



Islamic Relief Worldwide

**Achieving gender justice:
An Islamic Relief review**

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Contents

Introduction	4
Methodology	5
Findings	6
Islamic Relief projects in numbers.....	6
Islamic Relief staff perceptions on gender programming.....	9
Promising work on gender justice and gender-based violence (GBV)	10
Targeted GBV projects.....	11
GBV advocacy programmes.....	12
Gender and intersectionality	13
Gender evaluation and baseline assessment	14
Best practice and effective interventions.....	15
Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals	16
Islamic Relief internal policies and systems.....	17
Capacity to support gender justice.....	18
Islamic Relief gender justice policy	19
Islamic Relief as an implementer and employer	20
Recommendations.....	21

Introduction

Islamic Relief Worldwide is an independent humanitarian and development organisation that has been serving humanity for over 36 years. With an active presence in over 40 countries, Islamic Relief aims to make the world a better and fairer place for those affected by poverty, conflicts or natural disasters.¹

Islamic Relief is committed to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG5) 'Empowerment of Women and Gender Equality'. This commitment is embedded within Islamic Relief's global strategy framework, underpinned by its commitment to the 'Leave no one behind' agenda and the 'Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability'. This calls for an understanding of, accountability towards and response to the needs, risks and capacities of different groups including women and girls and people with disabilities.

Islamic Relief is also a signatory to the World Humanitarian Summit 'Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Emergencies' and, made a specific commitment regarding women and girls with disabilities² at the 2018 Global Disability Summit.

In 2015 Islamic Relief published its Gender Justice Policy³ (GJP) which requires mainstreaming gender programming as a cross-cutting issue into all of its humanitarian and development work. The GJP also requires policies and procedures for gender-sensitive programming and sufficient institutional arrangements to support the implementation of the GJP and its agenda. Islamic Relief also established GBV policies on Early and Forced Marriage (EFM), domestic violence and Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) and is currently leading a global consultation on the launch of the Islamic Gender Justice Declaration (IGJD)⁴, which is a global initiative that presents key faith principles of justice and balance to challenge harmful practices and social conditions.

This report is a summary of a comprehensive analysis of Islamic Relief's gender and GBV related activities and programmes from 2017 to 2019 (inclusive). It used the framework of the GJP, the SDGs (particularly SDG5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) and the recently launched IGJD. The main purpose of the report is to document Islamic Relief's gender and GBV related activities to inform projects, policy and advocacy development throughout the organisation; support Islamic Relief's gender justice commitments; and inform the development of systems, policies and processes to advance Islamic Relief's effort to achieve gender equality.⁵

Methodology

The following approach and activities were undertaken:

- Inception meeting with Islamic Relief's Gender Inclusion and Protection Advisor
- Desk research, including analysis of Islamic Relief policies, database exploration, review of programme documentation and research into relevant areas of best practice
- Presentation of initial findings and insights to approximately 20 Islamic Relief staff
- Two online surveys
 - Mapping for country and partner offices (31 responses from 22 countries)
 - Review and audit for all Islamic Relief staff (589 responses)
 - Interviews with Islamic Relief staff, Protection & Inclusion (P&I) advisors and partner offices (19)

The following limitations to this research were identified:

- Projects in the Islamic Relief tracking database are not tagged to identify whether they are "gendered".
- The scope of Islamic Relief's ambition for gender justice very broad' and is not supported by targets, indicators and budgets, which would enable more effective tracking.

¹ Islamic Relief Worldwide, (2020) "About us", available at [<https://www.islamic-relief.org/about-us/>]

² Commitment no 8.1 'Committing to implementing inclusive gender analyses and act upon the intersectional identities of all women and girls with disabilities and the protection risks they face on different levels'.

³ Islamic Relief Worldwide, (2015), "Gender Justice Policy", available at publications tab [<https://www.islamic-relief.org/publications/>]

⁴ Islamic Relief Worldwide, (2019), "Gender justice declaration", available at [<https://www.islamic-relief.org/landmark-final-consultation-on-gender-justice-declaration/>]

⁵ Full report is available from Programme Quality Unit: International Programmes Department

Islamic Relief's Definition of Gender Justice

Guided by an Islamic understanding, the definition encapsulates both equity and equality. These terms are complementary and emphasise both the equal value and importance of women, girls, men and boys to society and the importance of equity in treatment of all people, regardless of their status. This should include equal opportunities and equitable access to resources and services according to gender needs, as well as recognition of all. Islamic Relief recognises that only equitable treatment creates the conditions that allow for the attainment of equality in societal value. In Islamic Relief programming and other activities, this means ensuring equitable access, participation and protection according to people's needs, aspirations, capacities and vulnerabilities. It should reinforce protection of cohesive family, increase security and ensure the well-being of all ensure the well-being of all [family] members. (Source: GJP 2015: p8)



Beneficiaries helped by Islamic Relief doing Income Generating Activities

Findings

This report maps Islamic Relief’s humanitarian, development and advocacy programmes which either mainstream gender or which address gender justice through stand-alone projects for women and girls. It identifies the number of relevant Islamic Relief projects, best practice and learning from across these projects and opportunities to further advance Islamic Relief’s effort to achieve gender equality.

Islamic Relief projects in numbers

Number of Islamic Relief programmes which mention women and girls or other gendered terms

The database review identified 370 projects out of a total of 1,115 projects from 2017 to the end of 2019:

- 345 project entries that mentioned women, girls and other gendered related terms such as: female (human), mother, maternal, pregnant, lactating, gender, marriage, widow, GBV, gender-based violence, trafficking, early marriage (variations of), FGM/C (variations of).
- An additional 32 projects that were tagged by Islamic Relief staff as contributing to SDG5 or identified by country offices responding to the mapping survey.
- Of these 377 projects, seven were subsequently excluded because of the lack of information available on their activities.

Categorisation of Islamic Relief Programmes

Area	Access	Stand-alone	Gendered	SRHR
Development	43	43	66	17
Emergencies	75	2	19	35
Early Recovery	9		6	
Disaster Risk Reduction	7		8	
Orphans	4	2	2	
Advocacy		3	7	
Rehabilitation	3	2	8	9
Totals	141	52	116	61 (total 370)

Category Explanations

Access: projects whose database entry mentions women and girls as being among the beneficiaries.

Stand-alone: projects with a sole focus on women and/or girls (men and boys sometimes also included to avoid backlash or to promote gender justice aims).

Gendered: projects that go beyond access and actively ensure they meet the practical needs and strategic interests of women and girls and/or address gender power relations. (see box below).

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR): projects tagged separately to acknowledge the importance of SRH. These often seem more geared to the health of babies than anything directly focused on women’s SRH.

A project is categorised as 'gendered' if it goes beyond access for women and girls and includes any or all of the following criteria:

- a component on women and girls' collective action or improved decision-making at any level
- a recognition of specific measures or intentions to improve women and girls' access to and control over resources
- an intention to address power relations, damaging gender norms or stereotypes (regarding gender identities, roles and sexuality) including through working with men, faith leaders, institutions and communities and/or specific adaptations in a project that address the socioeconomic barriers that women face in both accessing and capitalising on opportunities to fulfil their potential.

Promising projects

From the long list of projects identified above, 86 promising projects on gender justice were identified for further exploration. Of these, 35 address GBV (either integrated or as the primary focus of the project)

Number of open and closed promising gender justice projects at December 2019

Of the 86 promising projects only 6 will continue beyond 2020. Nearly three quarters are closed.	Gender Justice	Of which GBV mentioned in title/description
Closed projects	60	24
Open projects ending in December 2019	3	2
Open projects ending in 2020	17	9
Open projects ending in 2021	65*	0

*These include the Sida funded peacebuilding and conflict prevention projects, which do not mention GBV in the database entries, though the work conducted does incorporate GBV prevention and response.

Project duration

Project type	Gender Justice	Where GBV is mentioned in the project title or description
Less than 12 months	17	3
12 months	26	20
More than 12 months but less than 3 years	33	9
3 years or more	8	3
Duration not specified	2	
Total	86	35

Project funding is often for a short duration. This is in part a legacy of Islamic Relief's origins as a humanitarian organisation. This short-term nature of so much of Islamic Relief's projects is not conducive to good project design, gender analysis, monitoring, evaluation and learning. Gender justice depends on attitudinal, cultural and policy change and is difficult to address with short-term interventions. Further, short-term projects which challenge gender norms without longer-term engagement can put women and girls and, in some circumstances, men and boys at risk.

Budget value of promising gender justice and GBV projects

The budget value of the identified 86 promising projects is approximately £42m, of which £27m is on GBV related interventions. Based on the selected sample, not all projects with a gender lens have been included in this total budget, and it should not be understood as equating to Islamic Relief spending on gender justice work across the organisation.

Islamic Relief examples of promising practice in equitable access and participation in humanitarian projects

Humanitarian response and resilience building for drought-affected communities in Wajir, Kenya (2018 - 2019).

Women were involved in all project undertakings, from selection and registration of the right holders of food and non-food items (NFI), of which approximately 80 per cent are women, as members of disaster response committees and of the water users associations (WUAs). A total of 200 people, of which 90 were female and 110 were male, were trained on community-managed disaster risk reduction.

This enabled communities to develop a community-owned management plan for the disasters common in their respective areas. Fifty-two women and 48 men were trained on water facility management. The projects also conducted student, community and duty bearer awareness and knowledge raising on GBV, child rights, child abuse and protection issues, including FGM, to help survivors access better services, care and support and assist in the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). There is, however, insufficient attention to gender in the delays, challenges and risk analysis in project documentation, or to women and girls with disabilities.



Islamic Relief Kenya is implementing water access projects that make innovative use of green energy.

Islamic Relief staff perceptions on gender programming

Understanding among Islamic Relief staff (HQ and Country offices) around gender justice and women empowerment programmes

Over 90 per cent of male and female Islamic Relief staff who responded to the review survey agreed with the statement 'I personally support Islamic Relief's commitments to gender justice' to a large or moderate degree.

There is widespread support for Islamic Relief's commitments to gender justice across the organisation's staff who responded to the survey. Institutionally, however, Islamic Relief tends to see gender justice in terms of 'non-discrimination' of women and girls, with a focus on 'access' for women and girls. A significant proportion of projects explicitly target women and girls and generally appear good at disaggregating output data by gender, but not all were reviewed.

With notable exceptions, women and girls are generally presented as vulnerable and in need of protection. There is insufficient mention of women and girls as agents of change, increasing women's and girls' decision-making power, collective action or control over assets. Where Islamic Relief projects do go beyond 'non-discrimination', 'access' and 'vulnerability', the focus is on 'empowering women and girls' rather than on transforming unequal gender relations, particularly at the household level, including exploring masculinities and gender and social norms regarding gender.

Access to education, economic resources and health services can have far-reaching impact on women's and girls' lives, including on their ability to influence decisions, while livelihoods-focused projects do give women some control over their economic situation. Yet without an understanding of the gendered socioeconomic barriers women and girls face in different areas of their lives, including restrictions on their ability to make and influence decisions and access and control resources, projects may be unable to overcome, or inadvertently exacerbate, discrimination against women and girls and limit the potential of projects to improve their lives in a sustainable manner.

While there are notable exceptions, such as the work on GBV and reproductive health in Iraq, few humanitarian projects were 'gendered' and there is a tendency to perceive gender justice activities as disconnected from the life-saving work that Islamic Relief undertakes in such contexts.

Promising work on gender justice and GBV

Seven out of 31 respondents to the mapping survey stated that all programmes in their respective countries incorporated gender justice. A further 15 respondents stated that most of their programmes did. From the database analysis and document review, some countries stand out as having more examples of promising practices that are more

transformational in addressing gender equality.. These include Mali, Niger, Kenya, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Jordan, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan and Ethiopia, as well as South Sudan, where there has been an external review of gender in Islamic Relief's programming.

Islamic Relief examples of promising practice in tackling GBV

- Project reports from Combatting gender-based violence of women and girls in Deka Suftu Woreda, Somali regional state of Ethiopia (2016 –2017) include some case studies of impact on GBV. This includes an attempted rape case in Takthager kebeles that was reported by a community volunteer to the Woreda women and children affairs office. The perpetrator was subsequently caught and is now in prison. This project also addresses other harmful practices, including FGM and widow inheritance, and reports provide case studies of the impact of the project on these practices and the reduction of domestic violence.
- Reducing and mitigating SGBV in conflict-affected areas of Iraq (2017 – 2019) works on increasing community awareness on SGBV and providing support for survivors in 12 women's centres. The project provides psychophysical support for 2,000 women and girls, 10,000 dignity kits, as well as engaging 5000 men, women, girls and boys at monthly meetings on SGBV and early marriage. This project explicitly takes a human rights approach to SGBV and SRHR services.
- In Jordan, women and children safe spaces in Mafraq (2017 - 2019) delivered a series of awareness sessions to strengthen the knowledge of women on GBV and GBV prevention, as well as identifying women and/or children who need protection and referring them to services (e.g. to the UNHCR Protection department). The project also sought to increase awareness related to reproductive health issues and knowledge about any equal opportunities for females and males in education, decision-making and leadership.
- Islamic Relief conducted research in 2016 on violence against Syrian women in Lebanon and Iraq, the report of which includes a set of recommendations on employment, violence against women and girls and education to reduce the vulnerability of Syrian women (Curtis, Stawski, Griffin, 2016, Invisible Lives: How the International Community is Failing Syrian Women Refugees, Islamic Relief). A follow-up advocacy report was produced six months later to assess progress against the policy recommendations (Curtis and Stawski, 2017, Still Invisible: An update on the recommendations of the Invisible Lives report. Islamic Relief).

Targeted GBV projects

Stand-alone or mainstreamed GBV services in Islamic Relief country offices

The mapping identified 35 projects addressing GBV, of which nine were stand-alone projects focused on GBV (including one on trafficking) and three focused on safe spaces for women and children.

Projects that integrated GBV varied considerably, but included the following kinds of approaches:

- Multi-strategy empowerment projects for women and girls which integrate GBV (psychosocial support, awareness raising with different community members and services)
- Sectoral projects for women and girls including nutrition, WASH and livelihoods which integrate GBV (psychosocial support, awareness raising with different community members and services).
- Sectoral projects for all which integrate GBV (psychosocial support, awareness raising with different community members and services)
- Programmes, including livelihoods, where survivors of GBV are prioritised.
- Microfinance for families on the condition they do not marry their girls before adulthood.

The Orphan Sponsorship Programme (OSP) sometimes includes awareness raising on issues related to GBV, including EFM, FGM/C, domestic and family violence, as well as other aspects of gender justice such as girls' education. The OSP is a large programme and this approach could be systematised across Islamic Relief's programming. Other projects were identified which suggested that activities addressing issues such as livelihoods and education would impact different forms of violence, but did not include activities to directly address GBV. Applying principles of gender mainstreaming to work in all sectors would help to ensure that the gender justice commitments are met.



Empowerment of Women and Reduction of Gender-Based Violence and Early Forced Marriage

GBV advocacy programmes

Incorporation of GBV advocacy and campaigning activities into Islamic Relief programmes

From the database search, targeted GBV advocacy programmes in Islamic Relief country offices appear limited. Only Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq implement projects labelled as advocacy projects in the database, all of which address GBV and provide psychosocial support. Project information does not mention campaigning.

A handful of other types of projects included advocacy and campaigning elements related to gender justice.

- In Mali, women engaged in advocacy to address discriminatory government policy barring women from accessing subsidies for fertilisers.
- In Bangladesh, the promoting women empowerment, rights and development (POWERED) project held a rally, discussion session and female development fair as key activities of the 2019 International Women's Day (IWD) event.
- In Gaza, Islamic Relief has worked with beneficiaries to improve their ability to be change makers, including providing awareness sessions for beneficiaries on gender, the Palestinian Labour Law and international labour standards, as well as producing radio spots and episodes, awareness materials, a short film, text messages, a Twitter session and a campaign during the 16 Days of activism against GBV.

Islamic Relief and partner offices also undertake advocacy and conduct campaigns, particularly on GBV. Islamic Relief conducted a coordinated social media campaign using #ThroughHerEyes⁶ for the 2019 16 days of activism against GBV. A wide range of Islamic Relief country offices actively engaged with the campaign on twitter, including UK, Malaysia, South Africa, the Islamic Relief Humanitarian Academy for Development (HAD), Australia, Somalia, Switzerland, Palestine, Indonesia, Germany, Sweden and Middle East. The engagement of these country offices took place in multiple languages including English, Arabic, German, Swedish and others. Content shared included statistics on GBV and calls to raise awareness. Islamic Relief UK also shared a blog post proposing 16 ways to take action against GBV, including engaging with male allies and faith leaders and honouring inspirational women.

Developing the international advocacy of different country offices could be undermined by the fact that international campaigns, policies and plans on gender justice and GBV appear to be largely developed at headquarters and as a result may not resonate with or reflect the reality in country offices on the ground. The IGJD development is an exception, being informed by a number of country consultations to build country support. Islamic Relief is already developing a plan to build advocacy capacity among country offices and roll it out. However, if the capacity of Islamic Relief staff to link, support and learn from each other is not improved, then Islamic Relief work on the IGJD may lack coherence.

⁶ Islamic Relief Worldwide, (2019) "Through her eyes campaign 2019", twitter feed available at [https://twitter.com/hashtag/ThroughHerEyes?src=hashtag_click]

Gender and intersectionality

Intersectional approaches to gender, including age, disability and other excluding factors, across Islamic Relief programmes and country offices

Projects often focus on specific vulnerable groups, but disaggregated data, beyond sex, requires more effort to be systematic. 'Beneficiary selection' often mentions particular groups, typically widows, female-headed households, single women, orphan mothers, young people and older people. Projects may make some mention of people with disabilities, but these mentions are not always gendered and, at the global level, disaggregated data to reflect factors of disproportionate vulnerability including disability and age should be standardised .

Further, projects and programmes do not systematically consider women and girls within other kinds of households (i.e. not female-headed households), or with different and intersecting vulnerabilities, including ethnicity, sexuality and HIV status.

A search of the Islamic Relief database for disability-related terms identified 48 projects. The sample of promising projects on gender justice includes only six of these, underscoring that there is more work to be done to ensure full inclusion of gender justice and people with disabilities throughout all areas of Islamic Relief's work. Specific targets on people with disabilities or other marginalised identities are lacking and very few examples of projects that were comprehensively inclusive of people with disabilities and their organisations were identified.



Addressing Special Educational Needs for Children with Disabilities project in Ethiopia

Gender evaluation and baseline assessment

Baseline assessment, end line evaluation and impact measurement of gender-focused programming

Although project and programme documentation have to cover gender as a cross-cutting issue, gender does not have to be allocated any weighting (under sector and sub-sector) and there is no standard Islamic Relief format or template for conducting gender analysis. No baselines or end line evaluations with strong gendered components were identified during this audit.



Empowerment of Women and Reduction of Gender-Based Violence and Early Forced Marriage

Best practice and effective interventions

Best practice, innovation and faith-based interventions

There are 86 promising Islamic Relief gender justice projects which were identified as containing the following characteristics:

- Emphasis on the empowerment of women and girls through economic development, education and addressing GBV.
- Working with men and boys and, on some occasions, women and girls to challenge unequal gender relations.
- Multi-strategy approaches, which have been shown to be most effective at improving gender equality and the rights of women and girls.
- Supporting women's involvement in community and project decision-making structures.

Some of the most interesting projects and practices from across Islamic Relief include those that are based on intersectional gendered analysis, participatory approaches to project planning, implementation and accountability and support for women's organising, leadership, and decision-making. These include:

- A project in Afghanistan which worked with men and boys around GBV and child rights and supported women to play a 'constructive leading role in the community' to achieve the desired long-term impact of reduced early marriage and child labour, strengthened women's rights, reduced GBV and better psychosocial well-being;

- A multi-country project on child protection and GBV in humanitarian action in Mali, Niger and Pakistan, which aimed to integrate GBV in WASH and nutritional and health activities and set up accountability systems enabling people to report instances of GBV;
- An ongoing project in Niger to address GBV and EFM, which aims to improve the capacity of women's community-based organisations (CBOs) to manage village saving and loan associations, improve income generation for women and increase awareness across 10 villages on preventive measures against GBV and EFM, as well as strengthening the response mechanisms;
- An ongoing project in Iraq on SGBV is particularly noteworthy, as it takes an explicitly rights-based approach to SRHR;
- The Sida-funded multi-country conflict prevention and peacebuilding project, including ongoing peacebuilding work in Kenya which links with local women's organisations and work in Pakistan which has led to the establishment of the very first women's village development committee in what was formerly known as the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA).

Only a handful of projects specifically work with men and boys and faith leaders to address gender justice and rarely address decision-making at the household level. These offer the potential to be transformational for women and girls if men's control over women is challenged and if this work is not prioritised over work on women and girls' empowerment.

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals



Addressing **SDG5** targets on gender equality and contributing to **SDG4**⁷

5 GENDER EQUALITY 	SDG5 targets	Results
	<p>5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.</p>	<p>Three projects, all of which are in Bangladesh, directly mention addressing gender discrimination.</p>
	<p>5.2 Eliminate all forms of VAWG in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.</p>	<p>35 projects explicitly mention GBV.</p>
	<p>5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.</p>	<p>Four projects address FGM and five projects address EFM, of which only one is ongoing.</p>
	<p>5.4 Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.</p>	<p>Islamic Relief does not tend to recognise unpaid care and domestic work or promote shared responsibility for it. However, 58 Islamic Relief projects have the potential to reduce the burden of unpaid domestic work through infrastructure, e.g. WASH projects.</p>
	<p>5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.</p>	<p>42 projects include a component on improving women's and, on some occasions, girls' involvement in CBOs. Some state that women and girls and others will be included in project and programme decision-making.</p>

⁷ Girls' education can significantly contribute towards gender equality and provides a transformational approach for Islamic Relief programmes, therefore the co-relation between SDG4 and SDG5 is apparent.



SDG5 targets | **Results**



5.6 Ensure universal access to SRH and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

64 projects mention reproductive health, pregnancy or lactation. All but nine of these projects appear to only address practical gender needs and possibly regard women as little more than bearers of children.



5a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.

105 projects aim to directly improve the economic lives of women and, on some occasions, girls, e.g. access to livelihoods, income generation and microfinance (this includes projects that focus on access only).



5b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular ICT, to promote the empowerment of women.

No projects identified in the database address this target. Ten projects which address this target were identified in the mapping survey, but details were not provided.



SDG4 contribution | **Results**



SDG4: Education

52 Islamic Relief projects improve access to education for boys and girls and, in some circumstances, women. 31 have specific activities to encourage girls' education.

Islamic Relief internal policies and systems

Internal policies and systems that support gender justice

Islamic Relief's GJP and policies on EFM, FGM/C and domestic violence are the framework for the gender justice strategy. Yet while some Islamic Relief gender policies are, in general, neither prominent nor strongly embedded in project documentation.

Child protection, protection and inclusion and safeguarding are more commonly referred to, although often in very general terms. Explicitly referencing Islamic Relief policies in programming and reporting, including gender justice policies, EFM and FGM/C⁸ and integrating the commitments made in these policies into Islamic Relief's ongoing monitoring would help to embed them and facilitate tracking of work undertaken and progress made to address these issues.

Areas for improvement include adopting standardised intersectional gender analysis templates and recommendations on budget allocations to directly support gender justice.

It is encouraging to see that Islamic Relief sometimes works through and with national and local partners and that Islamic Relief's analysis related to sustainability sometimes focuses on building the capacity of local and national actors. Unfortunately, Islamic Relief's sustainability plans generally needs improvement. Islamic Relief needs to develop a set of basic requirements for partners that they address gender in some manner and that, where possible, they help to develop or link with local women's organisations or support women's involvement in CBOs.

Around Islamic Relief regional and country offices there could be more cross-working in teams and more opportunities to learn from and reflect on experiences in other countries or regions (including sharing learning among partner offices, country offices and Islamic Relief headquarters). There are some very recent efforts to introduce opportunities for horizontal learning and sharing, such as the protection and inclusion coordinator webinars recently introduced this year, or the international human resources forum. There are also more formalised opportunities, such as family council meetings. Providing gender justice with formal space at these meetings would be a positive step. Effective sharing of learning requires an organisational culture that creates space to talk about challenges and difficulties without fear of judgment and welcomes this kind of reflection as an opportunity to develop understanding.

As an employer, Islamic Relief has HR policies that support gender justice for staff and the forthcoming international HR manual has potential to increase gender justice for staff around the world. However, based on survey responses, it is perceived to be male dominated and there is a sense that discussions on gender or issues raised by them as women will not be prioritised. There is a relatively low level of agreement that the working environment has improved for women over the last five years.

There is possibly a lack of older women within the organisation, which may limit women's representation in leadership positions. Consolidated and careful work is needed to overcome the challenges that Islamic Relief faces in increasing the number of female staff at senior levels across the organisation and improving organisational culture so that women are enabled to assume senior roles.

⁸ Islamic Relief Worldwide, (2018) "One Cut Too Many: Islamic Relief Policy Brief on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C)" and "Don't Force Me! A Policy Brief on Early and Forced Marriage", available at [<https://www.islamic-relief.org/publications/>]

Capacity to support gender justice

Islamic Relief's capacity to support gender justice

Within the UK, key roles for gender justice include the Gender and Inclusion Advisor, the Disability and Inclusion Advisor, the Head of Global Advocacy, the Safeguarding Lead and Child Protection Advisor, the Conflict Advisor and the HAD Head of Research. There are other staff in the UK with interest, experience and expertise in aspects of gender justice and some champions at leadership level.

From interviews and qualitative responses to the survey, it is clear that capacity to integrate gender into Islamic Relief work is stretched and somewhat patchy. Documentation reveals that there is an association of gender justice with women's access to projects. Too few staff have accessed capacity development activities on gender justice, including in their induction.

Among partner offices, Islamic Relief Canada is streamlining its approach as a funder to bring it in line with the Canadian government's feminist foreign assistance policy. It requires all programmes that it funds with a duration of over 12 months, to include a budget line for gender analysis and an 'access and inclusion contingency' line. It also contributes to the costs of protection and inclusion coordinators in countries where it has funding. Islamic Relief USA has also significantly contributed to gender justice, supporting policy development, programme quality unit activities and in creating faith-sensitive approaches to

gender justice. Other Islamic Relief offices have also contributed to support gender and GBV work at a country level, including Sweden, UK, Germany and others.

At country office level there are also examples where capacity on integrating gender justice has been improved. The creation of protection and inclusion coordinator roles (or similar) has been a positive step, as gender justice tends to be incorporated in these roles along with other areas of responsibility. However, sustainability of these roles is an issue, given they are often tied to project funding.

Training for staff is, in particular, a feature of the multi-country programmes and this has successfully increased staff knowledge regarding how to better address gender justice in programming. Yet it is unclear what ongoing support is offered to, or sought by, country offices to ensure that knowledge is embedded in practice and shared across projects. Headquarters staff mentioned that they receive very few requests for support, yet responses to the surveys suggest that there is a general and consistent demand for training and support, including on GBV, among Islamic Relief staff. Islamic Relief should explore the barriers to requesting support and their capacity to provide additional support should these requests increase.



Yemeni mother and child - malnutrition health programme

Islamic Relief gender justice policy

Progress with implementing the gender justice policy

This mapping is the first review of the implementation of the GJP commitments since they were introduced in 2015. Since then, Islamic Relief has developed pockets of promising practice and some very interesting projects, particularly in terms of GBV. There are also examples where Islamic Relief has taken steps towards mainstreaming gender justice in development projects.

There has been less demonstrable progress in mainstreaming gender justice in humanitarian programming and there is a very mixed picture in terms of institutional arrangements to support gender justice among Islamic Relief staff.

Outcomes of gender justice work over the mid-to-long-term are unclear. Project documents mainly focus on outputs over a short period of time. Changes in women and girls' empowerment, or shifts in cultural norms around gender justice, equity and equality, are rarely addressed. Three evaluations on the Islamic Relief website that focus on humanitarian action highlight a lack of focus on gender.

Myth 1: Gender is just about women

Reality: Gender integration is about ensuring the perspectives and needs of women and men and girls and boys are taken into account and understanding how they are impacted differently by our interventions throughout the programme cycle and in everything we do. (DFID, 2019)

According to interviewees, Islamic Relief needs a stronger culture of reflection on what works or what has achieved long-term impact. Staff are under pressure to deliver with tight resources and teams which are stretched. It will be vital for the organisation to develop longer-term thinking, reflection and impact assessment across all of its work. This should include the Orphan Sponsorship Programme, where Islamic Relief develops long-term relationships with families and communities.

Myth 2: Taking a gender-sensitive approach is complicated, costly and takes time.

Reality: Gender analysis can be done progressively, even as a crisis or conflict unfolds. If gender issues are not addressed from the outset you cannot be sure that those most in need are being reached. It will also cause problems in the future and can even risk further fuelling conflict. (DFID, 2019)



Emergency healthcare service provision for Syrian refugees in Jordan

Islamic Relief as an implementer and employer

This section draws on the staff survey developed for the audit and reflections from interviews and the mapping survey for country offices. The main focus of this section is to review the effectiveness of Islamic Relief's institutional mechanisms to support its programming in the following commitments in the Gender Justice Policy.

1. Increasing female representation, participation and engagement (in our workplace, in particular in management roles at headquarters, field and partner offices)

Anecdotal evidence and feedback suggest that some progress has been made to increase the number of women in senior positions in Islamic Relief. However, their numbers are minimal and data is unavailable to demonstrate whether this is in fact the case. There is a perception among some staff that the organisation is male dominated. There is possibly a lack of older women within the organisation, which may limit women's representation in leadership positions. Islamic Relief's current strategy does not prioritise gender justice, although there are clear efforts to increase women's representation across the organisation and in senior positions.

2. Ensuring an equal appreciation of the roles that both men and women play in the organisation (increasing female voices across the organisation; removing gender disparities; improving the working lives of women)

Women, particularly in the HQ, are much less likely than men to say that they can air their views openly on how Islamic Relief operates and are less likely to feel there is an equal appreciation of the work of women and men. There is a sense that discussions on gender or issues raised by them, as women, will not be prioritised. Women expressed the perception that men are more likely to get their jobs through contacts, while women are viewed as less qualified but are being monitored and addressed elsewhere by management'

3. Providing a conducive and safe working environment

There is a relatively low level of agreement that the working environment has improved for women over the last five years. Women, in general, are not particularly positive about the working environment for female staff. Some female staff expressed a view that their concerns would not be immediately addressed if they reported them. While efforts to deploy women and include female colleagues in humanitarian responses were recognised, there is further progress to be made. There are policies and procedures in place to protect staff and most staff are aware of those procedures.

4. Increasing flexibility in the workplace (to accommodate competing demands of work and home, for both women and men)

Flexible working and maternity and paternity leave policies are in place and are currently being rolled out across Islamic Relief. Sixty-nine per cent of women and 71 per cent of men felt that Islamic Relief allows them to accommodate the competing demands of work and home to a moderate or large degree. Women in HQ were the most positive about Islamic Relief allowing them to accommodate the competing demands of home and work, though men in HQ were less positive than women, which is replicated across other Islamic Relief offices. The majority of women and men feeling that Islamic Relief provides a flexible working environment and policies to support flexibility are in place and comprehensively implemented.

5. Raising gender awareness in the organisation (in the induction programme and in developing dedicated gender staff training modules in all offices)

There is a high level of support for the gender justice agenda at Islamic Relief among survey respondents. 71 per cent of men, but only 53 per cent of women, agree to a moderate or large degree that 'staff have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude to carry out their work with gender awareness'. From interviews and qualitative responses to the survey, it is clear that capacity to integrate gender into Islamic Relief's work is stretched and somewhat patchy. Documentation reveals that there is an association of gender justice with women's access to projects. Too few staff have accessed capacity development activities on gender justice, including in their induction.

Recommendations

1. Gender justice should be more strongly emphasised and consistently prioritised and embedded throughout Islamic Relief's next global strategy.
2. Senior management across the organisation must champion the Islamic Gender Justice Declaration and ensure that it helps deliver practical and positive change in ways of working
3. Islamic Relief should move from 'targeting' and 'access' to a focus on 'empowerment' and 'transformation'.
4. Islamic Relief should make the case for gender justice as 'life saving and transformative' including in development and humanitarian settings.
5. Intersectional gender analysis should be undertaken throughout the project cycle, addressing power relations at different levels, including household, community, national, international and organisational.
6. Analysis and monitoring templates should be standardised across Islamic Relief projects, in line with Islamic Relief commitments on gender justice. Islamic Relief should identify a means to clearly label projects that include gender justice to make it easier to track progress against gender justice commitments.
7. Islamic Relief should do more to work with women's organisations and support their collective action within countries and transnationally, including linking with women's movements for systemic change.
8. There should be a shift towards long-term funding and impact assessments, as well as guidance for resource allocation across Islamic Relief projects.
9. Organisational culture for learning and critical reflection should be strengthened, using the Islamic Gender Justice Declaration as an opportunity and supported by a strong knowledge management system.
10. Islamic Relief needs to work harder to ensure a safer, more appreciative and more conducive work environment for both female and male staff.



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