

POLICY DOCUMENT ON
GENDER EQUALITY AND
**COMBATING
GENDER-BASED
DISCRIMINATION**

GENDER EQUALITY AND COMBATING GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION POLICY DOCUMENT

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The Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence (CŞMD) defines itself as an organization that stands against all forms of discrimination created by the binary gender system, adopting queer and trans feminist perspectives and methods.

This document outlines CŞMD's policy and approach regarding "Combating Gender-Based Discrimination and Ensuring Gender Equality."

CŞMD acknowledges that the systematic internalization of gender-based discrimination is a structural issue, and no one is exempt from discriminatory language or behavior.

In addition to addressing gender-based violence and discrimination as its core area of work, this document guides and informs all CŞMD policies with its empowering and transformative vision.

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy document applies to all C\$MD team members, employees, board and audit board members, volunteers, interns, consultants, vendors, partner organizations, and C\$MD's target audience.

Its purpose is to:

1. Serve as a reference for procedures in case of potential incidents of discrimination, gender inequality, or gender-based violence within or during association activities;
2. Guide other C\$MD documents (Ethical Guidelines, Procurement Policy, Human Resources Policy, Monitoring Strategy, Child Protection Policy, Sexual Harassment and Violence Policy, Risk Management Procedures, Advocacy Strategy, etc.) by developing mechanisms to support and empower staff and affiliates placed at risk;
3. Ensure that members (employees, volunteers, interns) are aware of their rights in supporting gender equality;
4. Serve as a reference in institutional strategy and policy planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes.

This is a living document. It is reviewed annually during C\$MD's Summer or Winter camps and, when necessary, evaluated collectively to improve practices.

2. Approaches

2.1. Queer and Trans Feminist Approach

C\$MD adopts queer and trans feminist principles in all of its organizational and policy work. Drawing strength from feminist and LGBTQ+ movements, it builds a solidarity-oriented, collectively produced, and anti-hierarchical structure.

It resists patriarchy and its alliances with capitalism, militarism, racism, cissexism, heterosexism, speciesism, normativity, and ageism.

Rather than reducing "gender" to a male-female binary or oppressed-oppressor dichotomy, C\$MD seeks to eliminate conditions that create inequalities in all aspects of gendered social life—including

reproductive politics, sexualized violence, masculine domination, the binary gender regime, normalization of certain sexualities and behaviors, biological essentialism, and class-based exploitation.

Recognizing the compounded harm of gender identity- and sexual orientation-based violence and discrimination, CŞMD commits to intersectionality.

Key queer and trans feminist principles guiding CŞMD include effective inclusivity, centering the most marginalized, solidarity, empowerment, liberation, and critical reflection.

2.2. CŞMD's Approach to Gender

The term "gender" typically refers to the social and cultural norms attached to femininity and masculinity, assigned at or before birth based on genital appearance. It is generally assumed that individuals are aligned with the assigned gender.

People often learn and internalize these gender roles through interaction in family, school, media, and other environments. Gender roles are not fixed; they are constructed, variable, and challengeable. The term encompasses gender identity, sexual orientation, and gender expression. Sexual identity is complex, fluid, and personal. Thus, the unequal relationship between "woman" and "man" is socially constructed, and can—and should—be transformed. When gender roles are rigidified, prejudices and violence toward those who do not conform also increase.

Gender-based inequalities arising from everyday practices are highly layered and complex. The concept of gender does not assume that everyone is cisgender, heterosexual, allosexual¹, or endosex², nor does it accept a binary framework where genders are limited to opposing categories of woman and man. By emphasizing that gender is a social construct, it highlights how these norms are shaped by space, time, place, culture, and structure. The concept of gender creates both a framework for thought and knowledge production, and a field for action and policy-making around inequalities..

¹ *Allosexual: Used to describe individuals who experience sexual attraction.*

² *Endosex: Refers to individuals whose innate sex characteristics align with normative medical or social ideas of female or male bodies.*

Across the world, numerous practices of discrimination, hate, and violence are produced based on gender inequalities. These practices lead to fundamental human rights violations and undermine the principle of equality, democratic social structures, and human rights law. The fact that legal mechanisms worldwide are heteronormative and cisnormative results in human rights violations based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics being ignored. CŞMD adopts the Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in Relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity³, which were created as a guiding framework to make these rights violations visible and are grounded in the principle that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

CŞMD’s approach to establishing and promoting gender equality includes and actively uses the concepts of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics. In doing so, CŞMD does not fix a single gender identity at the center of its policies and does not build its inclusion strategy on binary oppositions. Similarly, instead of using the term “gender affirmation process,” it prefers the term “trans identity process.” Through this concept, it frames the challenges faced by trans people not as issues of gender dysphoria, but as a result of the political and pathologizing pressures imposed by the state on trans existence during this process.

3. Implementation

3.1. While Formulating Policies

- CŞMD promotes solidarity across all marginalized groups facing discrimination (based on political belief, age, race, health status, profession, etc.), in addition to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics.
- It adopts inclusive and participatory methods, aiming to create safe, empowering spaces for diverse identities.
- It plans, implements, monitors, develops, and evaluates all knowledge production, policies, and activities through a queer and trans feminist perspective. It aims to ensure that documents, presentations, and materials are prepared with attention to gender equality.
- Within the association, including gender-related work, it seeks the perspectives of employees, activists, and individuals with lived experience and expertise in the field, and refers to the institutional knowledge and literature accumulated over time.

³ For the Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in Relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, see: <https://kaosgidernegi.org/images/library/2014yogyakarta-ilkeleri.pdf>

3.2 In Daily Practice

Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence;

- Applies a gender-sensitive budgeting approach⁴ to resource allocation and program planning. Carries out awareness-raising activities to promote gender equality.
- Translates and distributes materials guiding its work with queer and trans feminist terminology. Establishes internal mechanisms to address discomforting behaviors and violence. These prioritize prevention, protection, and repair, and are introduced in orientation sessions.
- Prioritizes hiring women and LGBTQ+ professionals in procurement and external service contracts.
- Plans programs and internal processes considering the different needs of diverse gender identities. Uses social media and advocacy campaigns to highlight LGBTQ+ visibility on key dates.

3.3. In Human Resources Processes

Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence;

- It plans recruitment processes with a gender-sensitive approach and selects its employees based on this principle. It takes into account the historical inequalities faced by LGBTQ+ individuals and women in accessing education and employment. It ensures diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity within the recruitment team. When necessary, and in line with predefined criteria, it applies affirmative action to support candidates such as trans, intersex, and non-binary individuals who meet the minimum professional qualifications but have faced discrimination and inequality in working life.
- The association prepares its internal documents based on self-identification, in accordance with the requests and needs of trans and non-binary individuals, allowing them to express themselves as they wish (excluding official records that the association is legally required to keep and submit).
- It strives to create appropriate and sensitive working environments for employees undergoing a trans identity process.
- It strives to create suitable and sensitive working conditions for employees going through menopause.
- It works to create accommodating environments for employees who are in the prenatal or postnatal period, whether themselves or their partners.
- It implements one (1) day of paid menstrual leave per month for employees and adapts to changing conditions.
- It seeks ways to shape the working environment according to employees' needs and demands, taking into account their physical and psychological health status.

⁴ A gender-sensitive approach refers to the development of activities, policies, and programs that address the various situations, roles, and needs arising from gender inequality.