

GENDER AND SOGIESC POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH NL) is an international non-governmental organisation (INGO) that works to protect children by preventing and stopping child exploitation, and by empowering children to make their voices count.

We achieve this by being a catalyst for systemic change to stop child exploitation, utilising our knowledge and expertise to co-create sustainable, evidence-based solutions. As such, TdH NL is committed to tackle the root causes of child exploitation.

Based on our **Theory of Change**, we tackle child exploitation by working to address structural injustice and inequalities, driven by harmful social and cultural norms, as well as imbalances in power established in our current patriarchal societies. In our **Listen Up! Strategy**, we commit to using an intersectional approach to prevent and stop child

exploitation (Goal 4), recognising that overlapping vulnerabilities children face in specific cultural and socioeconomic contexts. Further highlighted by our **Core Principle** of Intersectionality and Power Awareness, we aim to proactively maintain awareness of power relations and the overlapping or intersecting factors that can be empowering or oppressive. This Policy aims to put those foundational documents into practice. This Policy further supports our commitments under the **International Gender Champions** (IGC), notably the IGC Panel Parity Pledge and the IGC Gender-Based Violence Pledge.



OUR VISION

Children can flourish in a world free of all forms of exploitation.



OUR MISSION

Protect children by preventing and stopping child exploitation. And by empowering children to make their voices count.



OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

Our core principles are children at the centre, intersectionality and power awareness, sustainability, meaningful and strategic partnerships, safety and wellbeing.

1.1 Purpose

This Policy lays down a **clear and common vision and commitments to support, promote, and operationalise the advancement of gender and Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC) equality and inclusion**. By establishing this Policy, we can ensure that TdH NL staff and partners understand our approach to gender and SOGIESC and how to consistently and cohesively apply it across the variety of contexts that TdH NL works in.

Promoting gender equality and SOGIESC inclusion is integral to achieving TdH NL's mission to prevent and stop child exploitation, ensuring sustainable systemic change and empowering children and communities worldwide. Gender and SOGIESC equality are **prerequisites** for creating a world where children can thrive free from exploitation. This Policy aims to serve as a roadmap for embedding gender equality and SOGIESC inclusion in all operational domains, advocacy, and programming.

This Policy is grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), whereby the rights of children are guaranteed without discrimination of any kind (Article 2). In light of the UNCRC Committee General Comment No 13 on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence, we understand that addressing all forms of gender discrimination must be part of a comprehensive violence-prevention strategy. This Policy further aligns with the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and international human rights standards on addressing gender and SOGIESC discrimination.

1.2 Policy Statement

TdH NL recognises that child exploitation is a form of gender-based violence, rooted in global power structures, intersecting inequalities and stereotypes. Gender and heteronormative norms shape the manifestation of the violence children experience and their risks of victimisation. Therefore, **addressing inequalities based on gender and SOGIESC directly contributes to our commitment to tackling the root causes of child exploitation**.

This Policy acknowledges the diversity of sociocultural norms and political contexts across the regions where TdH NL operates, ensuring **locally relevant but universally equitable approaches**. When implementing this Policy in local contexts, TdH NL maintains non-negotiable commitments to advancing gender and SOGIESC equality, ensuring the values of diversity and inclusion remain central to our work.

We commit to zero tolerance of all forms of gender-based violence, sexist attitudes and behaviours within our organisation, work and interactions with children, communities and stakeholders.



GOAL

Gender and SOGIESC equality & inclusion in all work and culture.



SCOPE

All offices & programmes.



ACCOUNTABILITY

Integrity Framework | Safeguarding | Measurable Indicators.



PARTNERSHIPS

Compliance | Local Adaptation | Capacity Building.



IMPLEMENTATION

Guidelines provided for global, consistent application across different contexts.

1.3 Scope

This Policy applies to **all TdH NL offices and field operations, all its processes, procedures, communication and work, including programmes, research and advocacy**. This Policy constitutes a guide to ensure gender and SOGIESC equality and inclusion are embedded throughout all aspects of our work and organisational culture. This means holding ourselves and our partners accountable to ensure gender and SOGIESC equality and inclusion in our organisation, as well as '*walking the talk*' by proactively employing approaches and practices to ensure gender and SOGIESC equality in all matters and sectors, including employment and decision-making practices.

TdH NL recognises the importance of accountability and established mechanisms to ensure the

consistent application of this Policy. These include measurable indicators to track progress on gender and SOGIESC equality. Our Integrity Framework and safeguarding mechanisms are integral to promote inclusivity and ensuring compliance across all levels of the organisation.

The Policy extends to TdH NL's partners, who are expected to adhere to its principles, while ensuring its local contextualisation. Mechanisms such as periodic audits, capacity-building initiatives, and monitoring processes support partner compliance.

Implementation guidelines provide detailed instructions on operationalising this Policy in varied contexts, to ensure its principles are consistently applied globally.

2. GENDER AND SOGIESC EQUALITY ARE INSTRUMENTAL IN TDH NL'S SUCCESS

In order to adequately implement this Policy, it is important to have a common understanding of the concepts of gender and SOGIESC and why they are essential to tackle child exploitation.

2.1 How We Understand Gender/ SOGIESC

TdH NL defines **gender** as an individual's identity, and the expression of that identity, as a boy/man, girl/woman or something beyond these binary categories, including transgender, non-binary, queer and other gender identities.

TdH NL acknowledges the existence of dominant gender norms, which are socially constructed expectations around the appearance, behaviours and roles for boys/men and girls/women. These norms are shaped by systems of oppression, including patriarchy, granting boys/men greater power and privilege in society, heteronormativity, which assumes all individuals are heterosexual, and cisnormativity, which assumes all individuals' gender aligns with their biological sex at birth.

TdH NL aims to move away from these dominant gender norms that marginalise and disadvantage girls, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA+) individuals and boys who do not conform to societal expectations of dominance and toughness. These identity categories intersect with other factors, such as race, disability and economic inequality, creating compounded vulnerabilities for certain groups. We

seek to be more inclusive, making space for more diverse, complex and fluid SOGIESC identities, beyond heterosexual males and females.

TdH NL recognises **everyone has a unique SOGIESC**, as related identity features that can interlink in diverse ways. We define key aspects of SOGIESC as below:

- **Sexual orientation** is an individual's emotional, romantic, physical and sexual desire and/or attraction to and relations with others of the same gender (homosexual, lesbian), opposite gender (heterosexual), both binary genders (bisexual), any gender (queer, pansexual) or none (aromantic or asexual).
- **Gender identity** refers to one's deeply felt sense of self as a male, female or something beyond these binary categories, which may or may not correspond with their biological sex assigned at birth.
- **Gender expression** denotes the public presentation of one's gender identity through their appearance (dress, hairstyles, cosmetics and accessories), mannerisms, behaviours, names and preferred pronouns.
- **Sex characteristics** describe the biological and physical attributes, including hormones, chromosomes, reproductive organs, genitalia and other reproductive anatomy, that are assigned at birth (female, male or intersex) or develop from puberty.

2.2 Why Gender and SOGIESC Matter to TdH NL

Children are diverse individuals. Their vulnerabilities and experiences of exploitation are shaped by their diverse identities, characteristics, and statuses, including gender and SOGIESC. These intersect with other forms of inequality—such as age, ability, race, ethnicity, economic status, and geographic location—creating compounded risks. Addressing these interconnected oppressions is essential to effectively tackling child exploitation, which often stems from deeply rooted systems of power such as patriarchy, colonialism, and heteronormativity.

As outlined in our [Listen Up! Strategy](#), TdH NL's mission is to protect all children by preventing and ending child exploitation, and our vision is a world free from all forms of child exploitation, where all children can flourish. As a form of gender-based violence, gender norms and a child's SOGIESC distinctly shape their vulnerabilities to

and experiences of all forms of child exploitation. Girls and LGBTQIA+ children, particularly those with intersecting marginalised identities across race, ability, gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity and religion, face heightened risks and barriers to accessing essential support services. By framing child exploitation as a form of gender-based violence, the focus shifts to addressing the underlying gender and SOGIESC inequalities that perpetuate the problem, ensuring more targeted and effective interventions. Therefore, achieving our mission and vision requires addressing these gender and SOGIESC dimensions across all forms of child exploitation.

In our Strategy, TdH NL has committed that every programme incorporates context-specific insights into the gender and intersectionality dimensions of child exploitation, to ensure evidence-based programming and policy-making by 2030. With this Policy, TdH NL further commits to addressing key gender and SOGIESC dimensions across all forms of child exploitation, including sexual exploitation of children, online child sexual exploitation, child labour exploitation, child trafficking and child exploitation in humanitarian contexts.



Sexual Exploitation of Children (SEC)

SEC aligns with patterns of other gender-based sexual violence, whereby gender norms and power imbalances affect both boys and girls, as well as SOGIESC diverse children's risk of victimisation, albeit in different ways. Adult men are the main offenders of SEC, with girls being disproportionately targeted, although boys are victims too. Girls who have experienced SEC face specific risks, such as unsafe, unwanted pregnancies, forced abortions, child marriage, victim-blaming, cultural double-standards surrounding sexuality and stigma for losing their virginity or becoming pregnant prior marriage. LGBTQIA+ children are particularly vulnerable to SEC, due to social exclusion. Boys who

have experienced SEC often face stigma based on gender norms, such as being labelled “un-masculine” or “homosexual”.



Online Child Sexual Exploitation (OCSE)

OCSE often coincides with offline SEC and other gender-based violence, albeit the online environment amplifies existing vulnerabilities. Similarly to SEC, adult men are the primary offenders of OCSE, with girls being the main targets for child sexual abuse materials (CSAM), online grooming, and non-consensual sexting. Boys are more often targets for online financial sexual extortion. LGBTQIA+ children face heightened risks, due to social isolation and greater likelihood to seek connections with strangers online.



Child Labour (CL)

Gender dimensions of CL reflects existing systemic gender inequalities and power dynamics in adult employment, including undervaluing what is considered as female labour such as care work, and with boys pressured into masculine roles as breadwinners, pushing them prematurely to work. Boys in CL are mainly recruited for strenuous, hazardous, income-generating jobs outside the home, while girls are mainly forced into unpaid domestic and care work. Girls face higher risks of violence and SEC when they are forced to work in income-generating roles outside the home and are often still expected to fulfill household and care duties alongside other work. Girls are expected to take on caregiving and household work, forcing them into exploitative labour from an early age. Boys in CL often continue their education, while girls are forced to leave school, affecting their future employment prospects.



Child Trafficking

Girls are the primary targets of child trafficking, mainly being trafficked for SEC, child marriage and domestic CL, while boys are trafficked for heavy manual CL. LGBTQIA+ children are at higher risk of child trafficking, particularly for SEC, due to their overrepresentation among homeless youth and the hidden, taboo nature of LGBTQIA+ relationships.



Child Exploitation in Humanitarian Contexts

In humanitarian crises, girls face heightened risks of child exploitation, including child trafficking, SEC, child marriage, and CL in cooking and caregiving roles. Boys are more often recruited as child soldiers. LGBTQIA+ children are especially vulnerable due to exclusion from relief programmes and destruction of LGBTQIA+ community services and safe spaces.

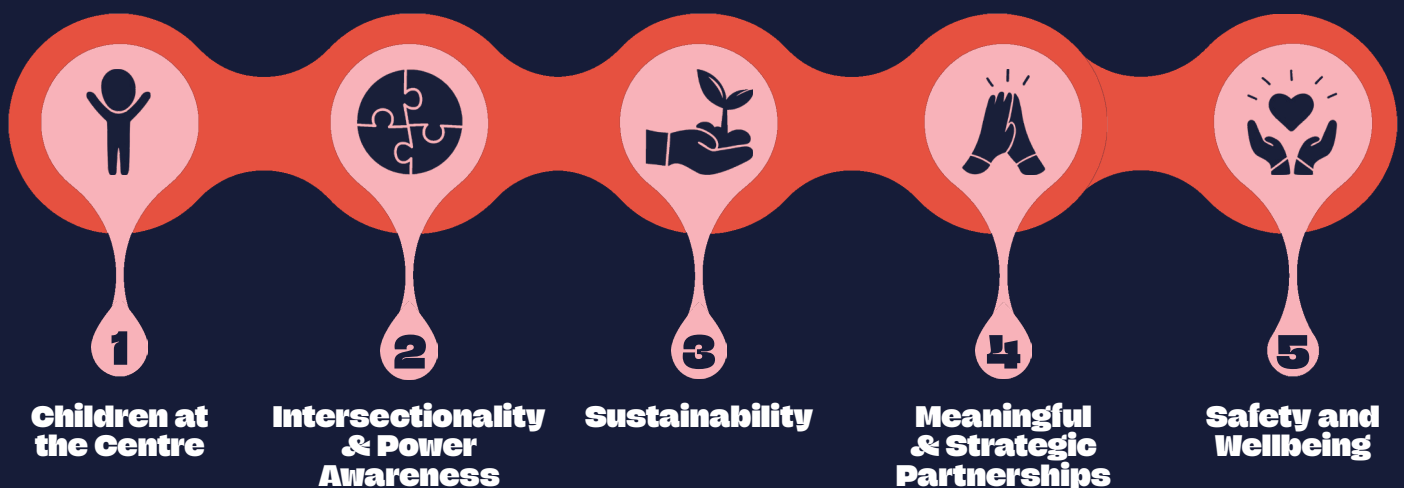
TdH NL centres such gender and SOGIESC intricacies of child exploitation across our work, integrating them into research, advocacy and programming. This enables us to be adaptive and responsive to these complex dimensions of child exploitation and the diverse needs of children based on their varied gender and SOGIESC identities, to effectively tackle child exploitation and its root causes.

The increased focus on gender and SOGIESC diversity, equality and inclusion is also important to TdH NL, in light of our Human-centred value and our core principle of Intersectionality, as we strive to achieve an inclusive work environment, where everyone feels safe, happy and has their voices and views are valued and respected. By centering gender and SOGIESC across our organisation, we foster an environment where all staff feel supported and accepted, no matter their gender or SOGIESC.

3. PRINCIPLES FOR ACHIEVING GENDER AND SOGIESC EQUALITY

TdH NL's ambition to advance gender and SOGIESC equality and inclusion is guided by TdH NL's **five Core Principles**, as defined in our Theory of Change. In addition to these Core Principles, **three Additional Principles** set clear expectations for how we aim to achieve gender and SOGIESC equality and inclusion.

TdH NL'S FIVE CORE PRINCIPLES



3.1 Children at the Centre

We believe that the meaningful participation of children requires the inclusion of girls, boys and children with diverse SOGIESC identities, to ensure **safe and inclusive spaces** across our interventions.

In line with TdH NL's Child Participation Policy, we ensure all children, in all their diversity, feel safe to express themselves freely and authentically,

without fear of discrimination, judgment, or involuntary disclosure of their identity. We create safe and inclusive spaces that accommodate all children's unique needs and differences. To this end, we remove the barriers that hinder meaningful and equitable participation for children, in all their diversity. This includes ensuring that the processes, methods and language used for child participation do not marginalise children and are inclusive of diverse SOGIESC identities. In doing so, we prioritise culturally sensitive methods and language promoting diversity and inclusion to ensure accessibility for all children.

In addition, **we actively seek and amplify children's voices** on gender and SOGIESC issues, to shape solutions that reflect their lived experiences. We ensure that a diverse group of children, representing various SOGIESC identities, are heard and contribute to Policy and programme design, while safeguarding their well-being and rights. We encourage children involved in our activities to show up as who they are, without putting themselves, other children, or staff at risk of discrimination or being 'outed' (i.e. to have their identity disclosed).

3.2 Intersectionality & Power Awareness

In addressing gender and SOGIESC inequality, we apply an intersectional lens across all aspects of our work. We ensure that diverse, overlapping and intersecting identities are considered when designing, implementing and evaluating strategies, policies, programmes, research and advocacy.

We commit to addressing the root causes of gender and SOGIESC inequalities in our programmes, research and advocacy, to tackle the harmful social norms, unequal systems and power structures upholding the patriarchy as well as intersecting systems of oppressions perpetuating discrimination, disadvantage and violence against children. We proactively maintain awareness of power dynamics and address organisational processes and structures that contribute to power imbalances, by conducting **power analyses**, promoting **inclusive decision-making**, and **addressing systemic barriers** within our organisational processes and partnerships.



3.3 Sustainability

We commit to transforming all dimensions of gender and SOGIESC inequalities and oppression. By confronting harmful social norms, unequal systems, and entrenched power structures, we aim to drive transformative and systemic change, to foster the foundations for environmental sustainability, economic equity, and social justice.

In alignment with the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), particularly Goal 5: Achieve Gender Equality, our work contributes directly to Target 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking, sexual and other types of exploitation.

To this end, we prioritise **evidence-based, inclusive and gender transformative solutions** to address the intersections of SOGIESC with child exploitation and gender-based violence. By integrating an intersectional gender and SOGIESC transformative approach, we contribute to a more equitable and sustainable future, fostering long-term progress for children and their communities.



3.4 Meaningful and Strategic Partnership

In line with TdH NL's Partnership Policy, we recognise that achieving our vision is not something we can do on our own. To achieve lasting change, we engage in meaningful partnerships that can both support and complement our efforts. This requires collaboration with partners who share our values of gender and SOGIESC equality, diversity, and inclusion. Our partnerships are built on mutual accountability and a commitment to all children and the communities that together we work with and for.

We believe that partners should **hold compatible values** to ensure there is a common foundation for the partnership. This means that we strategically partner with women-led organisations, organisations with specific gender and SOGIESC expertise, or with partners who commit to developing this expertise, with our support. In addition, we hold partners accountable through regular evaluations, capacity-building initiatives, and shared goals.

We build partnerships that commit to gender equality, diversity and inclusion, as well as elevating the voices of marginalised communities. To support children with specific needs, we ensure our partners assume accountability towards all children and the communities that together we work with and for.

3.5 Safety and Wellbeing

Many children and adults we work with may, at some point, have experienced trauma that continues to shape their lives. We recognise that owing to discrimination and widespread stigmatisation, girls/women and LGBTQIA+ children and adults face heightened risks of victimisation, trauma, and specific forms of child exploitation.

In prioritising the well-being of children, partners and staff, we take proactive trauma-informed measures to ensure that no child or staff member is placed at risk of discrimination or involuntary disclosure of their identity.

We prioritise **inclusive practices, culturally sensitive approaches, and thoughtful use of language** to affirm the dignity and identity of every person. We prioritise the right of children to express themselves freely and without fear of judgment, harm, or exposure. By embedding these principles in our work, we provide spaces that not only protect but also empower children, enabling them to thrive in an environment in which their individuality is valued and their safety ensured.

ADDITIONAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES



3.6 Do No Harm

Challenging harmful gender/SOGIESC norms can result in unintended risks, such as backlash and harm to children, staff, partners, and communities. In line with our Safeguarding Policy, TdH NL adheres to the Do No Harm Principle by identifying potential risks, implementing mitigation strategies, and ensuring our actions do not perpetuate inequalities. We embed **safeguarding** practices across all activities to protect children and staff from harm.

We recognise the need to protect children, and those protecting them, from risks and harm, particularly in contexts where actively including all children may be socially or culturally contentious. Prior to initiating any programmes or projects, we conduct thorough **risk assessments** to identify and address potential harm, to ensure precautions are in place to mitigate these risks effectively. Throughout our work, we remain steadfast in prioritising the safety, well-being, and best interests of children,

ensuring our actions support and empower them without compromising their dignity or security.

To create inclusive and safe spaces in challenging contexts, this Policy is localised in each context we work in (see 3.8 for the principle of local contextualisation). However, regardless of context, this Policy requires staff to promote inclusivity and diversity at all times, in order to comply with our Do No Harm Principle.

We are dedicated to ensuring **our work and interventions do not unintentionally reinforce or perpetuate gender and SOGIESC-based inequalities**. We achieve this by prioritising proactive measures, such as comprehensive bias awareness training and sexual harassment prevention programmes for all staff. Our recruitment and promotion processes are designed to uphold principles of equity and inclusion, ensuring fair opportunities for individuals of all genders and SOGIESC identities. We also promote inclusive language and a culture of empathy and learning.

3.7 Gender Transformative Approaches

According to the Inter-agency Working Group for Gender Equality definition, a gender transformative approach involves fostering a critical examination of inequalities and the roles, norms, and dynamics that sustain them. It seeks to recognise and strengthen positive norms that support gender equality and create an enabling environment where equitable outcomes can flourish. This approach promotes the relative position of women, girls, LGBTQIA+ and other marginalised individuals and groups, to ensure they have increased opportunities, voice, and power in decision-making processes. It also aims **to transform the underlying social structures, policies, systems, and widely held social norms that perpetuate and legitimise gender and SOGIESC inequalities.**

TdH NL embeds gender-transformative approaches across all activities to combat child exploitation, thereby fostering systemic change. While large-scale transformation may not always be immediately possible, **small, deliberate steps can address root causes** and shift entrenched norms over time. Our objective is to advance gender-transformative programmes and policies by dismantling systemic barriers like discriminatory laws, unequal resource access, barriers, and harmful social norms in incremental yet meaningful ways. Tailored to each context, these efforts drive sustainable and impactful change through incremental yet meaningful adjustments to entrenched attitudes and practices, grounded in the realities of communities.

3.8 Local Contextualisation

In each country where we work, we contextualise this Policy to reflect the local, social, cultural, and political realities while aligning with global principles. This involves co-creation strategies with local communities and stakeholders, including children, local leaders, and affected groups, to address gender and SOGIESC issues effectively, and challenge harmful norms.

TdH NL prioritises locally-led initiatives, empowering communities to take ownership of efforts to address inequalities and oppression through capacity-building programmes that provide the skills, knowledge, and resources needed for transformative change.

TdH NL collaborates with local partners to design and implement sustainable, culturally sensitive interventions that dismantle systemic barriers and power imbalances. When challenging harmful norms, we apply the Do No Harm principle to ensure the safety of children, staff, partners, and communities. This ensures that interventions are not only impactful but also sustainable, fostering long-term equity, diversity and inclusion.

Through these efforts, TdH NL commits to building partnerships that elevate local leadership and expertise, ensuring that tailored, locally relevant solutions are effective in addressing systemic inequalities while maintaining alignment with our global commitment to gender and SOGIESC equality.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



ALL STAFF

- Universal responsibility
- Inclusive culture
- Ongoing development



GENDER & SOGIESC FOCAL POINTS

- Regional & global coordination
- Capacity building
- Oversight & policy implementation



TEAM MANAGERS

- Policy awareness & compliance
- Safe & inclusive environment
- Accountability



PROGRAMME MANAGERS

- Power analyses
- Collaboration & reporting
- Promote gender parity & inclusion



PDQ DEPARTMENT

- Gender-transformative programmes
- Data-driven approach
- Impact tracking and learning



LEADERSHIP

- Strategic leadership
- Resource allocation
- Accountability & safeguarding



HR DEPARTMENT

- Inclusive workplace practices
- Zero tolerance policy
- Accountability and capacity building



INTEGRITY & COMPLIANCE

- Safeguard policy principles
- Address violations
- Promote safe space



PARTNERS

- Align with values
- Foster gender transformative approaches
- Capacity building

4.1 All Staff

Every staff member, regardless of their role or geographic location, is responsible for upholding and actively promoting the principles and commitments outlined in this Policy. The shared responsibilities include integrating gender and SOGIESC equality into daily operations, decision-making, and workplace practices, fostering an environment of respect, inclusivity, diversity and fairness in all interactions, and participating in mandatory training and development programmes to enhance their understanding and capacity to apply gender transformative approaches.

All staff are expected to contribute to fostering inclusivity and diversity.

4.2 TdH NL Gender & SOGIESC Focal Points

To ensure consistency and coordination across regions, TdH NL designates a network of Gender and SOGIESC Focal Points. This network includes one Gender & SOGIESC Focal Point responsible for the country offices in East Africa, one for the country offices in Asia, one for the country offices in Europe, and one Global Gender & SOGIESC Focal Point for overarching oversight and alignment of gender transformative approaches.

Gender & SOGIESC Focal Points are responsible for building organisational capacity to implement gender transformative approaches by conducting training, providing advocacy, and fostering an understanding of gender and SOGIESC inclusion across teams. They also serve as key points

of contact for all gender and SOGIESC-related issues, supporting staff in addressing challenges, contextualising the Policy and integrating gender transformative principles into their work. Together with the Global Focal Point, they oversee the implementation of the Policy and its annual reporting (see section 5.3).

The Global Gender & SOGIESC Focal Point is responsible for supervising and overseeing the implementation of this Policy across the organisation. This role includes ensuring the Policy is effectively applied in all areas of work and coordinating regular revisions to keep it up to date. Additionally, the Global Focal Point ensures that gender champions are identified and trained across the organisation, and in all countries resources are made available to strengthen their capacities and foster their leadership to support the integration of gender transformative approaches at all levels.

4.3 Team Managers

Team Managers hold a critical role to ensure the effective implementation of this Policy within their areas of responsibility. Their specific responsibilities include ensuring that all team members are aware of, understand, and comply with the Policy. Their role also entails ensuring the requirements of this Policy are integrated into the objectives and daily operations, while addressing any incidents of non-compliance and fostering a culture of accountability.

Team managers are also tasked to create and maintain a safe and inclusive work environment. This includes fostering a culture where all staff, including women and LGBTQIA+ individuals, feel respected, valued, and empowered to contribute fully.

4.4 Programme Managers

Programme managers are responsible for embedding the practice of systematically conducting gender and SOGIESC power analyses across all programmes, to ensure this becomes an integral part of our work. To support this effort, new tools and resources to embed gender transformative principles into programme design are developed, providing programmes managers with the necessary guidance to carry out these analyses effectively.

Programme Managers are expected to collaborate with the Programme Development and Quality (PDQ) team, to ensure alignment with monitoring and evaluation processes. Programme managers are also responsible for reporting on the gender & SOGIESC impact of their programmes through regular reviews and evaluations.

Additionally, programme managers must actively promote gender parity and inclusion, especially in public settings, such as conferences and discussion panels. Programme managers are also responsible for bringing together diverse points of view, to generate sustainable, innovative solutions that lead to a gender-transformative change in culture.

4.5 Programme Development and Quality (PDQ)

The PDQ team ensures that all programmes are gender transformative, addressing the root causes of gender and SOGIESC inequalities. They are responsible for embedding gender and SOGIESC considerations throughout the programme cycle. A key commitment of the PDQ team is to systematically collect, analyse, and use disaggregated data by gender, SOGIESC, age, and other relevant factors to inform policy and programming decisions. Data on SOGIESC is collected when and where it is safe to do so and the data is anonymised to respect privacy. The team is responsible for applying gender transformative monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) principles to track impact, document lessons learned, and share best practices to drive systemic change and inform future programmes. They are also tasked with supporting the annual Gender and SOGIESC Policy reporting, to highlight successes, challenges, and areas for improvement.

4.6 Leadership

The Leadership team holds the highest responsibility for championing the Gender and SOGIESC Policy and its principles. Leadership, including at the country level, models a clear commitment to gender equality and SOGIESC inclusion, driving transformative approaches that challenge harmful norms and promote systemic change.

The leadership team provides strategic oversight, ensuring that gender transformative principles are prioritised in organisational strategies, policies, and decision-making processes. The leadership team ensures meaningful representation of diverse voices in decision-making and strives to align leadership representation with the proportion of women in the sector and SOGIESC individuals in the population.

Leadership allocates adequate financial, human, and technical resources to advance gender equality and SOGIESC inclusion. They prioritise staff training and professional development to build the organisation's capacity for achieving transformative change. The leadership team also establishes accountability mechanisms to monitor progress, regularly review outcomes, and address challenges. Leadership actively engages stakeholders—internal and external—to align on gender and SOGIESC goals, and ensures risks and backlash are proactively managed, fostering a safe and inclusive environment for all.

The leadership ensures that its safeguarding and PSHEA responsibilities are updated to include the obligations under this Policy.

4.7 Human Resources (HR)

The Human Resources (HR) team plays a vital role in embedding gender equality and SOGIESC inclusion throughout the TdH NL's workforce practices. HR ensures that TdH NL fosters an inclusive workplace where every individual has opportunities and access to the resources to reach their full potential. This includes ensuring diverse and equitable representation in decision making, ensuring meaningful, gender and SOGIESC-sensitive participation across all staff levels, and implementing mandatory bias training.

HR establishes and enforces guidelines and processes to ensure hiring, promotions, retention, training, and compensation practices reflect equity and diversity at all levels of the organisation, including senior leadership. This includes ensuring recruitment processes are gender-transformative, equitable and inclusive, with job descriptions, pay transparency and candidate assessments designed to promote inclusivity and diversity. We remain committed to sustaining and strengthening gender equitable representation of women in leadership positions, ensuring alignment with their overall representation in the workforce. Additionally, while we currently do not collect staff's SOGIESC data to respect privacy, we are committed to fostering a culture of inclusion and exploring safe and voluntary staff-centered ways to better understand and embody the diversity of our workforce in the future.

HR integrates the principles of this Policy into onboarding and induction processes, setting

clear expectations for advancing gender equality and SOGIESC inclusion. TdH NL maintains a zero tolerance for gender-based violence, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and any form of discriminatory attitudes and behaviour within the workplace, and interactions with children, communities, and stakeholders. These commitments are reflected at every stage of the employee lifecycle, ensuring the organisation actively addresses underlying inequalities and fosters an inclusive culture.

The HR team also reviews policies and practices across regions to ensure that they promote family-friendly work environments, enabling employees to balance work and family life. HR ensures protective measures for staff implementing this Policy in a challenging context, including training on safety protocols and access to legal resources.

Additionally, HR allocates resources to build staff capacity in gender and SOGIESC inclusion, equipping employees with the knowledge and skills to uphold these values in their work.

HR reports annually on key indicators, such as gender in staffing and leadership roles, SOGIESC inclusivity, as well as pay equity, to ensure transparency and accountability.

4.8 Integrity and Compliance Team

The Integrity and Compliance team safeguards the principles outlined in this Policy and integrates them in the Global Integrity Framework. The team promotes SOGIESC inclusion by raising awareness and strengthening gender-transformative integrity mechanisms.

The Integrity and Compliance team ensures the adherence to this Policy by addressing violations. The team receives and handles cases confidentially and impartially, prioritising the safety of those affected. The Integrity and Compliance team ensures that gender equality and SOGIESC inclusion principles are respected, violations are addressed, and safe, inclusive spaces are maintained within the organisation.

4.9 Partners

Partners include all organisations, individuals, sub-contractors, volunteers, and other entities with whom TdH has formal agreements or informal collaborations. Partners are expected to align with our values on gender and SOGIESC equality and inclusion, uphold these principles in their work, and actively contribute to fostering gender transformative approaches. TdH NL proactively seeks to work with and consult organisations and partners that demonstrate a commitment to advancing gender and SOGIESC rights and inclusion across all the countries in which TdH works.

To support this alignment, TdH NL encourages partners to participate in gender and SOGIESC training, to strengthen their understanding and capacity for implementing gender and SOGIESC equality strategies.

5. OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

5.1 Capacity Building

To ensure cohesive and consistent implementation of this Policy, comprehensive training is mandatory for all staff. This training covers key concepts of gender and SOGIESC, gender-transformative approaches, and addressing biases, including those against gender and SOGIESC minorities. This aligns with the Strategic Plan's Intermediate objective 4.1, under which all TdH NL and partner staff are equipped to understand the role of gender and intersectionality in the context and the forms of child exploitation.

All new staff participate in onboarding training related to this Policy, while existing staff attend mandatory refresher sessions. Senior management leads by example, championing this Policy, through their active participation in training and awareness programmes. These training activities strengthen the organisation's ability to equitably serve children and cultivate a workplace that respects and supports diversity.

To foster continuous learning, we encourage reflection on the gender and SOGIESC dimensions of child exploitation, as well as personal and institutional biases. Training effectiveness is evaluated regularly through surveys, participant feedback, and reviews of programme outcomes. We also commit to updating training content to reflect evolving local and global contexts, challenges, and best practices.

5.2 Resource Mobilisation

In line with our Strategy, TdH NL commits to incorporate in every programme proposal context-specific insights into the gender and intersectionality dimensions of child exploitation, to ensure evidence-based programming, to be funded by the donor.

TdH NL allocates resources to programmes that challenge harmful norms, promote equality equity, and foster systemic change. TdH NL also actively tracks and evaluates resource allocation and spending on gender mainstreaming and gender and SOGIESC-related activities, using a gender budgeting framework to ensure accountability and transparency.

In addition to securing resources for programme implementation, we prioritise investments in training, capacity-building, and the development of tools to strengthen the staff, partners, and stakeholders' ability to uphold and apply gender transformative practices across the organisation. This includes ensuring sufficient funding for monitoring and evaluation processes to assess the effectiveness and impact of these practices. TdH NL is committed to advocating for resource mobilisation strategies that embed gender and SOGIESC equality principles at all levels, ensuring that financial planning and budgeting processes align with our organisational values and policy objectives.

5.3 Communications

TdH NL's external marketing, fundraising, advocacy, and communications activities, as well as the conduct of TdH NL representatives, reflect and uphold our commitments to gender and SOGIESC equality and inclusion. All external communications adhere to the principles outlined in the Ethical Content Policy, ensuring that messaging and representation are respectful, inclusive, and aligned with our values.

We are committed to promoting equality and challenging harmful stereotypes in all communications by:

- 1 Using gender- and SOGIESC-inclusive language in all materials (i.e. avoiding gender binaries, such as only referring to girls and boys),
- 2 Avoiding assumptions or biases,
- 3 Showcasing diverse and authentic stories, voices, and visuals that reflect the lived experiences of the communities we serve,
- 4 Undergoing regular reviews to identify and correct any unintentional bias or exclusion,
- 5 Ensuring all people are portrayed with dignity and agency.

TdH NL also provides guidance and training to staff and partners on gender- and SOGIESC-sensitive communication to build their capacity for creating content that reinforces inclusivity and respect. We actively engage with stakeholders to amplify the voices of marginalised groups and support advocacy campaigns that highlight the importance of gender and SOGIESC equality.

In line with this commitment, all communications activities are monitored to ensure they align with our gender and SOGIESC policy objectives, and adjustments are made as needed to reflect best practices and evolving contexts.

5.4 Tools and Resources

TdH NL mobilises appropriate human, technical, and financial resources to effectively implement this Policy, ensuring that gender-transformative approaches and the root causes of gender and SOGIESC inequalities are comprehensively addressed.

We develop and provide tools and resources to facilitate the implementation of this Policy. These include training, knowledge products, gender and SOGIESC analysis frameworks, transformative methodologies, and MEAL templates. Resources also include an evidence-based localisation methodology to support the work of country offices in order to tailor policies, tools, and resources to their unique social, cultural, and political contexts.

Tools are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant and effective. Additional resources, such as guides on addressing barriers to inclusion and examples of gender-transformative practices, are developed to support staff and partners.

5.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

We establish measurable indicators to track progress, including the integration of gender and SOGIESC considerations in programmes, policies, and partnerships. Indicators assess changes towards gender and SOGIESC equality, using output, outcome, and impact levels. Data collection is facilitated through simple templates integrated into existing MEAL systems.

We hold ourselves accountable by publishing an annual gender and SOGIESC report. This report provides a transparent overview of progress, including performance against indicators, success stories, challenges, and areas for improvement. Feedback mechanisms allow staff and partners to report on and discuss Policy implementation, enabling a culture of continuous improvement.

5.6 Implementation and Localisation

The Gender & SOGIESC Focal Points lead the localisation of the Policy in each country where TdH NL operates. Localisation is guided by an evidence-based methodology, ensuring that the Policy reflects each country's unique social, cultural, and political realities, while maintaining alignment with global principles of diversity and inclusion. Each country office adopts a Strategy to implement and localise this Policy.

The localisation process prioritises multi-stakeholders consultations focusing on terminology, needs, barriers, and risks, while centralising the voices of diverse children through focus groups.

Each community's specific challenges and starting points inform the approach, with incremental, targeted actions taken to address root causes of inequality and harmful norms. A safety and risk assessment ensures that localisation does not create undue risks for staff, partners, or children, and that mitigation measures are in place. Good practices and lessons learned from localisation efforts are documented to inform and improve future implementation processes.

5.7 Policy Awareness, Adherence and Revision

The Policy is introduced to all staff through awareness materials and training sessions. Once the Policy is rolled out, it is the responsibility of all staff to adhere to its principles and accompanying Guidelines.

Questions and concerns on this Policy may be directed to the Gender Focal Point. Any violations of this policy should be directed to the Integrity Team using our Speak Up reporting channels in line with our Integrity Framework.

To ensure the policy remains relevant, it is reviewed every three years and updated as needed based on feedback from staff, partners, and other stakeholders.

ANNEX - DEFINITIONS

Abuse

Abuse refers to the physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats, against another person, that are often violent, and frighten, intimidate, terrorise, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, injure or wound someone.¹

Asexuality

Asexuality describes when an individual lacks sexual attraction, desire or interest in sexual expression. An asexual person may or may not experience romantic or emotional attraction to others. Those who do experience a romantic or emotional attraction, may identify with terms such as bisexual, lesbian, queer or straight, as well as asexual, to describe the orientation of their romantic/emotional attraction. An asexual person can have any gender identity, expression or sex characteristics.²

Bisexuality

Bisexuality is the emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction to both male and female individuals. Being a bisexual person does not necessarily mean an individual is equally attracted to both binary genders. A bisexual person can have any gender identity, expression or sex characteristics.³

Cisgender

Cisgender describes a person whose gender identity and expression corresponds with their biological sex characteristics assigned at birth.⁴

Cisnormativity

Cisnormativity is the assumption and/or expectation that all individuals are or should be cisgender. This is often inscribed in and reinforced by laws, institutions, mass media, social practices and structures and family, peer and community relationships.⁵

Discrimination

Discrimination unequal or unfair treatment that can be based on a range of grounds, such as age, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, which can lead to victimisation, harassment, and abuse.⁶

Diversity

Diversity signifies the great variety throughout humanity, with many different identities across gender, sexuality, nationality, race, ethnicity, age, ability, socio-economic status, religion, and politics. As a concept, diversity acknowledges every person is unique. As a practice, diversity entails recognising, including, accepting, celebrating and finding strength in differences across individual's various backgrounds and identities.⁷

Exclusion

Exclusion is the process whereby certain individuals or groups are prevented from fulfilling their rights and participating in society. It is caused

1 UN 2024

2 UNFE 2024

3 Plan International 2024; UNFE 2024

4 Plan International 2024; UNFE 2024

5 Ibid

6 Child Rights Connect 2023

7 Plan International 2017

by inequality in the distribution of resources and power, by inequality in the value associated with different groups and identities and by the social norms that perpetuate these inequalities.⁸

Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) involves the physical, sexual or psychological force or harm directed towards someone, because of their gender, or when such harms disproportionately affect persons of a particular gender. It can involve physical violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, rape, and trafficking. While GBV can be directed towards any person, women, girls, and LGBTQIA+ individuals are the main victims. GBV is a fundamental violation of human rights and can lead to life-threatening psychical, and mental health consequences.⁹

Gender Binary

The gender binary is the dominant socio-cultural assumption and expectation that there are only two gender categories that people fall into, being boy/man or girl/woman. This idea has an exclusionary impact, overlooking the possibility of diverse, more complex gender identities and expressions, such as non-binary or gender fluid individuals.¹⁰

Gender Equality

Gender equality defines circumstances in which all individuals, irrespective of their gender and SOGIESC, have access to equal social, economic, political, and cultural opportunities and resources to realise their full potential, human rights and dignity in society. It infers an equal valuing and treatment of the similarities and differences across diverse gender identities and expressions, where all beings

can become full partners and participate within home, community and society environments.¹¹

Gender Norms

Gender norms are the deeply entrenched beliefs and expectations about the attributes, roles, behaviours, power relations and status related to different gender identities. They govern what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable on behalf of diverse gender identities, often in unspoken ways. Gender norms maintain a hierarchy of power and privilege, often favouring that which is male over that which is female or gender diverse. Yet, they undermine the opportunities for all beings, men, women, and LGBTQIA+ individuals alike, to freely express their gender identities, as not conforming to dominant gender norms can lead to social sanctions, exclusion, discrimination and abuse.¹²

Gender Roles

Gender roles are the behaviours, attitudes, actions, occupations and responsibilities that society deems appropriate, or inappropriate, for a boy/man or girl/woman, according to cultural norms and traditions. They can vary across cultures, time, generations and in relation to other identities, such as class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability, or religion.¹³

Hegemonic Masculinity

Hegemonic masculinity describes gender norms of male dominance over women, children (especially girls), and LGBTQIA+ individuals. This norm includes ideals of boys/men as physically and emotionally strong, aggressive, violent, assertive, heterosexual, sexually domineering, breadwinners and heads of households. If boys/men fail to meet these

8 Child Rights Connect 2023

9 European Commission 2024; UNGA 1993, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women

10 Plan International 2024

11 UNICEF 2021

12 UNICEF 2021

13 Save the Children 2024

rigid norms, they risk facing stigma, exclusion, discrimination and persecution.¹⁴

Heteronormativity

Heteronormativity defines the assumption and expectation that all individuals are and should be heterosexual (defined below). This norm is often inscribed in and reinforced by laws, institutions, mass media, social practices and family, peer and community relationships.¹⁵

Heterosexuality

Heterosexuality is the emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attraction towards people of the opposite sex and gender than oneself. The significance of this sexual orientation is underpinned by the gender binary, assuming there are only two genders.¹⁶

Homosexuality

Homosexuality is the emotional, romantic and/or sexual attraction to people of the same sex and gender as oneself. This term is most commonly used in relation to gay men but can also apply to other people with diverse gender identities and sexualities.¹⁷

Inclusion

Inclusion is the process of bringing people together and strengthening meaningful participation for all individuals and groups, particularly those who have been historically marginalised. It seeks to foster more equal representation, access to resources, rights and opportunities for everyone in society.

It requires actively addressing root causes of exclusion and making space for diverse, often disenfranchised, individuals to have their voices heard and challenge dominant power imbalances.¹⁸

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is the complex, cumulative ways in which identities overlap and combine, across gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, religion, age and ability. Such intersections privilege certain individuals over others, as influenced by multiple forms of discrimination, such as sexism, racism, ableism and classism.¹⁹

Intersex

Intersex refers to people who have diverse combinations of sex characteristics that do not fit medical and social classifications for male and female bodies, including hormones, chromosomes, internal reproductive organs and external genitalia. These characteristics can be internal or external, apparent from birth, develop from puberty, or not be physically noticeable at all. This can cause increased stigma, discrimination, harm and violence towards such individuals. Not all people who meet this definition of intersex use this label to describe themselves or their identity, and an intersex person may have any gender identity, expression or sexual orientation.²⁰

Lesbian

Lesbian is a term to describe a woman who is emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to other women. People with diverse gender identities may also identify as lesbian.²¹

14 UN Women 2023

15 Plan International 2024

16 Plan International 2024; UNFE 2024

17 Ibid

18 UN 2016

19 UNDP 2023

20 Plan International 2024; UNFE 2024

21 Ibid

Pansexuality

Pansexuality is the capacity to be emotionally, romantically and/or sexually attracted to individuals with all gender identities and expressions, irrespective of their sex or gender.²²

Patriarchy

Patriarchy refers to the dominant social system in society where men hold the greatest power, privilege, leadership positions, moral authority and access to resources and land, including within the family unit. Despite some minor exceptions in small community contexts, all modern societies today can be classified as patriarchies.²³

Queer

Queer is a term with offensive, derogatory and homophobic roots, that has been reclaimed by some individuals today, as an inclusive umbrella term for all people with diverse, non-conforming SOGIESC identities and expressions. Although it is important to note that this term has not been universally embraced, especially as some people have experienced being labelled this term as a form of bullying or harassment, hence do not wish to identify with it.²⁴

Social Norms

Social norms are the entrenched beliefs and expectations in society about what is considered typical and appropriate attributes, roles and behaviours for a given identity group or community. They are taught ideals from an early age, often infancy, and reinforced by social sanctions for non-adherence, such as exclusion, ridicule, discrimination and persecution. Conforming to these norms leads to social acceptance and reward, while non-conforming leads to social sanctions aforementioned.²⁵

Transgender

Transgender describes a person whose gender identity is different from the gender usually associated with their biological sex assigned at birth. Some (yet not all) transgender people may choose to modify their bodily appearance through medical, surgical or hormonal procedures or other expressions, such as clothing, speech, gestures and mannerisms, to align with their gender identity. Transgender people may identify with a range of gender identities, such as man, woman, trans man, trans woman, non-binary person, or a transgender person. A transgender individual may have any gender expression, sexual orientation, or sex characteristics.²⁶

²² Plan International 2024; UNFE 2024

²³ UNICEF 2017

²⁴ UNFE 2024

²⁵ Plan International 2024; UNICEF 2021

²⁶ Plan International 2024; UNICEF 2021

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