

## NORTHERN COUNCIL FOR GLOBAL COOPERATION: GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

The Northern Council of Global Cooperation has adopted Council Member L'Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale (AQOCI)'s Gender Equality Policy.

### **Introduction**

NCGC has decided to embrace a strong feminist identity. The eradication of poverty and the fair distribution of resources cannot be achieved without radically addressing power relations between men and women. By embracing a feminist identity, NCGC is clearly stating that patriarchy and all forms of gender discrimination must be tackled head on if we are to build solidarity and equitable relations amongst all peoples. This is a long term endeavor and it is the responsibility of each and every one of us, both in the North and in the South.

NCGC wishes to contribute to building a world in which the rights of women and girls are respected, men and women are treated equally, and women's movements are fully recognized as key civil society actors. By adopting this policy, the Board of Directors has expressed its renewed political commitment to advancing gender equality. This policy is intended to serve as an institutional lever and a tool for dialogue with its affiliates.

The Board of Directors wishes to give NCGC the means to more systematically mainstream gender throughout its programs, and to better support its affiliates so that they can contribute to advancing the rights of women and girls in the Global North and the Global South.

### **Our Principles**

This Gender Equality Policy is rooted in the following principles :

1. Gender equality is both essential to the full realization of human rights and a pre-condition for achieving social justice.
2. The struggle against systematic discrimination against women and girls requires a deliberate effort and constant vigilance. Gender equality cannot be achieved without a firm commitment to defending and promoting the rights of women and girls.
3. Women and girls play an essential role in development, which must be recognized and

valued. The empowerment and full participation of women and girls in all aspects of society – including participation in decision making and access to power – is essential in both the Global North and the Global South.

4. Both men and women have an important role to play in challenging the institutions and mindsets that perpetuate gender inequality and sexism. True equality cannot be achieved without engaging men and boys. Not only is it essential to work with men and boys, but it is also critical to engage them in a reflection on the concept of masculinity.

5. The struggle to achieve gender equality must be intricately linked to the fight against all other forms of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, color, age, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability and political opinion.

6. Women’s organizations and networks are essential development partners and must be empowered to play a leadership role within civil society, both in the Global North and the Global South.

### **Our Commitments**

Challenging patriarchy and empowering women are critical for development. This policy affirms NCGC’s commitment to placing gender equality at the heart of its structures, programs and support to its network.

In terms of its structure, NCGC is committed to :

- Applying this Gender Equality Policy by putting in place concrete mechanisms, such as action plans, and measuring the achievement of stated objectives and commitments

- Striving to achieve gender parity within its Board of Directors

- Ensuring gender parity among its spokespeople

- Being an equal opportunity employer and require that all employees, at all levels, have a commitment to and knowledge of gender equality

- Ensuring that someone with relevant expertise is responsible for the gender equality file in order to respond to the needs of NCGC staff and members, and to build knowledge and awareness of gender equality issues

- Supporting and promoting the expertise and mandate of the Gender Policy by providing the necessary human and financial resources

In terms of its programs, NCGC is committed to :

- Promoting alternative visions of development based on the experience of women's groups in the Global South and on feminist perspectives on development
- Systematically applying a gender analysis to all its programs, advocacy initiatives and public engagement campaigns
- Defend women's rights in all its position statements and ensure that its communications and public engagement work contribute to changing attitudes towards gender equality
- Influence foreign policy, across the North and Canada, so that it advances gender equality
- Encourage Canada's international aid programs to place a greater emphasis on women's rights and to offer targeted support to women's groups
- Build solidarity with women's movements and support feminist struggles, both in the Global North and the Global South

In terms of its support to its affiliates across the North, NCGC is committed to:

- Raising awareness among its affiliates on the importance of gender equality in the fight against poverty and the struggle for social justice
- Encouraging its affiliates to adopt gender equality policies and to put gender equality at the heart of their structures, communications and programs through both gender mainstreaming and standalone work on women's rights ;
- Providing training and tools on gender equality to its members to enable them to apply a gender analysis to their public engagement initiatives and development programs