
Gender Policy

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Introduction

*"Man and woman have been created, which is to say, willed by God: on the one hand, in perfect **equality** as human persons; on the other, in their respective beings as man and woman. 'Being man' or 'being woman' is a reality which is good and willed by God: man and woman possess an inalienable **dignity** which comes to them immediately from God their Creator (cf. Gen 2:7, 22). **Man and woman are both with one and the same dignity 'in the image of God'**".*

— Catechism of the Catholic Church, 369



Founded in 1967 to respond to the needs of marginalized populations without any discrimination, Development and Peace — Caritas Canada bases its actions on the founding principle of building peace on a daily basis and thus working for greater justice among human beings (*Populorum Progressio* 76). That is why Development and Peace **supports movements and organizations working for women's rights** and has a significant history of supporting women's struggles around the world.

This work is based on one of the foundations of Development and Peace: **the preferential option for the poor**, one of the leading principles of the social teaching of the Church. This principle emphasizes the importance of making it a priority to help the most marginalized people, including women, who are an important part of that segment of society. This teaching of the Church is also based on the study, questioning, and **transformation of power relations**, especially between men and women, and in recognizing the intersection of several systems of oppression and sources of injustice.

From the perspective of the struggle for **human dignity**, another of the principles of the Church's social teaching, Development and Peace joins forces with social change groups in the North and Global South to, among other things, promote women's rights. Supporting women in their quest for social and economic justice is underscored in the very mission of Development and Peace. This support becomes concrete in the support given to Southern partners—including women's organizations—who are promoting **alternatives to the social, political and economic structures of injustice and oppression**.

Development and Peace was one of the first international cooperation organizations to have developed a Gender and Development Policy, in 1993. It is recognized **for supporting women's participation in decision-making**

in both its structure and its programs. This was particularly the case with the ground-breaking appointments of Molly Boucher as the first woman President of Development and Peace in 1977 and of Gabrielle Lachance as the first woman Executive Director of Development and Peace in 1988.

In 2019, Development and Peace is renewing its commitment to gender equality and is beginning a process of institutionalizing it. A participatory gender audit of its programs and its partners, at all levels of the organization, has enabled it to renew its Gender Policy and its accompanying Action Plan. Through this new policy, Development and Peace is strengthening its position as an organization instigating change in the world, in **solidarity with the struggles for human rights, especially for women's rights**. This policy is intended to be a tool for integrating gender equality within Development and Peace's structure, its programming as well as among its local partners, **in an across-the-board and intersectional manner, all while respecting Catholic values**.

"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

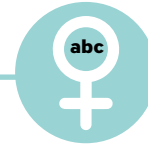
— Galatians 3:28

1. Context



Women make up **75 per cent of the world's workforce**, but earn only **10 per cent of the world's income**.¹

If there were no wage inequality between women and men, global GDP could increase by **\$28 trillion by 2025**.²



A child born to a literate mother is **50 per cent more likely to survive** after the age of 5.

Each additional year of schooling for a mother reduces the probability of infant mortality by **10 per cent for her children**.³



Violence against women persists worldwide with **1 in 3 women victims of sexual violence**.

Women with disabilities and in conflict situations are **2 to 4 times more at risk**.⁴



A 5 per cent increase in the proportion of women in parliament makes a state **5 times less** likely to resort to violence when faced with an international crisis.⁵

¹ OXFAM, <https://www.oxfam.org.nz/what-we-do/ending-poverty-inequality/womens-rights/>.

² The McKinsey Global Institute (MGI), *The power of parity: How advancing women's equality can add \$12 trillion to global growth* (2015).

³ UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report* (2011).

⁴ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistic*.

⁵ Mary Caprioli and Mark Boyer, "Gender, Violence, and International Crisis," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45 (August 2001): 514

These statistics remind us that the work to achieve equality between women and men, as well as between all women, is essential and far from over. The **Sustainable Development Goals** also remind us of this, especially the goal to “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.” Indeed, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by 192 United Nations member states is a global call for action to get all countries and international cooperation organizations aligned together on its structuring orientations.

Moreover, as demonstrated by Pope Francis’s position on women’s rights (see quote below), the Catholic Church is attentive to the evolution of women’s status around the world and is clearly expressing support for women’s empowerment. As an organization of the Canadian Catholic Church, Development and Peace is positioning itself as a **key player in the implementation of the principles of the Church’s social teaching**, especially with regards to promoting the rights and dignity of women.

To that end, Development and Peace mirrors the priority areas for gender equality espoused by CIDSE, which brings together Catholic development agencies in Europe and North America, namely:

- **Combating violence against women**
- **Dismantling the economic, political and social barriers that prevent women from reaching their full potential**
- **Transforming unequal power relations between men and women**
- **Ensuring women’s access to education, decision-making, land and resources**

Like other Catholic development agencies, Development and Peace carries the mandate of the Catholic Church to promote equality, justice and peace. Given the global reach and position of influence held by Catholic organizations, they can truly inspire sustainable, faith-based change that preserves the dignity of women and men and eliminates all forms of gender-based inequality and injustice. Together, our Catholic organizations and leaders can make a real difference.



“History is burdened by the excesses of patriarchal cultures that considered women inferior... There are those who believe that many of today’s problems have arisen because of feminine emancipation. This argument, however, is not valid, it is false, untrue, a form of male chauvinism. The equal dignity of men and women makes us rejoice to see old forms of discrimination disappear, and within families there is a growing reciprocity... [W]e must nonetheless see in the women’s movement the working of the Spirit for a clearer recognition of the dignity and rights of women.”

— Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 2016

2. Objectives

Development and Peace wants to establish itself as a **prophetic Catholic organization** that makes a significant contribution to gender equality and the empowerment of women around the world. This policy reaffirms the **importance that Development and Peace gives to women's rights** and the recognition of women as central actors in their development and decisions. The ultimate objective of this policy is to contribute to **eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence** against women and **promoting their rights**.

At the organizational level, the policy is aimed at:

- Strengthening the **commitment to women's rights and diversity at all levels** of the organization and guiding all employees and stakeholders on the importance of gender equality with an intersectional approach.
- Integrating gender and diversity into the **structure, processes and policies**.
- Making Development and Peace a **prophetic Catholic actor** in the promotion of **equality between men and women** in Canada and around the world.

At the programming level, several thematic objectives are targeted:

- To support the development of **inclusion, leadership and women's economic empowerment**, including **access to resources** and **decision-making** at all levels: from the family unit to the public space.
- To promote an **intersectional analysis** of gender inequalities and **transform the power relations** that are at the source of inequalities.
- To promote the **participation of women citizens** in democratization processes.
- To recognize the **impacts of climate change and the exploitation of natural resources** on women and support their initiatives for ecological justice.
- To support **women victims of violence and conflicts** and promote their place in **peace** processes.
- To ensure that women actively participate in reconstruction initiatives as part of our **humanitarian work** to avoid reinforcing inequalities that disproportionately increase women's vulnerability to disasters.
- To promote the **commitment of men** to gender equality.



3. Principles

The **principles of the Church's social teaching** are central to this policy, including the principles of **human dignity**, the **preferential option for the poor**, **participation**, **rights and responsibilities**, and the **common good**. These call for integral human development that encompasses the well-being of every person in all their dimensions: economic, political, social, ecological and spiritual. It is a holistic approach to development that Pope Paul VI called "authentic development".⁶

Complementarity

Development and Peace's conception of gender equality is based on the principle of complementarity, which is rooted in the fact that "Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with **equal dignity** though in a different way." (*Catechism*, article 2335). This teaching celebrates and elevates man and woman and defies those who try to subjugate women or who find a way to harm them physically, psychologically and economically on the basis of those differences. Such offenses are incompatible with the notion of equal personal dignity.

Solidarity

The principle of **solidarity** gives effect to the work of Development and Peace with the struggles of women of the Global South, by amplifying their voices and listening to their needs and priorities, in order to support them as agents of change. This solidarity is demonstrated above all by supporting organizations and movements fighting inequalities and injustices and for the promotion of women's rights, among other things. Through its actions in Canada, Development and Peace is also working to develop the solidarity of Canadian women and men with the struggles of women here and elsewhere.

Transformation of power relations

Through this policy, Development and Peace continues its work for the **transformation of unjust power dynamics** and various cross-linked systems of oppression. It challenges the dominant paradigms that govern social, economic and political relations and proposes alternatives to the structures at the source of the inequalities, thus contributing to a broader social movement of transformation.

Consistency

This policy is based on the principle of **consistency**. It is a question of being consistent in the application of gender equality with an intersectional approach at all levels of the organization: internally, in the programs, in communications as well as with partners. For example, in order to be able to support its partners in a process of institutionalization, Development and Peace must ensure that it demonstrates an exemplary intersectional institutionalization of gender equality within its own organization, as well as the equal representation of men and women in its own structure. It is also about emphasizing consistency between Catholic values, the mission of Development and Peace and supporting women in the realization of their rights and gender equality.



⁶ Development and Peace, *The Principles of Catholic Social Teaching*, www.devp.org/sites/www.devp.org/files/documents/materials/devpeace_cst_principles.pdf

4. Approach

Development and Peace advocates an approach that is **free from colonialism and paternalism** in carrying out its mission in general. In fact, working through local partners and in solidarity with social organizations and movements in its focus countries enables Development and Peace to avoid falling into the post-colonial and paternalistic trap that would have it impose its own vision and solutions. Development and Peace advocates a **partnership approach** that is respectful, participative and recognizes local expertise. It thereby supports **women's organizations** in their own demands and according to their own approach by providing them with the resources that they need.

Intersectionality and **diversity** are also key elements in Development and Peace's approach to gender equality. Development and Peace recognizes the diversity of realities experienced by women and men – whether in Canada or internationally – and wishes to represent that diversity. It analyzes and seeks to transform power relations and the various systems of oppression related to age, disability, religion, ethnic origin, etc. and stresses the importance of providing appropriate support to address these structures

Development and Peace works to advance women's rights at all levels of the organization, with the National Council and in all its programs. Development and Peace recognizes that the gains won for women's rights through struggle remain fragile. Resistance in the countries of intervention, in Canada and within the organization itself can create tensions and hamper its capacity for action. There is resistance that is both formal and informal, in addition



to often conveying false information and disseminating harmful stereotypical beliefs. Moreover, Development and Peace recognizes the particular vulnerability of women with respect to power dynamics at all levels of the organization and is working to adopt policies and procedures to prevent, report and adequately deal with all cases of abuse.

In order to overcome resistance and counteract setbacks, Development and Peace will continue to develop innovative strategies of engagement, mobilize internal champions, and support agents of change. This will be done by promoting the link between the mission of Development and Peace and the work on gender equality, as well as the Church's solidarity in the struggles for women's rights. More concretely, this work will be carried out by supporting projects and programs that respect the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, including the right to life and dignity of all human persons. Development and Peace is against all forms of discrimination against individuals and communities and works in compliance with Canadian law.

"... [A] living Church can react by being attentive to the legitimate claims of those women who seek greater **justice and equality**. A living Church can look back on history and acknowledge a fair share of male authoritarianism, domination, various forms of enslavement, abuse and sexist violence. With this outlook, **she can support the call to respect women's rights**, and offer convinced support for greater reciprocity between males and females, **while not agreeing with everything some feminist groups propose.**"

— Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 2019

5. Commitments

In order to promote gender equality, Development and Peace is making several commitments, some internal and others at the level of its partners and programs.

At the institutional level:

1. Reinforce the political will and **formalize the commitment** to gender equality and diversity within the organization.
2. Invest in **training, education and raising awareness** within the organization—at all levels—in order to build capacity in human resources on gender equality and diversity at all levels of the organization.
3. Ensure a **work environment consistent with the principles of gender equality**, so that it will be representative, diverse and free of all forms of discrimination. From this environment will emerge fair working conditions for all those working for Development and Peace and **mechanisms of inclusive governance and transparency** in decision-making within the organization.
4. Foster **dialogue and advocacy on gender equality with the different stakeholders** within the Church and develop a spirit of solidarity towards the promotion of gender equality.

At the programs level:

5. Systematize the integration of an **intersectional gender analysis** into all the programs, as well as develop a gender-specific strategy.
6. Promote women's rights in programs of **public engagement, advocacy, and research** in Canada and internationally.
7. Continue to work **in alliance** with movements and organizations that work on promoting gender equality in Canada and internationally.
8. Ensure the **integration of gender equality into monitoring and evaluation** programs.

At the local partner level:

9. Build local partners' capacities for **integrating gender equality into their programming**: from project development to evaluation.
10. Build local partners' capacities for **institutionalizing** gender equality within their own organizations.



6. Responsibility and follow-up mechanism

This gender policy is meant to be a tool to spread the pride of working with a pioneering Catholic organization on gender equality. Successful implementation of this policy depends in large part on **the members, partners and staff of Development and Peace and their willingness to act as well as their adherence to the fundamental principles and objectives that derive from this policy.** That is why an action plan for the policy and its implementation and monitoring has been developed (see Annex). This will ensure shared responsibility for the implementation of Development and Peace’s Gender Policy. It will have to be renewed every five years to promote the application of its principles. In addition, all levels of the organization will be mobilized in the efficient application of the policy as follows:

- Members must adhere to the policy and participate in its implementation.
- The National Council of Development and Peace shall approve, promote and ensure the implementation of this policy and its action plan at all levels of the organization and in all of its programs.
- The management is responsible for implementing, monitoring and assessing the policy for the entire organization.
- The Gender Committee shall monitor the policy’s implementation in a day-to-day way. It will encourage analysis and provide methodological support for the entire Organization.
- The International Programs Department is responsible for applying the policy to international programs and to the partners, in dialogue with the latter.
- The Public Awareness and Engagement Department is responsible for the policy being respected in educational and other activities, as well as in aspects regarding the members and alliances with the Canadian social movement.
- The Communications and Campaigns Department is responsible for applying this policy to all the organization’s communications, educational materials and campaigns.
- Administrative Services, including human resources, are responsible for the policy’s establishment with measures that ensure equal access and favor diversity in the recruitment, selection and promotion of employees and directors.
- The union and the management will carry these issues through the Collective Agreement and harmonious and respectful working relationships. In addition, the employer and the union are responsible for applying the policy’s objectives.
- Each staff member is responsible for implementing the policy at their work level.



GENDER GLOSSARY⁷

Women's rights

"The human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community." (United Nations, *Vienna Declaration and Program of Action*, Article 18, 1993).

Gender equality

Gender equality, or equality between women and men, means that women, girls, boys and men enjoy the same rights, opportunities, resources and rewards. Equality does not mean that men and women are the same, but that the enjoyment of their rights, opportunities and life chances are not decisively governed or limited by whether they were born male or female.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality, i.e., taking into account the interdependence of various systems of oppression, such as sex, race, ethnicity, class, caste, age, etc., is first and foremost an analytical tool to understand how these intersections create particular experiences of oppression and privilege. Intersectionality can be defined according to three important principles:

- Different oppressions are experienced simultaneously and are not dissociable from one another.
- Systems of oppression feed and build upon one another while still remaining autonomous.
- The systems must therefore be combated simultaneously and must not be prioritized or put in a hierarchy.

It is the totality of oppressions that produce the specific discrimination faced by each individual and that is why we can not dissociate them.

Sex

Universal, obvious and generally permanent biological differences between men and women. Describes the biological, physical and genetic composition with which we were born.

Gender

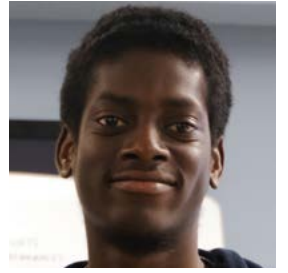
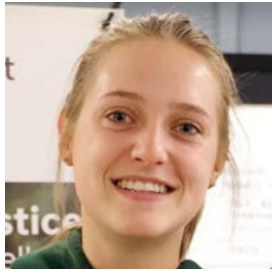
Refers to the characteristics of women and men as determined by society. These social roles can evolve over time and place.

Positive masculinity

Masculinities are a social construct of the masculine gender, that is to say, what is expected by society on how to be a man. They are constantly being built by men, so they are in permanent evolution and thus can change. They meet the needs of men and boys to feel accepted by society. In patriarchal societies—i.e., the majority of societies in the world—they have built “dominant masculinities” that are often associated with violence and other problematic characteristics that are used to maintain their dominant position not just over women, but also over other men. To contribute to gender equality, the “positive masculinities” approach develops men’s commitment to gender equality as well as to other ways of being a man. This approach recognizes that it is neither necessary nor natural to associate masculinity with violence. For example, men, too, can engage in the education of children and in the activities of the home without affecting their masculinity.



⁷ This glossary is based on the “basic notions” training of AQOCI’s Quebec Committee on Women and Development and on the “Terminology” section of CIDSE’s *Believe in Change* toolkit.



Development and Peace – Caritas Canada
 1425 René-Lévesque Blvd West, 3rd floor
 Montreal, Quebec H3G 1T7 CANADA
 1 888 234-8533 | devp.org

Thank you