

Gender Positioning & Policy Paper

Dalberg Media, March 2021

At Dalberg Media, we are entrepreneurs and innovators, designers and creative problem solvers, thinkers, and doers. We come from a diverse set of backgrounds and each identify with various groups around us and abroad. To our core, we believe that gender equality, equal opportunities, and diversity lead to improved quality across the company's operations and projects.

At Dalberg, we have pledged that "Neutral is Not Enough" during the United Nations' General Assembly in 2019 to proactively place gender inclusion at the centre of the organization's efforts and across our portfolio of work in all sectors¹. We work on solutions to deliberately draw out the gendered dimensions of a given problem or opportunity in order to accelerate our collective efforts to achieve gender equality.

Dalberg Media applies a gender lens across projects and operations. In operations, we strive to counteract societal inequalities and create a safe and inclusive work environment. Across all projects, we design our approaches with the aim to contribute to giving all humans, regardless of their gender and sexual identities, equal opportunities and access to resources, decision-making, and the safety to voice their opinions. Together, this will create better processes and results, and lead to greater impact to ultimately form more just and sustainable societies.

With this Gender Positioning and Policy Paper, we wish to describe how Dalberg Media works to ensure increased gender equality and equal opportunities across the firm and its project work. The policy covers any member of staff that works for Dalberg Media, including but not limited to permanent staff, project-based staff, operations and finance staff, interns, et cetera. The Gender Positioning and Policy Paper is complementary to other resources and policies at Dalberg Media.

The document first describes Dalberg Media's understanding of and approach to gender and inclusion. It then outlines the company's gender practice across operations and internal practices. Finally, it explains Dalberg Media's approach to projects and collaborations with external stakeholders.

1. Understanding Gender

Dalberg Media understands *gender* as a social construct used to distinguish the characteristics and social behaviour of women and men. We recognize that gender is defined by each person for themselves and cannot be reduced to a person's body. All of our employees have the right to identify and express their gender in the way they choose.

Assumptions about a person's gender are often made based on the sex assigned to them from birth and seen as dependent on the person's physiological characteristics. The assigned sex is widely legally and medically regulated and is as such socially constructed in a specific cultural and historic context. Sex has traditionally been defined in binary terms as either male or female. This dichotomous distinction of sex is however problematic as it neglects people whose sex cannot be defined as either male or female, e.g. people who are born intersex.

¹ <https://dalberg.com/our-ideas/press-release-cross-sectoral-commitment-four-leading-organizations-achieve-global-goals/>

Independently of their sex, a person might or might not feel like their associated gender matches how they experience their gender. Gender also relates to society's norms and expectations of people to behave, think and present themselves in line with their assigned sex. Expectations about gender roles vary between cultures and societies and can also change across different groups, times, and places.

Ascribing a person attributes, characteristics or roles based on their sex creates gender stereotypes, which can cause discrimination and unequal treatment. Gender stereotypes can be harmful for persons of all sexes and genders, but they are particularly harmful to those that do not conform to the normative gender roles. Dalberg Media acknowledges the existence of societal expectations on people to behave according to their gender and is committed to fighting gender stereotypes in the workplace and through its project work.

In integrating gender and a gender-equality perspective in all operations and project work (gender lens), Dalberg Media takes a gender mainstreaming approach. This is a long-term strategy whereby gender equality is mainstreamed in all aspects of internal processes and projects, from the designing stage to the implementing and evaluation phases. Gender mainstreaming is the responsibility of all and is supported by a commitment to raise awareness of gender equality issues, knowledge, resources, and availability of information.

2. Gender in Practice: Operations

Dalberg Media applies a gender lens in our work in several ways: it is built into both our internal operations and the way we conduct project work for clients. Our approach is aimed at providing *equal opportunities* for all and creating a *safe and inclusive work environment*. In practice, these principles are applied and implemented through several channels. These channels are subject to change, and depend on an ongoing assessment on the most pressing current needs in the company at any point in time. In our internal operations these channels currently include:

2.1 Inclusivity

Dalberg Media recognizes the right of staff members to express their gender identity, characteristics, or expression without fear of consequences. We encourage our staff to express their gender and/or sexuality in any way they are comfortable, and do not put them in situations where this expression might be compromised. This means e.g., that staff members, including those identifying as LGBTQ+, can refuse to work in, or travel to, countries where they believe themselves to be at risk of any form of intimidation, harassment, or prosecution due to their expression of gender and/or sexuality, without any negative implication or consequence for their career.

2.2 Safe Work Environment

Dalberg Media is committed to providing a safe work environment for all its employees free from discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. We do not tolerate discrimination and harassment in any form, including due to sexual orientation or gender identity, and including in forms of physical, verbal, and non-verbal conduct. This covers discriminating behaviour and harassment carried out by employees of Dalberg Media, office collaborators, clients, casual workers, contractors or visitors, et cetera, whether it takes place within office premises or outside, including at social events, business trips, training sessions or conferences.

Dalberg Media proactively encourages that any discriminating behaviour or harassment is reported to management. All complaints of sexual harassment will be taken seriously and treated with respect and in confidence, and all allegations will be promptly investigated. No one will be victimised for making such a complaint. Any person found to have sexually harassed another will face disciplinary action.

2.3 Recruitment, Staffing and Onboarding

Dalberg Media acknowledges that women tend to be under-represented in leadership positions in society and recognizes the need to dedicate special attention to gender equality in hiring processes to ensure a gender balance across the levels of a company. At Dalberg Media, we maintain sensitivity to gender diversity across seniority levels when making hiring decisions, applying positive discrimination to equally qualified candidates to re-balance gender imbalances. Equally importantly, we consider this in our outreach to new potential hires to ensure that language is gender neutral and appeals to a diverse audience, including all genders.

We recognize that social norms and pressures lead men and women to take on different sets of tasks which do not necessarily lead to equal career-advancement opportunities in the long term. We acknowledge the societal issue of women taking on more non-promotable tasks than their male counterparts, also sometimes labelled "corporate housework" (including tasks such as planning social events, administrative tasks and helping out on smaller project-tasks that do not develop their professional skills). These non-promotable tasks are essential for maintaining a good work environment and delivering high-quality products to our clients. We therefore dedicate special attention to distributing both promotable and non-promotable tasks evenly across genders to ensure equal career advancement opportunities. We further recognize the importance of having a diverse gender composition across projects, allowing for diverse perspectives to be considered which we see not only as morally important, but as good for business as it stimulates better decision-making.

2.4. Salaries and Terms of Employment

Dalberg Media acknowledges that the gender pay gap is still an urgent issue, also in Denmark where the company is currently based, and we want to be part of pushing for equal pay for equal work. We follow four principles in ensuring sensitivity to gender issues in determining salaries and terms of employment, outlined below.

2.4.1 Conducting Pay Audits

Awareness is an effective first step to ensuring fairness in salaries. We are therefore committed to analysing compensation from a gender perspective and ensuring that equal work gets compensated equally. In having standardized criteria on performance, we increase transparency on what compensation is tied to, giving employees agency in maintaining fair salary levels across genders. Management tracks compensation development to identify patterns and potential gaps across all levels of the firm.

2.4.2 Ensuring Hiring and Promotion is Fair

We know that in general, men tend to be systematically rated higher than women in conversations about promotion, leading to higher salaries and faster career advancement. To ensure we are not part of reinforcing these tendencies, management is committed to analysing promotions and terms of employment to increase awareness around our potential biases. We further conduct gender sensitivity training for our managers to ensure fair negotiations.

2.4.3 Ensuring Women Have Equal Opportunity for Advancement

We acknowledge that there are gender differences in advancement opportunities. We focus specifically on working against the lack of feedback women tend to receive on their performance, the lack of access to career mentorship they face, and the systematic assignment to less high-profile tasks (see 2.3) that is a problem for women specifically. Dalberg Media works against these societal tendencies based on a principle to ensure persons of all genders are on the right track to promotions, by providing systematic feedback and mentorship.

2.4.4 Encouraging Women's Negotiations Efforts

We recognize that there are gender differences in negotiations. In Dalberg Media, we pay special attention to encouraging women to negotiate, not evaluating them solely based on collaborative traits that they are often evaluated on in society. In addition to increasing transparency around compensation on different levels we are also mindful not to discriminate in our reactions towards negotiations and pay specific attention to not engaging in a social push back when women negotiate. We do this for example by engaging in gender sensitivity and bias training to better understand different gender norms in negotiations and biases towards different genders.

2.5 Work-Life Balance

Beyond these efforts, we also foster an organizational culture allowing for work-life balance, both because we believe it is the right thing to do from an inclusivity perspective and due to the business case associated with doing so. In Dalberg Media, this culture is fostered e.g. by allowing for flexibility in working hours and locations and respecting differences in lifestyle choices. Furthermore, we pay special attention to encouraging men to take parental leave, being mindful of the fact that organizational culture plays a key role in determining whether or not men specifically choose to take paternity leave.

2.6 Leadership

Dalberg Media ensures that diverse leadership, specifically focusing on women and non-binaries, is encouraged by refraining from defining leadership traits exclusively based on attributes that are typically associated with a specific gender in society, and by recognizing the importance of diversity across the company and in its leadership. We further recognize that women tend to score high on many critical leadership traits and the business case associated with promoting them.

We incorporate gender diversity-thinking also on the highest levels of our leadership e.g. in ensuring gender diversity on our Advisory Board. Beyond minimum efforts, we pay special attention to striving towards enough women in the Board to reach the critical mass that ensures their perspectives have a real impact on our work and make important efforts to source women even when it is hard.

3. Gender in Practice: Projects

Dalberg Media applies a gender lens across all project work. We do this by proactively addressing the gendered dimensions of a given problem or opportunity when developing solutions and recommendations. By taking into account the needs and realities of people of all gender identities, we enable holistic project designs with a clear understanding of the target group.

3.1 Applying a Gender Lens to Project Work

Applying a gender lens starts with the project design. At Dalberg Media, we integrate a gender lens into any project from the outset and throughout the entire project process with attention to three stages, described below.

3.1.1 Problem Definition

Our understanding of the context utilizes available gendered insights and sex disaggregated data when applicable to draw out relevant gender gaps. We invest efforts into identifying such data and explore how a problem is different for women and men when defining the problem for a project to address and integrate gender across hypothesis forming and issue exploration.

3.1.2 Analysis

Our analytical approach and methodologies deliver intentional gender analysis to understand how and why gender gaps exist and persist. We ask gender specific questions as relevant in interviews, work to ensure gender balanced stakeholder and attendee lists of our programs and consult context-specific experts when applicable.

3.1.3 Solutions and Recommendations

Our design and delivery of solutions put a primacy on enabling the agency of all humans with particular attention to the special needs and circumstances of women, girls and non-binary persons. We incorporate gender in the synthesis of main evidence and findings, develop recommendations that are sensitive to women's needs, preferences, and socio-cultural context, and design programs and communication deliverables that support the empowerment of women, girls and non-binary persons in particular.

3.2 Applying a Gender Lens Across Our Portfolio

We bring gender intentionality into projects across Dalberg Media's portfolio of experiences & facilitation, advocacy & campaigns, and production & storytelling, as described below.

3.2.1 Experiences and Facilitation

When working with experiences and facilitation, we strive to design and execute experiences that celebrate and proactively reinforce diversity by ensuring *representative stakeholders*, inviting *diverse speakers* with attention to gender, sex, race, colour, religion, political or other opinion, or other status, and enabling *equal access to participation* amongst impact-driven people of all genders, sexualities, race, religions, and political affiliation, with positive partiality to women and girls, non-conforming sexualities, and marginalized people. The goal is to empower participants and inspire action to create lasting impact; and the greatest change we can make is for the individuals who have otherwise been deprioritized.

3.2.2 Advocacy and Campaigns

For advocacy and campaigns, we bring fora and communications to life with an urgent attention to key challenges and highlight *gendered experiences* and discrimination to push for change to policies, systems, and individual behaviour. We utilize and produce photos and graphics that challenge traditional ways of understanding gender roles, we promote women's leadership, and we make sure that voices of women, girls, and non-binary persons are represented.

3.2.3 Production and Storytelling

In production and storytelling, we address gendered dimensions of situations and challenges for the production of educational materials, magazines, books, and videos. We empower persons of all genders to tell their own stories and those of their communities through creative storytelling to inform and mobilize key stakeholders.

When attending external fora and events, Dalberg Media seeks to have an equal gender balance in its representation. To the extent possible, we avoid attending events with only male speakers or panel attendees and engage in an active dialogue with organizers on how the event can be made more inclusive when they do not meet these standards.

4. Operationalizing the Gender Positioning & Policy Paper

4.1 Adhering to Our Principles

To ensure we actively prioritize to adhere to these principles and that the company is made aware of any issues relating to the above, we have several mechanisms in place:

- **Ombudsperson:** The ombudsperson can bring staff perspectives to management's attention anonymously and is an important mechanism for staff to use in raising gender equality concerns both in terms of personal experiences and on a general level.
- **Office Manager:** The office manager provides clarity on issues that relate to employee rights and support. The office manager can help enlighten staff on their rights.
- **Gender Work Group:** The gender work group makes suggestions for standards that Dalberg Media should adhere to and recommendations on how to implement these on an operational level. The gender work group further takes on operational tasks, where needed, to ensure the agreed upon gender equality standards are met.

4.2 Use of the Gender Positioning & Policy Paper

All Dalberg Media staff members are introduced to the Gender Positioning and Policy Paper when starting in the company, are informed about revisions, and have access to the paper via the company's internal resource system.

*This document was last updated on **29 March 2021**.*