ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION TO ACHIEVE EQUITY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL
This white paper outlines the ambition, approach and Theory of Change of one of Hivos’ three impact areas: Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI)
**HIVOS’ AMBITION ON GENDER EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

**SUMMARY**

Globally, we are witnessing increasing marginalization, shrinking civic space, and the widening gap between rich and poor. As Covid-19 and climate change continue to affect lives and livelihoods worldwide, it is evident that women, LGBTIQ+, and other marginalized communities are more likely to bear the social, health, and economic consequences. More so, widespread discrimination continues to impact the lives of women and people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities (from now on referred to as rightsholders). This interferes with their full enjoyment of all human rights and hampers their participation in processes that tackle the root causes of such discrimination.

To counter this, we want to co-create new solutions that catalyze broad social and structural transformation to advance gender equality, diversity, and inclusion (GEDI) and achieve equality for all.

We aim to support rightsholders in their efforts to claim the power, agency, and leadership necessary to drive change. Recognizing that there are multiple and intersecting forms of systemic discrimination, we put intersectionality at the center of our approaches, recognizing that there are multiple forms of systemic discrimination. Inclusivity in policy and practice is key to providing equal access to opportunities and resources needed to shift public discourse.

Hivos’ vision is that of a more just, fair, dignified, and prosperous society, where all people have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities. A world where gender equality, inclusive economies, and governance practices become the principle for organizing and building just societies. To achieve this vision, our overall goal is to build the political power and influence of rightsholders’ movements led by women, youth, and LGBTIQ+ people and ensure they have the capacity and resources to achieve transformative social change. In particular, the GEDI impact area aims to realize rightsholders’ sexual and reproductive health and rights, bodily autonomy, and participation in political and economic development.

In the coming years, we aim to contribute to the following outcomes:

1. Laws, policies, and agreements that tackle discrimination and promote rightsholders’ inclusive SRHR, economic rights and justice, leadership, and political participation are adopted and implemented locally, nationally, and internationally.
2. Transformative GEDI narratives influence public and political discourse and inspire behavior change leading to a shift in social norms and systemic transformation in support of sustainable development and inclusive societies.

These outcomes are linked to the social transformation we envision and are connected to human rights and feminist movements in which Hivos’ work is complementary to that of our partners at the forefront of women’s rights, gender justice, and LGBTIQ+ rights.

**LGBTIQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer people; the ‘+’ indicates that these terms have a limited scope, and not all people who are marginalized because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics (SOGIESC) self-identify with these terms.**

Over the last decades, the world has witnessed several positive developments in gender equality, diversity, and inclusion. Rightsholders and activists worldwide have built communities, taken to the streets, filed lawsuits, and advocated for their rights. Their efforts have put sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) firmly on the international agenda. There are also growing demands to end violence against women and LGBTIQ+ people based on sexual orientation, gender identity, expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a significant achievement that affirms the crucial importance of gender equality and women’s empowerment as integral to all other sustainable development goals and their realization. Furthermore, several countries have made remarkable progress in intensifying human rights protection for LGBTIQ+ people in recent years. Sexual orientation is now enshrined in at least one protective law in more than 80 countries that offer some form of protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.

Despite these developments, the potential of women, LGBTIQ+ people, and other marginalized groups remains woefully untapped. Globally, these rightsholders remain underrepresented in decision-making spaces, face economic hardship due to discrimination and exclusion, and continue to be targets of physical and sexual abuse.

**CHALLENGES**

Over 70 countries still criminalize same-sex relations. Conservative forces are increasingly assertive and vocal in their concerted effort to spread anti-abortion, anti-LGBTIQ+, and anti-SRHR messages globally. This renders people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities particularly vulnerable to discriminatory laws, policies, and practices and has a considerable impact on their human rights, public health, and economic development.

Disproportionate economic hardship is one of the most tangible consequences of the discrimination and exclusion of women, LGBTIQ+, and other marginalized communities. During economic downturns, they are more liable to lose their jobs. Even in countries with policies supportive of working women, they earn less than their male counterparts performing the same job. This harsh economic inequality has gone unaddressed as socio-economic development agendas, including the SDGs, fail to consider LGBTIQ+ inclusion in a meaningful way.

In terms of health care, women, girls, and people of diverse SOGIESCs have much less access to targeted SRHR services. Lack of access to such resources is exacerbated by the criminalization of same-sex relations or laws that hinder access to quality SRHR information and services, such as safe abortion, as well as pervasive social norms regarding gender and sexuality. Where there are (improved) SRHR programs and policies, they remain hetero-normative, leading to poor health care for LGBTIQ+ people and placing them at particular risk of HIV and other STIs.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

To achieve lasting change towards a more inclusive and fair society, public discourse around women, LGBTIQ+ people and other marginalized groups must change and address intersecting forms of systemic discrimination. Building on our work over the last decades, we see an opportunity to influence people to change harmful or dominant norms, attitudes, and patterns of inequality that prevent women and girls, LGBTIQ+, and other marginalized communities from achieving their full potential. Our experience has shown that rightsholders and allies can amplify new and transformative GEDI narratives through carefully crafted narrative change strategies. The underlying principle is that change occurs when individuals perceive change within their reference group or social milieu. By focusing on the “movable middle of society” to, for example, actively abandon harmful norms, advocate for inclusion, and thus influence others, a more significant part of society will shift to support full inclusion and equality. It is thus necessary to ensure that rightsholders have the capacity and resources needed to shift public discourse.

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In addition to changing narratives it is necessary to ensure LGBTIQ+ people and women are equally included in socio-economic development and have the necessary skills and resources to improve their social realities and economic status. Hivos is opportunistically situated to work with rightsholders on this, having decades of experience strengthening and building effective movements, and with a programmatic portfolio that builds on extensive activist and workers networks. Strong support for and leadership by rightsholders is needed to achieve the envisioned change in narratives and socio-economic policies and practices. Hivos sees the opportunity to work with rightsholders and allies across different sectors such as health, politics, education, artists, and religious leaders. Our aim is that the public, governments, businesses, duty bearers, and other relevant institutions do not just acknowledge and respect the voices and rights of rightsholders, but actively recognize the need for equal inclusion of and leadership by these groups in decision-making processes.

Data raising our concern

   - More than one-third (35%) of women worldwide have experienced some form of physical violence, with 31% being married and 21% being in non-marital unions. This is a significant issue that needs to be addressed.

2. HIV and AIDS - Data from UNAIDS, 2021 Global Report.
   - In 2020, there were 37.7 million [30.2 million–45.1 million] people living with HIV.
   - In 2020, key populations (sex workers and their clients, gay men and other men who have sex with men, people who inject drugs, transgender people) and their sexual partners accounted for 65% of HIV infections globally.

   - Globally women do two to three times more informal care work than men.
   - Total aid integrating a gender equality perspective in economic and productive sectors reached USD 18 billion on average per year in 2018–19, representing 47% of DAC members’ total bilateral aid in these sectors.
   - As a result, less than 2% of the ODA was dedicated to gender equality as a primary objective.

   - Women make up 50% of the population, but only 25% of the leadership.
   - According to the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report, 2021, the gender gap in Political Empowerment remains the largest. Across the 156 countries covered by the index, women represent only 26.1% of the leadership.

The Gender Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (GEDI) Strategy underpins our programmatic work, ensuring that we implement programs that consistently address gender inequalities and prioritize those furthest left behind. This strategy goes beyond the GEDI impact area portfolio, covering all Hivos programs and guiding our internal functioning. Together with our partners, Hivos forms part of much broader human rights and gender justice movements at the local, regional and international levels. Our role in these movements is complementary and guided by co-creation processes. We create linkages, enable learning between partners and across movements, and carry out joint international advocacy efforts.

Our GEDI work actively involves women, young people, sexual and gender diverse/LGBTIQ+ communities, ethnic minorities, people living with HIV, and those with disabilities. Importantly, we recognize intersectionality within and among these groups. Hivos has committed 50 percent of our programmatic budget to support GEDI efforts by investing in women’s and LGBTIQ+ organizations as critical partners.

2. Advocate for economic justice and rights of women and LGBTIQ+ people to secure economic resources, opportunities, services and wellbeing as well as influence and participate in economic decision-making. This entails improving women’s access to and control over resources and decent work and strengthening LGBTIQ+ communities’ ability to demand a fair share in economic development programs. Simultaneously, we will address endemic unemployment that disproportionately affect youth and LGBTIQ+ people and promote nondiscriminatory labor markets and decent work for all. Finally, we will use research to demonstrate the economic consequences of exclusion experienced by women and LGBTIQ+ people – even more so during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond in order to allow for meaningful engagement and address data gaps.

3. Advance women’s, youth & LGBTIQ+ leadership, and political participation at all levels of decision making. To ensure greater voice, inclusion and representation of women, youth and LGBTIQ+ people in political and societal decision-making processes, we will facilitate opportunities to strengthen their leadership and organizational capacity by providing the resources and accompaniment necessary to lead and take their place at the decision-making table. We will also continue to support women’s full and effective representation and increased leadership positions in civic and political institutions and their participation in all levels of peace processes.

We use the term rightsholders to highlight the power of women, girls, and LGBTIQ+ people, rather than focus on their marginalization through other common terminologies.
PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES GUIDING OUR INTERVENTIONS

To address the complexity of inequalities that rightsholders face, the following principles and strategies guide our work.

• We employ feminist principles to promote values, wellbeing, and good practices to achieve gender equality, diversity, and inclusion by centering the voices of rightsholders and those experiencing marginalization.
• We use an intersectional framework to analyze and act upon rightsholders’ concerns, overlapping identities, and experiences.
• We recognize the interconnections within and among rightsholder groups and the issues we seek to address.
• We implement a dual-track approach that embraces the spirit of inclusion and working in collaboration / partnership.
• We walk the talk by ensuring that our organizational culture and partnerships align with our GEDI vision.

Using a feminist lens helps us analyze and look at the world from a perspective that includes the place and history of women (in all their diversities) and strives for human rights-based and inclusive equality.

• Our strategies and programmatic efforts focus on addressing structural barriers that prevent gender equality, bearing in mind the needs of those most affected by multiple forms of discrimination.
• To achieve our GEDI objectives, we pay attention to the unequal power relations and opportunities between different groups of women, men, and gender-diverse individuals.

We implement a dual-track approach that embraces the spirit of inclusion. Working in partnership with like-minded institutions and unusual allies, we invest in the co-creation and implementation of:

1. GEDI-specific programs in which equality and gender justice are the principal or primary objective of an initiative. GEDI-specific programs pay attention to rightsholders furthest left behind and their intersecting inequalities. Our focus is to support initiatives that are community owned and led by those directly impacted.
2. A mainstreaming (integrated) approach in which GEDI is a significant element or a deliberate objective, although not the principal reason, for undertaking the project/program. This approach allows us to connect with Hivos’ two other impact areas – Climate Justice and Civic Rights in a Digital Age – and make the gendered aspects of inequality visible in the programmatic assumptions, processes, and outcomes of all three impact areas.

• Our work on Climate Justice provides clear opportunities for embedding GEDI objectives in our work on climate finance, leadership, and economic empowerment, especially for women and other marginalized communities. For a just climate transition, women and other marginalized groups must have a say in what happens, as they – the smallest polluters – are also the ones disproportionally affected by the climate crisis. Through our programs working on a gender and energy nexus, they gain more access to and control over clean energy resources and can meaningfully participate in the renewable energy sector.
• The link with Hivos’ work on Civic Rights in a Digital Age lies in our efforts to protect and strengthen the role and civic rights of women and LGBTQI+ people and help ensure that digitalization also advances their participation, equality, and accountability. We therefore aim to generate new insights on the intersection of gender and digitalization by building on Hivos’ robust portfolio, such as the Digital Defender’s Program, so women and minority groups can truly benefit from the digital transition.
• We walk the talk by making our organizational culture and partnerships align with our GEDI vision, prioritizing intersectionality and GEDI awareness at all levels of the organization. We will continue to engage in ongoing critical reflection to ensure that GEDI principles are adequately reflected in our programs, staff, and management, and we address structural inequalities and discrimination in our partnerships and workplace.

We take every opportunity to develop knowledge and competencies of Hivos staff, rightsholders, and partners who want to engage or implement GEDI trajectories in their work or organizations.
GEDI Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (ToC) in this paper defines pathways of change and shows how and where we believe we can contribute to achieving this change. It further provides a framework for learning both within and between programming cycles and lays out our position based on our assumptions, vision, strategies, and pathways for how change can occur. The GEDI ToC reinforces the delivery of the 2023-2024 Hivos Strategic Compass and Hivos’ vision of everybody’s right to live in freedom and dignity, enjoy equal opportunities, and influence decisions that affect them. The pathways of change and the three main strategic pillars of this ToC overlap and reinforce each other.

The GEDI ToC sets out a vision for a more just, fair, dignified, and prosperous society, where all people have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities. A world where gender equality, inclusive economies, and governance practices become the principle for organizing and building just societies.

Our vision is connected to three strategic pillars that embrace a unified approach to programming, partnerships, and investments to achieve desired change. One is to ensure that rightsholders have sustained political power and influence to drive change. The second is to build political and public support towards sustainable development and inclusive societies and thirdly, we aim to work in partnership to innovate and scale-up solutions.

Interconnected with the three strategic pillars are pathways of change that relate to sustained changes produced by a combination of interventions by Hivos and our partners that result in the following outcomes:

- Laws, policies, and agreements that tackle discrimination and promote rightsholders’ inclusive SRHR, economic rights and justice, leadership, and political participation are adopted and implemented locally, nationally, and internationally.
- Transformative GEDI narratives influence public and political discourse and inspire behavior change leading to a shift in social norms and systemic transformation in support of sustainable development and inclusive societies.
- Strengthened collaborations and interactions between rightsholders and relevant actors instill broader social, legal, and policy change towards equal participation, inclusive SRHR, and economic justice.

Our support and accompaniment efforts are designed to ensure rightsholders have the sustained political power and influence needed to challenge social and political systems and practices that fuel discrimination and exclusion. Our interventions ensure that women and LGBTIQ+ people have the tools, knowledge, and support to assert their rights and spark change in their communities and internationally.

In addition, well-resourced diverse and inclusive movements, collective power, and action are necessary for the sustained change we envision. As such, Hivos invests in building, connecting, and sustaining resilient and flourishing rightsholders-led movements. We create safe spaces under the umbrella of Communities of Action where rightsholders can connect, learn, and develop joint strategies to improve their lives and well-being.

1. Building political power and influence
Hivos aims to put rightsholders’ ideas, voices, and needs at the center of our interventions. Our support and accompaniment efforts are designed to ensure rightsholders have the sustained political power and influence needed to challenge social and political systems and practices that fuel discrimination and exclusion. Our interventions ensure that women and LGBTIQ+ people have the tools, knowledge, and support to assert their rights and spark change in their communities and internationally.

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2. Reshaping GEDI narratives to inspire action and shifts in dominant social – cultural norms
A deeper understanding of the intersecting identities, characteristics, and overlapping discriminatory systems that shape rightsholders’ lived experiences is needed to inform new narratives, interventions, and policy development.

Therefore:
- Our narrative change work is part of the larger struggle to shift power in society; it is context-specific and is led and informed by rightsholders’ needs and priorities.
- As part of this process, we encourage greater use of intersectional knowledge and forms of evidence to instill and drive meaningful social, legal, and policy changes.

3. Collaborating for impact
Hivos aims to increase shared knowledge by working in partnerships, joining like-minded initiatives, and building (intersectional) connections where rightsholder movements and their allies co-create, implement, and scale (new) solutions. This enables rightsholders, allies, and donors to deploy their resources collectively to reach those furthest left behind. We also envision rightsholders using these connections to work with duty bears across sectors to identify and respond strategically to priority issues.

Leveraging our track record of implementing and coordinating impact, knowledge, innovation, and learning hubs, we bring together different stakeholders to develop innovative approaches or scale new or proven strategies to realize GEDI outcomes. We use our position to convene and facilitate collaborations between rightsholders and relevant actors to build more robust networks and relations for change. We achieve this through existing Communities of Action and practice and by engaging in collaborative research and peer learning to develop a body of evidence on promising practices that can scale solutions.

In the coming years, we aim to build political and public support for new narratives that foster transformative dialogue on GEDI and disrupt dominant narratives and patterns of inequality. Hivos programs such as RO.O.M. experiences from KP REACH and the Free to be Me campaign, form the basis of our GEDI narrative change initiatives. Hivos will therefore invest in rightsholders’ capacity and communication resources to spur shifts in public discourse. To do so, we aim to continue supporting activists, researchers, creative artists, social and media influencers to produce and circulate transformative GEDI narratives using arts and culture, strategic communication, campaigns, and storytelling to drive long-term social and systemic change.

To achieve lasting change towards a more inclusive and fair society, public discourse around the rights of women, LGBTIQ+ people and other marginalized groups must change by centering them as experts and key decision-makers at all levels.

Fifty percent of Hivos’ programmatic work and budget are linked to GEDI objectives that support human rights, gender justice, LGBTIQ, and feminist movements in which Hivos’ work is complementary to that of our partners.
A more just, fair, dignified, and prosperous society, where all people have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities. A world where gender equality, inclusive economies and governance practices become the principle organizing and building just societies.

Collaborating for Impact
A lack of equitable and inclusive SRHR.

Shrinking civic space and digital divide.

1) Building Political Power and Influence
Resilient and diverse rightsholder movements engage with public and political actors from a position of strength and legitimacy.

2) Reshaping GEDI Narratives to Instil New Energy and Inspire Action
Shifting dominant narratives and social, cultural norms and political support for systemic and legal transformation to promote sustainable, just and inclusive development.

3) Collaborating for Impact
Local ecosystems and communities of action, collaborate for impact across sectors, inspire multifaceted and inclusive environments.

Building Political Power

- Policies and agreements that tackle discrimination and promote rightsholder inclusion: Resilient and flourishing rightsholder movements are at the center of global, national and local GEDI efforts.

- Rightsholders and affected communities are in the best position to understand their lived realities, justice & rights, leadership & political participation.

Reshaping GEDI Narratives to

- Instil New Energy and Inspire Action

- Rightsholders and relevant stakeholders engage in multi-actor initiatives to co-create, innovate and instill broader support for GEDI programs and policies.

Collaborating for Impact

- Rightsholders have the capacity and communication resources to address inequality and bias in public discourse on SRHR, economic justice, and women’s rights, leadership & political participation.

- Rightsholders have sustained leadership opportunities in decision making with rightsholders, understand their unique identities and social positions. Systemic inequality can be dismantled using transformative narratives and intersectional evidence-based advocacy.

- Even in hostile environments, there are governments (policy makers), businesses, and other stakeholders willing to engage with rightsholders, understand their unique needs, and remove barriers.

- Rightsholders and affected communities are in the best position to understand their lived realities, but have limited access to decision-making that affects their lives.

- Women, girls, LGBTIQ+ & other marginalized communities are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Politicians and policy makers can be leveraged to disrupt inequality and power imbalances.

4) Influencing policies and practices

- # policy debates and outcomes that reflect the changed narrative

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5) Supporting frontrunners

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Our track record is based on current programs whose strategies reinforce our Theory of Change. They offer opportunities to scale up, expand or replicate the innovative ideas they are built on. Furthermore, we plan to utilize results and lessons from them to inform new program ideas and partnerships.

Voice


Key partners: Oxfam Novib, The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and rightsholder groups and organizations.

Program snapshot: Voice is synonymous with inclusion, explicitly targeting those left furthest behind whom Hivos wants to reach first. Voice has four types of grants: empowerment, influencing, innovation and learning, and sudden opportunity grants. The added value of Voice lies in its demonstrated ability to give practical meaning to the notion of “nothing about us, without us” by creating and managing an easily accessible grant funding mechanism. Voice offers grants to grassroots groups and organizations less likely to access funding from other sources. This includes allowing grant submissions in local languages, audio or video, to accommodate different skills and capacity levels. Voice has supported over 120 projects to amplify the voices of women and girls to increase gender equality. The program specifically focuses on people who face intersecting discrimination and promotes a key role for women and youth in all its work.

Free to be Me


Key partners: Hivos as the lead, Positive Vibes, ILGA World, Global Interfaith Network (GIN), Sog-Campaigns, and Workplace Pride as technical partners.

Program snapshot: The program provides funds, coaching, and accommodation for LGBTIQ+ groups to influence norms and attitudes, generate (public) support, and promote laws, policies, and regulations that recognize, respect, and protect LGBTIQ+ people’s rights. Furthermore, since LGBTIQ+ people are often excluded from socio-economic development agendas, targeted economic empowerment policies and programming are lacking. Hivos and our alliance partners aim to fill this gap by combining national-level approaches and foundational work at the global level. We invest in community engagement efforts and are piloting new ideas that are critical in reshaping how LGBTIQ+ individuals engage and benefit equally from inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

We Lead


CURRENT PROGRAMS

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We Lead


Key partners: Hivos leads a consortium of Positive Vibes, Restless Development, Marsa, FEMNET, the Central American Women’s Fund.

Program snapshot: The program focuses on young women and adolescent girls who live with HIV, identify as lesbian, bisexual, trans, or intersex (LBTI), live with a disability, and are affected by displacement. It puts young women rightsholders in the driver's seat, connecting them in Communities of Action. In these spaces, they share knowledge, experiences, and ideas, and learn from one another while also developing joint strategies to improve their SRHR. We accompany and coach them as they work towards achieving the legal and policy changes they have targeted. The program also empowers these young women to participate in movements and develop and lead campaigns to change the perceptions of policymakers and the public on rightsholders’ SRHR. Finally, an innovative participatory grantmaking mechanism provides financial support to realize their plans and build and strengthen their organizations. Throughout the program, there is continuous attention for rightsholders’ safety and security and their psychosocial well-being.

Hivos Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) Fund

Scope 2016-2021: East and Southern Africa

Key partners: Community Initiative for Social Empowerment (CISE Malawi), Pans Institute for Southern Africa, Gateway Health Institute (GHI), Rozana Memorial Trust (RMT), The Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPPSI), Women’s Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCOZ), Girls Empowerment Network (GENET) Malawi, Grass Root Soccer (GRS) Zambia, Sex Rights Africa Network, Real Open Opportunities for Transformation Support (ROOTS) Africa, Bridges of Hope, Restless Development.

Program snapshot: The Regional SRHR Fund has adopted an approach that is interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Evidence-informed grantmaking processes are at the core of the Fund’s activities. This strategy is supported by a range of other actions to ensure a comprehensive approach, including capacity strengthening of partner organizations, advocacy and influencing policies for improved access to services, and strategic convening of key stakeholders for a more coordinated regional SRHR response. The Fund’s interventions align with SDGs 3 and 5 as the priority SRHR areas in facilitating voice, agency, and collaboration amongst youth-focused SRHR organizations in East and Southern Africa.

She Leads

Scope: 2020-2023: Zimbabwe

Partners: Women’s Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCOZ), Institute of Young Women Development (IYWD), Gender & Media Connect (GMC), The General Agriculture and
Our understanding and practice of gender equality is based on all people’s equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity, ethnicity, ability, religion, age, among other grounds.

We use the term diversity when discussing equal rights and opportunities because people (rightsholders) differ. It refers to the practice and quality of including or involving people/rightsholders from different social, political, and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, social-economic class, amongst other determinants.

The term inclusion describes our active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity as described above. And the degree to which we meaningfully engage with people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, ensuring they have equal access and resources to participate fully in society.

We use the term rightsholders to highlight the power of women, girls, and LGBTIQ+ people, rather than focus on their marginalization through other common terminology.

We use the acronym LGBTIQ+ to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer people; the ‘+’ indicates that these terms have a limited scope, and not all people who are marginalized because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics (SOGIESC) self-identify with these terms.

We use the term women as an inclusive category to include cis-gender, transgender, and intersex women and women of all ages, including girls.

Intersectionality is an analytical framework for understanding how aspects of a person’s social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege, as expressed by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989). The idea is that when it comes to thinking about how inequalities persist, categories like gender, race, and class are best understood as overlapping and mutually constitutive rather than isolated and distinct.

At Hivos, we employ an intersectional approach because:
- Our interventions and partnerships recognize that everyone has multiple identity factors that impact their participation, their agency, and who they are.
- We recognize the interconnections within and between rightsholder groups and the issues we seek to address, ensuring they have a voice and resources necessary to address the complexity of inequalities they face if actual social change is expected.
- We employ the principles of intersectional knowledge where lived experiences are a valid form of evidence, ensuring that our data collection and utilization considers the politics of power and how power is exercised or experienced.

We understand transformative change as a process that addresses root causes of inequality, challenges power dynamics, and leads to a shift in social norms, behaviors, laws, and policies.

- To achieve GEDI objectives, we work on transforming gender norms and addressing power relations, notably addressing patriarchy. Our analysis and work also examine the underlying norms that limit the broader interpretations of gender by including other identities, expressions, and sexual orientations.
- We recognize transformational work is long term and often generational, and requires sustained investments.

Hivos employs a dual-track approach to ensure GEDI is a cross-cutting (mainstreamed) theme in Hivos’ work and the focus of targeted (stand-alone/specific) programming, research, and advocacy. Programmatic distinctions are made based on the project/program’s objective(s).

- Principle objective: implies that GEDI is the main objective of the project/program and is fundamental in its design and expected results.
- Significant objective: means that gender equality or GEDI is an essential and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/program.