Social Inclusion and Gender Statement

VSO

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting everyone, but it is the most vulnerable and marginalised who are most affected. Women, girls, children, non-binary persons, people with underlying health conditions, and persons with disabilities amongst vulnerable groups face disproportionate risk and are the most excluded. VSO is committed to ensuring social inclusion and gender equality as part of all our interventions in our COVID-19 response placing emphasis on reaching out to the most marginalised communities with the intersection of gender and disability.

Key areas of focus

1. **Accessible communication:** Ensure that all information related to protection and prevention is in accessible formats and languages required. To tailor messages for specific groups as required.

2. **Access to services:** Ensure vulnerable communities have access to basic services including health and wellbeing, social protection, education and livelihood opportunities.

3. **Improving resilience:** We will endeavor to support and prioritise gender and disability as part of any relief and rescue efforts.

4. **Protection and addressing gender-based violence:** Create awareness on safeguarding and duty of care amongst all stakeholders. Providing linkages for referral and counselling.

Our approach

1. **Strengthening agency:** working with vulnerable groups and building capabilities of marginalised groups to overcome discrimination and exclusion emerging out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. **Build inclusive leadership:** ensure that women, people with disabilities and other excluded groups are part of the decision-making process in addressing the COVID-19 outbreak.

3. **Build alliances:** Work with and build partnerships with agencies and governments to build capacity on social inclusion and gender and strengthen interventions to ensure that no one is left behind. Strengthening voices of the poor and marginalized.

4. **Influencing:** Work with partners and vulnerable groups to influence healthcare providers, ministries of health and disaster management organisations to ensure access and inclusion of vulnerable groups in their response and interventions. Develop strategies for social protection, change unequitable gender norms, and ensure livelihood opportunities for women, non-binary persons, persons with disabilities and other excluded groups.

5. **Engaging volunteers:** Supporting and training volunteers on social inclusion and gender at the community level to work on COVID-19 responses in their home community, ensuring their safety and protection.

6. **Safeguarding and duty of care:** Ensure that our COVID-19 response follow safeguarding measures and do no harm principles. In specific to ensure the protection of children, young people and all vulnerable groups.

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