

Inclusion Matters

Communities are more resilient when people of all genders and ages have access to opportunities and services and the ability to act upon them. To achieve better lives for people and communities in a sustainable way, we must reduce barriers to resources and increase empowerment, equity, and inclusion for all groups.

For **50 years**, ACDI/VOCA has shown how allowing everyone to engage in economic activities, regardless of gender or social factors leads to stronger economies and self-reliant communities. To make this a reality, we focus on three main areas, all while maintaining our commitment to do no harm.



Social Transformation Creates Resilient Households and Communities

Our programs around the world address harmful or limiting norms using techniques including social and behavior change communication campaigns, trainings designed to ensure male and female participation, and dialogues that lead to transformed perspectives on gender roles and norms.

At the start of any program, we conduct a gender and inclusion analysis, which identifies issues, informs our goals, and helps us plan our approach. We use USAID's Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting practices to measure our progress and learn and adapt as we go.

At the household and community levels we help raise awareness and shift behaviors in the areas of decision making, income and spending, and caretaking to ensure women, youth, and other marginalized groups are able to benefit from their work and participate actively in decisions that affect their lives and communities.

Recognizing Intersectionality

People are not defined by gender and age alone. Ability, sexual identity, religion, ethnicity, economic and residency status, and other social identifiers play a role too. These identifiers often create overlapping systems of disadvantage, vulnerability, and discrimination. To truly empower all people, we must account for the interrelated and diverse roles of—and the impacts of those roles on—those we serve.

ACDI/VOCA is a global development design and delivery partner that has implemented effective economic and social development projects in nearly 150 countries since 1963. Learn more at www.acdivoca.org. To contact our GSI team, email genderfirst@acdivoca.org.



"I AM VERY EAGER TO START A LIVESTOCK BUSINESS TOGETHER WITH THE TWO OTHER WOMEN IN MY GROUP. FROM THE BUSINESS SKILLS TRAINING RECEIVED, WE WILL ENSURE THAT WE ARE COMPETITIVE." – Rukia Liban, 33
Feed the Future Kenya Livestock Market Systems Activity participant

Diverse Representation Builds Strong Economies

When marginalized groups are empowered and included, economies strengthen and expand. ACDI/VOCA analyzes the gender and social norms that inhibit economic growth and works with local partners to make markets more inclusive. We do so by

- building the private sector business case for engaging all people,
- increasing access to markets and finance,
- guiding policy decisions,
- influencing social norms, and
- providing workforce development training.

These efforts expand upon the [Women's Economic Empowerment in Market Systems Framework](#) – developed under Leveraging Economic Opportunities (LEO), a USAID contract led by ACDI/VOCA – to help women, youth, and marginalized groups become self-reliant.

Gender First™

Start with gender to succeed together

[GenderFirst™](#) is a collection of more than forty resources on how to collect, analyze, and apply information about gender and social inequalities. GenderFirst™ also guides program staff in developing theories of change and indicators for monitoring change and capturing learning over time. ACDI/VOCA offers [nine Signature Tools](#) designed by our technical experts that help development professionals think through solutions to complex issues.

Engaged Youth Promote Sustainable Economic Growth

ACDI/VOCA knows that male and female youth have specific needs that differ from each other and the adults in their communities. That's why we analyze **both age and gender differences** and address youth issues within their separate contexts.

ACDI/VOCA builds on USAID's Positive Youth Development approach to help youth gain a sense of agency, contribute to their communities in meaningful ways, and access safe spaces to develop their skills. We work with youth groups who equip the next generation to be central actors in their own development. We lead workforce development training and support environments in which gender- and youth-responsive policies are in place. We also provide youth with internships and mentorships to help secure their roles in an inclusive economic market system.