



# 20 years of Mainstreaming 1998 - 2018

"I do not wish women  
to have power over  
men, but over  
themselves"

*Mary Wollstonecraft*

# Introduction:

Doctors of the World is an international voluntary association working for the defense and promotion of the right to health of all human beings. Its origins date back to 1980; Doctors of the World in Spain, Médicos del Mundo, (MdM from now onwards) opened in 1990.

Its main goals are: defense and strengthening of public health systems; defense of the principles set in *Alma Ata Declaration* and *Ottawa Charter* (promoting preventive care and not only curative care, as well as bringing up the social factors affecting health); promoting the leading role and independence of the World Health Organization; determined action to urge the States to fulfill the commitments related to the right to health; fostering dialogue between traditional medicine and western medicine.<sup>1</sup>

MdM promotes a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA). The role of NGOs under this approach consists of narrowing the gap between the theoretical framework of human rights and the reality in the country/region of intervention. Therefore, working with different agents to promote the right to health is essential: duty-bearers (state), rights-holders (population) and responsibility-bearers (international and civil society organizations, among others).



Right to health approach focuses on equality and non- discrimination. In order to include these two concepts in our projects, Gender Mainstreaming turns out to be essential from the onset, the formulation phase of our interventions. We are aware that women and men are not on equal footing in the fulfillment and access to health due to several forms of discrimination: the different roles played, pushing women into the private/domestic sphere in which they have less opportunities to have access to economic, social, work, education resources, being therefore less present in the decision-making and power spheres.

Therefore, our work is aimed at capacity building of the State as bearer of the duty to allow the population to have access to the best health conditions, to foster the empowering process of the population (as rights-holders) as for them to be aware of their rights as citizens and to associate in order to claim their rights. With civil society, we also develop initiatives as for it to monitor the work of the State and other entities which could be interfering in the full exercise of the right to health. It is also our duty to strengthen society through counselling in actions of Political Advocacy, raising awareness activities, participation in negotiating tables, networking, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Extracted from the Policy of Universal Right to Health, approved in Plenary Session of the Executive Board of MdM on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

# Historical overview

In 1998, MdM started a reflection process on the need to integrate Human Rights and Gender Equality approaches in the different areas and procedures of the organization, with the following six milestones:



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## 1998 - 2000. Origins

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Although the association started its activities in Spain in 1990, it was not until 1998 that a reflection process arose, focusing on the need to assess whether power and subordination relations were changing, leading to a transformation of the social constructions on gender or just meeting the immediate needs of women, without taking into consideration the potential changes in their social position.

It is to be noted that one of the main intervention areas of MdM is Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, that goes beyond the right to health services. In this regard, women's control over decision-making processes and access to resources are two key elements for the correct implementation of any programme in this sector.

After this kick-start, the Executive Board decided to create the *Women and Children Committee* to lead the process. The committee gathered a group of 7 women (6 volunteers and 1 member of Communication Department staff). Their first goal was to offer training courses on gender issues to the volunteers, the Executive Board and Board of Directors and the employees of Medicos del Mundo.

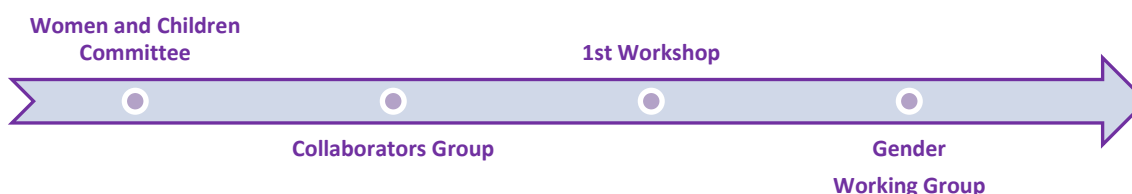
In April 1999, the first workshop on Gender, Reproductive Health and Cooperation in Madrid was held. Having been targeted to the Association, the turnout was high and the participants requested more training courses to be organized in order to have a wider impact in the projects being implemented.



After the great success of the workshop, a Gender Working Group was formed by volunteers and employees, both women and men.

The end of this period is marked by the discussion on whether gender-based violence was an issue related to health or not.

Following the trend set by the World Health Organization, which in 1996 announced that gender-based violence is a public health issue, MdM, in the same vein, stated that gender-based violence is directly related to the violation of the right to health, among other rights.




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## 2000 – 2004. Momentum and partnerships

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By 2000, the Gender Working Group, being already strengthened, requested a change in the name of the committee to *Gender and Human Rights Committee*, since the former name put the focus on the reproductive role of women, instead of highlighting the need to foster empowerment processes.

The Gender Working Group is actively involved in the *Spanish Group of Interest in Population, Development and Reproductive Health*<sup>2</sup> -GIE, by its acronym in Spanish- a platform founded in 1996 aiming at monitoring the Spanish Government in complying with the Action Plan of the *International Conference on Population and Development* (Cairo, 1994) and at the *Fourth World Conference on Women* (Beijing, 1995). After the exploratory mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina (2000-2001), the project on good practices on Sexual and Reproductive Health was consolidated. In the project implemented in Kosovo, a SRHR approach is included through gender-based violence prevention measures and training sessions on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, as well as the collaboration with Kosova Women Forum.

The first workshops on Health, Gender and International Cooperation are organized in a meeting of field team coordinators, as well as in other Delegations in Spain (Canary Islands, Balearic Islands, Madrid and Galicia), decentralizing the mainstreaming process.<sup>3</sup>

Additionally, more in-depth workshops are proposed with organizations which are members of the Development NGO Coordinating Committee (CONGDE, by its acronym in Spanish) in Spain in order to have access and handle more methodological tools. In November 2000, a workshop on gender-based violence was organized including the three working groups: Gender, Human Rights and Mental Health Working Group.



Cuaderno de Trabajo

Documento del Taller sobre Violencia de Género  
Documento del Taller sobre Violencia de Género

Navacerrada, 18 y 19 de noviembre de 2000.

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<sup>2</sup> It was later on named “Red Activas” (*Active Association Network*). The network was composed of Médicos del Mundo, Centre d’Estudis Demogràfics, Centre d’Anàlisi i Programes Sanitaris, Mujeres por la Salud y la Paz, Medicus Mundi, Federación de Asociaciones de Matronas de España, Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir, Enfermeras para el Mundo, Fuden Cooperación Enfermera, Federación de Mujeres Progresistas, Creación Positiva y Matres Mundi. It stopped working in 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Topics targeted in the workshops were Gender, Reproductive Health, International Cooperation and Aid Development, Gender mainstreaming in Health and Development Projects, including a session on “Female migrants”, Workshop of reflection and analysis of state-of-play of Gender Equality and Gender-based Violence.

In this period, MdM finally produced its 1<sup>st</sup> *Strategic Plan on Gender 2000-2002*, which set the guidelines to integrate the Gender Approach within the *General Strategic Plan of Medicos del Mundo 2000-2004*.

The Gender Working Group decided to be renamed as *Equality Working Group*, as the mission announced in the Strategic Plan reflects:

*To promote the implementation of the Strategic Plan on Human Rights with a Gender Approach. The Equality Working Group will work in collaboration with other areas or working groups of the organization, sharing its expertise and professionalism in Human Rights and Gender Equality. It will monitor Gender Mainstreaming at all levels and fields of intervention of the organization.*

After the Executive Board elections in 2002, it was decided to split the committee into two different committees: one for Gender Equality and the other one for Human Rights.



It is then that the *National Network on Gender* was created and continued working until 2004. It used to hold meetings twice a year in the different offices of MdM with volunteers and employees. Two online distribution lists were created: *GeneroSOS* (Generous), working as a consultancy for the organization, and *Comadres* (God mothers), for knowledge management among the Network members.

One of the milestones was fostering and coordinating the *International Forum on Gender mainstreaming in Humanitarian and Development Aid. Joint Responsibility between men and women towards a fairer society*, in which the Network Empowering Team of MdM<sup>4</sup> – the NET– and MdM organizations of Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, France, Portugal, USA and Greece took part. There was a turnout of 450 people.

In this Forum, the Association's *Ethical Charter on Gender* was approved and homage paid to Florence Nightingale, founder of modern nursing profession. Drafting of the *Ethical Charter on Gender* started in one of the meetings of the National Network on Gender and continued with the contribution of MdM Spain and NET members.

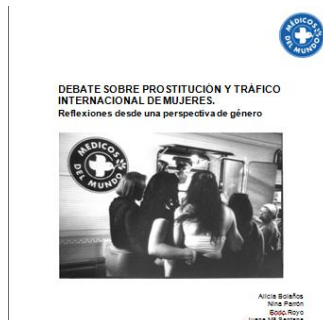


This document outlines the commitment of the association to Gender mainstreaming, promoting the exchange of good practices with other international MdM organizations and in the programmes, by promoting the support to organizations working on gender-based violence –which offer an alternative male role– and agreeing to continue the training and develop awareness raising actions.

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<sup>4</sup> Up to 2017, the International Network of MdM was known as *DRI, Dirección de la Red Internacional* (Directorate of International Network). From 2017, the acronym changed to NET – Network Empowerment Team–.

That very same year the report *Health and Gender. Practical Guidelines for Professionals in International Cooperation*<sup>5</sup> was published. As of today, it is one of the benchmark documents of Medicos del Mundo and other health organizations.



In 2003, the report *Debate on Prostitution and International Women Trafficking. Reflections from a Gender Perspective* was published. This was the kick-start for the stance taken by MdM as regards *Prostitution and Women Trafficking, MdM Men manifesto on Social debate and Institutional Strategy on Prostitution*.

It was also decided to open an in-house job position in Human Resources Department as Responsible of Mainstreaming Groups. This job position didn't last much as there were some disagreements between the responsible of this area and the Board of Directors.

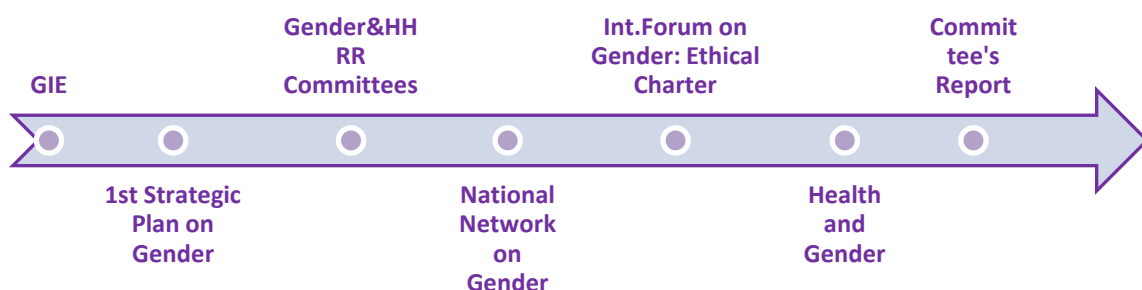
In 2004, an *Encounter on Human Rights in MdM* was held and one of the key questions raised by the participants was “What can MdM do to fight against inequalities affecting people?” This meant a catalyst for all the Political Advocacy initiatives that had so far been implemented in the association.



A replacement of the General Directorate and a report submitted by the Gender Committee to the Board of Directors entitled *The long and winding path to Gender Mainstreaming in the Development NGOs* represented a turning point towards a deeper understanding of the steps to be followed.

The conclusion of the Committee expressed in the report is clear:

*... still being at the starting point, Gender mainstreaming can be consolidated if we implement the proposals of the Action Plan, or maybe this initiative will disappear, all the work done will vanish, as it is the case after a sand storm. It has happened many times before, it is up to all of us to continue speeding up.*



<sup>5</sup> Editors Diana Sojo, Beatriz Sierra and Irene López. The Guide (in Spanish) is available [http://biblioteca.hegoa.ehu.eus/downloads/12596/%2Fsystem%2Fpdf%2F326%2FSalud\\_y\\_genero.pdf](http://biblioteca.hegoa.ehu.eus/downloads/12596/%2Fsystem%2Fpdf%2F326%2FSalud_y_genero.pdf)

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## 2004 - 2007. Organizational and structural process

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In January 2004 the scope and terms of reference of an external consultancy were decided. The objective of the consultancy was to make a diagnosis of Gender and Human Rights situation in the organization as well as an action plan for Human Rights and Gender mainstreaming. One of the recommendations from the consultancy was:

*Human Rights and Gender mainstreaming, as for it to be a meaningful process, should meet two requirements, which have not been met as of today: the mainstreaming process should be implemented at three different levels – theoretical, methodological and political (following this order)– and tightly linked to the internal processes of transformation and growth, which in turn should also be developed at those same three levels.*

In the framework of the consultancy, the 1<sup>st</sup> Action Plan for Human Rights and Gender Mainstreaming in Medicos del Mundo was designed, having as main goal:

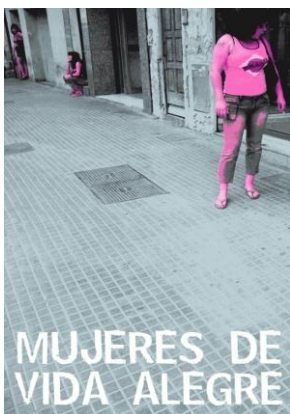
*To improve the quality and efficiency of International Cooperation Programmes of Medicos del Mundo in the 3rd and 4th World, promoting to this end the equality and equity between men and women, the equal access to the benefits of development, especially, the ones related to health and full exercise of Human Rights.*

Besides, it was agreed to assess the feasibility of the proposal made by the outgoing Director and the Human Resources Department to hire a person with a technical profile, reinforcing this area from an organizational point of view.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Strategic Plan on Gender 2003-2006 was approved, having the following general objectives:

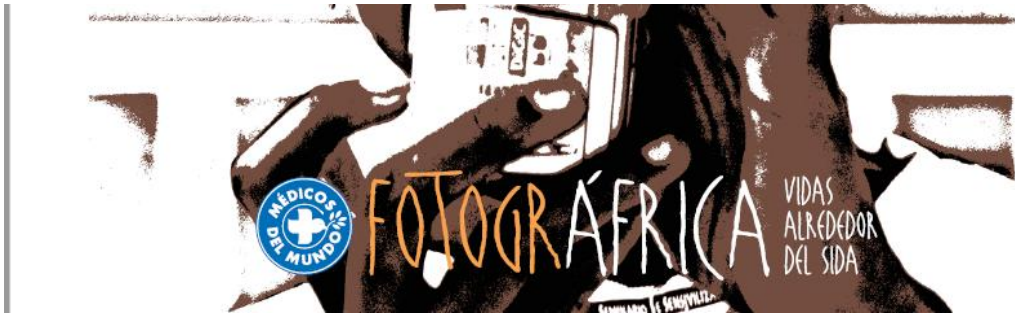
*To introduce the gender perspective in the agenda of each Delegation, not as a list of topics or worrying aspects but as a key factor in the health and development actions. To reach basic agreements on the scenario we are working in, reviewing agents and alliances, in order to meet the commitment of the organization, some of which are outlined in the Ethical Chart.*

In June 2004, a new Executive Board was established after the Member's General Assembly. In this period, several consultancies were hired for trainings aimed at reinforcing mainstreaming of aspects such as Gender perspective integration in projects, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, practical implementation of the Health and Gender Guidelines and Human Rights protection in Humanitarian Aid.



At the end of 2004, a Committee of Awareness Raising Projects was created, being composed by representatives of the Executive Board and the Gender and Human Rights Committees, whose mission was to guarantee Gender mainstreaming in the awareness, education for development and advocacy initiatives implemented by the organization. Some of these first initiatives were the exhibition *Mujeres de Vida Alegre (Ladies of the Evening)* and *FotogrÁfrica (PhotogrAfrical)*

And this was also the period in which MdM started taking a political stance in issues such as Prostitution, Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation, Immigration, etc.



On 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015, the website Sofiasexy.com was opened to protest against women trafficking and sexual exploitation.

*... the intention is to show that the Internet is not only a tool for porn, pedophilia and sexual exploitation but also a weapon for Internet users to fight against this type of blot in society.<sup>6</sup>*

In 2006, Medicos del Mundo participated with two papers in the *Mix Committee of Women Rights and Equal Opportunities* which finally approved the report on the “Paper on the State-of-play of Prostitution in our country”. The first paper reads:

*If women in prostitution were included as “workers” in the national employment system, governments would feel less accountable for creating opportunities for sustainable and decent job positions for women.<sup>7</sup>*

In the following paper, MdM explained the process through which the Association had gone in order to take a stance on prostitution, providing key data which could help understand this reality and the outcome of MdM internal process:

*Our stance is that prostitution is an activity which violates Human Rights of prostituted women and seriously damages their health and quality of life, ultimately becoming another type of gender-based violence.<sup>8</sup>*

The conclusions drawn from the diagnostic analysis and working plan for Human Rights and Gender issues brought forth the need to hire an external consultancy supporting the implementation of the action plan. The consultancy would report to the General Directorate, and later on, of the Director of the Social Mobilization Department –created in 2007 with the aim of promoting Human Rights and Gender, Volunteering, Networking and Political Advocacy areas.

At that time, the Gender Equality and Human Rights approaches began to have a direct impact on field projects, the drafting of internal documents and the general discourse of the Association, being a cross-cutting issue in the different sections.

Likewise, through an unprecedented participatory process in the Association, the *Strategic Plan 2007-2010* was approved. This plan included the Human Rights Base Approach and Gender Mainstreaming as part of its mission and set guidelines for its implementation in all sections

<sup>6</sup>The website was shut down. Information (in Spanish) on the initiative is available in this article in 20 Minutos newspaper: <https://www.20minutos.es/noticia/69600/0/sofia/sexy/explotacion/#xtor=AD-15&xts=467263>

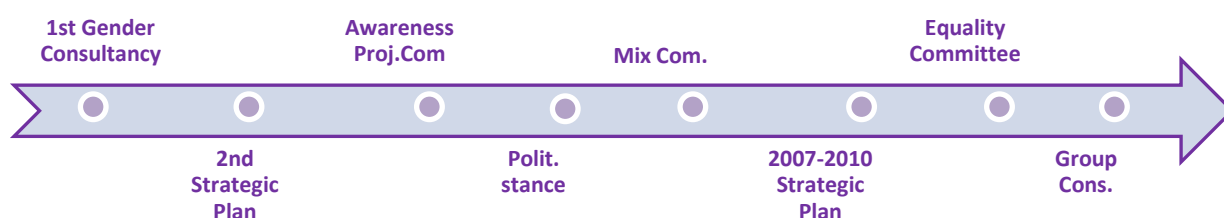
<sup>7</sup> Paper (in Spanish) by MdM available at: [http://bbpp.observatorioviolencia.org/upload\\_images/File/DOC1166017160\\_Prostitucion\\_perspectivaddhh.pdf](http://bbpp.observatorioviolencia.org/upload_images/File/DOC1166017160_Prostitucion_perspectivaddhh.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Paper (in Spanish) by MdM (page 25) available at: [http://www.congreso.es/portal/page/portal/Congreso/PopUpCGI?CMD=VERLST&BASE=puw8&FMT=PUWXTDTS.fmt&DOCS=1-1&DOCORDER=LIFO&QUERY=%28CGA200705240379.CODI.%29#\(P%C3%A1gina1\)](http://www.congreso.es/portal/page/portal/Congreso/PopUpCGI?CMD=VERLST&BASE=puw8&FMT=PUWXTDTS.fmt&DOCS=1-1&DOCORDER=LIFO&QUERY=%28CGA200705240379.CODI.%29#(P%C3%A1gina1))



and departments both in the headquarters and the regional and field offices.

In June 2007, a new Executive Board was elected. The Gender Committee requested its name to be changed to *Equality Committee*. Besides, the Equality Working Group became a benchmark in the Association, closely monitoring the action plan designed by the external consultancy. It is to be mentioned that the budget for this mainstreaming process was drawn from the funds of the Association. That is to say, this budget is not earmarked under any project, allowing the people in charge of its implementation to be fully independent from any financial backer.



## 2008 – 2012. Direct impact on projects and activities

In 2008, the Executive Board, upon request by the Equality Working Group, decided to hire a professional to integrate Human Rights and Gender Equality approaches not only in the development projects being implemented, but also in the internal processes of Medicos del Mundo, as a means to make visible the Association's commitment, both internally and externally, to the mainstreaming approaches.

Originally, the Human Rights and Gender Mainstreaming Unit worked under the Social Mobilization Department, which had been recently created.



Later on, the Equality Committee and the Equality Working Group requested the conversion of the Unit into a supporting unit under the General Directorate. This was regarded as a way to reinforce its mandate and the Executive Board's commitment to both approaches.

From this moment onwards, the Working Group was named *Equality and Human Rights Working Group*.

This represented quite an important movement as it made it clear that mainstreaming was a priority in the Association and all departments, units and projects should gradually adapt their working methodology, with the support of the Mainstreaming Unit.

What is more, it was the kick-start for a training process at all levels, taking political stance and developing internal processes with Human Rights and Gender approaches (Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights policy, promoting the swift from reducing the infant and maternal mortality rate to a wider scope, which implied taking a stance on safe and legal voluntary termination of pregnancy (VTOP), protocol for data collection of Human Rights violations, protocol of the Ethical Committee, support to draft the Humanitarian Aid Policy, some documents of internal procedures –such as safety protocols before going to the field,

etc– were reviewed). Similarly, mainstreaming influenced the production of dissemination material, guides and other institutional documents. For the International Cooperation projects, experts on Gender and/or Human Rights were hired so the activities being implemented could be monitored and specific context-wise action plans could be designed.

Similarly, the Intercultural approach, along with the Gender Equality and Human Rights approaches, started to be a key element in the projects and was gradually integrated in the goals of Bolivia, Peru, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

Up to 2011, the area of International Cooperation was undoubtedly the one benefiting most from the mainstreaming process, especially by integrating Gender Equality in the project lifecycle, assessing the capacities and needs of field staff as regards Human Rights and Gender, and training the staff responsible for these areas.

Cooperation with the Humanitarian Aid and Social Inclusion areas could become a reality thanks the reformulation of projects, evaluation of activities and development of working strategies (Strategy of National and Regional Programmes, Country Strategy, Nutrition Strategy, Mental Health Strategy, etc.)



In the framework of the joint collaboration of Political Advocacy and Human Rights and Gender, a [shadow report](#) for the *Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* was drafted with the participation of 19 organizations more. This report condemned the reform in the health system being carried out by the Government, and the setbacks in terms of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights among the most vulnerable populations.

2011 represents another landmark in Gender Equality promotion. On the one hand, a new department in the Association was created –Mainstreaming, Advocacy and Learning– whose aim was to safeguard and monitor the areas of Human Rights, Gender, Political Advocacy, Knowledge Management and New Technologies in Medicos del Mundo. On the other hand, two different processes would have an impact in all organizational aspects: a training programme for all MdM offices and the drafting of the [2013-2016 Equality Plan](#) of the Association.

The Equality and Human Rights Working Group proposed the Executive Board to develop a Plan in order to promote an organizational change on gender issues in the Association's work, policies and culture, going beyond Political Advocacy, Social Inclusion, International Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid.

The objective was to guarantee the real and effective integration of Gender Equality in the organization's culture, structures and procedures, with the aim of fostering a change in the organizational culture, not only of employees but also of volunteers, national and regional

executive boards. For this purpose, an in-depth intervention was required in the following two aspects:

- Thorough diagnostic analysis on Gender Equality not only among employees but also volunteers, having as baseline principles participation, duty of care, diversity, mainstreaming, respect for diversity, cooperation and coordination.
- Equality Plan setting the steps to give in the short, medium and long term in the process of organizational development with gender equity.

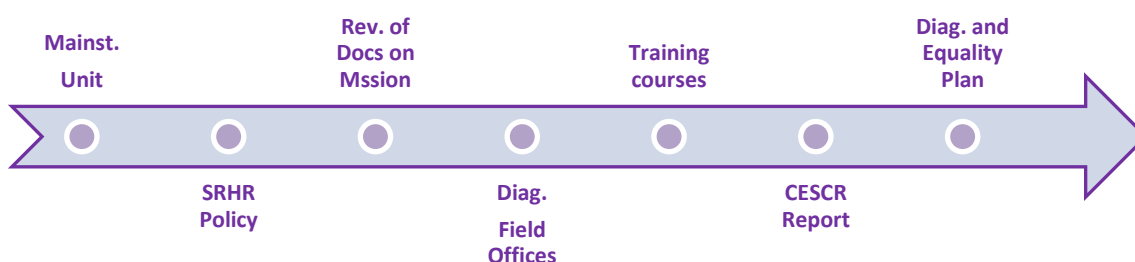


The Equality and Human Rights Working Group had a leading role in both initiatives.

The Training Plan was designed to be implemented at the same time of the Equality Plan so the organization would be involved in both plans throughout 2011 and 2012.

2013 is the starting year of the institutional Equality Plan, whose introduction reads as follows:

*We are facing a great and interesting challenge. In times of crisis, changes and disillusionment, it is essential to believe in equality, to think that it is possible, to pursue its fulfilment. No one being part of Medicos del Mundo should remain indifferent to the internal transformation that this Equality Plan will bring.*



## 2013 – 2016. Reinforcement of organizational process and advocacy

When the 2013-2016 Equality Plan started being implemented, the need and importance of working within the Association turned out to be evident. A Human Rights and Gender Mainstreaming process, to be efficient and coherent, should go hand in hand with an internal reflection process and ownership of the equality concept at different institutional levels. In this way, the elimination of gender inequalities could be a reality, benefitting more than just few intervention sectors or one or two gender experts in the organization only.

At the time the Spanish Government had to submit its 7th Report to CEDAW Committee, Medicos del Mundo decided to be actively involved in drafting a [shadow report](#) along with other Development NGOs and feminist movements in Spain.



As a result, the [CEDAW Shadow Platform Spain](#) was created, reaching a milestone in CEDAW history: more than 270 organizations jointly submitted a report to this committee. The CEDAW committee was conclusive on the Spanish government, recognizing the setbacks for women rights in Spain.

In collaboration with the International Network of MdM –the NET– the Association actively participated in the [NamesNotNumbers](#) campaign, aimed at raising awareness on the importance of defending and promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.



In the framework of the 2013-2016 Equality Plan, the Executive Board passed the Protocol against Sexual Abuse and Abuse on grounds of sex and/or gender. Its aim was to “provide the necessary tools to face any potential situation of this type in the Association”.



In November 2014 a training course was organized in El Escorial, in which the Equality and Human Rights Working Group and volunteers from the Network of Gender and Human Rights Benchmarks, from five regional offices, participated. The topic targeted was the Gender Equality and Human Rights Based Approach in Local Operations (LO).

The objective was to address the difficulties –previously faced by both volunteers and technical staff– in implementing these approaches in the assessment and identification phases of the projects, as well as in the use of tools learnt in the training courses.

In the final session of the training, and taking into account what had been presented in the previous sessions, two documents were analyzed: *Framework Project on Prostitution and Trafficking* and *Guide to Identify Local Operations Projects*. These two documents were tools to identify and design projects of Local Operations in 2014 and were submitted to the Local Operations Committee to be approved. The conclusion was that both documents had been drafted without the mentioned approaches, what implied that the projects to be assessed and designed based on these tools would not include these approaches either.

Therefore, it was recommended that MdM should have only one tool to assess and design Local Operations projects. Similarly, it was suggested that the five regional offices participating in this training should start designing projects on Prostitution and Trafficking implementing the contents of the training. Focus would be on two of the basic requirements for the implementation of these approaches: on the one hand, the participation of duty-bearers, rights-holders and responsibility-bearers throughout the process; on the other hand, updating the tool with the outcomes and lessons learnt in the process.

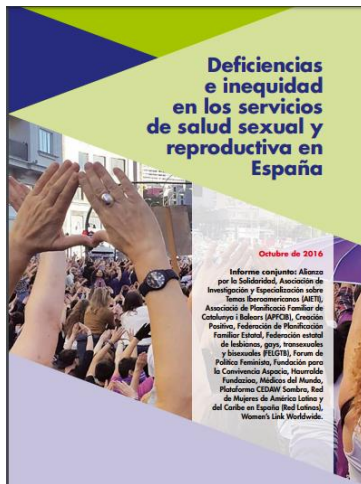
In 2015 four MdM Delegations (Asturias, Valencia, Madrid and Navarra) started working on a tool that was completed two years later: *Learning by doing. Towards the implementation of the Gender Equality and Human Rights Based approaches by Medicos del Mundo*. This would be a guide to identify and design not only projects on Prostitution and Trafficking but also projects addressing other situations and targeted to the beneficiary populations of MdM actions, in any of the regional offices. Additionally, it could also be of help in field projects.

In this period, the Association was more actively involved in the Gender Working Group of the [Development NGOs Coordinating Committee \(CONGDE\)](#), by chairing the Gender Committee of the Coordinator. This was a great opportunity to boost the pro-equity processes both within the Coordinator and the development NGOs being part of it. Political Advocacy initiatives were jointly developed as well.

MdM Spain, as it had been the case of MdM in Tanzania, adhered to the [16-day campaign to End Violence against Women of the United Nations](#). During these 16 days, the Association provided mass media with information on the different forms of gender-based violence and women fighting against it were interviewed. Likewise, it was decided that the Association should participate in the 25<sup>th</sup> November demonstration.



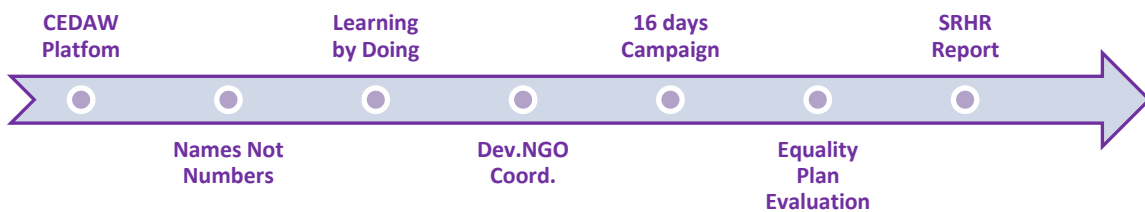
A mid-term evaluation of the Equality Plan was conducted, bringing as a result the need to reformulate some of the indicators, set baselines and have top level commitment for its full implementation.



In the last quarter of 2016, the report [Shortcomings and inequity in the Sexual and Reproductive Health Services in Spain](#), drafted in collaboration with 12 organizations more, was published.

The report highlights that, due to the cutbacks in recent years, there is a stark difference on the services offered in each autonomous community, having as a result a vast inequity in Sexual and Reproductive Health care services.

This report, along with the shadow report to CEDAW Committee, positioned Mdm as SRHR advocate in Spain.



## 2017 - ... Integrated Gender and Human Rights Based Approach

“Learning by Doing” specifies the basic characteristics of the Integrated Gender and Human Rights Based Approach and provides guidelines to ensure that it is operational at the time of identification and design of new projects or the review of already existing projects. This document analyzes the Gender Equality Approach and the Human Rights Based Approach, their mutual contribution, the shortcomings if only one of them is considered and finally the advantages of synergy, complementarity and mutually reinforcement if, rather than being considered a sum of approaches, they are considered as one single approach, named *Integrated Gender and Human Rights Based Approach*.

In the subsequent Strategic Plans of the Association, a specific working line of Gender and Human Rights was included to support the work done by the Working Group. In the *2016-2022 Strategic Plan* the two main objectives of this working line are:

- *Guarantee that Gender and Human Rights approaches are integrated in the organizational structure, management and interpersonal relations of Mdm*
- *Guarantee that Gender and Human Rights approaches are integrated in all Mdm interventions for equity purposes.*

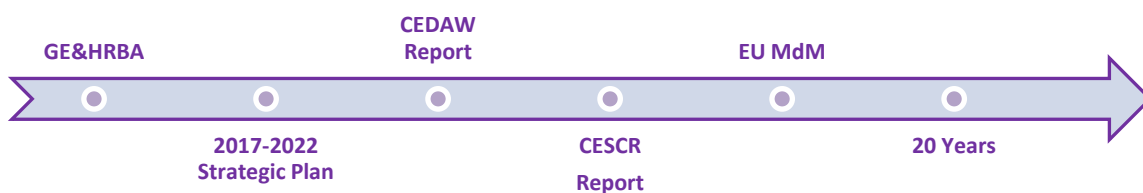
In 2017 along with the CEDAW Shadow Platform Spain, we submitted to the United Nations CEDAW Committee a monitoring report<sup>9</sup> on the progress in addressing gender-based violence, refugee women and girls issues, which brought to light the failure, once more, of the Spanish Government in complying with its commitments.

<sup>9</sup> Report (in Spanish) available at:

[https://cedawsombraesp.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/informesequimientocedaw\\_julio2017\\_esp3.pdf](https://cedawsombraesp.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/informesequimientocedaw_julio2017_esp3.pdf)

2018 prospects include submitting a second “shadow” report<sup>10</sup> to the *Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* condemning once more the impact of cutback policies in the lives of most vulnerable populations.

In the framework of the European Volunteering Project, we are participating in the organization of *the Seminar on Gender, Empowerment and Partnership* to be held in Madrid on 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> March. MdM organizations and partners participating are: MdM Spain, Belgium, United Kingdom, Sweden, the Netherlands, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Honduras, Ukraine and three local NGOs in Morocco, Burkina Faso and Benin, along with other delegations of MdM International Network and European NGOs. Similarly, on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the mainstreaming process, the following activities are planned: drafting the present document, offering in the Assembly a session on pro-equity processes, publishing articles on Gender and Human Rights in the magazine, as well as joining once more the 16-day campaign to *End Violence against Women of the United Nations*



<sup>10</sup> This report is being drafted by MdM Spain jointly with the *Federación de Planificación Familiar Estatal (FPFE)*, *la Federación de Asociaciones para la Defensa de la Sanidad Pública (FADSP)*, *la Sociedad Española de Salud Pública (SESPAS)*, *la Asociación de Economía de la Salud (AES)*, *la Sociedad Española de Medicina Familiar y Comunitaria (semFYC)* y *el Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR)*.

# Intervention Areas

For an internal change process, there are key areas that any organization wanting real changes may act upon, according to several research studies. Below we present the four levels to work at, summarizing at the same time the outcomes of the Association at these levels in this recent period:

**POLICY FRAMEWORK:** it reflects the work philosophy, the institutional thinking, the ideological grounds of the actions being carried out. In order to identify the policy framework of an entity, it is necessary to plunge into its archives to analyze what type of policies are adopted, stance taken and how action plans are designed.



**RESOURCES:** the Association's means of contributing to the Human Rights and Gender mainstreaming process.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:** the way the organization works, how responsibilities and tasks are assigned, and the stance and leadership style taken by male or female workers.

**ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE:** the belief and values system of the people setting conventions and unwritten rules within the organization (personality of the organization)<sup>11</sup>.

This report has so far outlined the outcomes of our work for the past 20 years. Below we would like to present the main achievements in mainstreaming, but outlining the information under each of the four levels above mentioned.

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## Policy Framework

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Under the **POLICY FRAMEWORK**, change-oriented policies and conceptual initiatives have been reinforced. After the **2017-2010 Strategic Plan**, Human Rights and Gender Equality approaches are presented as one of the strategic action lines. The plan includes a specific objective for association-wide mainstreaming, with funds earmarked for it.

The current **2016-2022 Strategic Plan** reinforces this commitment. Pro-equity actions are designed not only within the organization but also for the programmes and projects implemented. Similarly, more emphasis is given to fostering the empowerment processes at all levels.



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<sup>11</sup> Bastardes Tort, Clara and Franco Ortiz, Laia (2006): *Estudio-Diagnóstico: la Perspectiva de Género en el Trabajo de las ONGD Catalanas* [Study-diagnosis: Gender Approach in the operation of the Catalan Development NGOs] Federació Catalana d'ONG per al Desenvolupament. Pp 34.



Furthermore, a revision is being done on the **political stance**, which serves as guideline for the implementation of actions, and new policies are being designed, some of which still have to be developed. It is hoped that in the mid-long term the actions of the organization would be oriented by these new policies and stances. In other words, by guaranteeing the integration of the GE&HRBA approaches in the policies and stances, all actions implemented by the organization will be geared towards these action lines. Additionally, within the Executive Board there is a specific **Committee on Gender and Human Rights**, fostering the process at a macro level.

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## Resources

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The variety of **RESOURCES** being allotted to the process reflects the level of efficiency that can be achieved. As mentioned above, in 2005 several external consultancies were hired to draft an action plan and gear the process. From May 2008, there is an in-house job post – **Coordinator of the Human Rights and Gender Mainstreaming Unit**–, also being financed by the Association's funds. This initiative is being scaled-up to field offices and more specific consultancies are being hired for development and tracking of these resources. Besides, **economic and human resources have been increased and training resources** and theoretical and practical tools are produced. From 2011, we are developing a Human Rights and Gender training process for the staff (employees, volunteers and members) at headquarters and regional offices – **training resources**.



Regarding the tools, from 2009 onwards we have had a *Guide for Gender Mainstreaming in all phases of the project life cycle*, which nowadays turns out to be outdated. Recently, the Committees of National and Regional Programmes and Mainstreaming, Advocacy and Learning Committee approved the tool *Learning by doing. Towards the implementation of the Gender Equality and Human Rights Based approaches by Medicos del Mundo*.

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## Organizational Structure

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Regarding the **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**, as previously mentioned, a new **in-house job position** was created, financed by own funds and reporting directly to the General Directorate. Besides, the Unit counts on the **Equality and Human Rights Working Group** composed by professional volunteers to coordinate actions and receive feedback. In some projects, **specific staff and/or supporting consultancies** are being hired. There is an agreement with the **Master's Degree in Interdisciplinary Gender Studies of Autonomous University of Madrid** to have trainees working with us.

Since the implementation of 2013-2016 Equality Plan, there is a network of **Gender Focal Points and Gender Champions** supporting the actions included in the plan.

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## Organizational Culture

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Finally, with respect to **ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE**, all **briefing** courses for people joining MdM as volunteers (regardless of their job position) include a specific **training session on Gender and Human Rights** as a first step to Human Rights and Gender approach. Similarly, people leaving the organization undergo a **debriefing** process to provide feedback on the mainstreaming process in his/her area.

During 2011, a **diagnosis study of the organization** was conducted through a wide and participatory process resulting in the approval of the **2013-2016 Equality Plan**, recently completed. Mid-term and final evaluations have been done and we are currently in the phase of approval of the 2018-2021 Equality Plan. We believe that, before implementing the mentioned approaches, an internal revision is mandatory.

Some of the **outcomes of the implementation of the 2013-2016 Equality Plan** are: to prioritize candidates with studies or experience in Human Rights and Gender in the recruitment processes, to approve a protocol against Sexual Abuse or Abuse based in grounds of sex and/or gender, to reduce men-women salary gap in the Association, to create a network of Gender Focal Points –employees– and Gender Champions –volunteers and members – and to increase the number of women in middle-management positions and in the Board of Directors, among other initiatives.

The Organizational Culture can also be assessed by looking at the networks and platforms which we take part in and the local partners which we work with. For the past decade, we have joined networks and platforms of Defense and Promotion of Human Rights<sup>12</sup>, women and feminist organizations<sup>13</sup>, what allows us to strengthen our work at a national level and country level. Likewise, MdM presence in mass media and social media on the key [International Day Celebrations](#) related to health or gender equality is remarkable: 6<sup>th</sup> February, *International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation*; 8<sup>th</sup> March, *International Women's Day*; 28<sup>th</sup> May, *International Day of Action for Women's Health*; 28<sup>th</sup> September, *International Day of Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion*, 25<sup>th</sup> November, *International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women*, etc.

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<sup>12</sup> *Red Española contra la Trata de Personas, REDER 16/2012, Foro Social contra la Trata de Seres Humanos con Fines de Explotación Sexual, Plataforma de la Sociedad Civil de la Unión Europea contra la Trata de Seres Humanos, Rede Per a Saúde de Angola, Plataforma de Promoción de la Salud y Sensibilización de los Campamentos Saharauis, Mesa de Salud de la Cooperación Española y Mesa de Medicina Tradicional e Interculturalidad en Salud de Bolivia, Alianza Intersectorial de adolescentes y Red de Salud de la Procuraduría para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos de El Salvador*, among others.

<sup>13</sup> *CEDAW Shadow Platform—Spain, CAP INTERNATIONAL (Coalition for Prostitution Abolition), Unión Nacional de Mujeres Saharauis, Mesa Nacional de Género del Sector Justicia e Instituciones Afines, Coordinadora 28 de Mayo para la Incidencia en Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos de Guatemala, Comisión Intersectorial de Lucha contra la Violencia de Nicaragua, Grupo Multisectorial de Coordinación para la Prevención y Combate de la Violencia en la provincia de Maputo – Mozambique -, Tanzania Gender Networking Program, Koinadugu Gender Advocacy Network – Sierra Leone -, Comité de Vela de las Violencias Basadas en el Género del Distrito Sanitario de Pikine – Senegal -*, among others.

# Strengths and Challenges

After this review of some of the milestones of the mainstreaming process for the past 20 years, it is to be noted that this process has been enriching for the organization as a whole. Nevertheless, there are still some challenges to overcome, which set the roadmap for the organization in the coming years:

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## Strengths

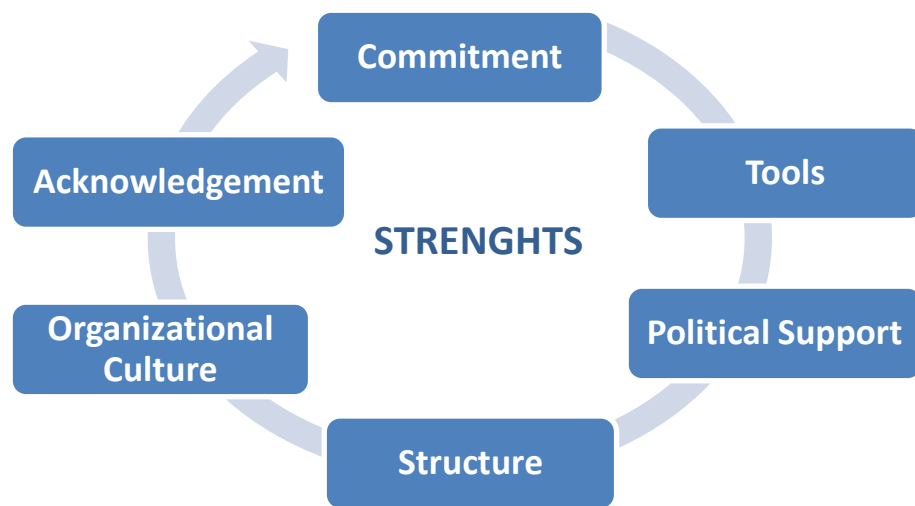
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Throughout this on-going process, MdM has been building up some **STRENGTHS** which grant the Association a particular identity in terms of Gender and Human Rights.

Overall it can be stated that the evolution of the Association is remarkable. At an early stage, the Association's role was to provide health care to most vulnerable groups at risk of social exclusion in Spain; nowadays it is a benchmark association, not only for the NET but for other organizations in the sector, as it gears its mission with a Human Rights and Gender approach, in both social inclusion and in international development and humanitarian aid. These are some of its strengths:

- **Commitment of the organization to social transformation** through social fight in favor of equality and non-discrimination in the fulfilment of Human Rights and women Human Rights.
- **Documents which are tools** reflecting this commitment and defining the identity of MdM Spain, such as the *Ethical Charter on Gender* and many others produced during these 20 years.
- Strengthening of the mainstreaming strategy at the **policy level**:
  - Human Rights and Gender action line in the previous Strategic Plans (2007-2010 y 2012-2015 and 2016-2022)
  - Integration of Gender Equality and Human Rights Based approaches in the documents setting the stance and policies in different intervention areas.
  - Committee on Gender and Human Rights participating in the Executive Board.
  - Equality and Human Rights Working Group and the Gender Focal Points and Gender Champions Network to facilitate the coordination between headquarters and regional offices.
- Changes in the **organizational structure** to favor mainstreaming
  - Creation of the Mainstreaming Unit, reporting to the General Directorate.
  - Funds earmarked for consultancies supporting the reflection and training processes related to an organization-wide integration of these approaches, to conduct diagnosis, etc.
- Promoting changes in the internal **organizational culture** through:
  - Training courses on Gender and Human Resources for all staff in MdM headquarters and regional and field offices.
  - Job descriptions and/or terms of reference in the recruitment processes including as selection criteria studies and/or experience in Gender and Human Rights.

- Equality Plan to secure the implementation of measures promoting internal changes within the organization in order to have effective equality between women and men.
- Development of *Learning by Doing* as a tool to guide the integration of the Gender Equality and Human Rights approaches in the identification and design phases of the projects, bringing out the changes to be done in the organization's ways of working.
- **Being acknowledged as a Gender and Human Rights benchmark**, not only by development NGOs but also by women and feminist organizations, local partners in our international programmes and several United Nations mechanisms. Some of the organizations of the networks and platforms in which we participate at national and international levels are Development NGO Coordinator, REDER, *CEDAW Shadow Platform—Spain*.




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## Challenges

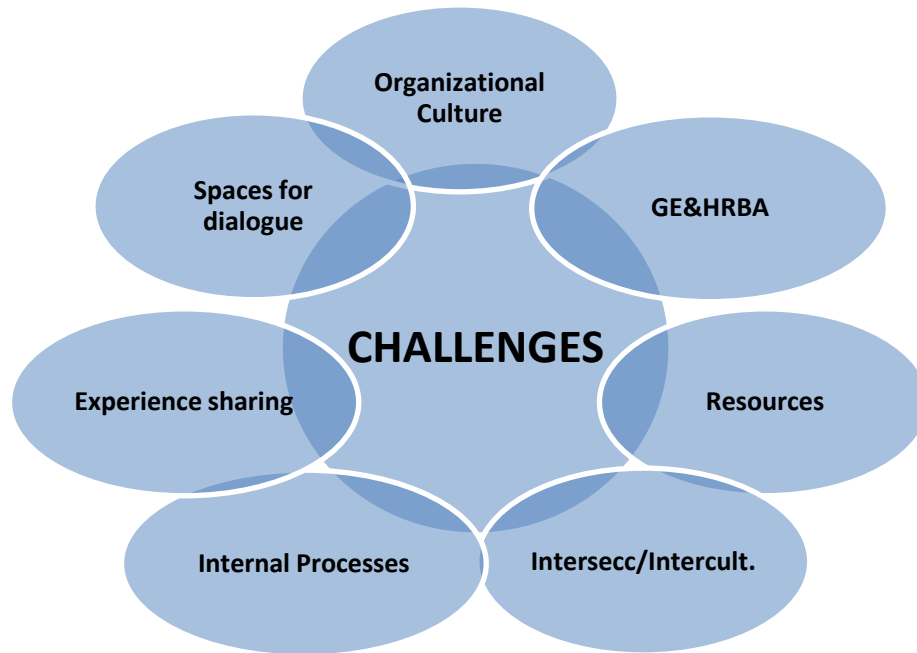
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Many others could be pointed out. But it shouldn't be overlooked the fact that there is still much to do, many **CHALLENGES** to face. We would like to conclude this report by outlining those challenges which could be the trigger to pursue our goal of building up more fair and just societies.

- Secure the process in the **organizational culture** of MdM. The challenge to face is helping the Association's staff to be GE&HRBA-responsive, screening each situation with Gender and Human Rights Based approaches. It implies capacity building not only of duty-bearers, rights-holders and responsibilities-bearers but also of those participating and working in the organization. Thus, the following aspects are key elements:
  - In the recruitment processes, studies or expertise in Gender and Human Rights should be one of the criteria in the terms of reference for all job posts, prioritizing the selection of candidates fulfilling these criteria.
  - Everyone joining MdM (volunteers, employees and members) should have access to a training course on Gender issues via Moodle Platform.

- Strengthening the Equality Plan implementation, as it improves the analysis and evaluation of the work done with a gender lens. It fosters capacity building of those participating in the association and identifies the potential collaboration and synergy areas leading to a greater involvement of the team at all levels in Gender and Human Rights mainstreaming.
- Of particular interest is the “deep structure” of the organization (similar to the subconscious mind of an individual): anything that is not questioned nor examined, but which lead to having certain behaviors and not others, to taking certain measures and not others. This deep structure is the set of values of the organization that are taken for granted, that is to say, in which everyone agrees; ways of thinking and doing which guide all decision-making and working processes, with a strong gender bias.
- Implementing the ***Integrated Gender and Human Rights Based Approach*** in the identification and formulation of projects, campaigns and actions in national and regional programmes. Most of our expertise in this topic has been drawn from International Cooperation Programmes and more recently from Humanitarian Aid Programmes.
- In relation to this issue, a new challenge arises: ***Political Advocacy with financiers*** so the calls for proposals include the GE&HRBA approach rather than the needs-assessment approach.
- ***Invest human, time, economic resources*** to maintain the reflection and debate
  - Experts on these approaches are required in order to prompt and enhance the debate in other areas of the organization (finance, human resources, communication, organization development, department managers, etc)
  - It is similarly necessary to have more time to organize encounters for reflection and debate within the organization and with other organizations. Likewise, funds are required to support these processes which are very often boosted by the good will of workers.
- ***To integrate the intercultural approach*** as part of the GE&HR perspectives, overcoming the view that cultures are unchangeable and finding ways for development and equality in the context we are working in. This analysis should be done considering ***intersectionality***, which is one of the main contributions of feminism. This analysis approach allows to bring to light the multiple ways of discrimination and the connection between violence, exclusion, marginalization and subordination and the different reasons for oppression, such as race, ethnical origin, social class, sexual orientation and gender.
- To promote the use of ***process indicators rather than activity indicators***, for which good practice exchange would be useful. The outcomes of the implementation of GE&HR approach are intangible and difficult to be measured. This may hinder the fund raising process since financiers are much more used to the logical framework approach. Thus, Political Advocacy is important with these financiers in order to evaluate not only the outcomes but also the process.
- Experience sharing with the ***International Network of MdM – the NET–***, as Human Rights and Gender mainstreaming is being demanded by other MdM organizations, such as France. Furthermore, the NET Direction is also interested in knowing more deeply the work being done by the Gender Mainstreaming Unit and the proposals arising from the projects.

- To promote *spaces for dialogue between public institutions and feminist and human rights organizations*, especially in those contexts in which it is difficult to bring together civil society interests and government interests. For an organization such as Medicos del Mundo, aiming at working at three levels (state, civil society and population) it is a challenging approach, as Aid Development is being misinterpreted by many states which intend to exclude civil society (regardless of how integrated it may be). Promoting dialogue spaces between civil society (integrated or not) and the State will reinforce the implementation of GE&HRBA as well as the capacities of duty-bearers and responsibility-bearers.





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