

# GENDER EQUALITY



Save the Children®  
100 YEARS



2019-2021  
STRATEGY



# FOREWORD

One hundred years ago Eglantyne Jebb, human rights defender, suffragist and visionary, catalyzed a global movement for children's rights when she founded Save the Children.

In marking our centennial year in the spirit of Eglantyne and her resolve to uphold the dignity and rights of every child, we are proud to launch Save the Children US' first Gender Equality Strategy. This strategy articulates how we plan to achieve progress by systematically mainstreaming gender equality in our programs, advocacy and organizational policies and practices. The strategy is a result of broad and inclusive consultation involving Save the Children staff, donors, peer organizations and partners.

This strategy is a bold vision for placing gender equality at the heart of our work. It represents a collective, organizational and programmatic endeavor. It is our vision for holding ourselves accountable to making continued progress toward equality for all.

We believe that advancing gender equality within and through Save the Children is essential to reaching our Breakthroughs. It is critical to realizing the rights and well-being of all children, their families, and communities, ensuring we address gender-based barriers to children's survival, learning and protection.

This Gender Equality Strategy is a work in progress. It is also work towards progress that all staff, across all levels, must share if we are to create a more equal future for children around the world.



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Gender Equality Strategy was spearheaded by Yeva Avakyan, Associate Vice President of Gender Equality, Andrew Gleason, Gender Equality & Social Inclusion Specialist and Save the Children US' Gender Equality Hub. It is a result of a highly collaborative and participatory process. We are grateful for the feedback and recommendations from a wide range of stakeholders, including Save the Children staff, donors, colleagues from peer organizations and partners.



Photo: Save the Children

## ENVISIONING GENDER EQUALITY

As Save the Children enters its second century of change, we are doing whatever it takes to ensure all children grow up the way they deserve – healthy, educated and safe. If we are to create positive, lasting change for children, we need an ambitious plan for promoting gender equality. Our vision is a world where girls, boys and youth of diverse gender identities are heard, valued and have access to equal opportunities. We believe that all children should be empowered to live their lives, speak their minds and determine their own futures. Placing gender equality at the heart of our work will have a resounding impact on the lives of children and families that we serve, creating positive and sustainable change in their communities across the globe.

## INSIDE

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Progress to Date
- 3 Guiding Principles
- 5 A Holistic Approach
- 7 Conceptual Framework
- 8 Thematic Priorities
- 9 Operational Priorities
- 11 Mechanisms for Progress

# INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is a human right. It is essential to realizing the well-being of children, their families and communities. It is vital to accelerating development outcomes across all areas of Save the Children's work. Despite remarkable progress, gender remains one of the most fundamental sources of inequality and exclusion around the world, critically impacting children's ability to survive, learn and live a life free from violence.

In 2017, Save the Children adopted a Gender Equality Policy positing that a focus on gender equality is fundamental to achieving our vision for all children. Since the launch of the policy, we have learned about the depth of commitment required to advance gender equality through our programs. We have acknowledged the need to align our organizational processes, programmatic commitments, and advocacy in order to fully align the organization to gender equality principles.

This Gender Equality Strategy details how Save the Children US (SCUS) will operationalize the Gender Equality Policy. It sets forth principles and commitments to guide our efforts to promote gender equality within and through SCUS, including guidance on advancing gender equality in our programs and advocacy, and strengthening organizational practices for an equitable, safe and inclusive workplace.

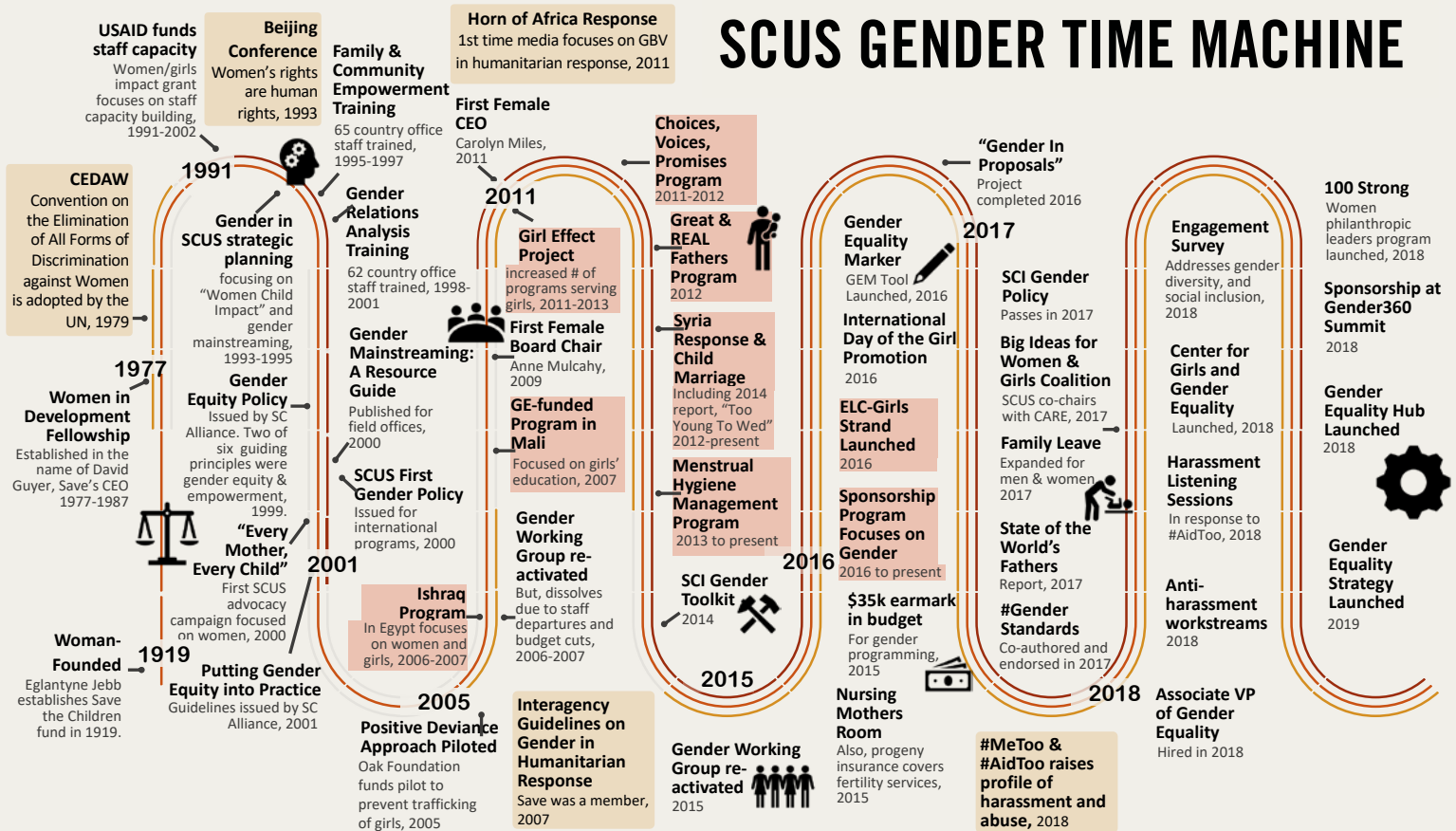
It is our vision to create a just and equal world where all children are empowered to exercise their rights, where they are safe from harm, where they are equally heard and valued, and where they have equal access and time to devote to education and play. This strategy is a collective, organizational commitment to placing gender equality at the heart of our work.

“Save the Children believes that it is critical to directly address gender discrimination and promote gender equality in order to ensure that no harm comes to children, and to advance our vision for a world where every child attains their equal right to survival, protection, development, and participation.”

*Save the Children Gender Equality Policy, 2017*

# PROGRESS TO DATE

Save the Children US has a rich history of advancing gender equality. Key moments from the organization's work to advance gender equality since its establishment in 1919 are illustrated in the gender timeline graphic below.



Items highlighted in pink indicate programs that were exceptionally gender transformative.  
 Items highlighted in orange indicate contextual events that influenced Save the Children's gender approach.

For 100 years, Save the Children has been a passionate advocate for the rights of children. With a long history of advocacy, programming and policies that respond to complex problems across the globe, Save the Children recognizes that promoting gender equality is essential if we are to deliver on our strategy and meet our ambition to reach every last child, including the most marginalized. With this strategy SCUS is reinvigorating the momentum to integrate gender equality principles across all thematic areas in its efforts to accelerate positive outcomes for children across all thematic areas of our work.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Save the Children's Gender Equality Policy and this Strategy are guided by the following principles:

**1. EQUALITY AS A RIGHT:**

Gender equality is an essential component of a child rights approach, and of critical importance in the fulfillment of our organizational mandate.

**2. ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES:**

It is critical to identify and work to transform the root causes of gender inequality; this requires addressing discriminatory social norms and institutions which reinforce gender inequalities, as well as advocating for and fostering legislation and policies that promote gender equality.

**3. HOLISTIC APPROACHES:**

Gender-transformative approaches require working with whole communities, and at all levels, equally engaging female and male stakeholders in culturally-sensitive gender equality policy and program work.

**4. MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION:**

Girls and boys are active citizens. They must be equally engaged in dialogue around gender equality, and have equitable opportunities to participate in all facets of their lives, including in the promotion of gender equality, within their families, schools, communities and countries.

**5. INDEPENDENT & CROSS CUTTING:**

Gender equality is both an independent area of focus, as well as a critical priority across our thematic areas of focus, Global Themes and Breakthroughs. Gender equality must be a central focus across our work, as well as across all parts and levels of our organization.

**6. COLLABORATION & LEARNING:**

Integrating gender analysis in our research and work opens up new insights and innovative solutions to development challenges that would not otherwise be possible without a gender equality-focused approach. It is essential to foster and participate in communities of practice, collaborate with organizations and stakeholders working on gender equality, translate what we learn into practice, and to share learnings widely.

**7. ACHIEVING OUR BREAKTHROUGHS:**

Gender inequality is a root cause of many barriers to sustainable development, and critically impacts children's ability to survive, learn and live a life free from violence. Addressing gender inequality is critical to accelerating the achievement of Save the Children's Breakthroughs.

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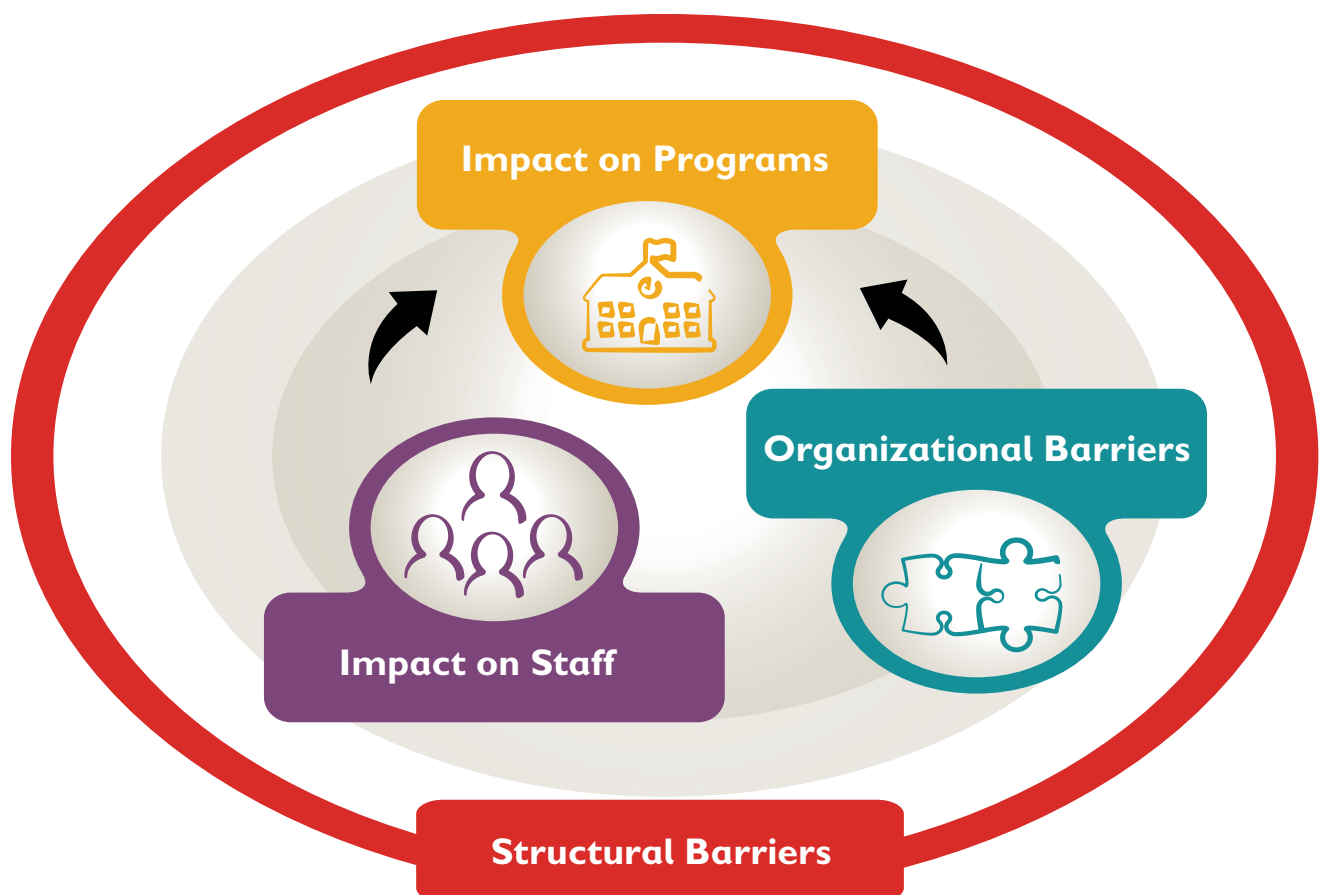
# A HOLISTIC APPROACH

Existing systems and structures play a significant role in exacerbating discriminatory practices in our programs and within our own organization. Equally, adjusting systems and structures to eliminate discriminatory practices can release pent-up power to enhance outcomes across all areas of our work.

Due to the interwoven nature of oppressive structures, promoting gender equality requires engagement at every level: organizational culture and structure, programs in development and humanitarian contexts across all global and domestic efforts, domestic and global advocacy, and partnership building.

As we renew our commitment to gender equality, we commit to taking an intersectional approach that recognizes the overlapping and compounding impact of race, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion, and other identities in shaping individual and group experiences of power, marginalization and discrimination. We also commit to working on gender equality not as a discretionary or stand-alone activity, but as one embedded in the organization's DNA.

A horizontal, comprehensive strategy that cuts across programmatic and functional teams at SCUS is essential because of their inherent interconnectedness through the interplay of structural, organizational, individual and programmatic obstacles to equality. The causal framework below outlines how gender inequality across all these levels affects program outcomes:





**Structural Barriers** permeate all aspects of our lives in the U.S. and around the world. They influence how organizations are structured including how individuals think and behave, and they affect all programs, both directly and indirectly. Structural barriers include gender inequitable laws, social norms, and political systems, including (but not limited to) women's disproportionate burden of unpaid work, social policy that perpetuates inequality in caregiving, lack of parental leave policies, gendered cultural expectations, and so on.

**Organizational Barriers** are influenced by structural barriers and institutionalized within an organization's policies, practices, hierarchies, and culture. The barriers can be both formal and informal. Formal barriers include lack of data and discriminatory policies and procedures. Informal barriers include organizational culture, lack of leadership support, and uneven capacity. Organizational gender barriers influence programs and therefore affect their impact.

**Impact on Staff:** Staff are negatively impacted by structural and organizational gender inequalities. These impacts take many forms, including gender pay gaps, risk of workplace harassment, and inequality in hiring, retention and promotion. Experiences of inequality and discrimination within and/or outside the workplace may shape individual experience at the organization. An intersectional approach helps us recognize the overlapping and compounding impact of factors, such as race, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion and experience of violence in shaping individual workplace experience.

**Impact on Programs:** Structural and organizational barriers, compounded with individual experiences, may have an unintended and adverse impact of Save the Children's programs. By addressing inequitable barriers that may exist across structural, organizational and individual levels, we can create an enabling environment for achieving equitable outcomes in our programs and through our advocacy and campaign efforts.

We commit to taking a cohesive and coordinated approach to advancing gender equality within and through Save the Children. This includes incorporating a gender equality lens in all our work as a human right and a means to overcome poverty and injustice, accelerating achievement of our Breakthroughs. By taking this approach we commit to aligning the agency's internal operations, programs, and advocacy with its policy commitments to gender equality.

# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Tearing down the deeply entrenched, complex barriers that stand in the way of gender equality require purposeful resources, effort and resolve.

Gender equality is central to achieving our vision for change: a world in which all children realize their full potential. Save the Children's long history of advocacy, policies and programming to promote gender equality has shown that shifting the balance of power and transforming discriminatory norms and practices is possible.

In the scope of this strategy we commit to growing programs and advocacy initiatives that transform gender power imbalances, prevent and respond to gender-based violence, empower women and girls, promote positive and diverse expressions of masculinity and prioritize the rights of people with non-binary gender identities. We will take an intersectional approach that recognizes the overlapping and compounding impact of race, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion and other identities in shaping individual and group experiences of power, marginalization and discrimination.

We will crystallize our focus on gender equality by addressing equity and inclusion, safety and empowerment across our programs and advocacy initiatives.



- Advocate for laws, policies and procedures that promote gender equality and inclusion
- Recognize that gender inequality intersects with and exacerbates other factors contributing to marginalization: age, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, etc.
- Address gender gaps in educational access, retention and learning
- Ensure equitable access to health, education, employment, income, food distribution and safe shelter in development and humanitarian settings

- Prevent and respond to gender-based violence, including child marriage, intimate partner violence, homophobic and transphobic violence, sexual and other forms violence in development and humanitarian contexts
- Shift adherence to restrictive and harmful gender and social norms that drive violence and exclusion
- Promote and nurture positive expressions of masculinity
- Do No Harm: recognize and mitigate unintended consequences for programs that seek to engage, challenge and positively affect gender inequitable attitudes and power relations

- Influence decision-making process at household, community and national levels
- Enhance capacity for purposive action, the ability to pursue goals and influence and make decisions free from violence and retribution
- Support tangible and intangible sources of power held by women, girls and people of diverse gender identities including critical consciousness, bodily integrity, knowledge and skills, time, and social capital

# THEMATIC PRIORITIES

In the scope of this strategy we commit to expanding our work in 2019-2021 in the following five thematic areas:



**ELIMINATING  
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE  
AND ALL HARMFUL  
PRACTICES, INCLUDING  
CHILD MARRIAGE**

**EMPOWERING  
WOMEN AND GIRLS**



**PROMOTING POSITIVE AND  
DIVERSE EXPRESSIONS  
OF MASCULINITIES**

**KEEPING GENDER  
EQUALITY AT THE HEART  
OF OUR ADVOCACY**



**INTEGRATING GENDER  
EQUALITY INTO HOW  
WE THINK, PLAN AND  
OPERATE AS A GLOBAL  
ORGANIZATION**

# OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES

The strategy puts forth five operational priorities to promoting gender equality within and through Save the Children US for 2019-21:

PRIORITY	WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE IN 2021?
<p><b>1</b></p> <p>Advance gender equality within the organization / SCUS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close gender pay gap</li> <li>• Increase in employee satisfaction with SCUS policies and procedures to address workplace harassment</li> <li>• Receive external recognition for gender equality and diversity in the workplace</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Strengthen staff capacity to mainstream gender across the organization and programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed gender equality priorities in team action plans</li> <li>• Train staff on gender equality relevant to their area of work</li> <li>• Align all new programs with the Minimum Standards for Gender Equality Mainstreaming</li> </ul>
<p><b>3</b></p> <p>Expand programs, advocacy and research focused on gender equality outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate gender analysis across all programs</li> <li>• Expand portfolio of programs, research, advocacy, and campaign initiatives focusing on gender equality outcomes</li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b></p> <p>Increase funding and recognition for gender equality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage new and existing supporters to raise resources and awareness for gender equality programming</li> <li>• Drive external thought leadership on gender equality.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5</b></p> <p>Engage with the global Movement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed gender expertise across regional offices.</li> <li>• Develop and roll out programming guidance to end child marriage</li> <li>• Develop and roll out women's and adolescent girls' economic empowerment framework</li> <li>• Co-lead the Every Last Child campaign to advocate and campaign with women and girls around the world</li> </ul>



# MECHANISMS FOR PROGRESS

Transformative change must be prioritized not only across the work we do for children, but also in how we operate. By adopting and operationalizing the SC Gender Equality Policy, SCUS will take significant steps towards being an organization that lives its gender equality principles.

Achieving our vision requires a clear commitment from all Save the Children staff to champion gender equality in all that we do for children. We will collaborate across the Save the Children Movement and leverage strategic mechanisms to cultivate an environment which reflects and nurtures our commitment to gender equality.

The SCUS' **Gender Equality Hub**, a cross-functional team, is a primary mechanism for driving the implementation of this strategy and critical to advancing our work. Gender Equality Hub members embed gender competencies across functional and technical teams, foster partnerships that advance gender equality and contribute to agency-wide working groups to promote gender equality within and throughout Save the Children.

**Center for Girls & Gender Equality** is a pillar of SCUS' Promise of Childhood Centennial Campaign and will serve as a funding mechanism to ensure that we have the resources to keep gender equality at the forefront of our agenda.

Living our Values at SCUS and across the Global Movement:

- **Diversity & Inclusion Council:** The Council's mission is to develop, strengthen, and support initiatives, partnerships, policies, and culture that promote a diverse workforce of individuals that feel that they are fairly treated, respected, visible, and enabled to do their best work, enhancing our impact for children.
- **Gender Equality & Social Inclusion Community of Practice:** Supports and champions the SCUS organizational learning agenda on gender equality and social inclusion.
- **SCA Global Lead for Gender Equality and Core Team:** Lead acts as the global steer and provides technical leadership on gender equality across the movement. Core team acts as the steering group and primary decision-making body for the Gender Equality Working Group, accountable for developing and delivering an annual work plan.
- **SCA Gender Equality Community of Practice:** Is represented by members, COs, ROs the Global Themes and SCI Centre. Members are staff across the movement who have a personal interest and/or job function and accountability re: gender equality.



# GENDER EQUALITY



**Save the Children®**  
100 YEARS

Save the Children believes every child deserves a future. Around the world, we give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. We do whatever it takes for children – every day and in times of crisis – transforming their lives and the future we share.

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