

Gender Justice for All:

achieving just and
equitable power relations
between women and men

July 2014



**Front cover: Members of the vegetable growers' association
in Minova, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.
Credit: Christian Aid/M Gonzalez-Noda**

Contents

Christian Aid is a Christian organisation that insists the world can and must be swiftly changed to one where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty.

We work globally for profound change that eradicates the causes of poverty, striving to achieve equality, dignity and freedom for all, regardless of faith or nationality. We are part of a wider movement for social justice.

We provide urgent, practical and effective assistance where need is great, tackling the effects of poverty as well as its root causes.

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Executive summary	4
1. Defining the problem: broken relationships	5
2. Our vision: gender justice for all	8
3. Global barriers to gender justice: unjust gendered power relations	9
4. Internal barriers to gender justice: being the change we want to see	12
5. Achieving gender justice: our commitments	14
6. Achieving gender justice: our impact	18
7. Essential partners in achieving gender justice	19
8. Conclusion: our ambitions for change	21
How we think gender justice for all can be achieved	22
How we can contribute to achieving gender justice	24
Endnotes	26

Executive summary

Our goal is to end poverty. In our corporate strategy, *Partnership for Change*, we identify three main goals that will help us to achieve this:

- ensure just power relations
- ensure equity and sustainability
- ensure resilient and thriving societies.

Gender inequality is primarily an issue of unequal power relations – of inequitable relationships between men and women. It violates human rights, constrains choice and agency, and negatively impacts upon people's ability to participate in, contribute to and benefit from development. Unless we can help create just and equitable relationships between women and men, we'll be unable to achieve equitable, sustainable, resilient and thriving societies.

This paper lays out our vision of gender justice for all: of a renewed world in which women and men live alongside one another in mutually empowering relationships; a world in which both women and men are empowered to pursue their human rights and fundamental freedoms; a world in which both women and men are valued as equal and active participants in the social, political and economic wellbeing of their households, communities and societies.

We recognise that there are global, as well as internal Christian Aid, barriers to overcome. This paper outlines our strategy for overcoming these barriers to achieve gender justice – a world of just and equitable power relations between women and men – centred on five main commitments.

1. We'll place gender justice at the centre of our analysis and work, thereby helping to lead the way in achieving gender justice for all.
2. We'll ensure faith groups are playing a more distinctive role in securing gender justice and the rights of both women and men.
3. We'll inspire supporters and mobilise partners to commit to take action and promote just power relations between women and men.
4. We'll demonstrate that we are making a significant contribution towards helping women and girls to achieve greater social, political and economic equality, and towards ensuring that gender equality has been placed at the centre of global development policy and action.
5. We'll demonstrate that we are making a significant contribution towards a reduction in gender-based violence and specifically in changing social norms that promote or condone it.

We're mindful that other organisations are also working on this, but we believe that we have a unique role to play in convening and mobilising people of all faiths and none to speak out and address gender inequality. Our generation has the tools and know-how to achieve gender justice. Our task is to inspire the will to make that happen.

1. Defining the problem: broken relationships

'If you've come here to help me, you're wasting your time. But if you have come here because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.'

Lilla Watson, Australian Aboriginal Elder

The discrimination or subordination of one gender by another is a global issue that negatively affects the social, political and economic development of every country in the world. It undermines our own theological understandings that all people are of equal and unique value and worth, and the essential unity of females and males being 'of one flesh'. It's also counter to the fundamental tenet of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world is the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family.¹

Gender is a universal power relationship – shaping men's and women's choices and opportunities in every sphere (political, economic, social, interpersonal) and at every level from household to global. While other structures (such as ethnicity, age, disability, caste, sexuality) can have a more profound impact on individuals, gender is all-pervasive – we're all gendered, and we all act every day within and upon a web of gender relationships. Every one of us is personally implicated in gender as a question of power. However, although we're all part of the problem, we're also all part of the solution.

For women, especially, gender inequality will follow them throughout their life from cradle to grave.

- In many societies, even before birth, a boy child is valued more than a girl child. The World Bank estimates gender-selective infanticide accounts for 1.56 million missing girls.²

- At school, the number of girls completing primary and secondary education is still far below the number of boys.³
- Millions of girls are forced into early marriages every year. These girls are at far greater risk of dropping out of school, experiencing dangerous complications in pregnancy and childbirth, and suffering from domestic violence.⁴
- Even when women do complete school, they are still likely to be paid less than men and hold jobs more insecure than those of men,⁵ and are far less likely to hold management positions.⁶
- 1 in 3 women will be affected by domestic abuse, and women are more vulnerable to contracting HIV.⁷
- According to the UN, for women aged 15-44, acts of violence cause more death and disability than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents and war combined.⁸
- A woman's chances of representing her community in politics and addressing these disparities is minimal.⁹
- In some societies, if a woman's husband dies, she is denied the right to inherit property.¹⁰

These facts amount to the systematic and insidious discrimination of women and girls.

But if it is hard to be a mother, wife or daughter, it can also be hard to be a father, husband or son. In a world of increasing inequality in which economic and political power is concentrated among an elite few; and in a world of conflict, uncertain climatic change and the depletion of natural resources, it is increasingly hard for men to live up to the traditional gender expectations society puts upon them to be the primary provider, protector and leader for the family.



Gerald's story

Like many dads, when Gerald Kimani's first child was born he felt unprepared; his wife, Fridah Mwari, had a difficult pregnancy and their baby daughter was frequently ill. The family live in a village in central Kenya, where pregnancy and childbirth are not openly discussed, so Gerald had no one to turn to for advice. He felt frustrated and alone and pushed his family away.

When Fridah got pregnant for a second time, a nurse suggested she join a mother-to-mother support group, started by our partner the Anglican Development Service Mount Kenya East (ADSMKE). Soon afterwards, Gerald discovered similar classes run for fathers.

Taught by local nurse Alice Karoki with support from ADSMKE, some things, like helping their wives in the home, went against the men's social and cultural

upbringing. 'The first time we met things weren't easy,' Gerald explains. 'We thought, how can a lady teach men? She told us about what men can do in the home. She told us, "Here it's not about men and women, it's about learning how to care for our families."'

Gerald says the classes taught him how to be a father. 'I am very happy now,' he said. 'The father-to-father group helped me a lot because before I didn't know things about the family, about taking care of my children and loving my wife and providing for them. It's very nice to be close to my children.'

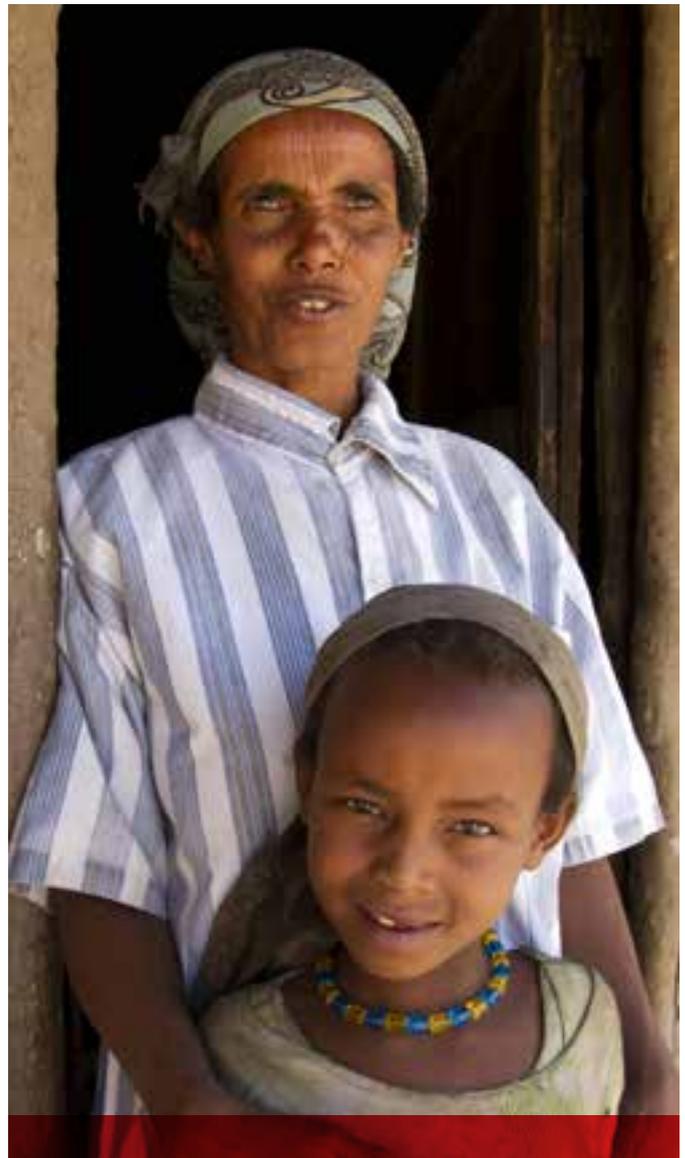
Smiling at his baby son, Gerald has some fatherly advice for the future. 'When he grows up, I will sit down with him and tell him what I was taught. I will tell him: love your children and love your wife. It's your choice.'

These gendered norms have damaging consequences for men's wellbeing, but also for women too (see 'Gerald's story', page 6). According to a recent multi-country UN study, the most common cause of violence against women was ideals of manhood that justify and celebrate toughness, male sexual performance and dominance over women.¹¹ Violence against women and girls is a global pandemic and one of the most harrowing results of gender inequality rooted in patriarchal systems and structures that enable men to assert power and control over women. These attitudes start early in life and, without early intervention, are passed on from generation to generation.

We believe that such concepts and practices of 'maleness', and their resulting suffering and injustice, must be against what God intends for both women and men. It cannot be right that women bear more of the burden of poverty than men, nor that the difference between women and men becomes itself a cause of poverty and vulnerability. This is a distortion of the human relationship, a sign of what happens when power is held unequally and when some are made vulnerable by others.

Despite increased attention given to gender inequality in recent years, interventions to date have tended to focus more on the effects than the causes of gender inequality. Indeed, gender inequality is a challenge that many development and faith-based organisations have yet to fully take on. Furthermore, the idea that gender inequality not only should end, but *has* to end and *will* end has yet to fully grasp the global consciousness – for the majority of women and men, gender inequality is simply 'the norm', often going unnoticed including by women who have been socialised to accept an inferior status (see 'Rahemete's story', right).

In short, we believe that the current societal relationship between women and men is broken and not fit for purpose. Gender inequality is primarily failing girls and women, but it is failing boys and men too; and the liberation of all from poverty are intimately bound together. Gender inequality is violating people's human rights, constraining people's choices and agency, and is negatively impacting upon people's ability to participate in, contribute to and benefit from development. But it doesn't have to be like this. Another world is possible.



Rahemete's story

'How would I dare ask my husband to help?' says Rahemete Mohammed from Wulbareg district in Ethiopia. 'In this house, it is only me who goes to fetch the water.' Like many women in this part of Ethiopia, Rahemete is responsible for the vast majority of the work to take care of her family. But with support from our partner Water Action, Rahemete's life is getting better. Not only is water more accessible – making daily life for women easier – but women are also an important part of the new water management committee. Rahemete, who is the treasurer, recalls how in the past she and the other women were not allowed to leave their homes without permission from their husbands. Water Action's work within the community is creating a greater understanding of equality between women and men.

2. Our vision: gender justice for all

“To reflect before God on gender is to think about what it means that we are male and female. . . it is to ask what it would mean to experience our being gendered as gift rather than danger, a source of life and hope rather than of oppression or fear.”¹²

Our vision is a world in which neither women nor men are excluded, marginalised, poor or discriminated against because of their gender. For us, gender justice means a world of:

- social justice and just power relations between women and men, in which both are valued equally in society and empowered to pursue their human rights and fundamental freedoms
- political justice, in which both men and women are able to have an equitable, active and influential say in decisions that affect their lives
- economic justice, whereby power relations and control over resources, business and market activity and regulation shift to become more gender equitable, providing sustainable benefits for both women and men
- environmental justice, whereby gender is no longer a barrier to accessing, controlling and sustaining the natural resources upon which both women and men depend
- spiritual gain, where men and women live alongside one another in peaceful and just relationships, equal in God’s sight.

For us, gender justice is not simply a means to ending poverty, but is a worthy aim in and of itself. From a theological perspective, we believe that the Christian faith, in its scriptures, in its beginnings as a radical movement and in its traditions, offers a profound commitment to a justice for women and men. St Paul writes that ‘... there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Jesus Christ’ (Galatians 3.28). We feel bound and encouraged to be brave in speaking out for gender justice.

We do not presume to dictate exactly what gender justice will look and feel like in the countries in which we work. Even so-called developed nations are far from achieving it.¹³ Gender relations, roles and norms vary between cultures, societies and generations. As such, achieving gender justice will be a constantly evolving process in which women and men explore together how they can both live lives of dignity, free from fear and oppression, in pursuit of their human rights.

We believe we have a crucial role to play in helping to establish safe spaces in which visions for gender justice can be formulated and achieved. For some, achieving a state in which both women and men perceive the relations between them to be just, equitable and mutually empowering will take generations to achieve; but for those for whom the light of equality never seems to dawn, we believe that we have a duty to give hope that one day it will.

3. Global barriers to gender justice: unjust gendered power relations

'If the rights and entitlements I now enjoy have been built upon the oppression of yours, then what are they really worth?'

Male Christian Aid staff member

Gender inequality often begins in the home and is perpetuated by families, schools, workplaces, communities, customs, cultures and religions as well as structures within society more broadly – the media, digital media, popular culture, advertising, laws, law enforcement agencies, the judiciary and others.

In order for the power imbalances between women and men to be redressed, the underlying structures and dynamics that produce them must be comprehensively addressed. As outlined in 'How we think gender justice for all can be achieved' (see page 22), we perceive the key barriers to achieving gender justice are:

Visible power structures: these are structures, such as legal, health or educational services, that are visible in public spaces or formal decision-making bodies. Often these visible structures do not take full account of the differing practical or strategic gendered needs of women and men, girls and boys (see the box 'Practical and strategic gender needs', page 11) and are backed by policies, laws, systems and procedures that are discriminatory, unresponsive or blind to the different needs of women and men. Therefore, despite being 'visible', they deny (more often) women equitable access to and control over services and resources. To achieve gender justice, we need to build upon the strong track record we have in successfully challenging and changing these visible power structures (see 'Shinkai's story', below).

Shinkai's story

'You can't ignore the women of Afghanistan,' says Shinkai Karokhail, one of the founding members and now the director of our partner Afghan Women's Education Centre (AWEC). 'Women shouldn't just be a token. They should be seen as key players with lots of knowledge, experience and commitment.' Shinkai is a prominent women's rights activist and member of the Afghan Parliament. She has worked tirelessly for the rights of women in Afghanistan, helping to pass through Parliament important legislation protecting women and girls, such as a bill banning child marriage. She highlights the shockingly low literacy rates among women as a key obstacle in their development: 'Female literacy is under 20%. This means women are mostly dependent on men's income. We want to empower civil society in Afghanistan for the future of all its people.'





Asar Mi's story

Like mothers the world over, Asar Mi wants a better life for her children. 'My first priority is always the children,' she says. But for Asar Mi, life in Myanmar was hard. Many people in her village and across Myanmar depend on farming and raising livestock to feed, clothe, house, educate and care for themselves and their families. With her husband working across the border in China, she had to beg and borrow just to make ends meet. 'It affects your dignity,' she explains. 'I felt a lot of pressure. I faced a lot of challenges alone.' Thanks to our partner Metta, Asar Mi received a loan of £240 and bought a pregnant pig. 'I knew we could make money from this activity,' she says. She also received training in animal care to keep her pigs healthy. Slowly but surely, her pig-rearing business is reaping rewards. Every six months she earns on average around £500 from selling her pigs. 'I have used the profit to pay our living costs and pay off debts. This year, I have no debts. The project is helping provide an education for my children.'

Hidden and invisible power structures: these are the unseen social and political norms that favour one gender over another. Many women lack sufficient social, legal and economic autonomy remaining both legally and culturally minors all their lives – under their fathers, husbands, even sons. This increases their vulnerability to poverty and decreases their ability to respond to it. Despite changes to laws and constitutions, and even when services and resources do exist, norms regarding women's reproductive and domestic roles¹⁴ still often confine them to the home, unable to access the visible structures available to them to pursue and obtain their rights, and seek an independent income (see 'Asar Mi's story', left).

To achieve gender justice, we need to identify, challenge and change these invisible power structures. Some of these include:

- **Dominant social norms:** around the world, there are many values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and practices that support male dominance, weaken women's sense of self-worth, and validate violence against women and girls.¹⁵ Such damaging social norms are perhaps the most insidious invisible barriers to gender justice because they shape what we believe to be 'normal'. This means that, from an early age, men often believe it's natural and right to subordinate women, and women believe it's their duty to be subordinate. Without challenging and changing these, no sustainable impact on gender discrimination can be achieved.
- **A lack of political and moral will:** there needs to be the political and moral will, and accompanying resources from governments, intervening international and bilateral agencies, and faith leaders to get to the root causes of gender inequality. An over-burdened and under-resourced civil society still undertakes the majority of gender equality and women's empowerment efforts. Gender equality is not simply the domain of civil society to address, it is a political and economic issue too.

‘When more women work, economies grow. If women’s paid employment rates were raised to the same level as men’s, the US gross domestic product would be an estimated 9% higher, the Euro zone’s would climb by 13% and... in 15 major developing economies, per capita income would rise by 14% by 2020, 20% by 2030.’¹⁶

- **Religious leaders and faith-based organisations:** faith-based organisations, faith leaders and religious texts have often been a key factor in replicating damaging gendered social norms at the local, national and global levels. They are the source of many of our values and beliefs that in turn give rise to attitudes and behaviours, which are then formalised and condoned in our laws and policies. To date, the breadth and depth of their interventions and unequivocal leadership in challenging and changing gender inequality has often been piecemeal and left wanting. However, faith-based organisations are not homogenous and have also shown that they can play a vital role in challenging and changing damaging social norms. Indeed they are an essential partner for us in achieving gender justice (see ‘Essential partners in achieving gender justice’ page 19).
- **A focus on the practical rather than strategic needs of women and men:** to date, most interventions to address gender inequality have addressed people’s practical, basic needs rather than being more strategic and transforming power relations and affecting societal change (see the box ‘Practical and strategic gender needs’, right). For example, in the 2010 budget, just 1.3% of OECD DAC¹⁷ funds dedicated to gender equality went directly to women’s rights organisations and ministries with the necessary expertise to address strategic gender needs.¹⁸ In order to properly address gender inequality, organisations need to invest more time, resources and money into tackling its root causes.

Practical and strategic gender needs

Practical gender needs are addressed by taking into account customary gender roles. For example, in many communities it is the tradition for women to fetch water. Therefore a project to build a well in a community addresses the practical gender needs of women in that community by making the water that they have to fetch more accessible. When these practical needs are not considered and met, they exacerbate poverty and existing gendered power imbalances. Projects that address practical gender needs respond to the effects of gender inequality, but they do not address the causes. Practical needs are met through ‘gender-sensitive’ interventions – those that are sensitive to the different traditional gendered roles and needs of women and men. We strive to ensure all of our work is gender sensitive.

Strategic gender needs are addressed by challenging the customary gendered relationships of power and control between women and men. For example, a project that encourages a community to ask the question ‘why should it solely be the role of women to fetch water?’ would be attempting to address the strategic gender needs. When strategic needs are not considered and met, the root causes of inequality are not addressed and existing power relations between women and men are entrenched and reproduced. Strategic needs are met through ‘gender-transformative’ interventions – those that challenge and change existing gender roles and norms. In every country where we work, we have at least one gender-transformative project.

4. Internal barriers to gender justice: being the change we want to see

'In theory I could go and run a successful gender project during the day, and come back home in the evening and beat my wife – if that's the case, then what has really changed?'

Male Christian Aid staff member

We recognise that to be champions of gender justice, we ourselves need to change. In 2013, we commissioned an independent assessment of our gender programming and advocacy work, our own internal policies, procedures, systems, culture and practice. As outlined in 'How we can contribute to achieving gender justice' (see page 24), this identified five key barriers that we ourselves need to overcome in order to make a significant contribution to gender justice.

1. We need to better develop, strengthen and demonstrate our own commitment, capacity and leadership for gender justice and to support staff to understand how gender affects their own lives.
2. We need to better assist our partners and supporters so that they feel inspired and capable of making a significant contribution towards gender justice.
3. We need to better focus our programming and advocacy work towards addressing the root causes of gender inequality and to demonstrate that we are making an impact.
4. We need to better align our fundraising, resourcing and prioritisation with our aspirations for gender justice.
5. We need to help mobilise a global inter-faith-based movement to champion gender justice and address damaging social norms.

In order to create an environment that promotes and encourages gender justice within Christian Aid, we must challenge ourselves in three interconnecting dimensions where change is most required:

The personal dimension of change

We need to take the time to examine and explore our own personal beliefs, attitudes and behaviours in relation to gender. All of our staff – both female and male – need to understand and reflect on how gender affects their personal lives as well as their professional lives. We must encourage our partners and supporters to do the same.

The professional dimension of change

We need to ensure that our programming and advocacy work is incorporating effective methods and approaches to tackle the root causes of gender inequality. We need to deepen the impact of our existing work and scale-up gender transformative work to new areas. In order to do this we need to invest in building the appropriate commitment and technical capacity of partners and sharpen the gender dimensions of each of *Partnership for Change's* strategic change objectives.

The institutional dimension of change

We need to support staff and partners in their commitment and capacity to change with appropriate policies, systems and resources. We need to be more equitable, not just in how we recruit our staff, but also how we retain, respect and develop our staff. Furthermore, we need to set red lines in our selection and retention of staff and partners. The commitment of our trustees and leaders for gender justice mustn't be a passing fad, but an unwavering commitment.

For us to be the change we want to see, all of these three dimensions of change are interconnected, mutually supportive and essential (see diagram, page 13).

**The three dimensions of change
needed to achieve gender
justice within Christian Aid**



5. Achieving gender justice: our commitments

'The full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields.'

Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 1979¹⁹

As an organisation and movement based on Christian values with a deep understanding of poverty and the power dynamics that create it, we believe that we have something significant and distinctive to contribute.

In order to achieve our vision of gender justice in line with our strategy, *Partnership for Change*, we will:

1. Place gender justice at the centre of our analysis and work, and ensure that all staff possess the necessary commitment, technical capacity and resources to make a significant contribution to gender justice.

Over the next three years we will:

- further develop our own understanding of the theology of gender justice and how it can inform our ways of working
- establish gender-equitable policies and procedures for the recruitment, development and retention of staff, and include 'gender sensitivity' as a core staff recruitment and performance indicator

- ensure that all staff have the opportunity to reflect on how gender impacts upon their own personal and professional lives by developing face-to-face gender induction training, offering gender-security training and running refresher gender training for staff, trustees and volunteers
- ensure all of our programmes are rigorously applying our gender-sensitive programming policy (see the box 'Our gender-sensitive programming policy', below) and making sure our partners have the capacity to apply it too
- align adequate existing and new human and financial resources to ensure we can make a significant impact on gender inequality.

Our gender-sensitive programming policy

- **Tackling power dynamics** – all programmes address the underlying causes of gender inequalities.
- **'Do no harm'** – not making existing gender inequalities any worse.
- **Equitable participation of men and women** – both in our programming and within our own organisation.
- **Disaggregating the impact of interventions by gender** – so we can monitor and evaluate the impact of our programmes.
- **Getting better** – a commitment to always improving our work around gender justice.

2. Ensure faith groups are playing a more distinctive role in securing gender justice and the rights of women and men.

Over the next three years we will:

- work with existing partners, supporters and affiliations in Britain, Ireland and worldwide to help establish and support a more coordinated global inter-faith movement to champion and work towards gender justice. The model for this is the INERELA+ network

that tackles discrimination around HIV/AIDS (see 'The Burundi story', below)²⁰

- work with this inter-faith movement to demonstrate leadership on gender justice, not just at global and national levels but through providing leadership and practical guidance at the community level too, in order to challenge and change social norms that create and reinforce gender discrimination.



The Burundi story

Faith leaders are instrumental in changing social norms. At the service pictured above, a BUNERELA+ (part of INERELA+) pastor is delivering a sermon to help reduce the stigma surrounding HIV. In Burundi (where BUNERELA+ was established with our support), together with the Belgian development organisation Solidarité Protestante, we have supported a project run by the Anglican Church aimed at creating an interdenominational joint response to HIV and gender-based violence. As a result, the Burundi Interfaith Network for the Fight Against AIDS and for the Promotion of Health (RCRSS) was launched in 2013, bringing together the country's four main religious denominations – the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Pentecostal Church and the Muslim community. The project will train religious leaders and partners' staff in gender equality, preventing gender-based violence and caring for survivors, and will organise a workshop on leaders' roles in preventing gender-based violence. It incorporates elements of the Kenya-based Tamar campaign²¹ that rethinks views of masculinity in Africa in relation to gender-based violence, and challenges churches to address the problem.

3. Inspire supporters and mobilise partners to take action and promote just power relations between men and women.

Over the next three years we will:

- ensure our communications with supporters help raise greater awareness and understanding of the need for gender justice, and what they can do to help achieve it
- select new programme partners based on their commitment to gender justice while providing extra support to existing partners and reviewing partnerships that consistently fail to demonstrate a commitment to gender justice.

4. Demonstrate that we are making a significant contribution towards helping women and girls to achieve greater social, political and economic equality, and towards ensuring that gender equality has been placed at the centre of global development policy and action.

Over the next three years we will:

- advocate for the post-2015 Millennium Development Goal framework to include a specific goal to address the root causes of gender inequality, and that all other goals incorporate gender-sensitive indicators. We will advocate and campaign for these and other gender equitable policies to be adequately resourced and effectively implemented at global and national levels
- advocate for the international community to strengthen its collation and analysis of gender-sensitive data at national and global levels. In turn, we will strengthen how we capture our own impact, and share and apply our learning on gender-transformative programming (see Ne'ama's story, page 17)
- ensure that our current and future advocacy priorities of climate change and tax are gender sensitive
- ensure that all of our existing strategic change objectives are gender transformative and work towards addressing the root causes of gender inequality (see the box 'Applying our strategic change objectives to issues of gender', left)
- work to increase women's participation and leadership in formal and informal decision-making bodies
- ensure that all of our humanitarian work is gender sensitive
- engage and mobilise key people and corporations in the private sector to help ensure that business and market activity and regulation are more gender equitable and provide sustainable benefits that economically empower both women and men.

Applying our strategic change objectives to issues of gender

Our strategic change objectives will help ensure that both women and men:

- have equitable power to influence institutions at local, national and global levels that affect their lives, for example, through supporting more women to participate in governance
- have equitable access to essential services, for example, through changing social norms that prevent women accessing sexual and reproductive health services
- get a fair share of income, goods and resources, for example, through gendered analysis of market value chains
- experience equality for all, for example, through mobilising faith leaders to challenge and change masculinities that dominate or subordinate women
- are able to tackle violence and help build peace, for example, through addressing harmful traditional practices, such as early and forced marriage and female genital cutting, and ensuring women have a voice in peace processes.

5. Demonstrate that we are making a significant contribution towards a reduction in gender-based violence and specifically in changing social norms that promote or condone it.

Over the next three years we will:

- scale up our work with faith groups and faith leaders working with both women and men to challenge and change social norms around gender-based violence, including harmful traditional practices such as early and forced marriage, female genital cutting, dowry and bride price
- advocate for the prevention of sexual violence against women and men, especially in conflict situations where it is used as a weapon of war, and further develop our programmatic work in this area
- work towards ensuring women and girls can safely access justice at all levels, including within customary and religious laws.



Ne'ama's story

Ne'ama lives under Israeli occupation near Bethlehem. Her home is constantly under the threat of demolition and she and her family have been fighting a legal battle for eight years. The social, economic and political disempowerment Palestinians face, largely as a result of the Israeli occupation, is even more profound for women. They are often excluded from decision-making within their homes and communities, and have little economic or social status. But thanks to the Women's Training Programme run by our partner the YMCA, women are able to develop their skills, start their own businesses and generate a sustainable income. Ne'ama attended YMCA's agricultural training and then took a loan offered to graduates of the scheme. She now has a thriving grape business. As the sole breadwinner in her family, she earns enough to send her children to university and to fight the ongoing legal battle against the demolition of her home. Now not only is Ne'ama economically empowered, but she is politically empowered too. The Women's Training Programme also works on legal issues that affect women's rights, such as inheritance laws.

6. Achieving gender justice: our impact

'Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.'

Kofi Annan, former United Nations Secretary-General

The impact we expect to see in the long term from our commitments to achieving gender justice (see chapter 5, 'Achieving gender justice: our commitments', page 14) are outlined on pages 22-25. In summary, we will contribute, and work towards:

- government and service providers being equally accountable to women and men for the attainment of their economic, social, cultural and political rights
- safe access to justice for both men and women at all levels, including within customary and religious laws
- women and men having equitable access to adequate and appropriate goods, benefits and services, and having a voice, choice and control over their own lives
- men and women being able to exercise equitable agency and autonomy over their own bodies
- creating business and market activity and regulations that promote gender equality, providing sustainable benefits for both women and men²²
- social and political changes that shift laws and social norms, which in turn mean that gender equality happens at all levels
- control over resources becoming more balanced between men and women
- women and men engaging in behaviours and practices that promote equality.

Only when these outcomes start to be achieved will we be able to say that we are on our way to achieving gender justice. Working towards gender justice will, in turn, enable us to achieve the three overarching goals of our *Partnership for Change* strategy for ending poverty by creating:

Just power relations: a world in which power relations between men and women are more equitable and mutually empowering, enabling both to pursue their human rights, fundamental freedoms and spiritual development.

Resilient and thriving societies: a world in which both women and men are valued as equal and active participants in the social, political and economic development of their households, communities and societies.

Equity and sustainability: a world in which no one is excluded or marginalised because of their gender, and a key barrier to sustainable development (gender inequality) is eliminated.

7. Essential partners in achieving gender justice

'Policies and laws that affirm women's rights and open up pathways for women's empowerment are critically important, but they are not in themselves sufficient to change women's lives.'²³

Pathways of Women's Empowerment

We cannot achieve our vision for gender justice alone. We are mindful that many others are making significant contributions towards gender justice and we will work to complement, rather than duplicate, their work. However, we believe that we have a significant role to play – especially in convening and mobilising faith-based organisations to speak out and address gender justice issues.

In order to achieve this strategy we will be relying on several essential partners.

Churches and faith groups

Faith-based organisations have an indispensable role in changing prejudices that are deeply rooted in culture and tradition. For example, a UN multi-country study in September 2013 concluded that early prevention of gender-based violence is possible but 'requires the sustained involvement of socialising institutions at the community and state levels, including... faith-based organisations.'²⁴ Despite the fact that faith-based organisations have often been a barrier to promoting gender equality (see chapter 3, 'Global barriers to gender justice: unjust gendered power relations', page 9), they are also part of the solution. Unlike governments and NGOs, they do not come and go. They have a more stable influence on social norms through frequent face-to-face interaction with communities. We are ideally placed to interact with faith groups, creating safe spaces for discussing contentious issues, and unlocking their full potential as agents of positive change (see 'The SADD story', right).



The SADD story

Arthur Cavalcante's (pictured above, centre) message of tolerance, understanding and social justice is lived out in practice in the way he has opened up his church as a forum for discussion and exploration of issues that the church in Brazil has traditionally found it difficult to talk about – including gender-based violence and gender inequality. In Brazil, a woman is assaulted every 24 seconds. Our partner Anglican Service for Diaconia and Development (SADD) is playing a key role in helping Brazilian churches to address gender-based violence within their communities. SADD has practical experience of working with victims of gender-based violence through the safe house that it runs for women in Rondonia (a poor state with high rates of violence). We are supporting it to use this experience to scale-up and develop its educational and pastoral work. Part of this has involved writing training materials based on biblical teachings to encourage other churches in Brazil to take a role in preventing violence in their communities, both practically by understanding how to support women who have been abused and also by speaking out when the laws and policies that should protect women are not fully implemented at a local level. SADD's aim is that 'we may be, as a Church, a place of safe haven for women'.

Women's rights organisations, coalitions, trade unions and others

In a patriarchal society, it is extremely difficult for women to be heard, so it is important that women are supported to come together. Women's organisations have a strong record of taking action to overcome gender inequality, and they succeed because they have local-level credibility and gain impact through working together.

Supporters

Our supporters are passionate about ending poverty in all its forms. By supporting our work on gender justice through giving, acting and praying, they'll be vital in challenging gender inequality in all its forms, including through their churches and faith communities. Collectively they are a strong body that can hold governments and institutions in the global North and South to account on implementing policies and laws that combat inequality and discrimination, and promote inclusion.

Social movements and networks worldwide

Many of the networks that we are a part of, including the ACT Alliance and World Council of Churches, are effective in campaigning against gender inequality, bringing passionate commitment together with advocacy and research.

The media

The many online and offline media outlets are together one of the main instruments in which social norms, attitudes and behaviours are produced and reproduced. Its power to influence is strong and therefore it is a critical stakeholder with whom we need to work.

The private sector

Businesses and their associates are key stakeholders for securing inclusive and non-discriminatory business practices that enable large-scale, innovative solutions to end gender inequality.

Governments

Governments and other political bodies are crucial in setting a firm legal framework for equal rights, and for resourcing the services that they are responsible for.

Our approach

We may experience puzzlement, resistance or even backlash from some of these partners. But we can be confident in our convictions that gender inequality and the disempowerment of women must end.

While our approach shall be that of positive engagement based on building mutual understanding and trust, we will not be afraid to speak truth to power and draw red lines with partners where we see persistent and wilful neglect of the issue of gender justice. At the same time, we will strive to ensure that partners and individuals working at the frontline of these issues have adequate protection and are not put at unnecessary risk.

8. Conclusion: our ambitions for change

'Sustainable development, peace and security can only be achieved when caring and respectful relations among women, men, boys and girls become the norm.'

United Nations 2013²⁵

We've not always put gender inequality at the front and centre of our work, nor fully committed to ending it. This strategy aims to change that.

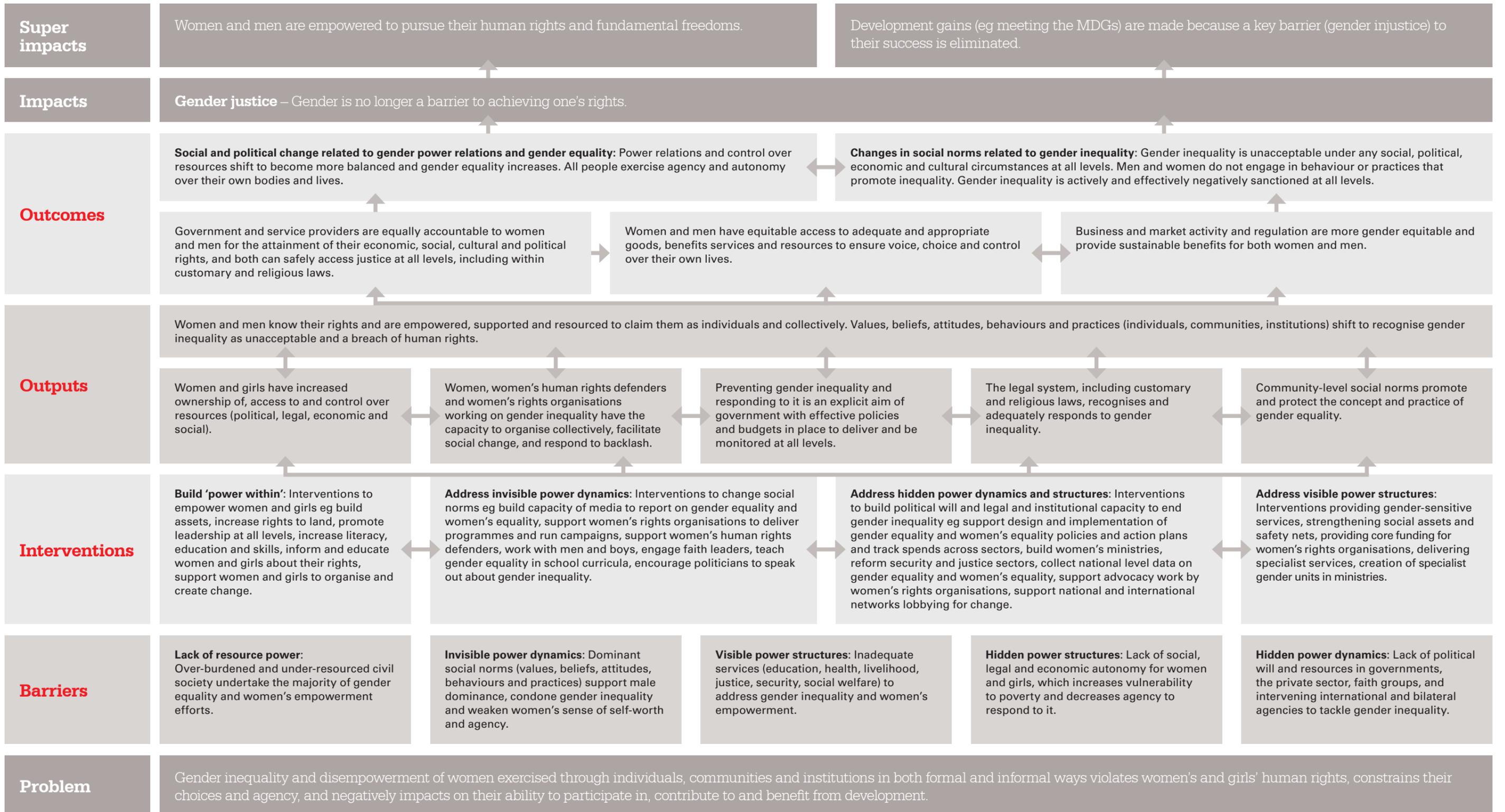
We will be the change we want to see. We'll ensure that gender is no longer a barrier for our own staff in achieving their rights and aspirations. We'll vigorously encourage and challenge church leaders and communities, in the global North and South, to use their power and influence to deliver gender justice. Furthermore we'll work much harder to build trusting relationships with other faith-based organisations, so that we can work together to bring about a shared vision of gender justice.

We will continue to engage robustly with governments and intergovernmental institutions, confidently speaking truth to power on the basis of strong research and deep understanding of the root causes of gender inequality. We'll take a vital role in setting the public agenda on gender justice issues, seeking reform and monitoring private and public sector performance against clear criteria.

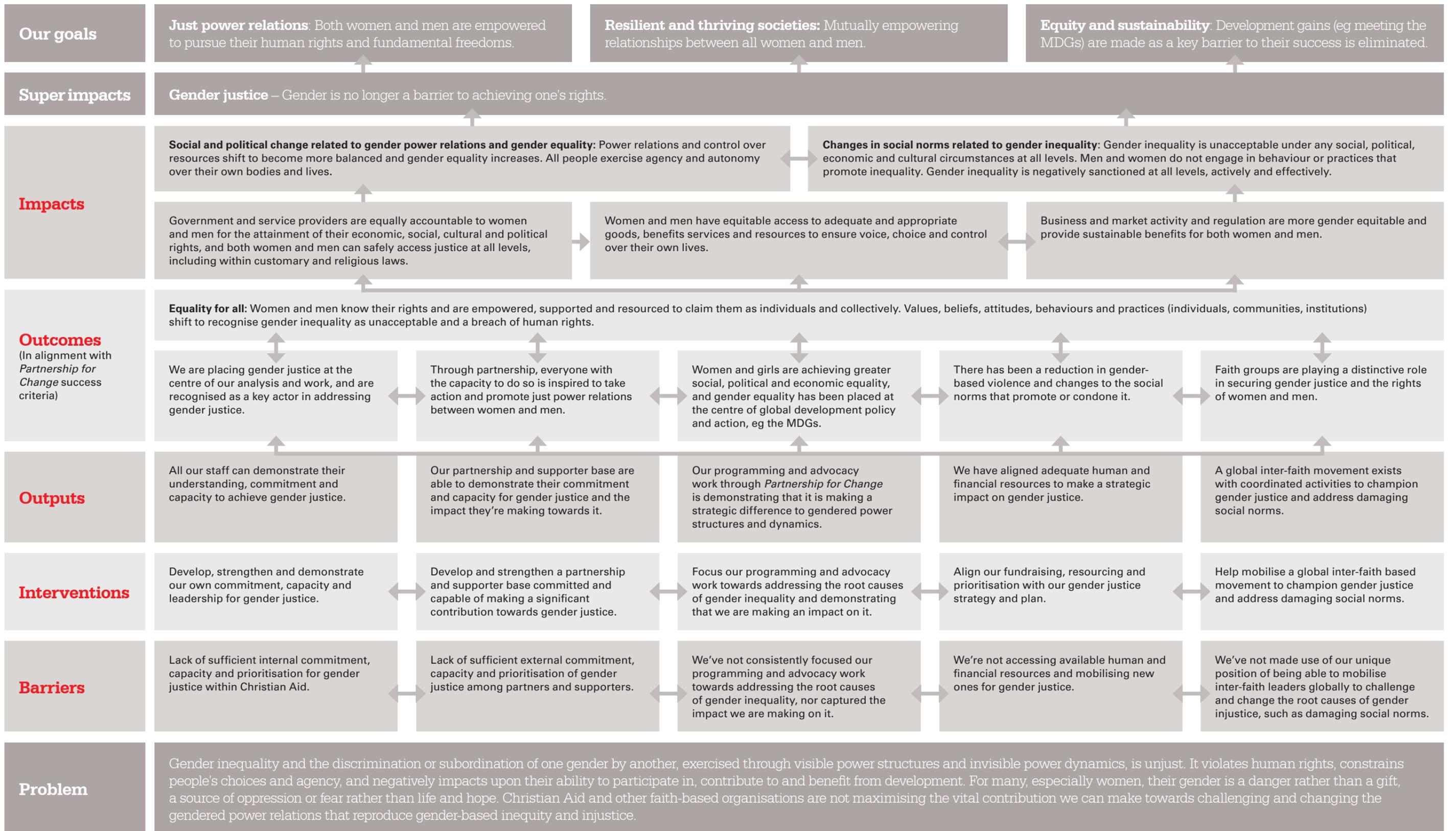
We will put gender justice at the heart of all our actions, making sure that there are mutually empowering relationships between women and men, and that economic development enhances rather than exacerbates gender equality, so that communities can continue to thrive from generation to generation.

These are high ambitions, rooted in our understanding of the biblical vision of a new earth, where women and men act together equally. Our generation has the tools and know-how to deliver gender justice. Our task is to inspire the will to make that happen.

How we think gender justice for all can be achieved



How we can contribute to achieving gender justice



Endnotes

- 1 un.org/en/documents/udhr/
- 2 World Development Report: Equality and Development 2012, The World Bank, 2012, <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTWDRS/EXTWDR2012/0,,contentMDK:22999750~menuPK:8154981~pagePK:64167689~piPK:64167673~theSitePK:7778063,00.html>
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 girlsnotbrides.org/what-is-the-impact/ (accessed 28/02/2013).
- 5 As of 2011, 50.5% of the world's working women were in vulnerable employment, often unprotected by labour legislation, compared to 48.2% of men. Women were far more likely than men to be in vulnerable employment in north Africa (55% vs 32%), the Middle East (42% vs 27%) and sub-Saharan Africa (nearly 85% vs 70%). *Global Employment Trends: Preventing a deeper jobs crisis*, International Labour Organization, p11, ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/--publ/documents/publication/wcms_171571.pdf
- 6 Globally, women occupy only 25% of senior management positions. Ibid, p23.
- 7 In 2011, about 820,000 women and men aged 15-24 were newly infected with HIV in low- and middle-income countries; more than 60% of them were women. Globally, adolescent girls and young women (15-24 years) are twice as likely to be at risk of HIV infection compared to boys and young men in the same age group. *Women's Health: Fact Sheet No. 334*, World Health Organization, 2013, who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs334/en/unwomen.org
- 8 unwomen.org
- 9 Only 20.9% of national parliamentarians were female as of 1 July 2013, a slow increase from 11.6% in 1995. Globally, there are 37 States in which women account for less than 10% of parliamentarians in single or lower houses, as of July 2013. Inter-Parliamentary Union, July 2013, ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm
- 10 An international comparison of agricultural census data shows that less than 20% of landholders are women. The situation is particularly grim in western and central Africa as well as the near east and north Africa, where generally less than 10% of landholders are women. *FAO Gender and Land Rights Brief*, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, March 2010, fao.org/economic/es-policybriefs/briefs-detail/en/?no_cache=1&uid=40497
- 11 UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV, *Why do some men use violence against women and how can we prevent it?*, Quantitative Findings from the United Nations Multi-Country Study, September 2013.
- 12 S Durber, *Of the Same Flesh: a theology of gender*, Christian Aid, 2014.
- 13 The Equalities and Human Rights Commission estimates that it will take another 70 years to achieve an equal number of women directors in the FTSE 100, another 45 years to achieve an equal number of women in Britain's senior judiciary, and another 14 general elections to achieve an equal number of women MPs. *Sex and Power*, Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2011, p3.
- 14 Everywhere, women devote 1 to 3 hours more a day to housework than men; 2 to 10 times the amount of time a day to care (of children, the elderly, and the sick), and 1 to 4 hours less a day to market activities. Maria Inés Berniell, and Carolina Sánchez-Páramo, *Overview of Time Use Data Used for the Analysis of Gender Differences in Time Use Patterns*, background paper for the World Development Report 2012, p 80 (see note 2).
- 15 In many nations, violence against women is perceived as acceptable or justifiable. On average, 29% of women in countries with data concurred that wife beating was justified for arguing with the husband, 25% for refusing to have sex, and 21% for burning food. Ibid, p83.
- 16 Kevin Daly, *Gender Inequality, Growth and Global Ageing*, Global Economics Paper 154, Goldman Sachs, 2007, unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures#notes
- 17 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee.
- 18 awid.org/Library/Financing-for-Gender-Equality-Rhetoric-versus-real-financial-support
- 19 Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 1979, un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/
- 20 INERELA+ is an international network of religious leaders – lay and ordained, women and men – living with, or personally affected by, HIV, inerela.org
- 21 The Tamar Campaign, supported by the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA), seeks to acknowledge the existence of gender-based violence in our society, with particular focus on sexual and domestic violence, and to challenge churches to address the problem, www.fecclaha.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=47&Itemid=145
- 22 Eliminating discrimination against female workers and managers could increase productivity per worker by 25-40%. See note 14.
- 23 Pathways of Women's Empowerment is an international research and communications programme established in 2006 with the aim of understanding and influencing efforts to bring about positive change in women's lives, pathwaysofempowerment.org
- 24 See note 11.
- 25 Ibid.

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