

# IMPLEMENTING GENDER MINIMUM STANDARDS

## APPROACHES, TOOLS AND LESSONS FROM THE SOLOMON ISLANDS NGO PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (SINPA)

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## ACRONYMS

ADRA	Adventist Development Relief Agency
ANGO	Australian NGO
APHEDA	Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australian Government)
EVAW	Elimination of Violence Against Women
GEWD	Gender Equality and Women's Development
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IWDA	International Women's Development Agency
LLEE	(now LLSI) Live & Learn Solomon Islands
LNGO	Local NGO
NGO	Non Government Organisation
OCAT	Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool
SINPA	Solomon Islands NGO Partnership Agreement
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund

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# INTRODUCTION

Gender equality lies at the heart of human rights. It is widely acknowledged as essential to achieving safe, equitable and sustainable communities and economies. It is one of 17 Sustainable Development Goals that leaders around the world have agreed are core inter-related priorities for the next 15 years if we are to secure the future for people and planet. Gender equality is also a key focus of the Australian Government's foreign, trade and aid policies. Indeed, one of the performance measures for Australia's aid program is that 'more than 80 per cent of investments, regardless of their objectives, will effectively address gender issues in their implementation.'<sup>1</sup>

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. It implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men.<sup>2</sup> Understanding gender inequalities and working to address them is essential in programs delivering aid. It is not possible to effectively implement aid and development programs without considering the influence of gender. It is not possible to maximise opportunities and outcomes for all citizens without considering gender. What this means is that in order to be effective, organisations working in aid and development need to ensure their own policies and systems, and programs, are capable of delivering outcomes towards gender equality, whatever their area of focus.

Gender inequality in the Solomon Islands is significant: only 2.1 per cent of parliamentarians are women; it is estimated that of Solomon Islanders receiving waged employment, only 28 per cent are women<sup>3</sup> and women continue to assume the largest share of unpaid work<sup>4</sup>; violence against women prevalence rates are among the highest in the world, at 64 per cent.<sup>5</sup> Gender inequalities influence all areas of life and work. But they can be invisible to some people, because they are part of the way things have been done, and so seem 'normal', part of how we do things here and reflected in attitudes, beliefs, norms, cultures, workplaces, laws, regulations, services, programs, policies. Making gender inequalities visible is important for effective aid and development work. Providing practical guidance can assist individuals and organisations to at least avoid making things worse and ideally contribute to positive change.

This learning paper is a final output of the SINPA Program. Under the program, International Women's Development Agency and Oxfam led the development of Gender Standards, a set of minimum standards developed to ensure that the work of SINPA partner organisations did not contribute to the perpetuation of gender inequality. This paper provides an overview of the tools and approaches used to develop and implement the SINPA Gender Standards. It identifies key lessons and recommendations for other organisations undertaking a self-assessment of their work toward gender equality.

## OVERVIEW OF SINPA

The Solomon Islands NGO Partnership Agreement (SINPA) was a program focused on strengthening civil society, supported by the Australian Aid Program through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) from June 2009 until January 2016. Through SINPA, five Solomon Islands NGOs and their Australian partners implemented projects aimed at identifying, testing and learning from contextually appropriate development models. While each NGO implemented a separate project, partners shared a common goal of improving NGO effectiveness through the partnership model. This partnership across the SINPA program was supported through a Secretariat and SINPA partners met regularly to share lessons and improve practice.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2015), *Making Performance Count: enhancing the accountability and effectiveness of Australian aid*, Government of Australia, available at <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/making-performance-count-enhancing-the-accountability-and-effectiveness-of-australian-aid.aspx>

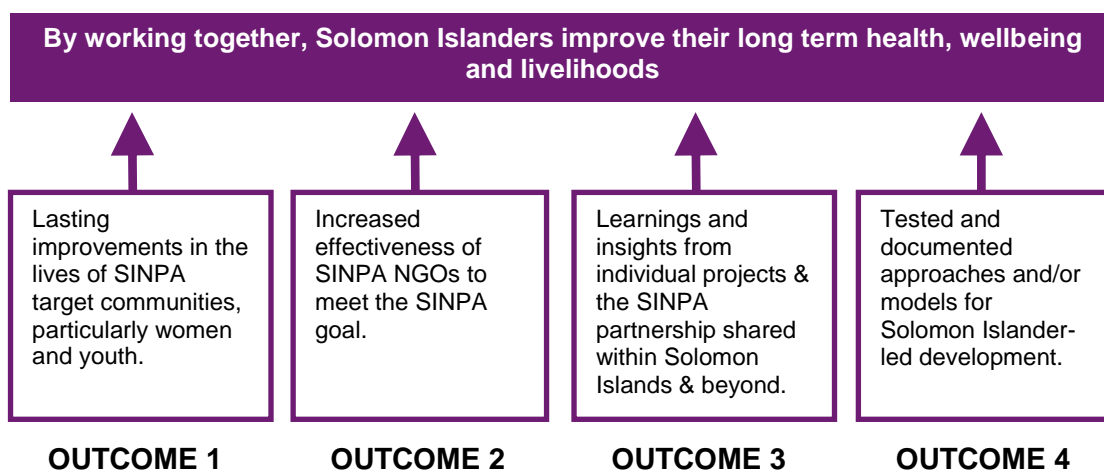
<sup>2</sup> UN Women, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>, accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Census 2009 and UNDP, Solomon Islands Human Development Report, 2009.

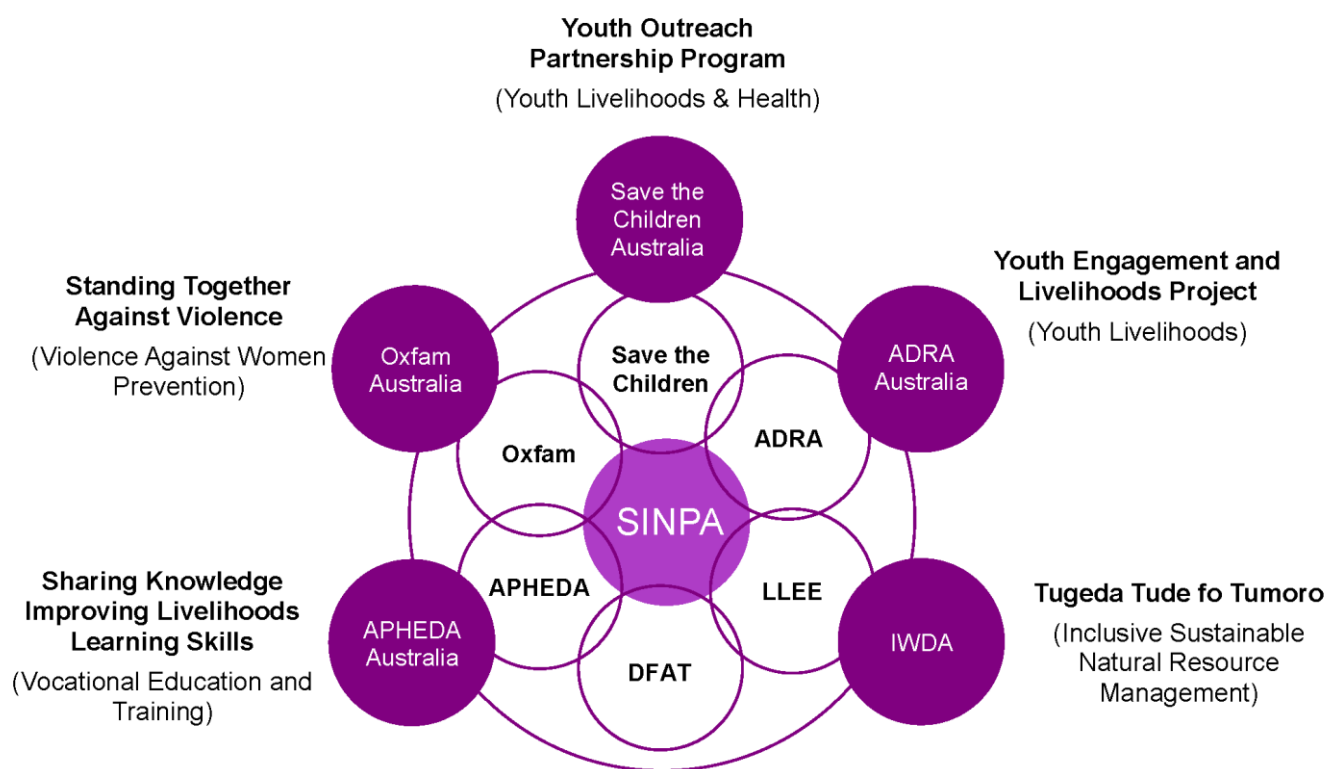
<sup>4</sup> Solomon Islands National Statistics Office & Secretariat of the Pacific Community, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands Demographic and Health Survey 2007-2007, May 2009.

<sup>5</sup> 64% of women aged 15-49 who have ever been in a relationship reported having experienced some form of violence (emotional, physical and/or sexual) from an intimate partner. See Rasanathan, J. (2011) "Gender-based violence in Solomon Islands: Translating research into action on the social determinants of health," World Health Organisation, Regional Office for the Western Pacific, accessed August 28, 2015.

## SINPA GOAL



## THE SINPA PARTNERSHIP



Australian Partner Organisation	Solomon Islands Partner Organisation
Adventist Development Relief Agency Australia (ADRA Australia)	Adventist Development Relief Agency Solomon Islands (ADRA)
International Women's Development Agency (IWDA)	Live & Learn Solomon Islands (LLSI – previously LLEE)
Save the Children Australia	Save the Children Solomon Islands
Oxfam Australia	Oxfam Solomon Islands / Family Support Centre
Union Aid Abroad- APHEDA Australia	Union Aid Abroad- APHEDA Solomon Islands

# GENDER STANDARDS

## WHAT ARE GENDER MINIMUM STANDARDS?

'Gender Minimum Standards' describe the base criteria that a project and organisation must meet in order to make sure their work does not contribute to or worsen gender inequality. When an organisation agrees to adopt Gender Minimum Standards they are applied across the whole organisation, on all activities. Gender Minimum Standards support organisations to consider gender equality in all aspects of their work. They are designed to be a resource throughout the project cycle to inform planning, design and implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning<sup>6</sup>.

## WHY DO ORGANISATIONS NEED GENDER MINIMUM STANDARDS?

Development projects are implemented across the world, by many different actors in complex and varied contexts. Gender Minimum Standards are increasingly being adopted and implemented by organisations in order to ensure a consistent and comprehensive approach to promoting gender equality in their programmatic work and in the governance of their organisation. Gender Minimum Standards support organisations in developing the policies, procedures and practices that are essential for effective work towards gender equality.

Gender Minimum Standards are necessary for:

### PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

By adopting Gender Minimum Standards, organisations agree on a set of benchmarks to ensure quality gender sensitive programming. By doing so organisations can do more to ensure the impact of their initiatives is felt by all community members, not just a powerful minority. Gender Minimum Standards can support organisations to use and build on the skills, resources and knowledge of women men, young men, young women, boys and girls, maximising program effectiveness.

### ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is about being responsible for our commitments, actions and inactions. Accountability also involves transparency – being open about intentions and how you are doing in practice. Opening our work up to scrutiny and feedback from governments, donors, other CSOs and the individuals and communities we are working with helps us know more about how we are doing and how our work could improve. Gender Minimum Standards set out the minimum requirements that organisations have agreed to be accountable for meeting. They tell staff and volunteers, and the individuals and organisations we work with, the standards we expect of ourselves, and what they can expect of us. Minimum standards also provide a framework and opportunity to monitor and report on how we are contributing towards gender equality.

### ENSURING WORK DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE TO OR WORSEN GENDER INEQUALITY

Achieving gender equality would result in women and men having the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. Gender Minimum Standards are important for making sure work in one area does not maintain or increase gender inequality in other areas or does not lead to unintended consequences that negatively affect women or men.

### SAFETY

Where work is conducted inappropriately or without adequate safeguards, interventions have the potential

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<sup>6</sup> Oxfam (2013)

to endanger staff, volunteers and community members. Some risks are gendered (affect staff, volunteers and community members of different genders differently). Gender Minimum Standards of practice establish a basic framework for working in a way that helps to ensure the safety of all involved and encourage organisations to consider and respond to gender-based risk.

## **BUILDING GOOD PRACTICE**

Sharing lessons about community development models contributes to more effective and appropriate development globally. By making clear the minimum requirements for addressing gender in the design, implementation and evaluation of all projects, Gender Minimum Standards provide a framework for organisations to share insights into contextually appropriate good practice and opportunities for progress.

## **DEVELOPING GENDER STANDARDS – PROCESS MATTERS**

The Gender Minimum Standards provide a starting point for organisations considering developing or adopting their own Standards. As an organisation decides to adopt Standards it is important existing standards and best practice are referenced. Standards are of little value if they won't support an organisation towards what is recognised as good practice.

In order for Gender Standards to be relevant and meaningful within an organisation, a consultative and participatory process to engage with standards is essential. The SINPA experience demonstrated that engagement of organisation staff in development of the standards was a key driver of change in organisational practice. Engagement strengthened awareness, understanding and the ability to implement the Standards. The Gender Standards in turn enable organisations to track and assess progress over time.

The SINPA Gender Standards are shared with the aim of providing a model that can inform and support other organisations wanting to strengthen the way they work in regard to gender.



# SINPA'S EXPERIENCE: INTRODUCTION

All SINPA partners recognised that to achieve the goal and outcomes of SINPA they must take into account how men and women relate to each other, and how they share resources and power, both in the community and within SINPA partner organisations. As highlighted by the SINPA Mid Term Review (November 2011) there was *'still great opportunity for women to participate in the decision-making process of SINPA programs, as both recipients and agents for change'*<sup>7</sup>. The SINPA Gender Standards aimed to make it clear how SINPA partners could actively and effectively pursue gender equality, within their individual projects and collectively.

In November 2012, following a collaborative process of development, SINPA partners agreed on the SINPA Gender Standards (the Standards); a set of minimum standards developed to ensure that the work of SINPA partner organisations did not increase or maintain gender inequality. The Standards provided a guide to all SINPA partners in promoting gender equality, in their organisations and in their projects.

The SINPA Gender Standards were monitored by the SINPA Steering Committee and applied to all members of staff based both overseas and in Solomon Islands including national and internationally recruited staff, managers, consultants, contractors and volunteers.

The SINPA Gender Standards were also intended to ensure that partners meaningfully contributed to the implementation of key Solomon Islands Government policies, action plans and conventions, including the Gender Equality and Women's Development (GEWD) and Eliminating Violence Against Women (EVAW) policies and the Families Protection Act; relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

## SINPA GENDER STANDARDS

SINPA partners acknowledge the power imbalances between men and women in Solomon Islands, the different opportunities and resources they have access to, and that, because of these differences, development activities will affect men and women in different ways. SINPA partners recognise that all human rights are equal and universal and that gender equality is fundamental to overcoming poverty, suffering and injustice. SINPA partners will not excuse, tolerate or support the continuation of discrimination or harmful practices based on sex, gender, culture, religion, age or tradition as well as discrimination against any other marginalised groups.

SINPA will therefore seek to change the systems, policies & practices, behaviour, ideas and beliefs that sustain gender inequality and often prevent women and girls from enjoying a decent livelihood, participation in the community, protection and basic services. SINPA partners are committed to working towards change in a way that is respectful and in a culturally appropriate manner.

SINPA Partners recognise that women and men often have different perspectives and needs, and take into account both men and women's voices, in their work.

SINPA partners will advocate and promote gender equality as a Human right.

1. **Power & Gender Analysis:** SINPA Partners will make sure that both power analysis and gender analysis and actions to promote gender equality are included in all programs.

<sup>7</sup> Solomon Islands NGO Partnership Agreement (SINPA) Strongim Yumi Tugeta, Mid Term Evaluation, 2011, p.52



2. **Non-Discrimination:** SINPA Partners will not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual preference, gender, marital status, family responsibilities and pregnancy and will not tolerate practices that result in gender based discrimination, prejudice or inequality\*.

\*In line with Australian Aid Program Child Protection Code of Conduct, SINPA partners are obliged to deny employment to any staff member who contravenes the organisation's Child Protection Policies.

3. **Working Equitably:** SINPA partners will work equitably, and in a culturally appropriate manner, towards the equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in decision-making processes that affect their lives.
4. **Positive Action:** SINPA partners will, where appropriate, necessary and safe\*, take positive action to ensure equal access to resources and opportunities for both women and men, so that both women and men can participate in program activities.

\*For the purpose of these Gender Standards, SINPA defines these terms in the following ways:

<b>NECESSARY</b>	Gender-based discrimination is evident and it is agreed that positive action will reduce this discrimination.
<b>APPROPRIATE</b>	It is agreed the action is suitable and proper for the context and circumstances and is not offensive.
<b>SAFE</b>	The action will not cause harm to those involved.

5. **Minimising Risk:** SINPA partners will analyse the following risks and take steps to prevent any potential harm to male and female staff, volunteers and community members:
- a. Risks to female and male staff working to promote and progress gender equality and non-discrimination
  - b. Gender-based risks for female and male staff working on all programs  
(Note: See Glossary for definition of 'gender-based risks')
6. **Working With Partners:** SINPA partners will support partner organisations to work equitably towards achieving gender equality internally and through their work.
7. **Recruitment and Professional Development:** SINPA partners will recruit people with a commitment to gender equality, and support their staff members to understand gender equality goals, principles and standards so they may fulfill their development objectives. SINPA partners will provide information, support mechanisms and professional and personal development opportunities to build gender awareness and analysis and to assist staff to meet SINPA Gender Standards.
8. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** SINPA partners will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their work in engaging and meeting the needs of men and women and in achieving gender equality. This will include the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated information and data.
9. **Sharing Lessons:** SINPA partners will demonstrate equality within SINPA, whilst achieving goals, share lessons learned and apply them to their programs to improve progress in achieving gender equality.
10. **Resourcing:** SINPA and its partners will mobilise and dedicate human, technical and financial resources to meet its commitments to gender equality.

# UNDERSTANDING THE SINPA GENDER STANDARDS

This section provides a brief overview of each of the ten SINPA Gender Standards, and guidance for their application. Further useful detail can be found in Section 6: Tracking Progress, where the Gender Standards descriptions for the SINPA Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) describe what this standard looks like at four levels of achievement.

## STANDARD 1: POWER & GENDER ANALYSIS

**SINPA Partners will make sure that both power analysis and gender analysis, and actions to promote gender equality are included in all programs.**

### KEY CONCEPTS

#### GENDER VS SEX

According to the World Health Organisation "sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women. *Gender* refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women."

#### GENDER ANALYSIS

Gathering information on the differences in men's and women's lives, including the differences that lead to social and economic inequality. Gender analysis looks at how these differences affect men's and women's ability to participate in community life and access services. Information from gender analysis can be used to develop policies, facilitate positive change and deliver better services for everyone. Gender analysis also provides information regarding the effect of the existing gender roles and relations on a project (design, implementation, monitoring) and how a project is affecting gender roles and relations.

#### POWER ANALYSIS

Power analysis is the process of identifying and exploring how power affects a given situation or community. Looking at who holds power, what kind of power they have and how they use that power helps us to better understand the different factors that interact to reinforce problems and issues. Having a more complete understanding of power relations helps us to identify appropriate strategies and entry points for our programs.

## WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO ACHIEVE THIS STANDARD?

- Gender and power are analysed and the results are used to inform all project activities.
- Deliberate actions are taken (in response to a gender and power analysis) to actively promote gender equality and address power inequities in target communities.

## WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?

- To assess likely or actual differences in participation, benefits and impacts between men and women at all stages of the project, including at design stage, so these can be addressed.
- To increase participation by gaining a better understanding of different needs, capacities and experiences.
- To make visible who has access and/or control of resources.
- To understand who is disadvantaged by the way power is distributed.
- To help identify appropriate strategies and entry points for change.

- To help prevent social conflict, political violence and insecurity.
- To foster shared understanding on why poverty prevails and stimulate thinking about processes of change, including how to approach informal and formal power relations and structures, and the actors and influences contributing to poverty.
- To help improve effectiveness of development programs by empowering those who may be overlooked due to a lack of voice.
- To help break down systematic gender inequalities

## QUESTIONS TO ASK FOR GENDER STANDARD 1

- Do we have the knowledge and resources (time, money, tools, technical advice) to complete Power and Gender Analysis for our project(s)? If not, what can we do to get them?
- Do we have the knowledge and resources (time, money, tools, technical advice) to respond to the finding of Power and Gender Analysis in our project(s)? If not, what can we do to get them?

## USEFUL TOOLS

Interaction Gender Audit Toolkit:

<https://www.interaction.org/sites/default/files/Gender%20Audit%20Handbook%202010%20Copy.pdf>

Vibrant Communities Gender Analysis Tools: <http://tamarackcommunity.ca/downloads/gender/Tools.pdf>

Power Analysis: <http://www.powercube.net/>

## EXAMPLE: GENDER ANALYSIS

A group of men was invited to a village meeting to jointly plan a community forestry project. The men told the foresters that they wanted to plant hardwood tree species to make furniture and wood carvings to sell. Three thousand hardwood seedlings were provided. They all died. Why? Because in the village it was the task of women to care for seedlings; no one had told them that the seedlings were coming, or discussed how this additional task could be managed. Another meeting was held. This time the women were included. Foresters learned that the women preferred soft wood fast-growing species for fuelwood and fodder. When the project provided seedlings of both types, satisfying the needs of both women and men, the women planted and watered all of them.<sup>8</sup>

## EXAMPLE – POWER ANALYSIS

An organisation working to promote increased representation of women in parliament in Sri Lanka, conducted a power analysis as part of the design phase of a new program. The power analysis revealed that almost all women parliamentarians were related to male politicians from powerful political families. The vast majority also came from the dominant ethnic group. Opposition to opening up more parliamentary seats for women representing women therefore not only stemmed from a reluctance to share power with women, but also from a reluctance to enable women outside the main 'political culture' to access seats of power and authority.

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<sup>8</sup> From Marilyn Hoskins, *Gender Analysis and Forestry*, in press, Sec.A, p. 6.

## STANDARD 2: NON-DISCRIMINATION

**SINPA Partners will not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual preference, gender, marital status, family responsibilities and pregnancy and will not tolerate practices that result in gender based discrimination, prejudice or inequality.<sup>9</sup>**

### KEY CONCEPTS

#### GENDER BASED DISCRIMINATION

The unfavourable (unfair) treatment of individuals on the basis of gender, which denies them rights, opportunities or resources.

### WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO ACHIEVE THIS STANDARD?

- Anti-discrimination policies are in place and used within the organisation.
- Anti-discrimination policies are discussed with staff as part of induction and on an ongoing basis to ensure shared understanding of expectations.
- Non-discrimination is recognised by staff as an important part of organisation culture.

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?

- To ensure equal opportunities for everyone regardless of their gender identity and/or expression, age, sexual preferences, socioeconomic status, religion, ethnic background, ability etc
- To ensure rules are fair for people in a range of different life circumstances
- To ensure an approach to development that recognises that factors such as age, sex, ability and more can intersect to magnify barriers and disadvantage.
- To protect fundamental human rights
- To ensure equal opportunities for capacity development, integration in society and access to social networks, and break down gender stereotypes
- To enable the community and economy to benefit from diverse skills, views and contributions.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK FOR GENDER STANDARD 2

- Does the organisation have a clear definition of discrimination, and do staff understand this?
- Are there clear procedures across the organization to minimise the risk of discrimination?
- Are there ways for individuals to safely inform the organisation of any discrimination experienced?
- Are there clear procedures that describe how discrimination will be dealt with – and stopped if it occurs?

### EXAMPLE

Following a period of maternity leave, a female employee wanted to start working part-time in order to balance family responsibilities, whilst maintaining her position and contributing further to the work of the organisation. Following an organisational gender self-assessment, the organisation had recently revised their recruitment policy to better support part-time roles so that women and men with child-care responsibilities were not disadvantaged. As a result the organisation was able to offer the woman a part-time role and benefited from a committed employee who already had a good understanding of the organisation's work, and avoided the costs of recruiting a replacement.

<sup>9</sup> In line with Australian Aid Program Child Protection Code of Conduct, SINPA partners are obliged to deny employment to any staff member who contravenes the organisation's Child Protection Policies.

## STANDARD 3: WORKING EQUITABLY

SINPA partners will work equitably, and in a culturally appropriate manner, towards the equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

### KEY CONCEPTS

#### MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

A process through which all members of a community or organisation are involved in and have influence on decisions related to development activities that will affect them. That implies that development projects will address those community or group needs on which members have chosen to focus, and that all phases of the development process will be characterised by active involvement of community or organisation members.

### WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO ACHIEVE THIS STANDARD?

- All staff understand what women and girls' equal and meaningful participation looks like in the context of their project.
- Barriers to women and girls' participation have been identified, including by asking women and girls what would enable their involvement, and strategies put in place to address barriers and support participation.
- Women and girls equally and meaningfully participate in decision-making processes at all levels and at all stages of the project.
- The project is working in a way that is considered to be culturally appropriate by Solomon Islands staff and target communities.

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?

- To create a fair working environment
- To ensure that projects are informed by the needs and priorities of all of the community, not just some power-holders
- To ensure that projects empower men, women, boys and girls through their involvement and participation in all parts of the project cycle

### QUESTIONS TO ASK FOR GENDER STANDARD 3

- Do we understand what women and girls' equal and meaningful participation looks like in the context of our work?
- Are there systems in place to ensure that women and girls' equal and meaningful participation is considered at all stages of the project cycle, for all projects?

### EXAMPLE

A project started implementation in a new area and spoke only to the male chiefs. As a result the intervention that was designed was not engaging youth, women or children. At a mid-term review to determine why engagement was so slow, youth spoke of different needs, as did women and young children. The project redesign provided women-only forums for advice, and supported youth to access information through a variety of communications tools. Better sites for engagement and varied communication tools resulted in engagement from a broader spectrum of community members and enabled the project to better meet community needs.

## STANDARD 4: POSITIVE ACTION

**SINPA partners will, where appropriate, necessary and safe\*, take positive action to ensure equal access to resources and opportunities for both women and men, so that both women and men can participate in program activities.**

\* For the purpose of these Gender Standards, SINPA defines these terms in the following ways:

<b>NECESSARY</b>	Gender-based discrimination is evident and it is agreed that positive action will reduce this discrimination.
<b>APPROPRIATE</b>	It is agreed the action is suitable and proper for the context and circumstances and is not offensive.
<b>SAFE</b>	The action will not cause harm to those involved.

### KEY CONCEPTS

#### **POSITIVE (AFFIRMATIVE) ACTION**

Positive steps taken to address discrimination, achieve equal opportunities and increase representation of women and minority groups.

#### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

All people, irrespective of gender, should have equal chance to access opportunities – for example as program participants or as organisation staff

### WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO ACHIEVE THIS STANDARD?

- Staff understand what is meant by the term positive discrimination and see how it can be applied in the project.
- Staff understand when positive discrimination may or may not be necessary, appropriate and safe, and feel knowledgeable or confident enough to respond constructively to questions or criticism about positive discrimination within their project.
- Where appropriate, necessary and safe, positive action has been taken to make sure women and men have equal access to resources and opportunities.
- Women and men have equal access to resources and opportunities within the project.
- Women and men can both participate equally in program activities.

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?

- To identify and increase participation by individuals from historically underrepresented groups in education and employment
- To remedy the effects of past discrimination, counter present-day discrimination and promote diversity
- To increase participation of women in decision-making and leadership roles
- To increase the representation of women in traditionally male-dominated occupations
- To improve gender equality standards
- To break the cycle of poverty and inequality

## QUESTIONS TO ASK FOR GENDER STANDARD 4

- Do we understand what positive action is and how it might be applied in our projects?
- Do we have systems or tools to consider the resources and opportunities that individuals need access to in order to participate in project activities?

### EXAMPLE

A gender audit highlights to a NGO Board that all except one of its Board members are men. The NGO works on programs for community development and is aware that lack of women's participation in positions of decision-making power and influence undermines development outcomes, and that there are many social and cultural reasons that women have less access than men to these positions. To address the gender imbalance in the Board, the organisation decides to introduce a quota so that at least 60% of the NGO Board will be women. In order to achieve this, the NGO proactively invites applications from women to join the Board. The organisation finds that as a result of the increased number of women on the Board, the next Strategic Plan better reflects both men's and women's perspectives on development needs. They also find that there is an increased interest at Board level in ensuring policies for staff recruitment and management are gender equitable.



## STANDARD 5: MINIMISING RISK

SINPA partners will analyse the following risks and take steps to prevent any potential harm to male and female staff, volunteers and community members:

- Risks to female and male staff working to promote and progress gender equality and non-discrimination
- Gender-based risks for female and male staff working on all programs

### KEY CONCEPTS

#### GENDER BASED RISKS

Gender based risks are risks which arise specifically for female and male staff in certain contexts and circumstances based on their gender. For example, the risk to a female staff member when traveling alone may be different to the risk for a male staff member traveling alone in the same area. If the reason this risk is different is due to the gender of the person involved then it is a gender-based risk.

### WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO ACHIEVE THIS STANDARD?

- Specific risks that may arise for staff, volunteers and community members promoting gender equality and non-discrimination have been considered by the organisation and are well understood by staff.
- Gender based risks that may arise for staff, volunteers and community members working in the organisation, both in the community and in their personal lives, have been carefully considered by the organisation and are well understood by staff, volunteers and community members.
- Risk mitigation strategies have been identified and action has been taken to address all these risks.

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?

- To help identify work-related risks affecting men and women differently
- To make the workplace safe for each employee regardless of gender and to ensure the freedom, equity, security and human dignity of all employees regardless of gender
- To reduce risks at workplaces rather than to exclude women
- To recognise that women may be more exposed than men to psychosocial risks at work, as a result of discrimination and sexual harassment at the workplace

### QUESTIONS TO ASK FOR GENDER STANDARD 5

- Do we understand what the gender-based risks are for male and female staff working on our projects?
- Do we understand what the risks are for staff working to promote and progress gender equality in the context we work in?

### EXAMPLE

An NGO in Solomon Islands has staff who travel to rural communities regularly to support and monitor project activities. Discussions with staff revealed some risks faced by all staff, such as bad weather making boat travel dangerous, and exposure to mosquito-borne diseases. However, women but not men also identified a high risk of being spied on or having someone try to get into their room at night, and felt less safe traveling alone after dark. As a result of the discussions the NGO updated their security policy and procedures to ensure that gender-specific as well as common risks were managed, including ensuring that staff could travel in same-sex pairs and work should be planned to ensure travel only during daylight.

## STANDARD 6: WORKING WITH PARTNERS

**SINPA partners will support partner organisations to work equitably towards achieving gender equality internally and through their work.**

### KEY CONCEPTS

#### GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

The ability of all employees to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of their gender.

#### PARTNERSHIP

Partnership is a dynamic relationship among diverse actors, based on mutually agreed objectives, pursued through a shared understanding of the most rational division of labour based on the respective comparative advantages of each partner. Partnership encompasses mutual influence, with a careful balance between synergy and respective autonomy, which incorporates mutual respect, equal participation in decision-making, mutual accountability, and transparency.

### WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO ACHIEVE THIS STANDARD?

- NGOs actively discuss gender as part of project activities and encourage and support partners to take action to work equitably towards achieving gender equality
- NGOs:
  - have the capacity to support partners to work for increased gender equality.
  - allocate adequate resources to support partners to work for increased gender equality.
  - have a good understanding of gender in the Solomon Islands context
- NGOs model working equitably towards achieving gender equality internally and through their work.

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?

- To enhance effectiveness and outreach of organisations by partnership and cooperation
- To contribute to, influence, or add value to the work of partner organisations to maximise impacts on gender equality and women's empowerment
- To increase participation of local communities by strengthened partnerships with local organisations
- To share information, skills and subject matter expertise
- To help collect evidence to contribute to formulation of policies promoting gender equality and empowering women, and to understand the different impacts of other policies on women and men, girls and boys
- To raise awareness of gender issues internationally.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK FOR GENDER STANDARD 6

- Do we (ANGOs and LNGOs) discuss gender in our project planning and monitoring conversations?
- Do we (ANGOs and LNGOs) have a common understanding of priorities and opportunities to achieve gender equality internally and through our work?

## EXAMPLE

Within the SINPA program, International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) IWDA worked with partner Live & Learn Solomon Islands (LLSI). As part of its partnership support, IWDA staff facilitated gender awareness workshops with LLSI staff and helped develop gender-sensitive monitoring tools. As a result, LLSI staff both in the project and in other parts of the organisation reported a change in their understanding that helped them also deliver gender awareness training in communities, and use practical methods to ensure more inclusive participation in project activities. At the same time, LLSI staff were able to share with IWDA their understanding of Solomon Islands norms in relation to gender and lessons learned about what worked and what didn't work when working on gender in rural Solomon Islands communities. This strengthened IWDA understanding about ways of working on gender.

## STANDARD 7: RECRUITMENT & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SINPA partners will recruit people with a commitment to gender equality, and support their staff members to understand gender equality goals, principles and standards so they may fulfill their development objectives. SINPA partners will provide information, support mechanisms and professional and personal development opportunities to build gender awareness and analysis and to assist staff to meet SINPA Gender Standards.

### KEY CONCEPTS

#### GENDER BALANCED RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

Equitable recruitment is a business issue as well as a legal and ethical one. It is about attracting and retaining the best people for the job and building a strong, gender-inclusive culture with committed, dedicated staff.

### WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO ACHIEVE THIS STANDARD?

- The organisation considers and prioritises commitment to gender equality when recruiting.
- Staff members fully understand gender equality goals, principles and standards and can share this understanding with others.
- The organisation provides information, support mechanisms and professional and personal development opportunities to build gender awareness and analysis for staff to fulfill their roles and think critically about ways to work towards gender equality.

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?

- To ensure the equal representation of women and men at all levels of the organisation, including leadership
- To ensure a fair recruitment process
- To support staff members to understand gender equality goals, standards and principles through workshops, training and networking
- To foster a gender inclusive, non-discriminatory culture
- To raise awareness of gender issues and uncover unconscious assumptions and personal biases
- To improve performance and competitive strength.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK FOR GENDER STANDARD 7

- Do we have clear guidelines regarding staff and volunteer commitment to gender equality in our recruitment procedures and job descriptions?
- Do we consider commitment to gender equality in performance monitoring?
- Do we have resources to support professional development of staff in gender awareness?

### EXAMPLE

As part of its organisational strengthening approach, an NGO completed a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) for its staff, including specifically assessing levels of existing gender understanding or previous training. The TNA identified that only 2 of 16 staff had had any formal training on gender, and identified this as a high priority for staff development. An external agency with gender expertise was contracted to provide two two-day workshops for staff on key gender concepts, gender analysis and gender in monitoring and evaluation. Following this the organisation also revised its performance assessment template to ensure

that gender awareness and good practice in regard to gender-sensitive programming were reviewed as part of staff performance assessment. Additionally, a minimum of 20% of the organisation's professional development (PD) budget over the next 3 years was earmarked to be used for PD activities focused on strengthening staff understanding and practice in regard to gender.

In the two years following these measures, the organisation saw a significant improvement in gender-sensitive behaviour within the organisation – such as equal participation of women and men in meetings. It also became known as an organisation that reflected an understanding of gender in program design, monitoring and evaluation, and project activities saw increased participation of women and young women, resulting in better community outcomes.

## STANDARD 8: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

**SINPA partners will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their work in engaging and meeting the needs of men and women and in achieving gender equality. This will include the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated information and data.**

### KEY CONCEPTS

#### GENDER ANALYSIS

Gathering information on the differences in men's and women's lives, including the differences that lead to social and economic inequality. Gender analysis looks at how these differences affect men's and women's ability to participate in community life and access services. Information from gender analysis can be used to develop policies, facilitate positive change and deliver better services for everyone. Gender analysis also provides information regarding the effect of the existing gender roles and relations on a project (design, implementation, monitoring) and vice versa.

#### SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA

Data that is broken down by sex, presenting information separately for women and men, boys and girls. It reflects roles, real situations, general conditions of women and men, for example, literacy rate, education levels, employment, resource ownership

### WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO ACHIEVE THIS STANDARD?

- The organisation consistently collects and analyses sex-disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data.
- The organisation consistently monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of their work in -
  - engaging men and women, including monitoring who is not participating in program activities and why
  - meeting the needs of men and women
  - achieving gender equality, by collecting and analysing information on changes in men's and women's roles, responsibilities, rights and relationships

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?

- To ensure that performance monitoring and evaluation activities capture the distinct impacts of programs on girls, boys, women and men
- To reflect different needs and different social, economic, and cultural barriers faced by women, men, girls, and boys that can affect their ability to access and benefit from services and programs equitably
- To assess men's and women's access to, utilisation of, and retention in services separately and to identify and address any issues a group is facing which causes them to be less likely to access or benefit from services
- To identify the gender inequalities, constraints, opportunities, and unintended consequences that can contribute to or affect how target beneficiaries access and benefit from a service or program
- To foresee and address gender-related issues proactively and improve program outcomes
- To provide evidence to partners and donors of gender-related barriers in development and advocate for the value of a gender-focused approach

## QUESTIONS TO ASK FOR GENDER STANDARD 8

- Do we collect sex-disaggregated data in all our monitoring and evaluation activity?
- Do monitoring and evaluation activities integrate gender analysis?

### EXAMPLE

In Pakistan, in an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp, shelters were constructed without of community consultations. UNICEF protection officers visiting the camps for monitoring noted that women and girls were nowhere to be seen. Upon further investigation, they learned that the IDPs were from Purdah communities, where women and girls faced restrictions on contact with men outside their immediate family. As a result, women and girls were confined to tents and were not accessing any services.

In response, UNICEF consulted with male and female community members (separately and together) in order to come up with a way to address the cultural restrictions on mobility faced by women and girls. They agreed to construct female-only spaces where women and girls could walk around freely and access basic services.



## STANDARD 9: SHARING LESSONS

**SINPA partners will demonstrate equality within SINPA, whilst achieving goals, sharing lessons learned and applying them to their programs to improve progress in achieving gender equality.**

### KEY CONCEPTS

#### COOPERATION

An act or process of joint effort towards the achievement of a common goal. Cooperation in development aims explicitly to support national development priorities and it is based on relationships that seek to enhance local ownership.

#### COMMUNICATION

Two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchange information, news, ideas and feelings but also create and share meaning. In general, communication is a means of connecting people or places. In development, it is a key function of participation, sharing knowledge and working towards the achievement of common goals.

### WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO ACHIEVE THIS STANDARD?

- There is evidence of the organisations sharing lessons learned and responding to them within their projects.
- There is evidence of the organisations responding to lessons shared from other SINPA partners.

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?

- To improve the success and efficiency of development programs
- To foster cooperation between development organisations
- To connect policy makers, development practitioners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders
- To enrich the development discourse and help prioritise issues of concern
- To increase collaboration and foster the creation of new partnerships by utilising knowledge sharing networks and discussion fora
- To enhance creativity and innovation in the finding of new solutions to specific development issues.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK FOR GENDER STANDARD 9

- Are we ensuring that our lessons learned are documented and actively shared with SINPA partners and others?
- Do we know what other SINPA partners/stakeholders are doing similar work and do we have ways to share learning and experience with them?
- Do we have the resources needed to ensure that we can participate in learning and information-sharing activities? If not, how can we get these resources?
- Do we monitor the outcome of our activities to share lessons with other organisations and learn from them?

## EXAMPLE

Of five SINPA Programs, two had a gender focus in their program goals and three had a broader focus. All organisations were committed to gender sensitivity in their programming. Over the course of the program, the partners shared learning with each other through regular reflection workshops, and development of Learning Papers and organisation of learning events to share with other stakeholders. In 2015 it was agreed that it would be valuable to find a way to share some of the SINPA learning on gender more broadly with other stakeholders working in the Solomon Islands, and a 'Gender Learning Event' was organised. At this event, the learning from SINPA partners was shared and discussed.

In preparation for the event it was recognised that a key area of shared learning that hadn't yet been presented in a Learning Paper or event, was the impact of staff increased understanding of gender on effective implementation of gender-sensitive programming – whether or not the program goals were specifically gender-focused. To capture and share this experience, a panel was organised with national office and field staff to talk about their experiences. This panel generated a lot of discussion and drew attention to an issue that may otherwise often be overlooked by organisations.

## STANDARD 10: RESOURCING

**SINPA and its partners will mobilise and dedicate human, technical and financial resources to meet its commitments to gender equality.**

### KEY CONCEPTS

#### HUMAN RESOURCES

The personnel of a business or organisation, regarded as a significant asset in terms of skills and abilities. Human resources are crucial in meeting organisational commitments to gender equality, as well as development goals, based on the need for expertise and skills relevant to gender issues in the development context.

#### TECHNICAL RESOURCES

Technical resources are all the technical means, skills, knowledge and other productive assets owned and/or accessed by staff and partners.

#### FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Different sources of funding required to achieve organisation goals.

### WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO ACHIEVE THIS STANDARD?

- The organisations have described clearly what their commitments to gender equality mean in practice
- The organisations have identified what resources will be needed to meet these commitments
- The organisations mobilise enough human, technical and financial resources to meet their commitments to gender equality.

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?

- To enable the successful realisation of projects and programs addressing gender issues
- To produce sustainable and efficient solutions to gender inequalities
- To enable research and access to relevant data
- To ensure organisation performance by increasing staff performance, motivation and productivity
- To maximise organisation capacity and impact in addressing development issues.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK FOR GENDER STANDARD 10

- Do we have a clear understanding of the resource needs to meet our commitments to gender equality -
  - in our organisation?
  - in our projects?
- Do our budgets, workplans etc. clearly identify how we will resource our commitments?

### EXAMPLE

After completing a gender self-assessment, Live & Learn Solomon Islands realised they needed to commit additional human resources to ensure gender considerations were integrated into all programs. As a result, a policy was agreed to include a Gender Officer in every new project, in order to provide guidance and technical support to other project staff to ensure gender was considered at all stages of the project cycle.

# IMPLEMENTING GENDER STANDARDS

There are varying levels of English language proficiency among staff in SINPA partner organisations and varying levels of understanding of core gender equality concepts. As such, ensuring shared understanding of the Gender Standards was seen as essential to the success of the self-assessment process.

In SINPA's case, the participatory process to develop Gender Standards was critical to building this shared understanding. This was enhanced by an accompanied process for each organisation to complete the first self-assessment against the Standards. This process meant that staff had the opportunity to discuss and debate the definition of each standard, with reference to their own contexts, to develop a common understanding and relevant language. Having each organisation complete the first self-assessment with the guidance of experienced facilitators with a deep understanding of gender, ensured that the process itself was a key capacity-development opportunity for organisations and the individuals involved.

## THE SINPA EXPERIENCE: UNDERTAKING A GENDER STANDARDS SELF-ASSESSMENT

The SINPA Gender Standards make clear the expectation that SINPA partners will '*demonstrate progress towards meeting these Standards*'. By approving these Standards the SINPA Steering Committee agreed that it '*is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Gender Standards within individual organisations and within SINPA as a collective*'. In June 2013 each SINPA partner undertook a self-assessment, and then goal setting process, to set targets and track progress toward meeting the agreed standards.

This process was initiated and facilitated by SINPA partner International Women's Development Agency (IWDA). The aim of the process was to:

- Assess partners' current work against the SINPA Gender Standards.
- Identify three actions to take before June 2014 in order to make progress towards meeting the SINPA Gender Standards.

The methodology of this process, summaries of the self-assessments and agreed actions are summarised below<sup>10</sup>.

## SINPA GENDER STANDARDS SELF- ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The SINPA Gender Standards Self-assessment process was led by International Women's Development Agency (IWDA). IWDA developed the methodology and tools used in this process and workshops were facilitated by two IWDA Program Managers.

The process took place over four stages. The first three (Ensuring Understanding, Self-assessment and goal setting, and Feedback) occurred in June 2013 via a one-day workshop with each partner, for self-assessment and goal-setting, followed by a half-day workshop with all partners for feedback. The finalisation of standards for incorporation into the OCAT was approved in March 2014.



<sup>10</sup> These are also documented in more detail in the report titled '*SINPA Gender Standards-Tracking Progress and Setting Goals*'.

## STAGE 1: ENSURING UNDERSTANDING

IWDA facilitated a half-day workshop to ensure shared understanding of the SINPA Gender Standards. It was important to give time to discuss each Standard and identify and clarify the following:

- Key terms and concepts
- Why each Standard is important
- Examples of how this Standard might be applied that are relevant to the Solomon Island context.

Time was also used to stimulate discussion about the implementation of each Standard within individual SINPA agencies.

The Standards were presented to the group as relating to one of two categories: **Participation** and **Personnel**. They were separated into these two categories to help participants see the links between different Standards, and to support them to consider how the Gender Standards apply at a community/project implementation level and within their own organisations.

### Participation

- **Standard 1:** SINPA Partners will make sure that both power analysis and gender analysis and actions to promote gender equality are included in all programs.
- **Standard 3:** SINPA partners will work equitably, and in a culturally appropriate manner, towards the equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in decision-making processes that affect their lives.
- **Standard 4:** SINPA partners will, where appropriate and necessary, take positive action to ensure equal opportunity and access to resources and opportunities for both women and men so that both men and women can participate in program activities.
- **Standard 8:** SINPA partners will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their work in engaging and meeting the needs of men and women and in achieving gender equality. This will include the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated information and data.

### Personnel

- **Standard 2:** SINPA Partners will not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual preference, gender, marital status, family responsibilities and pregnancy and will not tolerate practices that result in gender based discrimination, prejudice or inequality.
- **Standard 5:** SINPA partners will analyse the risks that may arise in the pursuit of gender equality and will take steps to prevent any potential harm to staff, volunteers and community members.
- **Standard 6:** SINPA partners will support partner organisations to work equitably towards achieving gender equality internally and through their work.
- **Standard 7:** SINPA partners will recruit people with a commitment to gender equality, and support their staff members to understand gender equality goals, principles and standards so they may fulfil their development objectives. SINPA partners will provide information, support mechanisms and professional and personal development opportunities to build gender awareness and analysis and to assist staff to meet SINPA Gender Standards.

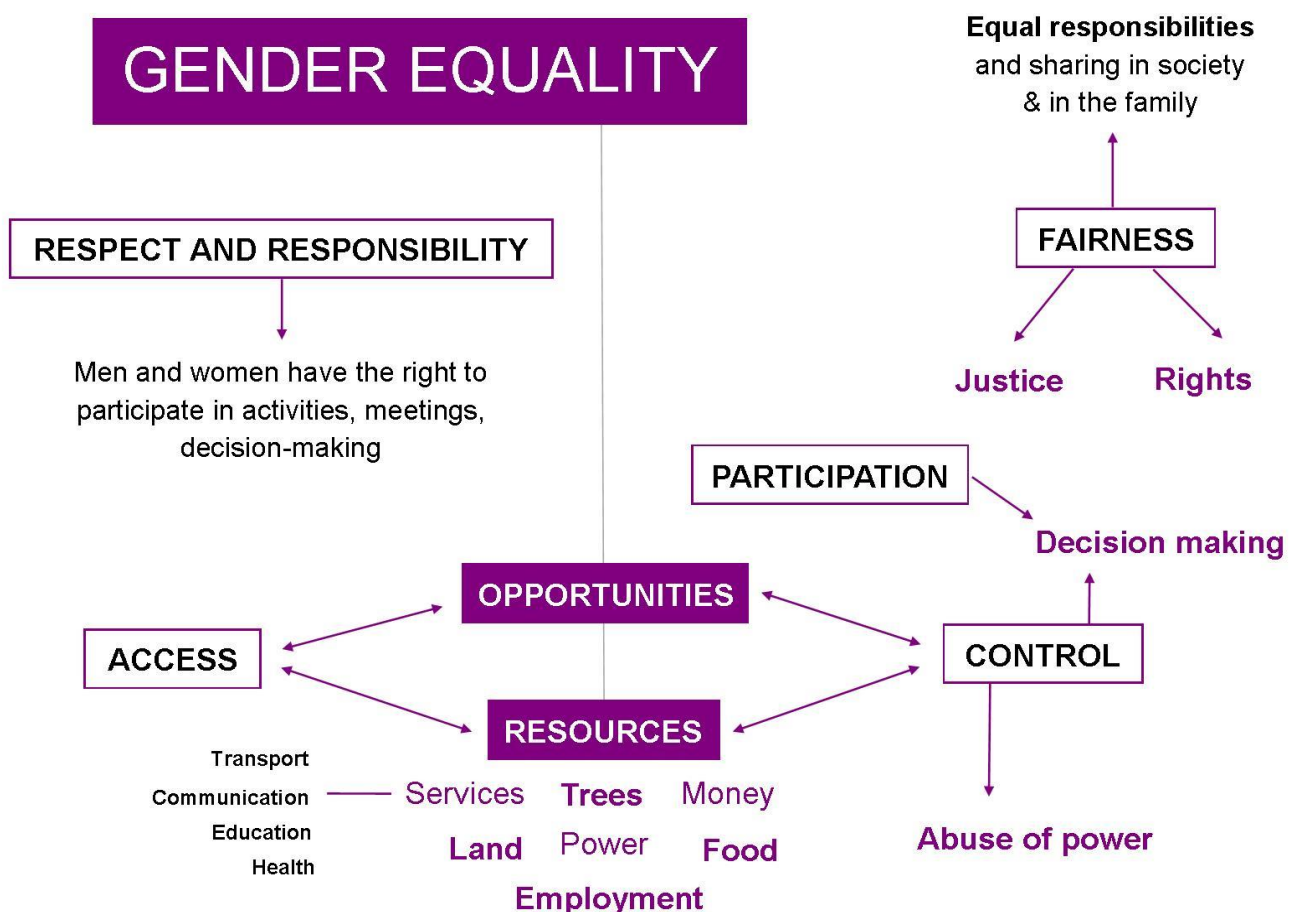
Standards nine and ten were excluded from the initial self-assessment process because they address the SINPA (partnership) rather than behaviour at the organisation level.

## Key discussion points

In the introductory workshop, participants were encouraged to consider and discuss key questions including:

- What do we mean when we talk about gender equality?
- What does equal and meaningful participation look like?
- How do you define meaningful participation in your project?
- What is positive action/positive discrimination? What are some examples?
- How do we find out if our project is meeting the needs of men and women?
- What skills and information might we need to know this?
- What is discrimination?
- What are some examples of discrimination on the basis of gender, marital status, family responsibilities and pregnancy?
- What risks might arise when working towards gender equality?
- What risks might arise specifically for female staff?

Figure 1: participant responses to 'what do you think of when you hear the term gender equality?'



## STAGE 2: SELF-ASSESSMENT & ACTION PLANS

IWDA met with each of the SINPA implementing partners for one full day.

Two representatives from another SINPA partner attended the session to act as a peer review team. The aim of engaging peer reviewers was threefold:

- to encourage greater accountability among SINPA partners when applying the SINPA Gender Standards;
- to allow for sharing on common challenges and strategies; and
- to develop the capacity of selected staff members to develop and implement strategies for improving gender equality within projects and organisations in the future.

These sessions were broken up into three parts:

1. Exploring how women's and men's roles, responsibilities, relations and rights differ in target communities and within organisations and why.
2. Facilitating a self-assessment process as a means of starting a discussion on the organisation's progress towards the achievement of eight of the ten SINPA Gender Standards.
3. Identifying three priority areas where improvements are needed and detailing actions to be taken by June 30, 2014 (one year after the self-assessment) to make progress in the identified priority areas.

### The Gender Tree

The 'Gender Tree' was used as a tool to stimulate discussion about the differences in women's and men's roles, responsibilities, relations and rights: in target communities and within organisations. The tool facilitates discussion to explore the rules and values that underlie these differences.

Participants filled in an empty tree template by brainstorming responses to the questions below. They complete the community side of the tree first and then use the same questions to complete the organisation side.

**Leaves:** What differences can we see between men's and women's opportunities rights and responsibilities in the community/organisation?

**Trunk:** Which rules/practices underlie what you see in the leaves? Who makes and maintains these rules/practices?

**Roots:** What values/beliefs prevail in the community/organisation about gender and cause the gender differences noted in the leaves?

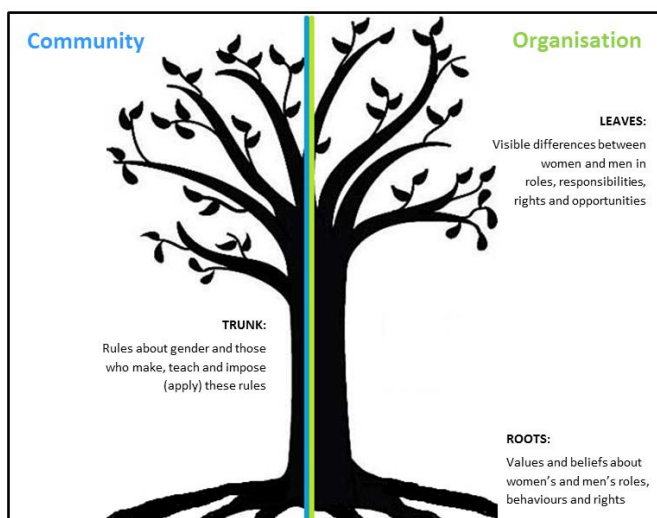


Figure 3: The Gender Tree

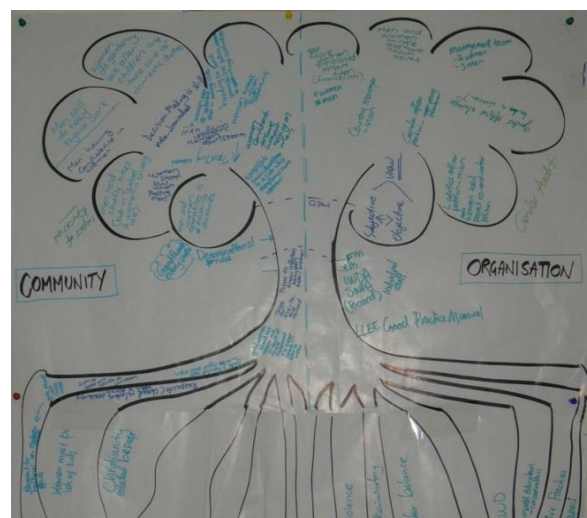


Figure 4: Gender Tree created by *Live and Learn*



When the tree is complete groups discuss the links and conflicts between the values they are promoting within their organisations and the values held by community members. They also use the tree to map work within their own projects and organisation that promotes gender equality, and discuss how this work contributes to changes in how resources and opportunities are shared between men and women. The Gender Tree tool was successful in supporting participants to explore local and organisation culture regarding gender equality, and to uncover and discuss some of the different manifestations of gender inequality they see in their work (e.g. violence against women). Examples raised during this activity were used during the self-assessment process to stimulate critical analysis of each organisation's progress across the Standards.

## The 'Wellness Wheel' Self-assessment

The Gender Standards 'Wellness Wheel'<sup>11</sup> Self Assessment locates each of the standards on one axis and provides a system for rating an organisation's position in relation to each standard.

After group discussion about the Standard being assessed, individual participants were asked to mark a score on a given wedge of the wheel before sharing their response and rationale with the group. An aggregate score for the organisation was then calculated.

There was no guidance given around scoring, aside from informing the group that a score of 0 was the lowest and 10 was the highest. Scoring was intended as a prompt for discussion, rather than as a numerical baseline measurement in itself. Notes taken on the discussions after scoring were shared with individual organisations, but are not included in this paper.

After scoring, the following prompt questions were used to stimulate further discussion:

- Why did you choose that score?
- Why did you feel your organisation deserved this score?
- What work has been done to reach this point?
- What improvements do you think need to be made?



Figure 4: Completed 'Wellness Wheel'

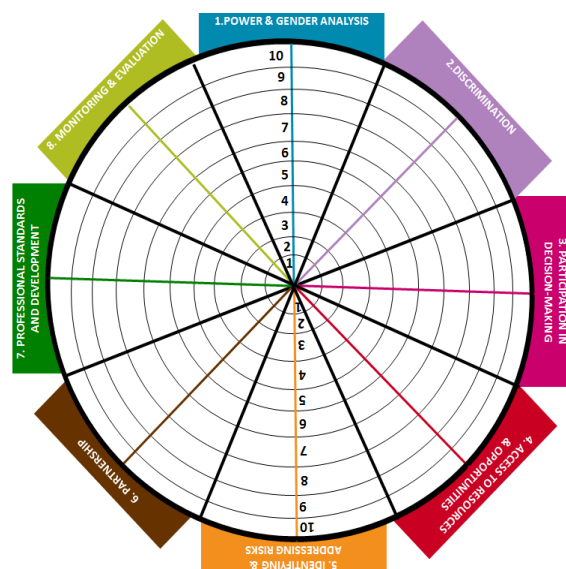


Figure 5: SINPA Gender Standards Wellness Wheel

<sup>11</sup> The tool used here is widely used in a variety of contexts. The terminology 'Wellness Wheel' is commonly used in the various health professions, and was used for the SINPA process as it was already potentially familiar to some participants.

## Setting Goals

In the final session, participants referred back to the 'Wellness Wheel' and used it, along with notes taken during discussion on each Standard, to identify at least three priority areas where improvements were needed. Participants then identified feasible strategies to make progress in these priority areas and created a draft work plan for achieving these goals over the next twelve months.

## STAGE 3: FEEDBACK AND REPORTING

Once all SINPA partners had completed their self-assessment, IWDA facilitated a half-day session with all SINPA partners to give feedback and stimulate discussion on what had been learned in different organisations and common areas for improvement across SINPA partner organisations.

### Circles of Confidence

The 'Circles of Confidence'<sup>12</sup> activity was used to gauge participants' level of confidence in the implementation of the SINPA Gender Standards in their projects and in their organisations. The activity allowed for discussion of some of the barriers to implementing the Standards and identification of strategies to overcome these barriers.

The Circles of Confidence exercise allows participants to provide a confidential rating of their confidence level. The Circle is put up on a wall or whiteboard and turned away from other participants. One at a time, each participant comes up and marks their individual confidence level on the chart. Once all members of the group have marked the chart, it is revealed to the group and used to prompt discussion to understand what has changed for participants and where further investment may be needed to strengthen understanding and confidence to implement gender standards.

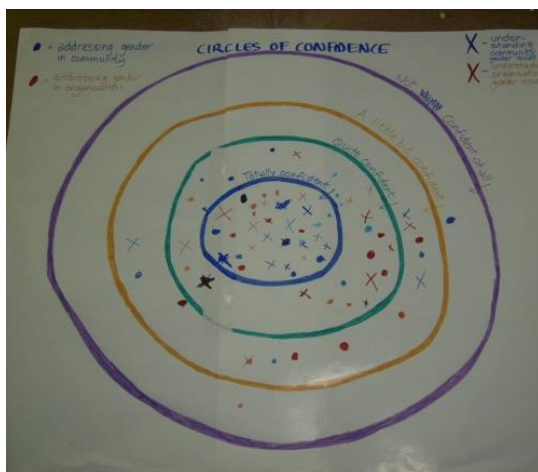


Figure 6: Circles of Confidence poster from SINPA Gender Standards Feedback Session.

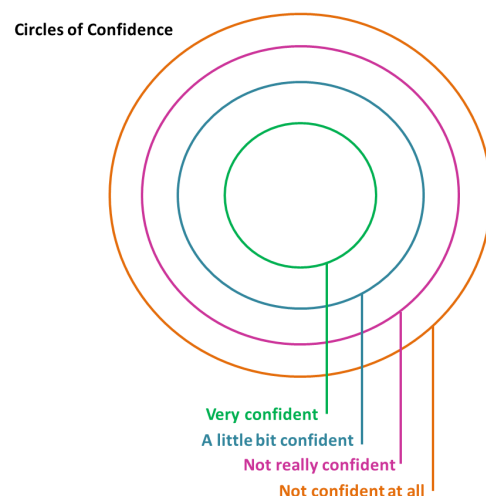


Figure 7: Circles of Confidence explanation diagram

<sup>12</sup> Circles of Confidence was developed by Manon Van Zuijlen, IWDA, adapted from the 'Circles of Influence' tool developed by Alan McMahon, Community Development for Remote Townships, UNDP/UNOPS Myanmar.

# TRACKING PROGRESS

Stage 4 of the process is Implementation and Monitoring. Monitoring organisational progress at regular intervals supports staff and leaders to ensure results are positive, and to address backtracks in progress if they arise.

## MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION

Having Standards is of limited value if implementation is not monitored. In order to support monitoring in a way that did not add a big additional workload for the organisations, the ten SINPA Gender Standards were integrated into an existing Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) already being used by SINPA partners to monitor organisational capacity development. For the OCAT, each Standard was described by four possible levels of implementation, and SINPA organisations were able to self-assess against these. The 'Wellness Wheel', with subjective assessment levels was used as a process-oriented tool to facilitate reflection and discussion by individual organisations. Contrastingly, the OCAT standards used specific descriptions of 'what it looks like' for an organisation to be performing at a given level in relation to each standard. As such, it was able to provide a more robust, objective and 'standardised' measure of the organisation's performance that enabled comparison over time<sup>13</sup>.

This approach reinforces an expectation of incremental progress ensuring the Gender Standards are seen as achievable goals over time, rather than a hard to achieve expectation that is either 'pass' or 'fail'. The breakdown of each standard into four 'levels' of implementation meant that organisations could measure and celebrate the success of moving, for example, from a '1' to a '2' rather than feeling a sense of failure at not yet reaching a '4' – full implementation of the standard.

## SINPA'S EXPERIENCE: INTEGRATING GENDER STANDARDS INTO AN EXISTING MONITORING TOOL

Following the initial SINPA Gender Standards Self-Assessment it was suggested by the Australian Aid Program, and agreed by the SINPA Steering Committee, that progress made towards meeting these minimum standards should be tracked in two ways:

- Use the self-assessment as a baseline, ensuring that the three priority actions agreed as part of the Gender Standards Self-Assessment are completed, and monitoring the impact of these actions.
- Integrate the Gender Standards into the Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) already being utilised within SINPA.

The Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) that was being used within SINPA required all partners to undertake an annual self-assessment of various facets of organisational capacity including governance, financial management and adaptive capacity. Partners rated themselves on a scale of 1 [Improvement Needed] to 4 [Good Practice]. Ratings were then shared with the SINPA Secretariat to aggregate and analyse scores and comments to identify common areas of capacity development need.

Following the format of the existing OCAT, a set of guidelines were developed to guide SINPA partners in undertaking an annual self-assessment of their progress toward meeting the SINPA Gender Standards.

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<sup>13</sup> Potentially because it is more standardised, the OCAT rating would also support comparison between organisations. With an emphasis in the SINPA partnership on collaboration rather than judgment and competition, organisations were encouraged to focus on 'competing with themselves' rather than with others and working to see what they could strengthen over time.

The integration of the SINPA Gender Standards into the OCAT was approved by the SINPA Steering Committee in March 2014. It was agreed it would be reviewed periodically and revised in response to SINPA Partners feedback, subject to the approval of the SINPA Steering Committee.

## GENDER STANDARDS INTEGRATED INTO THE SINPA ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL (OCAT)

The following was used as a guide to assist individual SINPA organisation in completing a self-assessment of their progress towards meeting the SINPA Gender Standards. It was intended to be used as a monitoring tool and a means for starting discussion among partners, both as individual organisations and as a collective about possible steps to take to make progress towards meeting the Standards.

### OCAT LEVELS: LEVEL 1 [IMPROVEMENT NEEDED] TO LEVEL 4 [GOOD PRACTICE]

STANDARD 1	
SINPA partners will make sure that both power analysis and gender analysis and actions to promote gender equality are included in all programs.	
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender and power analysis have been conducted and are used to inform decisions about project activities.</li> <li>Deliberate actions are being taken to address power inequities in target communities.</li> <li>Deliberate actions are being taken to promote gender equality.</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender analysis/ power analysis have been conducted and are being used to inform decisions about a limited number of project activities.</li> <li>Some deliberate actions are being taken to address power inequities in target communities.</li> <li>Some deliberate actions are being taken to promote gender equality.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender analysis/ power analysis have been conducted but are not being used to inform decisions about project activities.</li> <li>No deliberate actions have been taken to actively promote gender equality or address power inequities in target communities.</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Power analysis has not been completed as part of this project.</li> <li>Gender analysis has not been completed as part of this project.</li> <li>No deliberate actions have been taken (in response to a gender analysis) to actively promote gender equality in target communities.</li> <li>No deliberate actions are being taken (in response to a power analysis) to address power inequities in target communities.</li> </ul>

STANDARD 2	
SINPA partners will not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual preference, gender, marital status, family responsibilities and pregnancy and will not tolerate practices that result in gender based discrimination, prejudice or inequality*	
*In line with Australian aid program child protection code of conduct, SINPA partners are obliged to deny employment to any staff member who contravenes the organisation's child protection policies.	
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anti-discrimination policies are in place and are enacted within the organisation.</li> <li>Anti-discrimination policy is discussed with staff as part of induction and on an ongoing basis to ensure shared understanding of expectations.</li> <li>Non-discrimination is recognised by staff as an important part of organisational culture.</li> </ul>

3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are anti-discrimination policies in place, but staff has little knowledge of them.</li> <li>• Anti-discrimination policy is discussed with staff as part of induction but there is no ongoing effort to ensure shared understanding of expectations.</li> <li>• Discrimination is sometimes not recognised or is tolerated within the organisation.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are anti-discrimination policies in place and staff is aware of them but they do not know/ understand what they say.</li> <li>• Discrimination is not discussed with staff as part of induction and on an ongoing basis to ensure shared understanding of expectations.</li> <li>• Non-discrimination is not recognised by staff as an important part of organisational culture</li> <li>• Discrimination is often not recognised/ tolerated within the organisation.</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no anti-discrimination policy in place in the organisation.</li> <li>• There is obvious discrimination within the organisation, which is not addressed.</li> <li>• Non-discrimination is not recognised by staff as an important part of organisational culture</li> <li>• It is unclear to staff what constitutes discrimination.</li> </ul>

### STANDARD 3

SINPA partners will work equitably, and in a culturally appropriate manner, towards the equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff understand what women and girls' equal and meaningful participation looks like in the context of their project.</li> <li>• Barriers to women and girls' participation have been identified and strategies put in place to address them.</li> <li>• Women and girls equally and meaningfully participate in decision making processes at all levels and all stage of the project.</li> <li>• The project is working in a way that is considered to be culturally appropriate by Solomon Islands staff and target communities.</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most staff members understand what women and girls' equal and meaningful participation looks like in the context of their project.</li> <li>• Barriers to women and girls' participation have been identified.</li> <li>• Some steps have been taken to increase women and girl's participation but barriers to participation have not been addressed.</li> <li>• Women and girls meaningfully participate in some decision making processes but their voices are not heard at all levels and all stages of the project.</li> <li>• The project is working in a way that is considered to be culturally appropriate by Solomon Islands staff and target communities.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A limited number of staff members understand what women and girls' equal and meaningful participation looks like in the context of their project.</li> <li>• There are an equal number of men and women taking part in decision making within the project.</li> <li>• Women and girls participate in a limited number of decision-making processes and their voices are not always heard.</li> <li>• The project is working in a way that is considered to be culturally appropriate by Solomon Islands staff and target communities.</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been no discussion of what women and girls' equal and meaningful participation looks like in the context of their project.</li> <li>• Women and girls do not participate as much as men and boys in decision making within the project.</li> <li>• The project is not working in a way that is considered to be culturally appropriate by Solomon Islands staff and target communities</li> </ul>



#### STANDARD 4

SINPA partners will, where appropriate, necessary and safe\*, take positive action to ensure equal opportunity and access to resources and opportunities to both women and men so that both men and women can participate in program activities.

\*For the purpose of these Gender Standards, SINPA defines these terms in the following ways:

<b>NECESSARY</b>	Gender-based discrimination is evident and it is agreed that positive action will reduce this discrimination.
<b>APPROPRIATE</b>	It is agreed the action is suitable and proper for the context and circumstances and is not offensive.
<b>SAFE</b>	The action will not cause harm to those involved.

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff understands what is meant by the term positive discrimination and sees how it can be applied in the project.</li> <li>Staff understand when positive discrimination may or may not be necessary, appropriate and safe, and feel knowledgeable or confident enough to respond constructively to questions or criticism about positive discrimination within their project.</li> <li>Where appropriate and necessary, positive action has been taken to make sure women and men have equal access to resources and opportunities.</li> <li>Women and men have equal access to resources and opportunities within the project.</li> <li>Women and men can both participate equally in program activities.</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff understands what is meant by the term positive discrimination and sees how it can be applied in the project.</li> <li>Staff understand when positive discrimination may or may not be necessary, appropriate and safe, and feel knowledgeable or confident enough to respond constructively to questions or criticism about positive discrimination within their project.</li> <li>The project has considered factors that affect men's and women's participation in program activities and efforts have been made to determine how resources and opportunities are shared within the community and within the project (i.e. gender analysis)</li> <li>Where appropriate and necessary, positive action has been taken to make sure women and men have equal access to resources and opportunities.</li> <li>Women's access to resources and opportunities within the community/ project has increased since the project began as a result of deliberate action taken by the project.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff understands what is meant by the term positive discrimination and sees how it might be applied in the project.</li> <li>Staff understands when positive discrimination may or may not be necessary, appropriate and safe, but do not feel knowledgeable or confident enough to respond constructively to questions or criticism about positive discrimination within their project.</li> <li>There has been conscious consideration of the resources and opportunities that individuals need access to in order to participate in project activities.</li> <li>Efforts have been made to determine how resources and opportunities are shared within the community and within the project (i.e. gender analysis)</li> <li>In the case that resources and opportunities are shared unequally, potential positive actions have been identified but no positive action has been taken.</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff does not know what positive discrimination is or understand how it might be applied in the project.</li> <li>Staff does not understand when positive discrimination may or may not be seen as necessary, appropriate and safe.</li> <li>There has been no consideration of the resources and opportunities that individuals need to access in order to participate in project activities.</li> <li>No action has been taken (i.e. gender analysis) to determine if resources and opportunities within the community and within the project are accessed equally by men and women.</li> </ul>

## STANDARD 5

SINPA partners will analyse the following risks and take steps to prevent any potential harm to male and female staff, volunteers and community members:

- Risks to female and male staff working to promote and progress gender equality and non-discrimination
- Gender-based risks for female and male staff working on all programs

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specific risks that may arise for staff, volunteers and community members promoting gender equality and non-discrimination have been carefully considered by the organisation and are well understood by all staff.</li><li>• Gender based risks that may arise for female and male staff, volunteers and community members working in the organisation, both in the community and in their personal lives, have been carefully considered by the organisation and are well understood by all staff, volunteers and community members.</li><li>• Risk mitigation strategies have been identified for all risks and action has been taken to address all these risks.</li></ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specific risks that may arise for staff, volunteers and community members promoting gender equality and non-discrimination have been carefully considered by the organisation and are brought to the attention of all staff.</li><li>• Gender based risks that may arise for female and male staff, volunteers and community members working in the organisation, both in the community and in their personal lives, have been carefully considered by the organisation and are brought to the attention of all staff, volunteers and community members.</li><li>• Risk mitigation strategies have been identified for all risks and some action has been taken to address these risks, however not all risks have been addressed.</li></ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some consideration has been given to the specific risks that may arise for staff, volunteers and community members promoting gender equality and non-discrimination, but action has not been taken to address these risks.</li><li>• Some consideration has been given to gender based risks that may arise for female and male staff, volunteers and community members working in the organisation, both in the community and in their personal lives, but action has not been taken to address these risks.</li><li>• Risk mitigation strategies have been identified for only some of the identified risks.</li></ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There has been no consideration of the specific risks that may arise for staff, volunteers and community members promoting gender equality and non-discrimination.</li><li>• There has been no consideration of gender based risks that may arise for female and male staff, volunteers and community members working with the organisation, both in the community and in their personal lives.</li></ul>

## STANDARD 6

SINPA partners (ANGOs) will support partner organisations (LNGOs) to work equitably towards achieving gender equality internally and through their work.

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ANGOs actively discuss gender as part of project activities and encourage and support LNGOs to take action to work equitably towards achieving gender equality</li><li>• ANGOs:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ have the capacity to support LNGOs to work for increased gender equality.</li><li>○ Allocate adequate resources to adequately support LNGOs to work for increased gender equality.</li><li>○ have a good understanding of gender in the Solomon Islands context</li></ul></li><li>• ANGOs model working equitably towards achieving gender equality internally or through their</li></ul>
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	work.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ANGOs discuss gender as part of some project activities and provide some support to LNGOs to take action to work equitably towards achieving gender equality</li> <li>• ANGOs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ have some capacity to support LNGOs to work for increased gender equality.</li> <li>○ sometimes allocate adequate resources to adequately support LNGOs to work for increased gender equality.</li> <li>○ understanding of gender in the Solomon Islands context is sometimes limited.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• ANGOs model working equitably towards achieving gender equality internally or through their work.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ANGOs discuss gender as part of project activities but; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ have limited capacity to support LNGOs to work for increased gender equality.</li> <li>○ Do not allocate adequate resources to support LNGOs to work for increased gender equality.</li> <li>○ Do not have a good understanding of gender in the Solomon Islands context</li> </ul> </li> <li>• ANGOs model working equitably towards achieving gender equality internally or through their work.</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ANGOs do not discuss gender as part of project activities.</li> <li>• ANGOs do not model working equitably towards achieving gender equality internally or through their work.</li> </ul>

## STANDARD 7

SINPA partners will recruit people with a commitment to gender equality, and support their staff members to understand gender equality goals, principles and standards so they may fulfill their development objectives. SINPA partners will provide information, support mechanisms and professional and personal development opportunities to build gender awareness and analysis and to assist staff to meet SINPA Gender Standards.

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation considers and prioritises commitment to gender equality as a part of recruitment</li> <li>• Staff members fully understand gender equality goals, principles and standards and can share this understanding with others.</li> <li>• The organisation provides information, support mechanisms and professional and personal development opportunities to build gender awareness and analysis for staff to fulfill their roles and think critically about ways to work towards gender equality.</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation considers and prioritises commitment to gender equality as a part of recruitment</li> <li>• Staff members understand gender equality goals, principles and standards but do not feel confident sharing this understanding with others.</li> <li>• The organisation provides enough information, support mechanisms and professional and personal development opportunities to build gender awareness and analysis for staff to fulfill their roles.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation considers but does not prioritise commitment to gender equality as a part of recruitment</li> <li>• Staff members have a limited understanding gender equality goals, principles and standards</li> <li>• The organisation provides a limited amount of information and a limited number of support mechanisms and professional and personal development opportunities to build gender awareness and analysis for staff.</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation does not consider commitment to gender equality as a part of recruitment</li> <li>• Staff members do not understand gender equality goals, principles and standards</li> <li>• The organisation does not provide information, support mechanisms and professional and personal development opportunities to build gender awareness and analysis for staff.</li> </ul>

## STANDARD 8

SINPA partners will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their work in engaging and meeting the needs of men and women and in achieving gender equality. This will include the collection and analyses of sex-disaggregated information and data.

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The organisation consistently collects and analyses sex-disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data.</li><li>• The organisation consistently monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of their work in engaging men and women, including monitoring who is not participating in program activities and why.</li><li>• The organisation consistently monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of their work in meeting the needs of men and women.</li><li>• The organisation consistently monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of their work in achieving gender equality by collecting and analysing information on changes in men's and women's roles, responsibilities, rights and relationships.</li><li>• The above data and analysis is used consistently to inform decisions about project activities.</li></ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The organisation collects and analyses sex-disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data.</li><li>• The organisation monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of their work in engaging men and women, but does not monitor who is not participating in program activities and why. This monitoring is not consistent.</li><li>• The organisation monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of their work in meeting the needs of men and women, but this monitoring is not consistent.</li><li>• The organisation monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of their work in achieving gender equality by collecting and analysing information on changes in men's and women's roles, responsibilities, rights and relationships, but this monitoring is not consistent.</li><li>• The above data and analysis is sometimes used to inform decisions about project activities.</li></ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The organisation collects sex-disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data has a limited capacity to analyse this data.</li><li>• The organisation monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of their work in engaging men and women, but does not monitor who is not participating in program activities and why. This monitoring is not consistent.</li><li>• The organisation monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of their work in meeting the needs of men and women, but this monitoring is not consistent.</li><li>• The organisation monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of their work in achieving gender equality by collecting and analysing information on changes in men's and women's roles, responsibilities, rights and relationships, but this monitoring is not consistent.</li><li>• The above data is not used to inform decisions about project activities.</li></ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The organisation does not collect or analyse sex-disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data.</li><li>• The organisation does not monitor or evaluate the effectiveness of their work in engaging men and women, meeting their needs or achieving gender equality.</li><li>• Gender specific monitoring and evaluation data is not used to inform decisions about project activities.</li></ul>

## STANDARD 9

SINPA partners will demonstrate equality within SINPA, whilst achieving goals, share lessons learned and apply them to their programs to improve progress in achieving gender equality.

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is evidence of the organisation sharing lessons learned and responding to them within their project.</li><li>• There is evidence of the organisation sharing lessons learned and of other SINPA partners</li></ul>
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	<p>responding to them within their project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is evidence of the organisation responding to lessons shared from other SINPA partners.</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is evidence of the organisation sharing lessons learned and responding to them within their project.</li> <li>• There is evidence of the organisation sharing lessons learned but no evidence of SINPA partners responding to them within their project.</li> <li>• There is no evidence of the organisation responding to lessons shared from other SINPA partners.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is evidence of the organisation sharing lessons learned however there is no evidence of the organisation responding to these lessons within their project.</li> <li>• There is evidence of the organisation sharing lessons learned but no evidence of SINPA partners responding to these lessons within their projects.</li> <li>• There is no evidence of the organisation responding to lessons shared from other SINPA partners.</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no evidence of the organisation sharing lessons learned and responding to these lessons within their project.</li> <li>• There is no evidence of the organisation sharing lessons learned and of other SINPA partners responding to these lessons within their project.</li> <li>• There is no evidence of the organisation responding to lessons shared from other SINPA partners.</li> </ul>

#### STANDARD 10

SINPA and its partners will mobilise and dedicate human, technical and financial resources to meet its commitments to gender equality.

4	The organisations (LNGO and ANGO) mobilise enough human, technical and financial resources to meet their commitments to gender equality.
3	The organisations (LNGO and ANGO) mobilise some human, technical and financial resources to work on gender equality and this sometimes affects their ability to meet commitments to gender equality.
2	The organisations (LNGO and ANGO) mobilise a limited amount of human, technical and financial resources to work on gender equality and this often affects their ability to meet commitments to gender equality.
1	The organisations (LNGO and ANGO) do not mobilise human, technical and financial resources to meet commitments to gender equality.

# GENDER MINIMUM STANDARDS: KEY LESSONS FROM SINPA

In June 2015, two years after the self-assessment a 'Gender Learning Event' was held to share learning from the experience of SINPA partners.

SINPA partners were asked to assess the impact of the development and application of the Gender Standards in their organisations and programs and this was presented at the Gender Learning Event on 18 June 2015 in Honiara.

SINPA partners found that:

- The Gender Standards don't work if the organisation only sees the Standards as related to one project – commitment is needed from management to integrate Standards across the organisation's work
- It takes time - time to go through the process (development of the standards, and self-assessment), and time for change to take place
- It is not just about documents but also about people – staff need to develop an understanding of gender to be able to both implement and to monitor implementation – and developing this understanding can take time.
- Staff turnover makes it harder to keep the momentum going!

## IT WORKS!

SINPA partners also provided examples of changes to their practices that have happened as a result of the development and implementation of the Gender Standards. These provide evidence of changes in policy and practice, as well as the reality that recognising the problems does not necessarily mean that a solution will be obvious or easy:

**“Our values statement referring to gender equality is now incorporated in every Job Description”**

**“We changed our recruitment procedures to positively discriminate for women in the selection process - addressing the fact we have many more men than women staff in the organisation”**

**“We now have a gender position statement that guides the work of the whole organisation”**

**“New programs developed since this exercise have gender officer roles to ensure gender is considered”**

**“We have developed an induction package including orientation to gender concepts that every new employee goes through”**

**“We now collect data disaggregated by gender in programs that didn't have this before”**

**“We organised training for staff on how to analyse the gender-disaggregated data gathered as part of our M&E because although we gathered the data, they didn't feel confident to understand what it meant”**

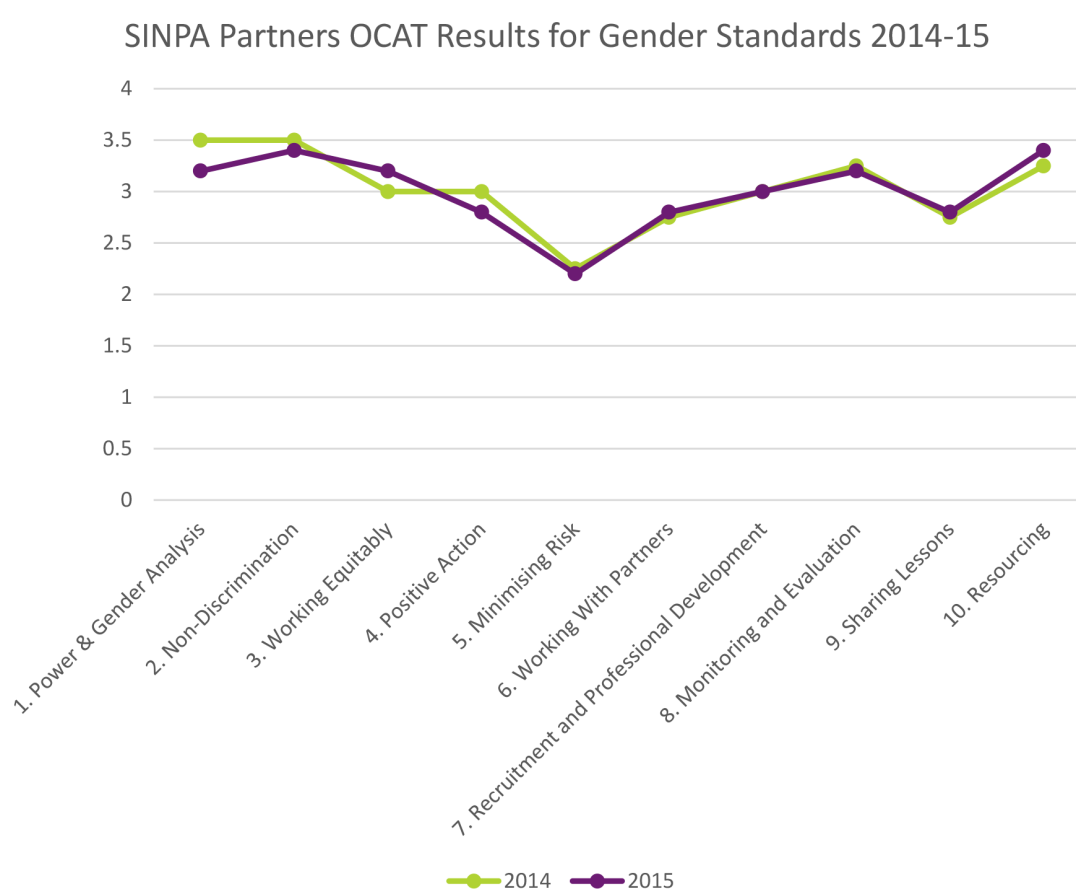
**“We have developed a safety and security plan for when staff travel out to communities”**

**“We still have less female than male staff even if the announcement encourages females to apply – we are still working out how to address this.”**

## OCAT RESULTS

The Gender Standards were first monitored as part of the OCAT in 2014. They were then self-assessed again in the 2015 OCAT assessment. From 2014 to 2015, a further change was made in the way the OCAT self-assessment was carried out, so that in 2015 this included a peer review – organisations worked in pairs on their self-assessments. It was recognised that peer review contributed to a more robust assessment – because organisations had to explain their self-assessments to each other, they were required to go into more detail in regard to the evidence for their decisions. Additionally, it contributed to the cross-organisational learning objective of SINPA.

As the SINPA program closed in January 2016, no further collated OCAT assessments were available beyond these two years. A comparison of the OCAT results for 2014 and 2015 shows that assessments in some areas improved a little while others declined a little, although overall relative achievement among standards remained similar (see graph of average assessments below for a comparison)<sup>14</sup>.



There are several possible explanations for the mixed results across the standards, all of which provide useful learning opportunities.

- Actual progress towards gender equality is messy - ‘slippage’ of implementation across organisations – staff changeover or shifts in organisational priorities affects how consistently progress is able to be achieved

<sup>14</sup> Only 4 of the 5 SINPA partners completed the self-assessment in 2014, while all 5 completed in 2015. The table reflects the average rating of all partners who completed the assessment in each year.

- As we know more we may see more gaps - as understanding of gender concepts and consequently organisations' own standards have continued to strengthen over the period from the 2014 to 2015 OCAT assessments, organisations are judging themselves more 'harshly'.
- The method of assessment may matter - the change in approach from a self-assessment by the organisation of itself, to a peer-reviewed self-assessment may also have influenced organisations to rate themselves lower either as a result of the greater pressure to provide evidence or simply because of a tendency to be more self-effacing when representing to others.

This result and SINPA learning regarding the value of peer review does reinforce the importance of:

- a) more than one person being involved in completing the organisation self-assessment, this allows multiple perspectives on discussions, and enables shared understanding of expectation and approach
- b) Self assessments need to be supported by evidence/ specific examples in order for more consistency to be applied from one year to another and to manage for the variability of new staff.

The continued use of the OCAT by organisations beyond the life of the SINPA program, over several years, would be likely to result in a more consistent assessment and provide a better picture of progress at the same time as it helps organisations embed and understanding of the best practice 'goals' for organisations in relation to gender. The challenge is for the SINPA partners to continue to use the OCAT without the unifying force of the program.

# GLOSSARY OF GENDER CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

## COMMUNICATION

Two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchange (encode-decode) information, news, ideas and feelings but also create and share meaning. In general, communication is a means of connecting people or places. In development, it is a key function of participation, sharing knowledge and working towards the achievement of common goals.

## COOPERATION

An act or process of joint effort towards the achievement of a common goal. Cooperation in development aims explicitly to support national or international development priorities with a focus on developing countries and it is based on relationships that seek to enhance developing country ownership.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All people, irrespective of gender, should have equal chance to access opportunities – for example as program participants or as organisational staff

## FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Different sources of funding required to achieve organisational goals.

## GENDER ANALYSIS

Gathering information on the differences in men's and women's lives, including the differences that lead to social and economic inequality. Gender analysis looks at how these differences affect men's and women's ability to participate in community life and access services. Information from gender analysis can be used to develop policies, facilitate positive change and deliver better services for everyone. Gender analysis also provides information regarding the effect of the existing gender roles and relations on a project (design, implementation, monitoring) and how a project is affecting gender roles and relations.

## GENDER BASED DISCRIMINATION

The unfavourable (unfair) treatment of individuals on the basis of gender, which denies them rights, opportunities or resources.

## GENDER BASED RISKS

Gender based risks are risks which arise specifically for female and male staff in certain contexts and circumstances based on their gender. For example, the risk to a female staff member when traveling alone may be different to the risk for male staff member travelling alone in the same area. If the reason this risk is different is due to the gender of the person involved then it is a gender-based risk.

## GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

The ability of all employees to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of their gender.

## GENDER VS SEX

According to the World Health Organisation "Sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women. *Gender* refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women."

## HUMAN RESOURCES

The personnel of a business or organisation, regarded as a significant asset in terms of skills and abilities. Human resources are crucial in meeting organisational commitments to gender equality, as well as development goals, based on the need for expertise and skills relevant to gender issues in the development context.

**MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION**

A process through which all members of a community or organisation are involved in and have influence on decisions related to development activities that will affect them. That implies that development projects will address those community or group needs on which members have chosen to focus, and that all phases of the development process will be characterised by active involvement of community or organisation members.

**PARTNERSHIP**

Partnership is a dynamic relationship among diverse actors, based on mutually agreed objectives, pursued through a shared understanding of the most rational division of labor based on the respective comparative advantages of each partner. Partnership encompasses mutual influence, with a careful balance between synergy and respective autonomy, which incorporates mutual respect, equal participation in decision-making, mutual accountability, and transparency.

**POSITIVE (AFFIRMATIVE) ACTION**

Positive steps taken to address discrimination, achieve equal opportunities and increase representation of women and minority groups.

**POWER ANALYSIS**

Power analysis is the process of identifying and exploring how power affects a given situation or community. Looking at who holds power, what kind of power they have and how they use that power helps us to better understand the different factors that interact to reinforce problems and issues. Having a more complete understanding of power relations helps us to identify appropriate strategies and entry points for our programs.

**SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA**

Data that is broken down by sex, presenting information separately for women and men, boys and girls. It reflects roles, real situations, general conditions of women and men, for example, literacy rate, education levels, employment, resource ownership

**TECHNICAL RESOURCES**

Technical resources are all the technical means, skills, knowledge and other productive assets owned and/or accessed by organisational staff and partners.



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