed throughout all areas of education, exchange and research. The active inclusion of the international learning community is central: An exchange of experiences between the continents enriches the knowledge of all and promotes the possibilities of development with gender-specific approaches. In educational work with adults and young people, living situations in Asia, Latin America and Africa are rendered visible and audible in Europe; as a result, the question of gender relations and gender relationships is continuously raised, either implicitly or explicitly. In research and teaching, through the archives and library collections of mission 21, the gender perspective has particular importance. Within the scope of the emerging contextual theology competence centre special attention is directed towards gender justice in church and society worldwide. This is done on the basis of advocacy action within the international relations of mission 21.

4.2 Department for Communication and Marketing

Language symbol systems are at the heart of social communication. Together with verbal and written language, pictures, photographs or graphics are also a form of linguistic expression. All these forms reflect values and norms, express gender relations and influence them. Precisely chosen words and pictures contribute to gender justice.

Within the communication of mission 21, particular attention is paid to the equality of the genders. Discrimination, clichés and gender stereotypes are avoided or explained where they are unavoidable. Effective public communication requires simple, clear and aesthetic language. Mission 21 connects this necessity with sensitivity for gender justice, whereby the rules of professional journalism are taken into consideration.

4.3 Department for International Relations

Through the integration of the different traditions and practices of the sponsoring associations of mission 21 within the organisation, gender aspects played a significant role for the work of the department of international relations from the outset. Since 2002, there has been a detailed questionnaire for the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (PIME) of projects and programmes, approved by “Bread for all”, DM – échange et mission, HEKS and mission 21. This contains gender issues as an

integral component of all project and programme phases. In the manual for programme management of “Bread for all” from June 2004, gender, within the context of the Commission for Projects and Programmes “Missions” (KPPM) became a cross-cutting issue for working cooperation with the partner agencies, to which mission 21 also belongs. Both documents were taken up in the Department for International Relations’ project management manual in June 2006. Accordingly, the following year, mission 21 made gender justice a cross-cutting task within the scope of its overall concept within the Department for International Relations. This means that gender justice is taken into consideration throughout all sectors of its project and programme work.

This comprehensive gender mainstreaming should ensure that the department’s activities, in particular its project and programme work with international partners, corresponds with the goals of gender justice as stipulated in the mission statement. Dialogue with partner churches and organisations facilitates the exchange on practised gender realities in the respective cultures and contexts and helps to raise awareness for the understanding of the roles of women and men. Through this, we contribute towards achieving a deeper, mutual understanding between partners within the mission 21 community. This helps create a basis of trust in order to indicate the possibility of, and necessity for, an equitable appointment of management positions and committees.

5. Equal rights as a condition of employment

5.1 Equal opportunities and obligations

The equality of opportunities and obligations for the staff of mission 21 is to be guaranteed through:

- the appropriate filling of posts in Switzerland as well as in relation to ecumenical co-workers abroad
- training and opportunities for professional development
- labour law measures
- respect for jurisdiction and areas of responsibility
- inclusion of expertise in decision-making processes
- reconciliation of work and family. Part-time employment opportunities are to be encouraged, particularly for men, so that they too can be more involved in family life and/or in voluntary work.
- respect and consideration for different life forms.

5.2 Wage equality

Wage equality is based on a differentiated appreciation and not on the assumption of an egalitarian community.

Wage classification is based on a transparent scale, arranged according to professionally relevant competence.

The principle, 'the same wage for the same work', applies to women and men. Equal rights for women and men are guaranteed in particular through the payment of compensation or redundancy etc.

During maternity or fatherhood periods, gender equity is taken into account.

High appreciation is also accorded to those workers carrying out unpaid work on an agreed basis.

5.3 Protection against sexual harassment

All forms of sexual harassment (verbally and physically) in the workplace are prohibited.

Employees are provided with appropriate information and the addresses of professional agencies when support is required.

Those affected can also turn to management or the employees' representatives. Superiors must protect their workers against sexual harassment. In certain situations financial compensation and redress is also possible.

5.4 Gender Budgeting

Mission 21 is introducing gender justice to budgeting decisions and in all financial areas within the respective departments and implementing it.

Through the instrument of gender budgeting, transparency is created, enabling gender justice to be achieved in the use of finances.

Gender justice is an essential criterion in the use of finances and is an obligation for all decision-making levels.

An economic expression of voluntary work should create awareness for its great value and its benefit for society.

5.5 Gender justice and decision-making processes

Gender justice is taken into consideration in all decision-making processes. Management bodies are responsible for this. The structural anchorage of the Women & Gender desk facilitates the provision of specific advice at all decision-making levels as well as a certain right to appeal.

5.6 Gender-sensitive language

Gender-sensitive language promotes gender justice through the formation and changing of awareness and of gender-specific norms and values.

It is to be used in dealing with staff as well as in guidelines, regulations, contracts, publications, job advertisements, donor appeals and other written documents.

6. Implementing, Evaluation and Monitoring

The policy was approved by senior management on 17th March 2009 and by the board on 3rd April 2009. It then came immediately into force and was presented within the scope of an “employees’ information”.

Two years after coming into force, the policy and its implementation will be evaluated.

The policy will be introduced according to need by the individual departments and within framework of staff training and will be anchored within the regular staff talks.

The criteria for post evaluation and hierarchical classification are checked periodically for gender-specific restrictions; in particular, this applies to a possible underestimation of (female or part-time) secretarial functions as opposed to officer posts.

The policy will be used by all staff on an everyday basis; attention will be drawn to it on a mutual basis.

Mission 21 enables its employees, when required, to have access to an external ombudsperson for victims of gender discrimination.

7. Glossary

Bible in Inclusive Language

The Bible in Inclusive Language is a new translation of the biblical texts including the Apocrypha from the original language into German. The translation into inclusive language was carried out by 40 female and 12 male German-speaking theologians. Mission 21 uses this Bible contextually. The quotations from it indicate a gender-sensitive reading of the Bible.

Community

Community is defined here as a faith, learning and active community. We live and experience mission with our partners through ecumenical exchange and unity in reconciled diversity. We stimulate and enrich one another and share a Christian life lived in fullness in preparation for the coming Kingdom of God.

Contextual theology

Contextual theology means looking at and interpreting Bible texts and theological topics in one's own overall situation. New light is shed on the texts and themes alike. Because of the differing contexts different interpretations are unavoidable, something which, in a positive sense, however, can lead to enriching experiences. Successful contextual theology leads to an authentic faith, rooted in and committed to each particular context, and to active commitment on behalf of the disadvantaged of this earth in the place God puts us.

Empowerment

The English term “empowerment” is also used in German. Strengthening and enabling people to improve their opportunities to act in a self-determined and self-responsible way. Empowerment refers both to the process of self-empowerment as well as to the support for the discernment and utilisation of creative opportunities and resources.

Feminist theology

Feminist theology, pursuing theology with a feminist consciousness and sensitivity was developed in the 1960s in the USA. But western middle class women have no monopoly on it. In the 1980s, theology from the perspective of women from the South originated in their respective continents as a form of liberation theology, for example womanist theology and Mujerista theology. The term “feminist” is to be used only in

specific temporal and/or geographical contexts. Feminist theology does not restrict itself to biological gender or sexual behaviour. Gender theology is a broader term, within which the feminist claim and argument do not get lost. Feminist theology from the perspective of women from the South seeks increasingly to be the theology of advocacy, i.e. giving a voice to the voiceless.

Gender

Gender, in English, refers to the concept of “social” gender, as opposed to “sexual” or “biological” gender. While “sex” refers to biological gender, gender roles in different cultures and, hence, the expectations of men and women, vary. Through the analytical classification of both facets, i.e. the sexual and the social gender, it has been possible to look at the “anatomy” and “destiny” of the genders, independently of one another.

Gender Budgeting

Gender Budgeting is an abridged form of “gender responsive budgeting” or “gender-sensitive budgeting”. It was developed in the 1980s in Australia. Since then, it has been used in many countries at different levels. With this instrument, mission 21 sets itself the goal of creating transparency in its income and expenditure through differentiated analysis, so that men and women benefit equally from its use of financial resources.

Gender justice

Gender justice incorporates the entitlement to equality as well as the consideration of existing differences (e.g. the need for special protection during pregnancy to guarantee protection against discrimination in such situations). Gender-transparent sensitivity and being careful to deal fairly with one another are indispensable.

Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming (integration of gender equality perspectives, comprehensive equalization orientation) refers to the attempt to put gender equality into practice throughout all levels of society. The term was first discussed in 1984 at the 3rd UN World Woman’s Conference. Gender mainstreaming differs from feminist policy in that both genders are included equally in the concept and it means that gender consciousness is applied across all areas of everyday life. Equal rights for both genders are understood as a basic principle which must be filled in all areas of life with contents.

Gender equality

Gender equality does not necessarily mean that women and men are to be treated exactly equally in all cases or that the same number of women and men must be included. Women and men should not become the same. Instead, the aim is much more for their opportunities and prospects in life to become, to be and to remain the same. The term summarises the striving for a society, in which women and men have the same opportunity to live a full life and be able to make a similar contribution to shaping society as they see fit. The aim of this equality is for the genders to be treated equally without any direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of gender. Equality also embraces the right of women and men to be different from one another.

Gender-sensitive language

Linguistic equal treatment is a component of gender equality. The use of gender-sensitive and gender-inclusive language is a form of feminist linguistics. On the one hand, the language itself and, on the other, individuals' linguistic behaviour is analysed and reinterpreted from feminist perspectives. Inclusive language developed not only out of scientific interest, but from a socio-political movement; it is concerned with sociological and political criteria and their execution. Mission 21 takes note of the guideline of the decision of the Upper House of the Swiss Parliament (Bundesrat) from 7th June 1993 with regard to the equal treatment of women and man in the legislative and administrative language and puts it into use.

Sexual harassment

Whenever a person, on the basis of his or her gender or sexual orientation, is disparaged and injured verbally, in writing or physically, one speaks of sexual harassment.

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