



Local Health System Sustainability Project (LHSS)

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Statement of Commitment

The Local Health System Sustainability Project (LHSS) recognizes that gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) are goals in their own right and central to the LHSS mission. People are often unable to access the health services they need due to gender and social inequalities. It is critical to understand and address the factors contributing to these inequalities so that health systems respond to the needs of women, men, boys, girls, and socially excluded people. LHSS will respond to gender and social inclusion issues throughout the project and build a GESI-aware project culture as a fundamental aspect of our work to increase financial protection, population coverage, and quality of essential services in the countries where we work.

Guided by USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy (2012), GESI guidance developed by USAID Missions, and the LHSS GESI Strategy, LHSS is committed to implementing five GESI standards to ensure that local health systems meet everyone's needs for access to quality essential health services.

1. Co-design activities with a GESI lens

- Apply gender and social inclusion analysis frameworks, in line with [USAID ADS 205](#) guidance, to understand the differential needs, constraints, and opportunities of women, men, boys, girls and socially excluded people
- Use gender and social inclusion needs assessments when co-designing and/or adapting interventions with stakeholders
- Budget sufficient resources to implement gender-responsive¹ and socially inclusive interventions

2. Implement sustainable GESI approaches

Work with local health system actors to strengthen their capacities to:

- Collect data on relevant gender and social inclusion issues
- Use the data in policy development, policy implementation, programming, and organizational practices
- Develop and measure gender and social inclusion indicators
- Apply best practices for gender integration and social inclusion
- Promote meaningful participation of women and socially excluded people in health systems management and governance

3. Monitor, document, and share lessons learned on GESI

- Incorporate GESI considerations into monitoring, evaluation, and learning plans
- Identify and use appropriate methods to understand intended and unintended GESI-related outcomes
- Analyze GESI-related data regularly and make course corrections as needed
- Synthesize lessons learned on gender and social inclusion across core activities and country programs
- Share learning with local partners and stakeholders, USAID, and the health systems strengthening community

4. Do No Harm

Interventions are not gender neutral. If women or socially excluded groups gain more power and voice, there can be backlash from groups who typically hold more power. We will ensure LHSS interventions do not exacerbate existing inequalities.

- Draw upon gender and social inclusion resources and expertise to guide activity design, implementation, MEL, and knowledge management
- Develop LHSS staff and partners' understanding of and capacities to support gender-responsive and inclusive interventions

5. Promote gender-responsive and inclusive workspaces

- Ensure sufficient resources are budgeted to create and maintain an inclusive workforce
- Maintain safe and inclusive workspaces that provide the conditions for staff to do their best work
- Ensure that project leaders use gender-sensitive and inclusive recruitment practices

¹ Gender-responsiveness refers to being aware of how gender identities and roles influence the opportunities of men, women, and other gender identities in a society and designing activities and policies that are structured and operate to demonstrate a commitment to gender equality.