



# Gender Strategy





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## ***Introduction***

The Amalima Development Food Assistance Program fosters women's empowerment and gender equality, seeking to empower women to play a key role in food security and resilience at the household and community levels. The Amalima Gender Strategy provides guidelines for gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting component to the program that underpins all activities. This strategy is founded on the results of the Amalima Gender Analysis Report conducted in 2014.

## ***Definition of Gender Mainstreaming***

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming is not an end in itself, but a pluralistic approach that assesses the different implications for women and men of any planned action. Mainstreaming aims to make gender perspectives, and attention to the goal of gender equality, central to the design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in economic and societal spheres to ensure women and men benefit equally. Consequently, it helps to empower women and achieve gender equality. The Amalima Program seeks to change the existing gender status-quo examined in the gender analysis by mainstreaming gender as a cross-cutting component to the project that underpins all activities.

## ***Background***

Communities in the Amalima districts adhere to a predominantly patriarchal culture, which has traditionally afforded limited rights to women. In rural Zimbabwe, women are customarily responsible for household chores and childcare activities, as well as the most time and labor intensive agricultural tasks, including land preparation, weeding and grain threshing. The promotion of labor saving technologies for both men and women through Amalima will consequently reduce their workload and enable them to more easily participate in other development activities. Women also have a prominent role in managing poultry and small livestock, including the use of eggs, milk and poultry meat for home consumption, while men control decision making around and marketing of cattle.

The Amalima Program leverages the social capital of Amalima collective action (most often applied by women) and builds on strong, trust-based relationships between women to promote improved practices, such as exclusive breastfeeding, household and community nutrition gardens, conservation agriculture, and village savings and lending (VS&L) groups. Amalima women groups, including VS&L and Community Health Clubs (CHCs), often decide to leverage their social and financial capital by expanding their objective to include other income generating or productive activities, including poultry and goat production or horticulture gardens. Men are generally reluctant to take part in duties perceived as womanly, such as supporting the care of sick children and fetching wood or water. Amalima outreach aims to integrate men into health, nutrition and VS&L interventions, which are dominated by women, with the ultimate goal of increasing male support in household and child rearing activities. Through these and other project interventions, Amalima supports women to have increased access to and control over incomes, and promotes men and women to take increasingly equal responsibilities at the household and community levels.

## ***Rationale for Gender Mainstreaming***

Women in Zimbabwe constitute 52% of the total population (54% in Bulilima, 53% in Mangwe, 52% in Gwanda and 54% in Tsholotsho) (ZIMSTAT, 2012). However, in recent years there has been a high prevalence of working-age males who out-migrate for work opportunities in neighboring countries leaving women to manage both the domestic and agricultural activities. Due to this demographic shift, Amalima operates in communities where, on average, 70% of the population are females and only 30% are males. Despite this majority, men control most assets which are essential for income generation and livelihood activities, including land, large livestock and incomes. The Amalima communities in Tsholotsho, Gwanda, Mangwe and Bullilima adhere to a predominantly patriarchal culture, which has traditionally afforded limited rights to women.

Women contribute most of the work in food production (land clearing and cultivation of crops), and household preparation and distribution of food. They are also in the forefront in post-harvest activities, such as shelling of grains, processing, storage, and marketing. Despite their central role in food production, women have limited access to land, education, agricultural extension services and access to credit in comparison with their male counterparts (MoAMID, 2013). Small-scale women farmers lack accurate information about existing markets, technical and physical support, and finance for scaling-up their initiatives. Furthermore, women have many domestic commitments, and suffer from gender role stereotyping at the family and community levels. The status of women in a patriarchal social structure like Zimbabwe makes them dependent on close male relatives (husbands, brothers and/or fathers) for decision making, even if they are hundreds of miles away in Botswana or South Africa.

Considering this context, the Amalima gender mainstreaming strategy is designed to mitigate challenges to the empowerment of women by promoting a pluralistic approach to program design and implementation that assesses the different implications for women and men of all project activities. The gender strategy outlines how Amalima will support the empowerment of women and mainstream gender to ensure women, as the majority in Amalima operational districts, influence development. Expected results of the strategy include:

- Proper targeting of the interventions to suit the needs and interests of men and women;
- Participation of both men and women in project activities;
- Increased access to and control over incomes for women;
- Improved access to agricultural and productive resources for women;
- Proper allocation of resources, roles, time and benefits at the household and community level;
- Men and women taking increasingly equal responsibilities in household and childrearing activities, and;
- Sustainability and ownership of the project by men and women.

## ***Results of the Amalima Gender Analysis***

The Amalima Gender Strategy is informed by results of the Amalima Gender Analysis, which was conducted in two wards per district in Tsholotsho, Bulilima, Mangwe and Gwanda in 2014.



The goal of the analysis was to discern the roles, rights, and responsibilities of men and women in target districts in order to ensure that all community members may access program services and activities. The analysis particularly considered the unique needs of rural Zimbabwean women. The study helped Amalima to develop transformative interventions that challenge underlying notions associated with gendered roles and that encourage a change in the status of women in their communities.

Major findings of the study largely confirmed information that was known to the project, including the following:

- Women largely lack access to income, credit and land.
- Lack of access to such resources largely confines women to means of agricultural production that are less expensive – and therefore often more time consuming – including using hand held hoes as opposed to mechanized tools for agricultural production.
- Men have access to higher valued assets, including land, cattle, and agricultural tools, which translates to a higher societal status and improved means of agricultural production.
- The general consensus among males in focus group discussions was that gender equality was appropriate for the workplace but not the home. Inequality in the home was justified using arguments based on religious and cultural beliefs. Husbands of formally-employed women even expressed discontent with household chores being completed by domestic workers, and voiced preference for their wives to be doing the cleaning, washing and cooking at home. Some men also expressed fear of infidelity when women attended work-related meetings and trainings that required them to travel and sleep in hotels.
- High earning cattle and cash crops are largely the domain of men, whereas women are relegated to small livestock production and crop production for home consumption.

Information gathered through the study has been complimented by operational data gathered in the field by Amalima staff during programming to confirm certain positions that had not been conclusively established through the gender analysis. In developing this strategy, Amalima has been careful to understand the cultures of the communities in its four operational districts to address contextual issues affecting gender inequalities and women empowerment.

### ***Objectives of the gender strategy***

The Gender Strategy helps identify opportunities and implement actions for increased women's participation and decision making in households and the community by:

- a) Strengthening gender mainstreaming across all project interventions;
- b) Increasing gender awareness in the community through monthly gender messages;
- c) Increasing women's leadership and participation in decisions affecting community development through training;
- d) Increasing men's participation in interventions favoured by women, including VS&L groups, Community Health Clubs, health and nutrition activities, and;
- e) Strengthening women's participation in livestock farming.

### ***Guiding principles***

Gender equality is an integral part of the project, and the gender strategy provides parameters of how gender will be mainstreamed in all project interventions. The following principles guided the

development of the Amalima Gender Strategy and continue to inform its implementation and monitoring:

1. Achieving gender equality requires the recognition that all project interventions affect women and men differently.
2. Empowering women is central to achieving gender equality. When women are socially and economically empowered, they become aware of unequal power relations and are more likely to overcome inequality in their homes and the community.
3. Gender equality and women's empowerment are integral to building individual and community resilience.
4. Equal participation of men and women in the project should not only be measured by sex-disaggregated data and results.
5. Gender equality can only be achieved when both women (who traditionally socialise children) and men (beneficiaries of patriarchy) are committed to bringing about changes in attitudes, behaviour, roles and responsibilities at household and at community levels.
6. Given the existing gender disparities, equal treatment of women and men is insufficient as a strategy for gender equality. Traditional leadership must be targeted when addressing the norms, beliefs, practices and attitudes that maintain gender inequality.
7. When choices for both women and men increase, their community benefits.



### Detailed Gender strategy by activity

Strategic Objective & related activities	Status at gender assessment	Status from field reports	Amalima approach
<b>SO1</b>			
Crop production through conservation agriculture	<p>-Most work (seed selection, land preparation, weeding, and the scaring of birds) done by women and children.</p> <p>-Men mostly involved in fencing of fields</p>	<p>Most work (seed selection, land preparation, weeding and scaring away birds) done by women and children.</p> <p>-Men involved in fencing of fields</p>	<p>-Strengthen the promotion of labor saving technologies to reduce workload for women and encourage male participation.</p> <p>-Promote use of quality inputs and high yielding varieties to ensure women spend less time looking for food</p> <p>-Diversify crops to ensure health and nutrition for women &amp; children. - Promote early planting of small grains to ensure harvest before birds arrive.</p>
Processing small grains	Harvesting, transporting, threshing, and pounding of grain (which are labour intensive tasks) recognised as woman's role and largely done by women.	Harvesting, transporting, threshing, and pounding of grain (which are labour intensive tasks) recognised as woman's role and largely done by	-Promote purchase of grinding mills with de hullers by Agro dealers, VS&L groups
		women.	
Horticulture and Irrigation	No data was collected on the intervention at gender assessment	Most horticulture work is currently being done by women	<p>-Promote use of quality inputs and high yielding varieties to ensure women spend less time looking for food</p> <p>- Promote women training as pump minders</p>

Livestock	Large livestock production including herding and decision making on pasture management is male dominated, while women dominate small stock production.	Large livestock production male dominated and small stock dominated by women	-Promote and strengthen women ownership of livestock, starting with small stock and gradually transitioning to ownership of cattle through VS&L groups and training - Train women Paravets to improve other women's access to livestock extension.
Access to Markets	Lucrative livestock marketing is male dominated, while the less lucrative local marketing of horticultural produce is women dominated.	- Livestock marketing is male dominated, and the marketing of horticultural produce is dominated by women - Agro dealership is male dominated	-Train women in input and livestock marketing. - Deliberately upgrade some VS&L groups to become agro dealers. - Use matching grants to empower women to become agro dealers. -Use HHAVs to target women to purchase
			farming implements fertiliser, seed, etc.
<b>SO2</b>			
DRR	DRR Committees are male dominated	DRR committees are male dominated	-Strengthen the participation and representation of women in DRR committees. - Capacitate women through training to be able to better articulate issues affecting them in community meetings

Rangeland management and natural resources management	No data was collected on the intervention at gender assessment	-Grazing land management committee is dominated by males. - Women have little say as they do not own a lot of large stock.	-Strengthen women participation and representation in rangeland management discussions -Empower women to own big stock
Village Savings and Lending	Clubs dominated by women	VS&L groups dominated by women	- Strengthen male involvement in VS&L - Promote VS&L in male dominated activities, e.g. livestock
Asset development	No data was collected on the intervention at gender assessment	-Workers in asset development are	-Promote a gender balance in asset development and
	assessment	mainly women, whereas most decision making is by men, especially the traditional leadership.	ensure women are represented in Project Implementation Team (PIT)
<b>SO3</b>			

Food distribution	Eating diverse foods is a challenge for the under 2 boys and girls and PLWs due to limited resources to provide the food	- PLWs & boys & girls under 2 share rations with other children in the family - Women as recipients and caregivers dominate food distributions	-Promote men accompanying their wives at food distributions so that they can benefit from health and nutrition messaging. - Address issues about the timing of distributions (so that women don't travel back home late in the evening), -Address issues about distances to the food distribution points, and ensure that the FDPs have toilets for both men and women. -Promote the inclusion of men in FDP committees -Promote male involvement through male champions
Health and hygiene caring practices of PLWs, boys and girls, under 2	Mostly recognised as a woman's role and done by women	Mostly recognised as a woman's role and done by women	-Promote male involvement in child nutrition, care, maternal health and nutrition to
			ensure increased support on nutrition and health. - Specifically target men and grandmothers during home visits. -Promote time saving technologies, e.g. eco stoves
WaSH rehabilitation/ construction	WaSH committees composed of both women and men.	-Mostly male leaders chairing health centre committees	-Train community based management (CBM) committees and promote more women to chair health centre committees

CHCs	No data was collected on the intervention at gender assessment	-CHC group members are mostly female - High number of women in CHC committees	-Empower women to take up leadership positions in CHC committees - Strengthen male involvement by treating the few men in CHCs as role models to others in the communities - Encourage the few men into leadership roles in the CHCs e.g. as male Community Based Facilitators (CBFs) & Committee members.
<b>Overall/ cross cutting</b>			
<b>Training materials</b>	No data was collected on the intervention at gender assessment	-Training modules/ materials being developed	Ensure training materials are relevant, appropriate and useful for all gender groups (men, women, young people, elderly, etc)
Recognition and commemoration of key events at national and sub national level	No data was collected on the intervention at gender assessment	-National and international events focussing on gender	Understand the local, national, regional and international context of gender so as to shape project activities