

Gender Justice to Live in a World Free from Gender-based Rights Violations & Discrimination

By 2028, children and youth together with tdh and partner organizations take action against gender-based rights violations and discrimination. They claim their gender rights and feed their local experiences and voices into feminist movements that push to overcome existing structures of oppression, particularly regarding gender-based rights violations, by challenging patriarchal and binary structures in culture and society as a root cause of gender-based rights violations and discrimination, and at local, national, and international level.

1. Rationale behind this goal

Impact Hypothesis:

IF we support partner organizations, children and youth to feed their voices and experiences from project work into the fight against gender-based rights violations as well as supporting their agency and leadership into existing local, regional, and global feminist movements,

THEN we challenge patriarchal and binary structures that legitimize gender-based rights violations and oppressions along stereotypical gender roles.

BECAUSE we strengthen children and youth as well as feminist movements by contributing to a more diverse and holistic perspective in fighting gender-based rights violations. Additionally, we support protection systems (including safe spaces) for both survivors of gender-based violence as well as young activists in feminist movements.

Important remark: To establish a common ground for all activities subsumed under this Strategic Goal, a joint definition and understanding of Feminism and feminist movements is hereby introduced. Referring to considerations by the Centre For Feminist Foreign Policy and the German Government that launched its Feminist Development in 2023, Feminism serves as a tool to both analyze and question any forms of discrimination and oppression and to present new and alternative visions for equal and just societies for all individuals - particularly for marginalized groups including children and youth - and for gender-equity when it comes to the distribution of power and resources. Feminism therewith challenges the current power and economic asymmetries that are analyzed as the root causes of gender-based rights violations.

Accordingly, feminist movements are the engine/impetus to challenge and overcome respective power asymmetries that emerge in sexist, racist, classist, colonialist, heteronormative and imperialist structures at various levels (among others). Such understanding of Feminism and feminist movements, enables tdh and partner organizations

to place a future-oriented emphasis on gender justice and the fight for rights and against sexual and gender-based violence.

The claims raised by feminist movements go beyond the fight against sexual and gender-based violence, that girls and women still experience to date, to include the fight for a safe and empowering environment for girls and women and especially survivors of such forms of violence. The chances are good that a feminist transformation that leads to a self-determined and rights-based life for all marginalized groups will have a significant impact on finally eliminating violence against girls and women.

2. Key reasons for supporting and funding approaches to fight gender-based rights violations and discrimination

Gender inequality and exclusion vary in their expression from region to region, from village to village but, in all countries where we work, we observe different forms of sex- and gender-based violence, gender-based rights-violations, gender stereotyping and an unequal distribution of power between girls, women, LGBTQIA+ persons, men and boys. We recognize that systems of oppression and discrimination intersect with each other, and that we need to fight against all forms of injustice and inequality. As a child rights organization, tdh has the mandate to support this multiplicity and diversity and to strengthen fighting inequalities in order to fight against gender-based rights violations and transform society. This is critical because discrimination on any ground is in itself a violation of children's rights, but furthermore, it is a root cause for consecutive rights infringements such as poverty, violence, police brutality, (commercial sexual) exploitation and displacement.

Overcoming inequalities, discrimination and exclusion is the central aim of tdh; the basic concerns of tdh are self-determination, freedom, justice, and equality for all people, to be realized in public as well as in personal life. As well as empowering girls, women and LGBTQIA+ people and all other marginalized groups in all their diversity within existing political, economic, and social structures. We aim beyond the abolition of gender-based rights violations by eliminating its root causes and supporting particularly disadvantaged people in realizing their human rights and self-determined lifestyles as guaranteed by UN conventions. This requires a self-reflective confrontation with one's own privileges. It requires reflection and confrontation with the history of colonialism and capitalism, financial and political power of interpretation and decision-making of the global North. Feminist movements are core stakeholders in this transformation and important allies in our struggle.

In the face of growing misogyny and increasing conflicts and wars worldwide, there is a growing danger of stereotypical masculinity - defined as (military) strength over life and death - and of feminist discourses being devalued as insignificant and side-lined marginalized.

It is therefore a responsibility of tdh and its partners to contribute to local, regional, and global feminist movements with a focus on child rights in their actions to overcome patriarchal and binary structures within societies. tdh and its partners make a significant contribution by supporting girls, women, LGTBQIA+-persons and communities in the project areas to claim gender rights. Tdh and partners work together to promote models of positive

masculinity, challenging the cultural, social structures as well as discrimination (keeping in mind a long-term vision of fully deconstructing gender stereotypes altogether). tdh will therefore make a meaningful contribution to existing feminist movements by bringing perspectives from grassroots organizations and activities into the political sphere.

3. Approaches and child rights-based frameworks that support the fight of gender-based rights violations and discrimination

Gender justice and equality are guaranteed in various UN conventions. Relevant binding conventions with monitoring mechanisms are UNCRC and CEDAW: the Convention of the Rights of the Child (including the Optional Protocols (UNCRC, 1989)) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979), with an additional protocol that allows for individual claims. Furthermore, the rights of women and girls are addressed in SDG 5, which aims at achieving gender equality and empower all girls and women. Also, the UN CRC in its article 2 gives all children the right to grow up without discrimination.

In many regional human rights instruments, gender rights issues are addressed and guaranteed, for instance in the African Youth Convention (2006), the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (2012), the Charter of the Organization of American States (1948), the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950) and the Arab Charter on Human Rights (2004). However, some regional mechanisms do not apply a universal approach to the rights of women and girls as well as LGBTQIA+ people but prioritize cultural and religious beliefs concerning the life and autonomy of girls, women and LGBTQIA+ people which contradict the global UN mechanisms.

tdh as an organisation has little experience and no holistic concept regarding the realities and challenges of children and youth identifying with the LGBTQIA+ community or those whose families or caretakers do. This is not least caused by differences between the regions. Against this background, tdh now has a unique opportunity to occupy the existing niche in development politics when it comes to children and youth affected by discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation.

4. Outcomes to be achieved by supporting and funding approaches to fight gender-based rights violations and discrimination

a.

Preparing a holistic involvement of LGBTQIA+ people into the goal efforts, tdh together with partners sets a critical **milestone** to be fulfilled until the first quarter of 2026: tdh together with partner organizations will strategically map out the different legislative, judicial and societal frameworks surrounding the discrimination against and oppression of youth who identify as members of the LGBTQIA+-community in the regions. A complementary mapping will highlight already existing projects and good practices in this context. Only then, an informed decision can be made about how to approach this aspect of children's rights in a sensitive and effective manner and according to diverse regional contexts. Such results will feed not only into the implementation of this Strategic Goal, but of all Strategic Goals, as each is concerned with specific forms of children's rights

violations which are intertwined with discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation.

A comprehensive **concept** based on the outcome of the exploratory and investigative activities will support tdh and partner organizations in their efforts to increase both the inclusion and visibility of children and youth that experience rights violations and discrimination because of their gender identity or sexual orientation. tdh will emerge as a strong companion on the side of children and youth fighting for changes of the legal and societal structures that cause these discriminations.

b.

At the micro level in the individual project areas, the projects aim at the outcome of preventing sexual and gender-based violence in project regions, empowering girls, women and LGBTQIA+ people in their economic and political participation and strengthening their leadership, addressing and ending intersectional discrimination in villages and communities, e. g. regarding unpaid care work, recognizing and strengthening non-patriarchal gender roles, and advancing models of positive masculinity. **At the meso level**, these project outcomes feed into programs that strengthen local, regional, and global feminist movements and multi-actor agreements by broadening them to include experiences, perspectives and voices of those children, youth, and communities most impacted by gender-based rights violations, and discrimination (from the projects on micro level).

At the macro level, these experiences will serve as a model to promote changes in laws and in the implementation of existing laws on gender equity. In the long term, these feminist movements push for the end of patriarchy, sex-dichotomy, and other forms of discrimination and for the transformation of societies across the world.

The goal is clearly linked with all other strategic goals. Children in the context of migration, LGBTQI+, girls and women are the most marginalized and the most vulnerable groups, at the receiving end of gender-based rights violations and discrimination. Since they are the poorest in society, they suffer most from climate change and its results, e.g., women and children are 14 times more likely to die in a natural disaster than men, partly because they are warned later, are less likely to be able to swim, and are more likely to care for relatives while fleeing. In times of drought, water shortage or forest dieback, women and girls must travel even longer distances to fetch water or firewood. This extra work is often accompanied by health impairments and increased risk of sexualized and physical violence. Even though the global education gap between boys and girls has narrowed, in many places, girls still have fewer opportunities to learn successfully and graduate from school. Access to education is particularly difficult for children who face intersectional discrimination, such as girls from poor households in rural areas. Education is key to overcoming such patriarchal structures, however, LGBTQIA+-children or youth are regularly confronted with discrimination and violence in everyday school life. In schools, but also beyond, creating safe spaces can lead to less harm for girls, women, and LGBTQIA+ people.

Gender-based rights violations and discrimination need to be addressed under each strategic goal, abolishing its root cause can only be successful when challenging the patriarchal and binary system in a holistic way.

5. Lasting effects envisioned by supporting and funding approaches to fight gender-based rights violations and discrimination

The vision of this goal is to overcome patriarchy and binary structures, for a world free from gender-based rights violations and discrimination, and where every human being, particularly children, can fulfil their potential not hindered by discriminating laws and economic and social structures.

Overcoming existing patriarchal and binary structures, the empowerment of girls, women, and LGBTQIA+-persons and the promotion of positive concepts of masculinity will lead to long-lasting effects in changing cultural patterns that go beyond the project work.

The goal has a strong component of network building which supports civil society actors to exchange their good practice models that can be replicated by others and therefore create synergies within civil society.

6. Five criteria for supporting and funding approaches to fight gender-based rights violations and discrimination

The following supporting and funding criteria define tdh's approach to accompanying children, youth and partner organizations and civil society organizations and social movements worldwide in their struggles to fight gender-based rights violations, and discrimination. Through this kind of engagement, tdh will support particularly grassroots and frontline activities, which will promote sustainable social changes in the long term.

Definition of addressed groups

In its holistic approach, the strategic goal addresses all those affected by gender-based rights violations and other forms of discrimination, and works with communities, including girls, women and LGBTQIA+ people as well as boys and men, to promote a change in the society.

- Support and fund programs that apply an intersectional lens to break down funding silos and multiple discrimination (e.g., survivors of gender-based rights violations, of LGBTQIA+, girls and women from indigenous communities or with disabilities, migrants, and other marginalized groups). Such intersectional and gender-sensitive perspective is applied in all tdh child rights programs.
- Support and fund programs for and with children, youth, and communities most affected by gender-based rights violations, including but not limited to safe spaces for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, and include men and boys as equitable partners fostering positive concepts of masculinity.
- Support and fund efforts and collective action for advocacy and lobbying work aiming at a just transformation that supports all marginalized groups, including girls, women and LGBTQIA+ persons, in claiming access to their rights and autonomy in their life choices
- Realize institutional capacity building within tdh and accompany partner organizations, children and youth with capacity building and ownership as well as leadership to support the fight against gender-based rights violations and discrimination.

- Support and fund feminist organizations and networks, including local, regional and global network-building between partner organizations from a gender justice perspective.