

***AMARO- DROM***

**GENDER POLICY**

**2020-2024**

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# **INTRODUCTION**

Union for Development and Integration of Roma Minority in Albania aims sustainable development and integration of the Roma community in our country, as well as preserving ethnic-linguistic values, cultural and national identity. An essential part of our vision are Roma women and girls, where their needs for empowerment, integration and more rights have highlighted the importance of incorporating gender equality into Amaro- Drom projects and initiatives.

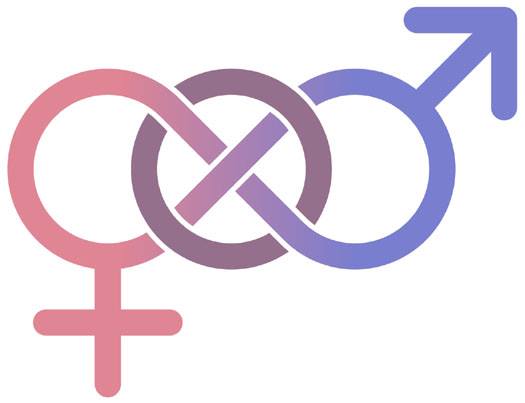
Amaro-Drom is aware that gender inequalities have a counterproductive effect not only on our work towards meeting organization’s goals and objectives, but also in the impact they create on staff, organizational climate and the overall well-being of the community. Thus, fulfilling gender-related responsibilities is seen as an important factor for achieving organization success.

Our commitment and responsibility towards gender is both legal and a moral duty. Law no.9970, dated 24.7.2008 on “Gender Equality in Albania” [[1]](#footnote-2)specifically covers certain areas such as staff recruitment, protection against sexual harassment, job announcements and other gender-sensitive issues that place significant responsibility on compliance of minimum standards that guarantee respect for fundamental human rights.

Being aware that gender inequality and injustice is a complex phenomenon which can derive and coexist within organization structure, process and practices[[2]](#footnote-3); our gender strategy

aims fight injustice and possible gender gaps considering two main fields: organizational and programmatic dimension, in other words both services delivered and organization itself.

Our commitment toward achieving gender equality will be based in gender mainstreaming strategy

*Gender mainstream strategy is a globally accepted approach which aims transforming structure that provides inequality; sensitivity to complementary and interdepended roles of man and woman in society and accepts that achieving gender equality requires addressing gender issues in overall organizational structures and activities.*

*(Retrieved from:*http://www.ekvilib.org)

Gender mainstreaming strategy not only focuses on women, but on cooperation between men and women in society, serving so the integration process in the most appropriate way[[3]](#footnote-4). Amaro-Drom gender policy aims to advance both women and men rights in the society and community where it operates, by providing a logical framework for incorporating gender perspective into all Amaro-Drom activities and initiatives. Equal participation of men and women are an essential part of our strategy.

# **METHODOLOGY**

Methodology used in compiling gender strategy has taken into consideration a variety of elements which guarantee development of a policy which successfully address and reflects needs and real context where it operates.

Our methodology not only has taken into consideration opinions of a wide range of stakeholders both from the community and within the organization, but also includes a review of existing documents and data. Specifically the methodology of gender policy is based on:

* ***Consultations with main stakeholders:*** Consultation with community stakeholders has been considered necessary in order to obtain necessary opinions to set gender policy priorities and objectives, while consultation with staff has served to set priorities primarily in the organizational field. Part of the consultation was also a questionnaire addressed to Amaro-Drom executives who aimed to conduct an assessment of the organization according to gender mainstreaming indicators. The data obtained were used for the development of gender policy.
* ***Document Analysis:*** An important part has also been the reviewing of existing data including review of documents, reports, articles and gender situation analysis with a particular focus both on rural and urban areas. The use of these documents has been seen as important to complete the context of gender situation in which Amaro-Drom operates and to serve the fulfilment of gender policy objectives and priorities.

# **3. SITUATION ANALYSIS IN THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE**

The challenges toward gender equality are complex and multidimensional. Inequalities in the labor market, poverty, gender-based violence, and the need to empower women and girls continue to be important goals of gender equality strategies and action plans in our country[[4]](#footnote-5).

The gender gap is also significantly strengthened by the low level of education and information. The lack of education and information affects the vulnerability and marginalization of the Roma community, especially Roma women, who, without being informed and educated about their rights, may be subject to abuse andexclusion.

An important part of Amaro- drom's work has also been informing and supporting the Roma community in accessing educational institutions, as well as supporting children to help them integrate. Dropping out of school often at a high level in the Roma community is an important challenge, as this dropout is not always related to lack of desire for education, but in most cases it is related to the poverty of Roma families.

A large part of the Roma community lives in rural areas. In rural areas these inequalities are even more pronounced, including problems with land rights; the low financial contribution of women in their families; low inclusion of women in entrepreneurship, employment and education, as well as low levels of information for women compared to men[[5]](#footnote-6).

For this reason, Amaro-Drom has undertaken various activities to improve the well-being of rural communities, with particular emphasis on gender issues. As part of projects focusing on sustainable development in rural areas, Amaro-Drom has contributed to the creation and support of women's collaboration groups in entrepreneurship initiatives, providing not only economic benefits for women and families, but also improving their social life and participation in decision making. These opportunities are good alternatives for empowering women and informing them for their rights and freedoms.

In fact Amaro-Drom's contribution to improving gender sensitivity in the community has been extended to several activities and areas. An important part has been training of Amaro-Drom members on gender equality; the training of Roma men and women in entrepreneurship, and vocational training through courses with equal participation by both men and women. Various meetings with representatives of the local level to further improve gender equality in the community have also taken place. However, despite achievements and efforts, gender equality challenges are still present. The analysis identifies that more progress is still needed in some key areas. Current major challenges include:

## **Gender equality in entrepreneurship and self-employment**

Fulfilling Amaro-Drom's mission in Roma community development undoubtedly requires efforts to combat poverty, especially that of womenwho are more vulnerable than men. Professional courses have always been seen as a good opportunity to develop and build the skills needed for the labour market. Amaro- drom, through "Sustainable Improvement of the Life of the Roma Community in Albania" project has supported Roma youth, boys and girls in the realization of various vocational courses. However, Roma often face discrimination in the labor market, especially in the private sector, being so forced to abandon employment despite the skills acquired in vocational courses[[6]](#footnote-7). Compared to men, women are in even less favourable positions.

On the other hand, a good alternative for women’s economic participation and empowermentis development of successful entrepreneurships by women that would enable greater economic independence and greater well-being for the community. In general, entrepreneurship initiatives are dominated by men and consequently they continue to be those who achieve higher levels of employment and financial gain. This is largely influenced by the lack of information of Roma women on how to set up an entrepreneurship, the lack of necessary qualifications and the fewer opportunities for them to be involved in these initiatives. Moreover, as long as men mostly own resources and land ownership, they are often those who undertake the most of this initiatives.

In rural areas, inequalities in land rights substantially condition the women's participation in entrepreneurial initiatives. This is also related to the lack of information, recognition of legislation on their ownership rights, and other sources. The need for education and information regarding the use of land, resources, and opportunities that the market offers would offer more alternatives to increase women's involvement in entrepreneurship and create opportunities for self-employment.

## **Empowering women in decision making and social inclusion**

The low participation of women in decision-making is an issue that obviously does not concern only Roma women. However, being a Roma woman places them in a “dual stereotype”condition not only as a woman, but also as a part of the Roma community. In this context, Amaro- Drom's efforts have been focused on raising community awareness of eliminating gender- based stereotypes and creating more opportunities for Roma women to become involved in decision-making.

Another problem encountered is also the lack of information and access to possible information resources that enable women to develop and increase their involvement in decision-making and social life of the community. Involvement in various social, cultural, economic activities creates an important advantage for the creation of social capital and the development of Roma women. Consequently Amaro-Drom places particular importance to the development of various activities for educational and cultural purposes.

Education, especially of Roma girls who are generally excluded from their right to education, has also been seen as an important challenge in terms of empowerment and social inclusion. In this context, educating Roma mothers and their spouses on the importance of education remains a substantial mission.

Women are also an integral part of labor chain in the rural economy, but most women are involved in informal agricultural duties[[7]](#footnote-8). In fact, we can say that women’s involvement in agricultural is not lacking, but their influence is at a very low level. Women in rural areas are actively involved in carrying out a variety of agribusiness processes, but there is a gap between men and women in decision-making of these processes.

On the other hand, the voice of Roma women needs representation in all Amaro-Drom initiatives. Amaro-Drom has shown great empathy in creating opportunities for women and men to be heard equally in all initiatives and activities. However, the creation of a formal structure responsible for the exchange of information between Amaro-Drom and women from the Roma community, would create better opportunities for increasing women's participation.

## **Political and organizational climate**

Commitment toward gender issues requires the promotion of gender equality at all organizational levels.The political and organizational climate remains a key factor in creating an enabling environment for gender equality. Amaro-Drom staff, since the beginning, has expressed their full commitment to gender issues and efforts to create a more favorable political and organizational climate.

From the analysis of key elements and factors that guarantee a gender-sensitive political and organizational climate, Amaro-Drom has identified as a major challenge: the lack of a code of ethics that specifically addresses gender issues; the need to train staff in addressing gender issues and the steps they need to take in protecting and addressing discrimination and any possible forms of abuse; the need to create opportunities for higher participation of women members of Amaro-Drom in decision-making, and the need to improve work organizing, especially in facilitating and maintaining a work-life balance. Maintaining a work-life balance is an important challenge especially for women, who perform unpaid work and undertake the primary role of caregiver in their families.

## **Staff technical capacities**

Maintaining a qualified staff can be a constant challenge for almost any organization. Amaro-Drom staff work professionally to fulfil its mission, however, further training needs are always in place as long as employee development needs should be consistent with the new advancements. Amaro-Drom's commitment to gender policy of course requires specialists and staff equipped with all thenecessary skills and qualities to implement this policy, as well as to successfully fulfil the mission of the organization. For that reason it is important for staff to receive the necessary training, and also to create opportunities to recruit staff with specific gender qualifications.

## **Cooperation and network development**

Partners are an important part of Amaro-Drom's strategy. Accomplishing gender policy mission should be seen as a shared responsibility with other stakeholders, as this is an important step in successfully fulfilling the mission. Throughout the years, Amaro-Drom has had successful collaborations with partners such as We Effect, which has had a significant impact on gender equality initiatives. However, the need to expand the network of partners and co-operators, especially with organizations wish specifically address women's rights and gender equality, would significantly improve the gender perspective in the Roma community.

# **4. THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF GENDER POLICY**

## **Vision**

We believe that sustainable development of the Roma community should be based on the equal integration of men and women, into a society that promotes hope, tolerance and social justice.

## **Mission**

Amaro-Drom's policy mission is to contribute to the development of the Roma community, in order to improve community well-being through gender-sensitive initiatives that guarantee social and economic inclusion.

## **VALUES AND PRINCIPLES**

1. *Social justice -* a principle that aims to create possibilities for equal access to opportunities; resources and rights

2. *Gender mainstreaming -* Consideration of gender equality as a priority, and incorporating it in all sectors in which organization operates at the organizational and programmatic level

3. *Respect and non-discrimination practice****-*** Mutual respect between men and women in society and elimination of all forms of discrimination

4. *Empowerment -* creating opportunities for social and economic inclusion for women and men, empowering them to maximize their capacities

5. *Partnership and co-operation -* sustainable development involving all stakeholders in achieving gender equality and placing emphasis on partnerships between men and women.

# **5. PRIORITY AREAS, STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

## Programmatic field

**Entrepreneurship and self-employment**

***Strategic goal 1:*** *Improving equal participation of men and women in entrepreneurship and self-employment initiatives*

**Empowerment and Social Inclusion**

**Objectives and indicators:**

* Development of necessary skills and capacities for women and men to undertake entrepreneurship initiatives

**Indicator:** *increase in the number of men and women who have obtained necessary skills and capacities to undertake entrepreneurship initiatives.*

* Increasing women's access to resources, services and opportunities for professional development, agriculture and entrepreneurship

**Indicator:** *increased number of women who are able to own their resources, access services and follow opportunities*

* Providing equal support to business and entrepreneurship ideas of men and women, helping them to realize them

**Indicator:***number of men and women who have obtained support for their ideas*

***Strategic goal 2:*** *Empowering women in order to improve their participation in decision making and social inclusion.*

**Objectives and indicators:**

* Raising the community’s awareness and particularly women’s awareness about the importance of their involvement in decision making and social life of the community

**Indicators:** *Community is informedand support women participation in decision making and social life*

*Increased number of women that are active and participate in decision making and social life*

* Creating the necessary structures that enable women's participation at all levels of decision-making regarding Amaro-Drom programs and services

**Indicator:***Increased women participation and created structures that facilitates the process*

* Raising awareness of Roma families on the importance of education for their children

**Indicator:** *Increased number of Roma families that are informed and ready to educate their children*

## **Organizational field**

***Strategic goal 3:***Development of a gender-sensitive political and organizational climate

**Objectives and indicators:**

* Providing a safe working environment for men and women part of Amaro-Drom staff

**Indicators:** *The creation of necessary structures that enable safe environment*

*Number of staff who reports safety problems*

* Increasing participation of women’s staff of the organization in decision-making

**Indicator:** *number of women’s staff that have taken part in organization’s decision making*

* Improving work organization for women and men, creating an enabling and staff-friendly environment.

**Indicator:** *improved work conditions and schedulesopportunities*

***Strategic goal 4:***Development of technical capacity of Amaro-Drom’s staff on gender issues at all levels

**Objectives and indicators:**

* Raising awareness of organization’s staff on the importance of gender equality and integrate a gender perspective into the organization's strategy

Indicators: *Staff is informed and has necessary knowledge on gender equality*

* Improving staff knowledge and capacities in relation to gender issues and implementation of gender policy

Indicator: *staff has necessary skills to incorporate gender perspective in organization’s strategy*

***Strategic goal 5:*** *Developments of networks and improving cooperation with organizations and institutionsthat works in the gender equality field.*

**Objectives and indicators:**

* Identification of organizations working in the field of women's rights protection, particularly in rural areas

**Indicator:** *the list of organizations which Amaro- Drom has identified and plan to cooperate*

* Collaborating with organizations and institutions to improve Amaro-Drom's activities in the field of gender equality
* **Indicator:***the number of partnership and collaboration with other organizations and institutions*

# **6. ACTION PLAN**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Field of action** | **PROGRAMAATIC** | | | | | | | | |
| **Strategicgoal 1:** | | *Improving equal participation of men and women in entrepreneurship and self-employment initiatives* | | | | | | | |
| **Objectives** | **Activities** | | | **Indicators** | | **Main responsible authority** | **/ Monitoring/ reporting** | **Time frame** (periodicity) | **Resources and budget** | |
| * 1. Development ofnecessaryskills and capacities for women and men to undertake entrepreneurship initiatives | 1.1.1.  Supporting young Roma in vocational courses | | | The number of young roma what successfully finished the course | |  |  |  | - | |
| 1.1.2  Preparation of training modules focusing on the development of entrepreneurial ideas and management | | | Training modules are prepared | |  |  |  |  | |
| 1.1.3. Organizing trainings to empower women and men in entrepreneurship and management | | | Organized trainings | |  |  |  | - | |
| 1.1.4. Study visits to successfully entrepreneurships | | | Conducted visits | |  |  |  | - | |
| 1.2. Increasing women's access to resources, services and opportunities for professional development, agriculture and entrepreneurship | 1.2.1. Conducting ongoing information meetings with women in order to familiarize them with legislation and property rights. | | | The number of meeting conducted with women | |  |  |  | - | |
| 1.2.2. Conducting trainings on financial education for men and women | | | Trainings are organized | |  |  |  |  | |
| 1.2.3. Creating a group of women who would be representatives of community and will share information on any entrepreneurship opportunity and initiative | | | Women’s representative group is created | |  |  |  |  | |
| 1.3. Providing equal support to business and entrepreneurship ideas of men and women, helping them to realize them | 1.3.1.  Organizing community awareness activities on the importance of supporting equally men and women in entrepreneurial initiatives | | | Awareness activities are realised | |  |  |  |  | |
| 1.3.2  Organizing activities to participate in local and national fairs | | | Participation in local and national fairs | |  |  |  |  | |
| 1.3.3. Providing support tools for realizing entrepreneurial ideas like (like physical assets, financial aid through cooperation with investors etc. ) | | | Supportive tools provided for entrepreneurial ideas | |  |  |  |  | |
| **Strategic Goal 2: *Empowering women in order to improve their participation in decision making and social inclusion.*** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Objectives** | **Activities** | | | **Indicators** | | **Main responsible authority** | **Monitoring/ reporting** | **Time frame** | **Resources/ Budget** | |
| **2.1.** Raising the community’s awareness and particularly women’s awareness about the importance of their involvement in decision making and social life of the community | **2.1.1.**  Organizing awareness raising activities with the community and women with a focus on women's participation in decision-making and communities’ social life | | | | Number of awareness raising activities carried out |  |  |  | |  |
| 2.1.2. Organizing an activity focused on presenting stories of successful women in career and family life | | | | Activity is organised |  |  |  | |  |
| **2.2.** Creating the necessary structures that enable women's participation at all levels of decision-making regarding Amaro-Drom programs and services | 2.2. 2. Consultative meetings with community's women on Amaro-Drom services and programs | | | | The number of realised consultations |  |  |  | |  |
| 2.2.3. Organizing trainings to empower women in creating information and advocacy networks | | | | Trainings are organized |  |  |  | |  |
| 2.2.4. Creation of the “Gender Equality Advocacy” group with community and Amaro-Drom members | | | | The group is created |  |  |  | |  |
| **2.3.** Raising awareness of Roma families on the importance of education for their children | 2.3.1. Organizing awareness raising activities on the importance of education and the long-term benefits of education | | | | Activities are realized |  |  |  | |  |
|  | 2.3.2. Organizing activities to introduce models of success with Roma parents who have chosen to educate their children | | | | Activitiesare realized |  |  |  | |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Field of action** | **ORGANIZATIONAL** | | | | | | | | |
| **Strategic: goal 3** | | **Development of a gender-sensitive political and organizational climate** | | | | | | | |
| **Objectives** | **Activities** | | | **Indicatos** | | **Main responsible authority** | **Monitoring/ reporting** | **Time frame**(periodicity) | **Resources/ budget** | |
| 3.1.  Providing a safe working environment for men and women part of Amaro-Drom staff | 3.1.1. Compiling code of ethics with a specific focus on gender issues; sexual harassment and discrimination | | | The code of ethics has been drafted | |  |  |  |  | |
| 3.1.2.  Introducing the code of ethics to all Amaro-Drom members | | | Amaro-drom members are informed about code of ethics | |  |  |  |  | |
| 3.1.3. Training of Amaro-Drom members on protection and addressing discrimination and sexual harassment at work. | | | Amaro-Drom members are trained in protecting and addressing sexual harassment and discrimination | |  |  |  |  | |
| * 1. Increasing participation of women’s staff of the organization in decision-making | 3.2.1 Organization of round tables with equal representation of men and women in decision making processes of Amaro- Drom | | | Number of organized roundtables | |  |  |  |  | |
| 3.2.2. Providing support through the promotion of women staff who exhibit good work performance | | | The number of women promoted | |  |  |  |  | |
| * 1. Improving work organization for women and men, creating an enabling and staff-friendly environment. | * + 1. Providing opportunities to work in home | | | The number of staff members that have had opportunity to work in home | |  |  |  |  | |
| 3.3.2. Providing opportunities for flexible schedule  . | | | Number of persons who have taken advantage of flexible schedule opportunities | |  |  |  |  | |
| **Strategic goal 4:** Development of technical capacity of Amaro-Drom’s staff on gender issues at all levels | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Objectives** | **Activities** | | | **Indicators** | | **Main responsible authority** | **Monitoring/ reporting** | **Time- frame** | **Resources/ budget** | |
| 4.1. Development of technical capacity of Amaro-Drom’s staff on gender issues at all levels | **4.1.1.** Organizing roundtables focusing on gender equality and the importance of gender perspective for the organization | | | | The number of round table meetings held |  |  |  | |  |
| 4.1.2.  Increasing participation of Amaro drom staff, especially men, in gender equality activities | | | | The number of men participant in gender equality activities |  |  |  | |  |
| **4.2.**  Improving staff knowledge and capacities in relation to gender issues and implementation of gender policy | 4.2.1.  Conducting a preliminary assessment on identifying gender development staff needs | | | | The preliminary assessment has been carried out |  |  |  | |  |
| 4.2.3.  Development of adapted training materials for Amaro-Drom staff | | | | Adapted training materials have been realized |  |  |  | |  |
| 4.2.4. Organizing trainings for staff development on gender issues such as conducting a gender analysis in their work | | | | Conducted trainings |  |  |  | |  |
| 4.2.5. Recruitment of one gender specialist | | | | The gender specialist is recruited |  |  |  | |  |
| **Stretegic goal 5:** *Developments of networks and improving cooperation with organizations and institutions that works in the gender equality field.* | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Objectives** | **Activities** | | | **Indicators** | | **Main responsible authority** | **Monitoring/ reporting** | **Time- frame** | **Resources/ budget** | |
| * 1. Identification of organizations working in the field of of women's rights protection, particulary in rural areas | 5.1.1.  Creation of a database of organizations working in the field of women’s right protection | | | Data base is created | |  |  |  |  | |
| 5.1.2. Participation of Amaro- drom in various activities in the context of gender equality | | | The number of activities which Amaro rom has attended. | |  |  |  |  | |
| * 1. Collaborating with organizations and institutions to improve Amaro-Drom's activities in the field of gender equality | Staff trainings to develop the necessary capacities for collaborations with organizations and for attracting donors | | | The staff is trained | |  |  |  |  | |
|  | 5.2.2. developing promotional activities of Amaro-Drom services and programs in order to increase interest in collaborations | | | The number of promotional activities organized | |  |  |  |  | |

# 7**. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN**

Monitoring and evaluation are important stages of successful implementation of gender policy. Implementation of the strategic plan will be continuously monitored based on relevant indicators. Responsible for monitoring will be Amaro-Drom leaders, and gender equality coordinator who will ensure that activities are fulfilled based on vision, mission, goals and objectives set. Fulfilment or not of the indicators, will provide critical information on the feasibility of the plan and the integration of gender equality across all sectors and levels of Amaro-Drom. For this reason it is important to have a periodic situation report every 6 months to see the progress of gender policy and identify potential needs for intervention and improvement. After the first year of implementation, an assessment will be carried out to see the overall progress of gender policy.

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