

Steps Syria for Community Development Gender Equality Plan (GEP) 2026–2028

Statement of Commitment

Steps Syria for Community Development (STEPS) is committed to fostering an inclusive, respectful, and equitable working environment in which all personnel are treated fairly and with dignity, regardless of gender, marital status, race, ethnicity, disability, age, religion, or any other personal characteristic or status.

STEPS recognizes that gender equality contributes to stronger organizational performance, better decision-making, staff wellbeing, and improved program delivery. STEPS is committed to integrating gender equality considerations into its organizational culture, management practices, recruitment processes, partnerships, and program implementation activities.

This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) establishes STEPS's commitments, objectives, monitoring mechanisms, and actions to promote gender equality across the organization.

STEPS recognizes that people may experience different barriers and inequalities depending on their individual circumstances, including gender, age, disability, displacement status, socio-economic status, ethnicity, religion, caregiving responsibilities, geographic location, and other relevant factors. The organization is committed to ensuring that these different needs and experiences are considered in its policies, practices, and programs.

STEPS is committed to ensuring that no person is disadvantaged in employment, participation, leadership, training, consultation, or program activities because of these intersecting vulnerabilities.

Scope and Application

This Gender Equality Plan applies to employees, consultants, contractors, senior leadership and decision-makers, and any other parties where applicable, recruitment and selection processes, and organizational policies and workplace culture.

The Plan applies across all STEPS operational locations.

Governance, Dedicated Resources, and Expertise

STEPS commits appropriate human and organizational resources to support the implementation of this Gender Equality Plan.

Responsibility for oversight and implementation of the GEP rests with Senior Management, Operations and HR personnel, and relevant managers and team leads. Senior Management retains overall responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation, monitoring, and periodic review of the Plan and its associated commitments.

Where necessary, STEPS may engage external gender equality expertise, advisors, trainers, or consultants to support implementation, training, safeguarding measures, or policy development.

Resources dedicated to implementation may include staff time allocated to policy implementation and monitoring, internal operational support, training and awareness-raising activities, external expertise where required, and organizational policy review and improvement processes.

STEPS will review this plan periodically and update measures as necessary.

Data Collection and Monitoring

STEPS commits to monitoring gender equality indicators and collecting sex/gender-disaggregated personnel data in accordance with applicable data protection laws and organizational needs.

Monitoring may include gender balance across staffing levels, recruitment and promotion statistics, leadership representation, participation in training and professional development, staff retention and turnover trends, and reported workplace concerns related to equality, discrimination, or harassment.

Monitoring and review activities will be conducted periodically and at least every two years.

All data collection and reporting activities will be conducted confidentially and in accordance with applicable data protection, privacy, and confidentiality requirements.

Training and Awareness Raising

STEPS is committed to promoting awareness and understanding of gender equality principles throughout the organization.

Gender equality awareness activities may include staff induction materials, internal guidance and policy dissemination, training sessions and workshops, manager and leadership briefings, safeguarding and anti-harassment awareness, unconscious bias awareness training, and inclusion and respectful workplace discussions.

Trainings target general staff, managers and supervisors, senior leadership and decision-makers, and recruitment panel members where applicable. Training shall be delivered internally or through external experts and service providers.

Priority Areas and Organizational Measures

Work-Life Balance and Organizational Culture

STEPS promotes a respectful, inclusive, and supportive organizational culture that values diversity, wellbeing, and equal opportunities for all personnel. STEPS supports flexible and inclusive working practices appropriate to operational requirements, including remote and hybrid working arrangements where feasible. The organization seeks to identify and address barriers that may disproportionately affect individuals with caregiving responsibilities, disabilities, or other personal circumstances, and encourages a healthy work-life balance for all personnel.

Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making

STEPS is committed to promoting equal opportunity and fair representation in leadership, decision-making, and participation in organizational governance. The organization seeks to ensure that recruitment, promotion, succession planning, and leadership development processes are transparent, merit-based, and free from discrimination. STEPS encourages diverse representation and meaningful participation of individuals from underrepresented groups in leadership and decision-making processes.

Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression

STEPS aims to ensure fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory recruitment, remuneration, performance management, and career development practices. The organization is committed to providing equal access to employment, professional development, mentoring, and advancement opportunities regardless of gender or other protected characteristics. Recruitment and promotion decisions shall be based on objective criteria, qualifications, experience, and organizational needs.

Integration of Gender Dimensions into Programs, Research, and Training

STEPS seeks to integrate gender equality, diversity, inclusion, and participation considerations into program design, research activities, stakeholder engagement, partnerships, and training content. The organization recognizes that individuals may experience multiple and intersecting forms of disadvantage and seeks to apply a Leave No One Behind approach by considering the needs, priorities, capacities, and perspectives of women, men, girls, boys, persons with disabilities, displaced populations, minority groups, and other marginalized or underrepresented populations where relevant. STEPS promotes meaningful participation and consultation to ensure that diverse voices contribute to the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of organizational and program activities.

Where appropriate, program design and implementation will be informed by consultation with affected communities and local stakeholders to ensure that activities are context-

sensitive, culturally appropriate, conflict-sensitive, and responsive to diverse needs.

Measures Against Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Harassment

STEPS maintains a zero-tolerance approach to gender-based violence, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse, discrimination, bullying, intimidation, retaliation, abuse of power, and other forms of inappropriate conduct. The organization is committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment through safeguarding measures, awareness raising, confidential reporting mechanisms, and appropriate response procedures. All personnel, consultants, contractors, and representatives acting on behalf of STEPS are expected to uphold these standards and contribute to a culture of dignity, respect, and equality.

Safeguarding, Inclusion, and Accountability

STEPS is committed to promoting safeguarding, inclusion, accountability, and equitable access across its operations and partnerships. The organization seeks to identify and address barriers that may prevent individuals or groups from participating fully and safely in organizational and program activities. STEPS promotes meaningful engagement with stakeholders and affected populations, supports confidential and accessible feedback and complaints mechanisms, and encourages continuous learning to strengthen inclusive and accountable practices. Particular consideration shall be given to the needs and experiences of individuals facing multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities, including those related to gender, age, disability, displacement, socio-economic status, ethnicity, religion, caregiving responsibilities, or geographic location. STEPS seeks to apply safeguarding, Leave No One Behind, participation, accountability, and Do No Harm principles across its organizational practices, partnerships, and program activities.

Monitoring and Review

This Gender Equality Plan will be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to reflect organizational developments, workforce changes, lessons learned, and applicable legal and donor requirements.

STEPS will monitor progress against the commitments outlined in this Plan through the periodic review of relevant indicators, which may include workforce diversity, recruitment and promotion practices, participation in training and professional development, leadership representation, safeguarding and workplace conduct trends, and other equality and inclusion measures as appropriate.

Where feasible and proportionate to organizational size, STEPS will seek to improve gender balance, participation in equality and safeguarding training, inclusive recruitment practices, and representation in leadership and decision-making processes.

Monitoring activities will be conducted in accordance with applicable data protection requirements and will inform continuous improvement of organizational policies,

practices, and procedures. STEPS aims to review progress and relevant indicators at least every two years.

Publication and Accessibility

This Gender Equality Plan will be made available internally to personnel and may be shared externally with donors, partners, or contracting authorities where required.

Approved and Endorsed by Senior Management

On behalf of STEPS;

Name: Ibrahim Alkarat

Position: Chair of the Board – STEPS Syria for Community Development

Date: 01/06/2026

