

## WHERE WE STAND

### The Role of Men and Boys in Gender Equality

#### Where Things Stand...

For many years the need for men and boys to be engaged with the agenda for gender equality has been recognised. In 1995 the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action encouraged men to participate fully in all actions towards gender equality and urged the establishment of the principle of shared power and responsibility between women and men at home, in the community, in the workplace and in the wider national and international communities.

The role of men and boys in their communities in working towards the recognition of equality in all aspects of society has been recorded over the intervening years through recommendations of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Human Rights Council, the Security Council and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the International Labour Organisation.

The human right to gender equality is a fundamental principle of the United Nations Charter. This right, which entitles women and girls, men and boys, the full and equal enjoyment of their human rights, is a responsibility of all UN Member States, and since 2015 is embodied in all Sustainable Development Goals. Gender gaps in the domestic and the professional sphere, are reinforced across States by discriminatory policy, legal, and justice frameworks. Evidence suggests that all aspects of society benefit when gender equality increases.

#### ...And Where Things Need to Go

##### Fundamental Action

All Governments should work towards policies and legal frameworks which acknowledge gender equality, implementing UN recommendations from bodies such as the Commission on the Status of Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against women and the international Labour Organisation.

Gender Mainstreaming: The design and implementation of policies, laws, procedures, programs, and projects intended to reduce gender gaps must foster the positive engagement of men and boys, regardless of the scope and scale of the initiative. To ensure that efforts towards achieving gender equality are inclusive of all members of society, Member States' policies, legislation, and budgeting should be influenced by, and held accountable to, evidence provided by sex disaggregated data. Civil Society must be permitted an active role in influencing and reviewing this process. States must be supported in developing national capacities to disaggregate data by as many intersections of sex as possible; including, but not exclusively: gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, geographical location, and economic status.

##### Additional Action

Governments, civil society, the private sector, academia, and the media must act in the following areas toward closing all gender gaps and achieving gender equality:

**Raise Awareness About the Universal Benefits of Gender Equality:** Training programs should equip men and boys, and women and girls, with an awareness of what gender equality is so that they may be discerning of situations which perpetuate gender inequality. All individuals must be empowered to serve as agents of change to end damaging and destructive gender stereotypes. Men and boys must be supported and encouraged to speak out against inequalities, including violence against women and girls. States, the private sector, and civil society organisations should assess and provide information about the benefits of gender equality, so that gender related decisions may be made with the participation of an informed public.

**Equality in Care Giving Roles:** The benefits of men and boys' equal involvement in care roles must be promoted. States must work to support the equal sharing of unremunerated familial and household responsibilities, including child and elderly care, and domestic work. To enable this, SI calls for the private sector to roll out programmes and policies which enable all employees to achieve a better work-life balance.

### **Violence against Women and Girls**

Governments are encouraged to develop and implement strategies to educate boys and girls and men and women about tolerance, mutual respect for all individuals, and the promotion of all human rights.

### **Where Soroptimist International Stands**

Soroptimist International joins with others who share the principles that Soroptimist International strongly supports and will advocate for on behalf of women and girls: SI will work:

- in the wider community to end gender stereotypes which reinforce the patriarchy and outdated definitions of male and female roles;
- to focus on the role of parents in ending harmful cycles of gender stereotypes;
- to encourage the participation of men and boys alongside women and girls to lobby, advocate, and to be involved in policy development that promotes gender mainstreaming and gender equality strategies;
- with and through the media to eliminate the harmful portrayal of gender stereotypes.

Soroptimist International supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through its Federations, Unions, Regions, and Clubs, by working on the ground with partner organisations and UN agencies to Educate, Empower, and Enable women and girls everywhere.