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ARCS Arci Culture Solidali GENDER POLICY

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1. Who we are

ARCS Arci Culture Solidali is a non-government organisation for social advancement founded in Rome in 1985 by ARCI, one of the most important Italian associations in the non-profit sector and spread throughout all of Italy. It works in the area of international cooperation, volunteering and education in world citizenship and peace, humanitarian aid and reception.

Mission and vision

ARCS promotes processes of social change that guarantee each person, especially those who belong to the more vulnerable swathes of the civil populations, is fully included in society and has paths towards active citizenship, the full enjoyment of civil rights, gender equality and guaranteed access to education, professional training and the work world.

ARCS works to create a world of global rights, peace and democracy that is just and sustainable.

ARCS promotes democratic ownership and participation, encourages the sustainable development of communities through own resources, promotes building relationships with migrant populations and the contribution of their ideas and projects, stimulates dialogue and the building of partnerships in line with the main objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Since 2011 ARCS has been subject to certification by the IID (Italian Donation Institute) regarding the proper use of the funds collected and resources used in their activities in order to guarantee administrative and accounting transparency with regard to public and private donors.

The areas that ARCS gives precedence to in its international cooperation activities are: the Middle East, North Africa, Latin America, Africa and the Balkans. With 22 offices throughout Italy and 19 worldwide, now it is active in over 12 countries.

ARCS has been working in the Middle East for over twenty years, with projects aimed at improving access to work and, more in general, supporting local communities, refugees and displaced persons, during emergencies and reconstruction, because it considers conflict resolution in this area to be a crucial factor for the whole planet. In Latin America ARCS is present because of the international relations policy created by the organisation in the second half of the nineties. This policy is what has led to important interventions over the years in support of social movements in acknowledgement of their active role in the building of an inclusive, peace-loving society.

In Africa ARCS has taken action in countries like Mozambique, Tanzania, Ruanda, Senegal, Ethiopia and Cameroon by supporting programmes aimed at developing the local economy and socially including women in the working fabric. The role of migrant populations in the promotion of local sustainable development has been key to the planning of ARCS's most recent interventions. Some of the issues it has dealt with in its projects are:

- **Environment, sustainable development and climate change:** environmental sustainability, strengthening access to clean drinking water, support for the development of renewable energies, environmental protection, maintaining biodiversity, combatting desertification;
- **Health:** protection of eye, infant, maternal and reproductive health;
- **Education, training, culture:** supporting childhood, young people and adolescents, particularly through education, training, recreational and cultural activities as well as peace, multicultural and sustainability education; protection of cultural heritage;
- **Human rights, democracy, equality:** Protection and promotion of women's role in society, support for equal opportunities, the social reintegration of prisoners;
- **Economic development and entrepreneurship:** support for local entrepreneurship, particularly in rural areas, and income-generating activities for women and young people aimed at developing the local economy, also through fair- trade commerce and microcredit;
- **Emergency:** multi-sectoral emergency services and the rights of refugees and vulnerable populations.

2. Our aims

One of the main objectives of ARCS is to pursue **gender equality** and equal rights between men and women in the full respect of the **principle of non-discrimination, considering the intersectional approach in a multicultural, global and non binary approach.**

One of the objectives set out in ARCS' mission statement that it focuses on is the **assertion and protection of equal opportunities** and **gender empowerment** by abiding by the principles of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women adopted by the UN General Assembly (CEDAW, 1979).

ARCS promotes equity among the genders not only within the organisation but also by planning international cooperation interventions and advocacy initiatives aimed at eliminating gender bias. The medium- to long-term plans that ARCS is responsible for – involving the struggle for gender equality – aim to achieve development and **output** that is clear, defined and measurable using specific indicators.

3. The context we work in

In 2019 the framework we work in still requires us to place at the forefront the struggle against gender inequality and its numerous forms as one of the main responsibilities of civil society. Gender inequality is multi-dimensional: both in terms of topics and in geographical terms.

The different types of discrimination that, to various extents and all over the world, afflict

women, girls and female children in terms of their right to health, education, inclusion and social participation, employment and pay are intolerable. Gender inequality is still today a significant obstacle to human development.

As an organisation that works in international cooperation, reflections on gender issues and the understanding of them, of what they are made up of and their dynamics, are what make us feel not only spiritually close to those who suffer such discrimination, or to stress our firm condemnation of this, but also to implement strategies for medium- to long-term intervention to transform the social fabric that gives rise to these inequalities.

Some of the words we would like to relegate to the past are: disempowerment, deprivation of physical integrity, poor education, early or forced marriage, harmful traditional practices, forced pregnancy, genital mutilation, forced displacement and repatriation, forced sterilisation, femicide, aggression, sexual violence and abuse, domestic violence, psychological violence.

Some of the words we would like to hear in the future are: equal protection and development of the fundamental rights of women and men and male and female children, equal access to employment opportunities, equal possibilities to express one's own potential, equal access to education and quality healthcare.

4. International milestones in gender equality

The principle of non-discrimination sanctions the full and equal enjoyment of rights for all citizens, male and female, and equal treatment among people, condemning and prohibiting all forms of discrimination based on nationality, sex, race or ethnic origin, religion or personal beliefs, handicaps, age and sexual orientation.

The **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**, adopted on **21 December 1965** by the UN General Assembly and entered into force on 4 January 1969, contains the first reference to the principle of non-discrimination.

The Conventions define racial discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.”

Further reflections on the principle of non-discrimination may be found in other documents issued by the Council of Europe. The **European Social Charter** is one of these. The Charter also mentions the right of equal opportunity and equal treatment in hiring and employment, reiterating its condemnation of all forms of discrimination on the basis of gender.

Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC however explicitly refer to six discrimination factors, including disability and gender.

There are numerous references to the struggle against gender discrimination in international law: conventions and international conferences starting from the '70s provide proof of the commitment to defining and analysing topics, principles and recommendations linked to women's rights.

In Europe the debate also centres on the role of women in civil and democratic society, specifically addressing the issue of equality of men and women in employment, permeating the topics of work, pay and access to goods and services.

Conventions

▼ **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly and entered into force in 1981.**

The Convention, a binding document and essential tool regarding women's rights, placed discrimination against women within a global framework.

Art.1 of the Convention defines the concept of **discrimination** against women as *“any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”*

The Convention condemns all forms of discrimination as violating the respect of human dignity. It contains the idea that *“the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields.”*

In General Recommendation no. 28 it says: *“The term ‘sex’ here refers to biological differences between men and women. The term ‘gender’ refers to socially constructed identities, attributes and roles for women and men and society’s social and cultural meaning for these biological differences resulting in hierarchical relationships between women and men and in the distribution of power and rights favouring men and disadvantaging women. This social positioning of women and men is affected by political, economic, cultural, social, religious, ideological and environmental factors and can be changed by culture, society and community.”*

▼ **Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) adopted by the Council of Europe in 2011, entered into force in August 2014 and signed by the EU in June 2017.**

The Istanbul Convention is considered to be the most complete international treaty on the struggle against violence against women. It analyses multiple forms of violence and recommends requiring that gender-based crimes be criminalised. Violence against women, part of the larger **gender violence**, is defined as *“a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or*

economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

Broad reflection is dedicated to the topic of domestic violence. According to the European Commission, one out of three women in the EU has been a victim of physical and/or sexual violence from the age of 15, over half of women have been sexually harassed and one out of twenty have been raped.

The convention urges the adoption of radical changes in mentality in order to transform prejudices and stereotypes linked to gender issues. The Convention also backs the role of international cooperation in its effort to achieve gender equality.

▼ **Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 November 1989.**

This convention recognises the civil, social, political and cultural rights of children. It is the fruit of reflections and results achieved thanks to previous treaties, such as the first Declaration of the Rights of the Child, written in 1923 by Eglantyne Jebb, the Geneva Declaration and the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, adopted by the UN on 20 November 1959. It has 54 articles and three optional protocols.

According to Art. 2 *“States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.”*

According to Art.3 *“In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.”*

Conferences

- ▼ **1975 UN Conference in Mexico City:** 133 delegations from the Member States took part, setting an Action Plan and three key objectives:
 1. Full equality between the sexes and the elimination of discrimination based on sex;
 2. The integration and full participation of women in development;
 3. The greater contribution of women to strengthening world peace.

- ▼ **1980 UN Conference in Copenhagen:** The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was approved. Representatives from 145 countries took part.

- ▼ **1985 UN Conference in Nairobi:** The action plan “Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women” was adopted. Governments and international organisations proclaimed equality as an objective. First and foremost is the condemnation of traditional practices that are damaging to women’s health.

- ▼ **1993 UN Conference in Vienna:** At the end of the UN World Conference on Human Rights, in which the representatives of 171 states took part, a Declaration and Programme of Action were approved to promote and protect human rights throughout the world. Some of the main points of the declaration are:

“The World Conference on Human Rights stresses the importance of working towards the elimination of violence against women in public and private life, the elimination of all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation and trafficking in women, the elimination of gender bias in the administration of justice and the eradication of any conflicts which may arise between the rights of women and the harmful effects of certain traditional or customary practices, cultural prejudices and religious extremism. The World Conference on Human Rights calls upon the General Assembly to adopt the draft declaration on violence against women and urges States to combat violence against women in accordance with its provisions. Violations of the human rights of women in situations of armed conflict are violations of the fundamental principles of international human rights and humanitarian law. All violations of this kind, including in particular murder, systematic rape, sexual slavery, and forced pregnancy, require a particularly effective response.”

“The World Conference on Human Rights urges Governments and regional and international organizations to facilitate the access of women to decision-making posts and their greater participation in the decision-making process.”

▼ **1995 UN Conference in Beijing:** Considered an institutional milestone in the history of women’s policy, this conference *“marks the transition from equality policy to the awareness that to achieve equal rights and conditions, male and female gender difference must be acknowledged and promoted; hence, the promotion of the experience, culture and values that women are the bearers of.”* (Italian Commission on Equality and Equal Opportunity between Men and Women).

Three key concepts were expressed: **gender and difference, empowerment and mainstreaming**. The strategic objectives were grouped into different categories: women and poverty, education and training of women, women and health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, women and the economy, women, power and decision-making processes, institutional mechanisms to foster women’s progress, the fundamental rights of women, women and the media, women and the environment, girls.

The Platform for Action reads: *“Absolute poverty and the feminization of poverty, unemployment, the increasing fragility of the environment, continued violence against women and the widespread exclusion of half of humanity from institutions of power and governance underscore the need to continue the search for development, peace and security and for ways of assuring people-centred sustainable development. The participation and leadership of the half of humanity that is female is essential to the success of that search. Therefore, only a new era of international cooperation among Governments and peoples based on a spirit of partnership, an equitable, international social and economic environment, and a radical transformation of the relationship between women and men to one of full and equal partnership will enable the world to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.”* Furthermore, *“The growing strength of the non-governmental sector, particularly women’s organizations and feminist groups, has become a driving force for change. Non-governmental organizations have played*

an important advocacy role in advancing legislation or mechanisms to ensure the promotion of women. They have also become catalysts for new approaches to development. Many Governments have increasingly recognized the important role that non-governmental organizations play and the importance of working with them for progress.”

UN Women

The 2010 UN General Assembly gave rise to UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women)

“UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women’s equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities:

- *Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems;*
- *Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy;*
- *All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence;*
- *Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action.”*

Sustainable development objectives and the 2030 Agenda

In September 2000, 193 UN Member States signed the “Millennium Declaration” identifying eight goals to reach in 15 years.

The Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs, are the first sign of the global awareness of the need to adopt “sustainable” development models.

From this experience, at the end of this 15-year period, a reflection began to evolve that, over three international gatherings (the conference in Addis Ababa on financing development, the extraordinary summit in New York on 25-27 September and the Paris climate change summit COP21) led to the drafting of a new planning document: the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development, approved in September 2015, setting 17 global objectives to reach by 2030.

“The 17 Objectives for Sustainable Development and the 169 targets that we will announce today demonstrate the extent and ambition of this new universal Agenda. They are based on the Millennium Development Goals and aim to complete what these have not succeeded in doing. They aim to achieve full human rights for all people as well as

gender equality and the emancipation of all women and girls. They are interconnected and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental dimension.”

“The world we imagine is a world where there is universal respect for the rights of humankind and his or her dignity, for the state of rights, for justice, equality and non-discrimination; where race, ethnicity and cultural diversity are respected and where there are equal opportunities for the complete realisation of human capabilities and common prosperity. A world that invests in the generations to come and where every child can grow far from violence and exploitation. A world where every woman and every girl can enjoy total gender equality and where all the obstacles to emancipation (legal, social and economic) have been removed. A just, fair, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world that satisfies even the needs of the most vulnerable.” (Transform Our World: 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda).

In Italy the adoption of the 2030 Agenda coincided with the reform of Italian development cooperation with Law 125/2014 and with the political will to relaunch development cooperation, put into action by instituting a specific agency, the AICS (Italian Agency for Development Cooperation) and by gradually increasing funding.

The 3-year Planning and Orientation Document translates the spirit of the Agenda into policies and concrete actions.

This document identifies the priority geographical areas, topics and sectors where Italy works within the context of cooperation. It recommends that work be done using an integrated approach that takes into consideration the three dimensions of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental – and incorporates the cross-cutting priorities of governance, rights and equality.

And actually, there are also cross-cutting elements in the Agenda. Although there is in fact a specific goal regarding gender equality – the fifth – the issues relating to overcoming gender inequality appear to be cross-cutting priorities throughout all the Agenda’s core objectives. For example, point 4.5 says: *By 2030 remove gender inequality in education and ensure equal access at all levels of professional education and training of the protected categories, including people with disabilities, indigenous populations and children in vulnerable situations.*

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- *End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.*
- *Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.*
- *Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female*

genital mutilation.

- *Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.*
- *Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.*
- *Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.*

5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.

5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.

5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

In 2018 UN Women published a report entitled “**Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**”.

This document shows how overcoming inequality between men and women is essential to achieving the 17 goals set by the Agenda in their entirety and how the achievement of these goals strictly depends on successfully reinforcing empowerment and female participation.

The report offers recommendations on how to tackle structural inequality and how to transform objectives and promises into concrete actions – and therefore on the implementation of the SDGs – in the hope of adopting integrated approaches.

Finally, the report examines two specific areas linked to gender issues: unpaid caretaking work and violence against women, where urgent action is required.

5. Our commitment

ARCS' policies and strategies are based on the ideals of equality, equity and intersectionality and on the firm condemnation of all forms of discrimination.

ARCS bases its work on the recognition and sharing of the fundamental principles contained within the Conventions, International Treaties and Constitutional Charters and acts in line with the sustainable development goals set out in the 2030 Agenda.

It brings together the stimuli and challenges launched in documents like the report “Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” and is committed, along with its numerous partners, to the struggle towards the achievement of gender equality, understood as essential to complete human development and as one of the fundamental and primary goods of humanity.

ARCS works to:

- ▶ **promote gender equality** as a universally accepted human right.

ARCS concentrates its efforts to achieve this goal through initiatives, campaigns, projects, lobbying and advocacy, as well as programmes dedicated to:

▼ **defending the rights of women and children**, fighting against all forms of gender violence and exploitation, against injustice, prejudice, cultural or traditional paradigms that hinder the achievement of true gender equality;

▼ **sustaining the empowerment of women, girls and boys** using all the tools at their disposal.

6. Who this policy applies to, their roles and responsibilities

This gender policy applies to partners, donors, statutory bodies, administrators, employees, collaborators, volunteers and anybody working temporarily with ARCS, both in Italy and abroad.

This gender policy declares the principles and values that must inspire and guide the work of all ARCS personnel: employees, collaborators, consultants, volunteers and personnel in any way involved in its missions.

It is our intention that this document express not only our vision of gender issues and the programmatic action implemented by ARCS to respond to the challenges the right to gender equality presents to the entire world; but that it also be a tool providing information and food for thought to the broadest audience possible so that the topics raised here can become sources of reflection and generators of social change in each of our lives.

ARCS' gender policy explains the value system we believe in and our commitment as an organisation working in international cooperation. This goes hand in hand with ARCS' PSEA Policy, to prevent sexual abuse on the workplace.

Top management undertakes to clearly communicate and share strategies, the definition of objectives, measurement and assessment systems, in order to be able to identify the measurable impact of our actions and act with the aim of continually improving our results.

Representatives of ARCS undertake to express in each area of our work values and principles that promote equal respect for women and men, boys and girls.

Project managers undertake to act according to a perspective of gender mainstreaming in the identification, formulation, implementation, monitoring, measuring and evaluation of all projects, programmes, activities, initiatives or actions.

All staff adhere to ARCS Gender Policy and PSEA Policy.

7. Our objectives

Economic empowerment – contribute to the struggle against poverty and social exclusion of women and the disadvantaged groups in society and strengthen the economic role of women in productive activities:

- Foster the socioeconomic reintegration of women and children who have been victims of violence or condemned to live in conditions of extreme poverty;

- Create new work and investment opportunities in sustainably productive sectors;
- Reduce the digital gender divide, the disparity of women's access to the Internet and digital technologies;
- Foster women and girl's acquisition of entrepreneurial skills;
- Help women to build microbusinesses;
- Foster women's access to professional training, scientific and technical training and education;
- include gender mainstreaming approach to public spaces and youth;
- Provide professional services, training and access to markets, information and technologies in particular to women with low incomes;
- Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks.

Political empowerment – promote the active participation of women in decision-making processes:

- Contribute to reinforcing self-management and social participation capabilities within development processes;
- Increase women's participation in conflict-resolution and decision-making processes;
- Promote women's contribution to developing a culture of peace.

Social empowerment – eliminate gender violence, contribute to achieving gender equality in education and health:

- Protect women who live in situations of armed conflict;
- Prevent gender-based violence;
- Protect the rights of migrants, refugees and displaced persons and provide them with assistance and training;
- Contribute to ensuring equal access to education;
- Allow men and women to reconcile family responsibilities with work responsibilities;
- Contribute to eliminating illiteracy among women and children;
- Reinforce prevention programmes that improve women's health.

Child protection:

- Contribute to eliminating all forms of discrimination against children;
- Protect the right to education and the acquisition of skills and training;
- Eliminate discrimination against male and female children in the areas of health and nutrition;
- Eliminate violence against male and female children.

8. Our approach

In promoting gender equity and equality as essential tools to achieve fair and sustainable socioeconomic development, ARCS has adopted the **Gender Mainstreaming** approach, a strategic model adopted internationally to respond to the challenge of gender equality.

In gender mainstreaming, the gender perspective is incorporated into each phase in the planning (needs assessment, strategic planning, implementation, budgeting, monitoring and assessment) of initiatives, programmes, projects, policies, legislative systems, with the aim of achieving solid and effective results in order to eliminate discrimination and achieve equal rights between men and women.

According to the definition provided by the UN (1997):

“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.”

9. Strategic lines

In projects, programmes, information and awareness campaigns, meetings, debates, cultural events training and information initiatives, workshops, camps, volunteer initiatives and in any other activities carried out with cultural associations and partners, we believe it is essential to rely on three strategic programme axes:

1. Put gender issues at the centre:

- Make gender issues, the struggle for equality and empowerment of women and minorities essential priorities in our work;
- Put gender issues and the protection of minorities at the centre of medium- to long-term programmes and initiatives;
- Foster the incorporation of gender equality and equity into all programmes and projects and ensure equal benefits for women and men, girls and boys, male and female children;
- Generate and disseminate data and information broken down by sex to improve planning and assessment processes;
- Encourage the use of women-focused, participatory methods to collect empowerment data, complementing existing output-level reporting
- Encourage gender-inclusive language;
- Promote gender mainstreaming approach to reinforce MEAL activities;
- Be gender sensitive and gender responsive, according to the principle of “do no harm”

2. Empower and involve:

- Develop strategies that empower women, girls and female children as key players in putting an end to poverty and promoting the values of peace and social justice;
- Plan programmes linked to gender issues that actively involve entire communities;
- Involve men and boys in the promotion of gender equality.

3. Cultivate partnerships:

- Create strong, stable partnerships with civil society organisations, members of the community, donors, governments and institutions to promote, support and achieve

gender equality, as per ARCS Gender Policy;

- Support women's civil society organisations to strengthen their tools for lobbying and advocacy.

10. Sectors of intervention and geographical developments

In planning our goals, we have defined three areas in which to focus our NGO's interventions, in the awareness that these three axes are not isolated from one another, but rather are connected: the successes achieved in one have positive repercussions on the other.

1. **The social dimension** includes culture and education, health and healthcare assistance, and the struggle against gender violence.

How we develop and implement this dimension: we contribute to socially rehabilitating women and children who have been victims of violence by offering them psychological support, reinforcing their entrepreneurial spirit and educating them on topics related to gender rights, prevention and combating violence, spreading a culture of peace and promoting inclusive public spaces. We protect the right to education for the most vulnerable swathes of the population and promote their opportunity to access public school services. We back the restoration of school buildings, the creation of day-care centres, awareness programmes regarding reproductive health, gender-based violence, conflict resolution and human rights. We organize literacy, English-language and computer skills courses. We organize healthcare and legal information points on reproductive health and the prevention of gender violence.

2. **The economic dimension** includes opportunities to earn an income and have a decent job and food security.

How we develop and implement this dimension: We promote income-generating activities mainly in rural areas (agriculture and livestock) and handicraft. We ensure women have the education and technical training sessions they need to acquire the skills, knowledge and awareness of their potential to become competitive on the job market. We offer training and assistance in the agricultural, pastoral and commercial sector also by providing raw materials.

We organise training programmes, theory courses and internships so women and young people can acquire management and planning skills as well as knowledge of the bureaucratic procedures and paperwork required to obtain financing or start up a microbusiness. We support women and young people by creating new job and investment opportunities in productive and sustainable sectors.

3. **The political/institutional dimension** includes democratic participation and

obtaining fundamental rights.

How we develop and implement this dimension: We support female and male representatives of civil society who are committed to building democracy by providing them with the tools they need in concerted action processes. We support women by providing them with the theoretical and practical tools to fully participate in the spaces of democracy. In line with the UN Women's Strategic Plan and 2030 Development Agenda, ARCS commits to combating VAWP, and supports women by providing them with the theoretical and practical tools to fully participate in the spaces of democracy.

We mainly operate in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, North Africa and Latin America.

In Cameroon we are involved in promoting decent work for women and improving social- healthcare conditions through direct access to clean drinking water. We promote the empowerment of women and girls and advances gender equality by supporting them in the micro-entrepreneurship projects,

In Senegal we support the employment of women and the young generations; we promote female entrepreneurship and the role of migrant populations in promoting development.

In Jordan we contribute to improving access to the job market for vulnerable Syrian and Jordanian refugees; we try to create innovative and sustainable employment opportunities by supporting microbusinesses; we contribute to strengthening the role of associations, social movements and independent unions in promoting democratic reforms and change; we promote social inclusion and the right to education for marginalized people through cultural activities and training programs

In Lebanon we contribute to create dignified job opportunities for refugees and vulnerable people by supporting micro-entrepreneurship and strengthening the entrepreneurial skills of women and youth. We improve detention conditions, and support post-detention reintegration. We provide essential education and protection services for vulnerable children and their families by ensuring non-formal education and social inclusion for marginalized youth through cultural activities, youth exchanges, and training programs

In Tunisia we work to reinforce women and youth's empowerment by supporting small-scale entrepreneurship in local rural areas and creating micro businesses. We boost economic and tourism development by promoting the region's products and craftsmanship. We support more efficient migration management by facilitating legal migration for family reunification and employment.

In Cuba we work to enhance the preservation and appreciation of historical heritage, strengthen cultural and tourism sectors, support sustainable urban development, and promote responsible tourism models, while fostering the growth of cultural and creative industries to ensure the sustainability of the cultural sector

In Ukraine we work to support the population of Ivano Frankivska, Chernivetska and

Odessa while we offer psychological aid to Ukrainian refugee people in Poland, especially women, minors and PwDs.

In Europe we work to spread best practices among youth on democracy, solidarity, peace, and social justice. It promotes awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), combats discrimination, and fosters social inclusion. Additionally, it strengthens European networks and strategic partnerships for education.

11. European, regional and global gender indexes: tools of reflection and analysis

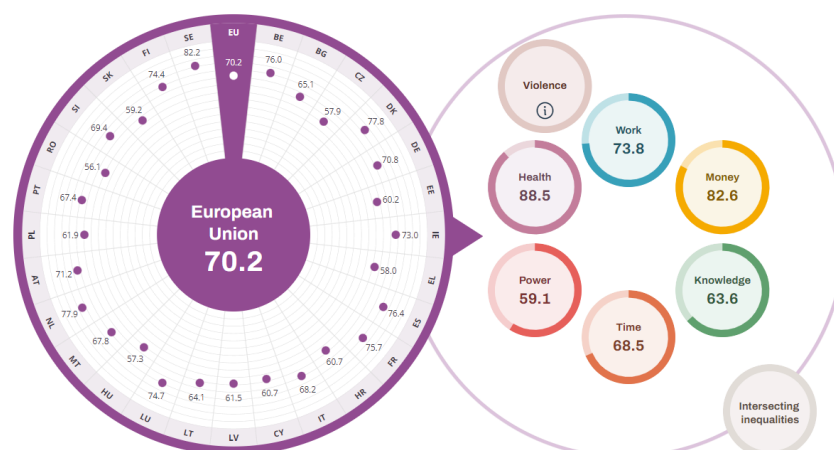
The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is an EU agency and research center focussed entirely on gender issues. Starting from the realisation that there is a real and still very large gender gap, this agency was created to reduce the gap between men and women mainly in terms of access to equal opportunities.

This agency has also developed a tool to measure gender equality: the Gender Equality Index.

“The Gender Equality Index is a composite indicator that measures the complex concept of gender equality and, based on the EU policy framework, assists in monitoring progress of gender equality across the EU over time. Measuring progress of gender equality is an integral part of effective policy-making. The Gender Equality Index supports the development and implementation of evidence-based gender equality policies and legislation and shows the different outcomes of those policies for women and men. It also increases awareness of progress and challenges in implementing gender equality policies among decision-makers and the general public. Finally, the Index highlights data gaps and calls for harmonised, comparable and reliable data that are both disaggregated by sex and available for all Member States.”

This index goes from 1 to 100, where 100 is the score reached when full equality between men and women has been achieved.

The average in 2023 for the 27 EU countries was 70.2, the highest being Sweden with a score of 82.2 compared to more complex contexts such as Romania, stalled at 56.1.



Source: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index>

The index is based on 31 indicators and 6 main domains: Power, Time, Knowledge, Health, Money and Work. Due to a lack of comparable EU-wide data, gender based violence data remains scarce and lacks comparability across the EU.

Each year the **United Nations Development Programme** publishes the “Human Development Report”. Since it was adopted, the human development index has been progressively enriched with content, generating additional measurement indexes.

There are two indexes that measure gender inequality. The first, the **Gender Development Index (GDI)**, measures the goals of women and men in the main, essential areas of human development.

The second, the **Gender Inequality Index (GII)**, measures gender inequalities in three areas: reproductive health, measured based on maternal mortality and birth rates; empowerment, measured by analysing the proportion of parliamentary seats held by women and the proportion of the level of secondary education of adult women compared to men 25 years and older; and economic and political participation, understood as access to the job market and measured by the rate of participation in the workforce of men and women aged 15 years and older.

“The **GII** sheds new light on the position of women in 160 countries; it yields insights in gender gaps in major areas of human development. The component indicators highlight areas in need of critical policy intervention and it stimulates proactive thinking and public policy to overcome systematic disadvantages of women.”

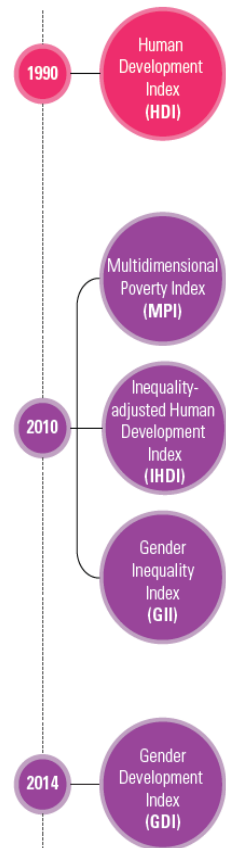
The higher the **GII score the greater the gender inequality. The overall **GII** score in 2022 was 0,462. In the developing regions, the **GII** score varies from 0,224 for Europe and Central Asia to 0.523 for the Arab States, to 0.565 for Sub-Saharan Africa.**

The **Gender Gap Index** was introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2006 to provide a framework for the extent of gender inequality.

The last Global Gender Gap Report published in 2024 examines 146 countries by measuring their progress towards gender equality on a scale of 0 (inequality) to 1 (equality) in four dimensions based on topic: economic participation and opportunities, education, health and political empowerment.

“The Index provides country rankings that allow for effective comparisons across regions and income groups. The rankings are designed to create global awareness of the challenges posed by gender gaps and the opportunities created by reducing them. The methodology and quantitative analysis behind the rankings are intended to serve as a basis for designing effective measures for reducing gender gaps. The methodology of the Index has remained stable since its original conception in 2006, providing a basis for robust cross-country

Evolution of human development composite indices



Source: Human Development Report Office.

and time-series analysis.”

Based on current trends, according to the last report, roughly 134 years will be needed to close the global gender gap in all the countries under consideration, compared to 100 years in the pre-Covid period. Educational and Health are still the sectors where gender inequality is more difficult to overcome while the second-largest gap to bridge is in Economic Participation and Opportunity. 152 years will be needed to close the gender gap in the economic sector. The figures on the gender gap for education are more encouraging and could be closed in the next 20 years.

The largest gap is in the political dimension but could be closed within the next 169 years. The gender gap in the health sector has grown larger, however, compared to the previous years.

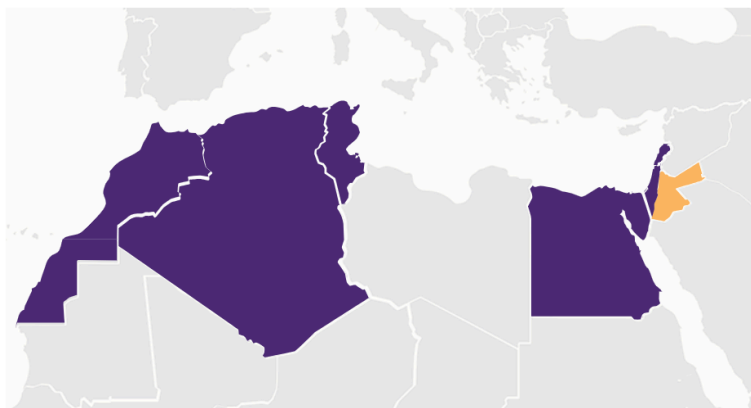
FIGURE 1.3 The state of gender gaps, by subindex

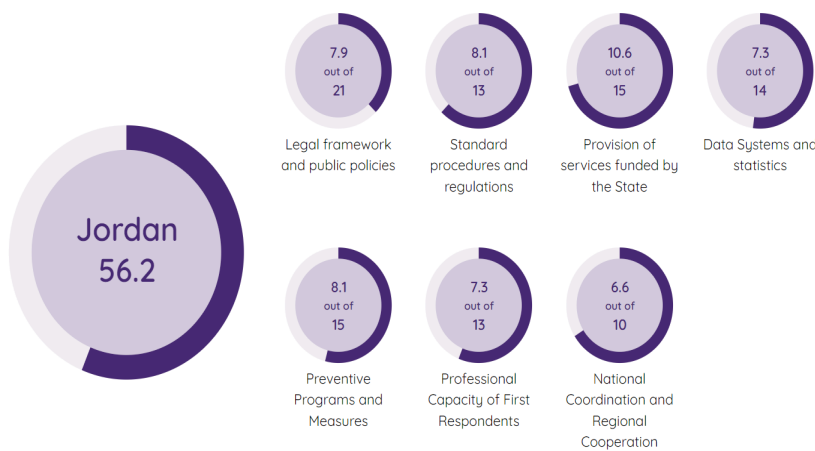
Percentage of the gender gap closed to date, 2024



1. Observatory with Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

It provides a global documentation on laws, public policies and services related to VAWG and WPS and the alignment with international law and women's rights instruments. It involves **Middle East and North Africa** countries such as: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Morocco and Tunisia.

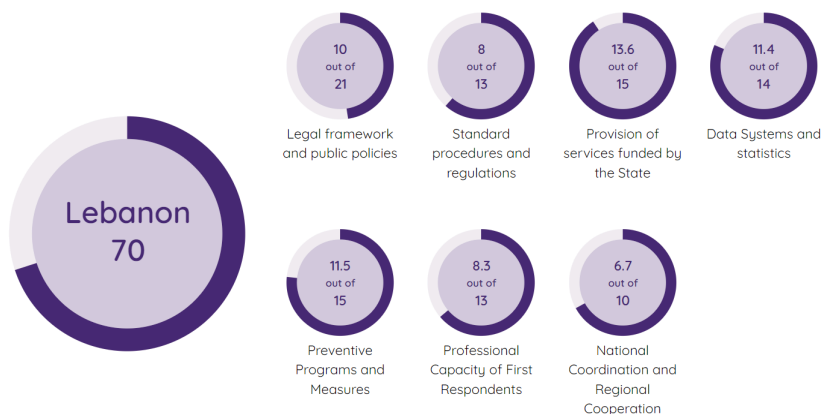




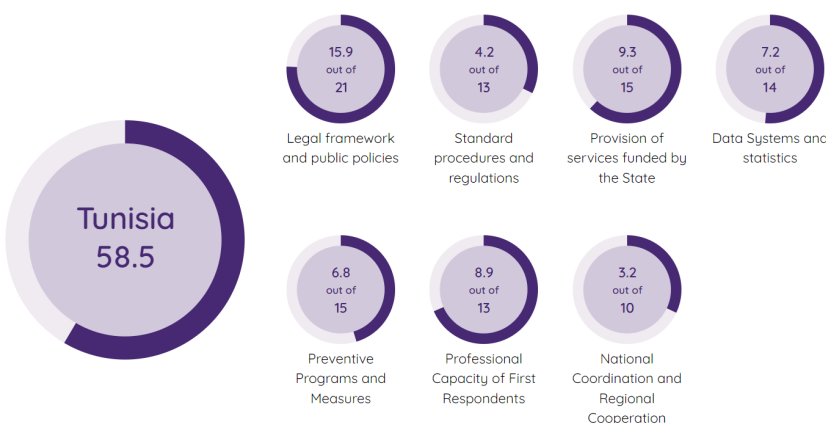
Jordan has achieved improvements in combating violence against women and girls (VAWG), with a score of 56.2 on the 2021 regional index. Positive changes have been made in amending the penal code, adopting of the law on protection from domestic violence, lifting several reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and

developing the National Strategy for Women in Jordan (2020-2025).

Lebanon has scored 70 out of 100 in the 2021 Regional Index on VAWG. It has ratified CEDAW, though it maintains reservations to articles 9, 16, and 29, and its Constitution does not explicitly prohibit sex-based discrimination. While Lebanon lacks a comprehensive law on VAWG, it has enacted specific laws such as Law No. 293/2014 on domestic violence and Law 205 on criminalizing sexual harassment. Other improvements include the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) and the National Strategy for Gender Equality (2017-2030).



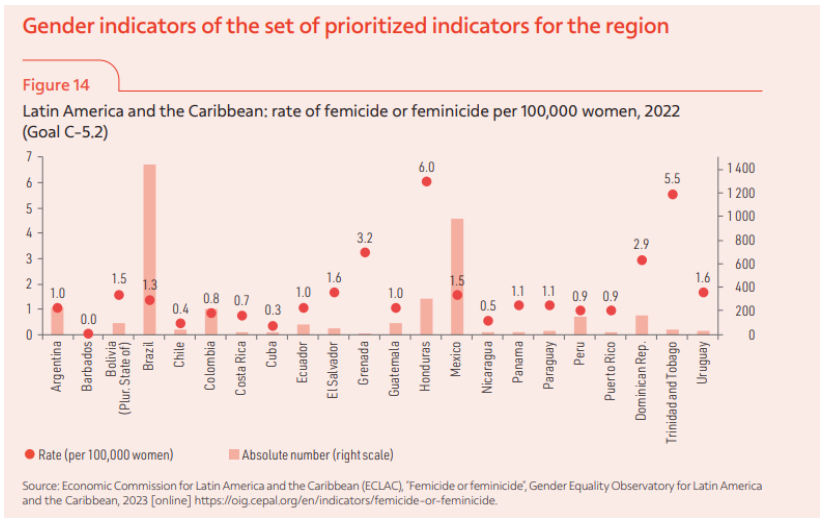
Tunisia reached 58.6 out of 100 in the 2021 Regional Index on VAWG. Even if the 2014



Constitution guarantees equality before the law, in 2017 Tunisia has recently improved by enacting a comprehensive law addressing all forms of Violence Against Women. Tunisia ratified all articles of CEDAW, although it has reserved decisions in contrast with its Constitution. Moreover, the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Elderly leads

national awareness campaigns and provides specialized services through six state-run shelters. Tunisia has also established multi-sectoral protocols for coordinating efforts across various ministries to combat VAWG.

5. Gender Indicators monitoring Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and Caribbean



Un Women and the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean has developed an annual index for tracking progress in gender equality in Latin America and the Caribbean through indicators on economic, physical, and decision-making autonomy. These indicators, derived from official data and country reports, include measures of unpaid work, economic disparities, legislative and executive representation, judicial

appointments, and physical safety, such as rates of child marriage, femicide, and maternal mortality.

6. Africa Gender Index AGI

AGI addresses the lack of gender-sensitive data and statistics by providing an advocacy tool to drive policy actions that improve the lives of women and girls in Africa. It has been created by UN Economic Commission for Africa to serve as a resource for planning, formulating, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating evidence-based policies and programs, ultimately supporting the equitable transformation of African economies.



12. Glossary

Access

Opportunity to use a resource (material, financial and human).

Culture

System of ideas, beliefs and rules that characterise the way of living and relations in a society or group within society.

Empowerment

Process of obtaining access to resources and development of one's own capabilities in order to actively participate in shaping one's own life and own community in economic, sociocultural, political and religious terms.

Engendering

Involvement in making a process or activity gender sensitive or gender responsive by incorporating gender needs and interests or by eliminating policies and practices that are gender discriminatory.

Feminization of Poverty

A concept used to describe the state of poverty that mainly affects women because they have little access to productive resources.

Gender

Refers to the characteristics and opportunities associated with being male and female, the sociocultural relationships between women and men, girls and boys, and to the relationships between different groups of women and different groups of men. These characteristics, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and assimilated through socialisation processes.

Gender Analysis

Systematic collection and examination of information on gender differences and social relations in order to identify, understand and correct gender inequality.

Gender Awareness

The awareness that men, women, boys and girls have different roles, responsibilities and needs.

Gender-based Violence

Any type of physical, mental, emotional, social or economic abuse suffered by someone because of their gender, including harm, sexual or psychological suffering, threats, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of freedom.

Gender Digital Divide

Disparity of access to the Internet and digital technologies by women.

Gender Equality

The condition where women have the same opportunities as men, including the possibility of participating in the public sphere.

Gender Equity

Equivalence of the life results of women and men by recognising that they have different needs and interests that require the redistribution of power and resources.

Gender Gap

Disparity between men and women in terms of their level of participation and access to resources, rights, pay, benefits, etc.

Gender Inequality

Disparity among individuals based on gender.

Gender Inequality Index

Measures gender inequality in three areas: reproductive health, empowerment and economic and political participation.

Gender Mainstreaming

A strategic model adopted internationally established to respond to the challenge of gender equality. According to this model, the gender perspective is incorporated into each planning phase.

Gender Parity Index

Measures the level of participation of women and men in development.

Gender Planning

Planning that recognises social models based on gender that then develops policies and programmes aimed at transforming these models to create a more equal society.

Gender Roles

Responsibilities and standard behaviour associated with males and females respectively in a given group or social system that are influenced by cultural, political, religious or economic factors.

The system of gender stereotypes defines what roles are considered “normal” and “natural”.

Gender Sensitive

Being aware of the different impact policies and projects have on men, women, boys and girls.

Intersectionality: differently from traditional approaches, it conceptualizes how various forms of discrimination intersect and impact individuals differently. (ex. race, gender, religion, disabilities and socio-economic discrimination)

Poverty

When an individual's state of deprivation is such that their income level is not high enough for them to satisfy their basic needs and have access to sufficient social, political and cultural goods and services.

Reproductive Health

Physical, mental and social well being linked to one's reproductive status, functions and processes.

Sex

The biological or physiological traits that define humans as female, male or intersex.

13. Contact info

We keep our partners, financiers, supporters, friends, fans and followers up to date through the news and information we publish on our site and on our social network channels. We issue a bi-weekly newsletter and publish pieces in *Arcireport* and the weekly ARCI newsletter focussing on contemporary issues, initiatives and the campaigns promoted by the association.

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