HELVETAS

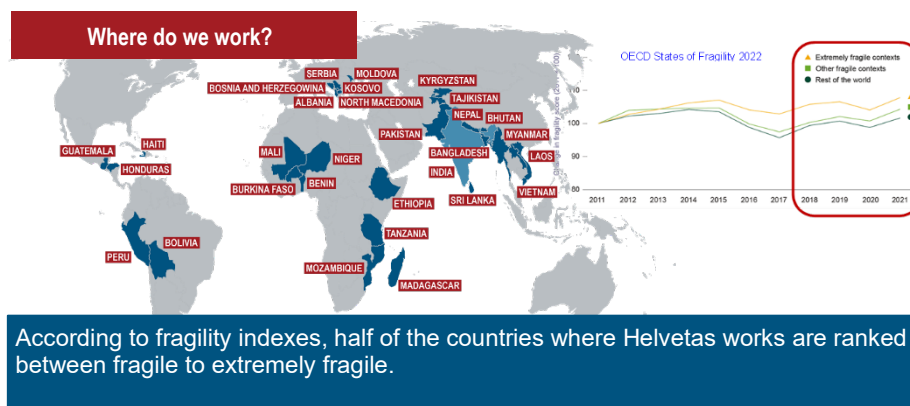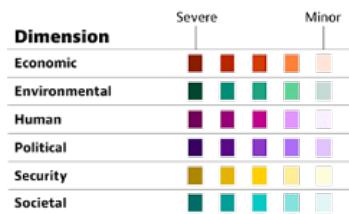**GENDER AND SOCIAL EQUITY VISION AND ACTIONS 2025-2028**

Principles

- Gender and social equity are integral to all topics, working areas and fields, all contexts, including in Switzerland.
- Social inclusion, social cohesion, social protection, social security, and/or social justice are key standalone and/or interlinked preventive and/or responsive objectives depending on the program context
- Gender-based violence (online/ offline, all forms: sexual, physical, psychological, economic etc.) is ever-present/ endemic in the development, fragile & humanitarian contexts we work in, affecting mostly women/girls **but also** men/boys. The latter under/estimated-reported due to taboo and in the contexts of conflict/war
- Do No Harm and contingency plans are a pre-requisite for all strategies: physical, psychological, financial, digital, societal, environmental, & political harms
- The above principles apply to both organization and program management e.g. resources, operations, employees, partners and stakeholders

Overarching global context:

We are living and working in an increasingly fragile and inter-connected world.

What is Fragility? It is the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacities of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks. Fragility compromises people, planet, and prosperity. In an interconnected world, addressing the root causes of multidimensional fragility is essential for sustainable development and peace.

Where do we work?

According to fragility indexes, half of the countries where Helvetas works are ranked between fragile to extremely fragile.

'Dangerous trends like climate change, biodiversity loss, zoonotic diseases, and pollution have compounded effects on human security (including food security), which create social imbalances in the form of poverty, inequality, and social tensions. The highly unequal distribution of costs and benefits of these interactions tend to reinforce the continuation of this highly destabilizing cycle. There is a risk that we might be at the start of a new cycle of heightened food insecurity and human deprivations.' UN

'Climate change is driving unprecedented risks to the geostrategic landscape of the 21st century. A growing number of militaries and national security communities around the world are concerned about a changing climate – including the very real risks it poses to global stability, conflict, and military missions. Militaries have a responsibility to help prevent and prepare for these risks.' IMCCS

- The following topics are Helvetas organizational priorities identified for the strategy period 2025-2028.
- In applying a GSE lens, the most **critical GSE** considerations are highlighted, in the form of **strategic opportunities, and/or threats**.
- While each topic is being analysed independently, there are important intersectionality's worth weighing. Considering this, key **cause/effect interdependencies between the key topics** from a GSE perspective are also noted, vertically and horizontally.

PROGRAMS

Topic	Key GSE Analysis	GSE nexus w/ other key topic/s	GSE Vision	GSE Action
Global blocks (" Cold War II")	• **Conservatism/ Authoritarianism** are a cause and effect of the rise in conflict, corruption, and inequality, exacerbating gender & social divides, backslides and existing and new forms of GBV and rights violations of women, and other social, ethnic and/or minority groups. • **Conflict:** enables corruption, increases gender and social inequality and livelihood insecurity, including reduced access to food. • **Corruption:** Corruption breeds conflict and exacerbates inequalities with different gendered and social impacts, especially on women and the more vulnerable Transparency.org; WB • **Inequality:** Economic inequality is closely linked to political inequalities, reinforcing division in society as the poorest people have less influence. The largest Gender gaps persist in women's political empowerment and leadership, be it in the public, political or business spheres.[1] • **Hunger: Global hunger is increasing while progress toward addressing it, is stagnating.** 60% of undernourished people in the world are women (girls) however if women in the agriculture sector were more valued, and resourced, productivity could increase by 30%, domestic agriculture output would increase by 4% and 100M less people would go hungry. ADB	• Evidence shows that more gender balance and diversity in leadership and decision-making functions contributes to more inclusive policy making and therefore social equity and cohesion. This was most recently exemplified during the COVID-19 **pandemic**. OECD; UNWOMEN • Research shows that when women are included in conflict mediation, peace negotiations, there is 30% more likelihood of a peaceful and lasting resolution. WPS Engaging youth as change agents and peace ambassadors is also gaining recognition. YPS • Conflict and inequality are a driver of **migration**, subjecting women, youth, and more vulnerable groups to increased hazards related to informal work, modern day slavery, trafficking, homelessness, hunger, violence, and criminalization among others. • **Xenophobia, racism, and sexism/gender discrimination** exacerbate gender inequality, social divides, and unsafe **migration**. Conflict, crisis, **pandemics**, and conservatism/authoritarianism, which are often linked, tend to trigger spikes in these socially destructive trends. IOM • The world's richest 10% account for between 36% and 49% of global emissions. At the same time, the political power of wealthy shareholders and corporations in carbon-intensive industries enables them to obstruct climate policies that undermine their interests: Inequality is linked to more greenhouse gas emissions related **climate change**. UCL • 1.6% of global incomes could be generated and reinvested in education, health and in the ecological transition through innovative, inclusive, and progressive tax options, addressing both **poverty** and **climate change** WID • The top drivers of hunger are conflict, **climate change** and inequity. AAH	**GSE is understood and treated as essential in preventing & responding to key risks and challenges** whilst **contributing to more lasting solutions** and sustainable impacts in all the contexts we work, no matter the working area/field.	HELVETAS, together with key implementing partners and system actors will ensure that: • **GSE is anchored at the centre of our context/ stakeholder, and/or sectoral analyses.** This means that GSE related national, regional, and/or international policies, laws, conventions, and compacts are part of all context analysis, no matter the working area/field. PEPA • **Our Inclusive systems approach aims for minimum 40% women, 40% men and 20% diversity[2]** in all leadership/management and/or decision making positions or processes strengthened, created and/or facilitated in frame of our programs/projects with our partners and system actors/ stakeholders from national to local levels, no matter the working area/ field. Additional resources/measures are accounted for to meet this commitment. • **GSE related Do No Harm is systematically part of all risk assessments** and management plans. These are co-shaped and co-monitored with key partners, system actors, and especially primary stakeholders, ensuring that women, and youth are actively involved.

[1] While inequality encompasses much more then gender inequality, considering evidence that shows when women are more included, this has positive effects on social equality and equity, investing in bridging pervasive and in some cases widening gender gaps is essential to addressing broader social inequality issues.

[2] Diversity includes age, ethnicity (indigenous), religion, identity, social strata (education, income, status), differently abled, and/or language, etc.

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Climate change	• For food, nutrition, hygiene and health, water is essential and therefore also a right. Due to women's traditional roles, un/paid care work, and the sectors they occupy, **women depend on clean and safe water and sanitation for their own, family, community, and societal wellbeing. Their inability to access these services and resources, forces them to travel longer distances, pushes them into precarious coping strategies, exposing them to more risks.** At the same time women's inability to 'fulfil their care work duties', often results in acts of abuse and violence against them as a form of disciplinary action/reprimand contributing to 1-3 women (girls) testifying to experiencing some form of GBV. UNWOMEN • Climate change threatens to exacerbate the inequalities between women and men's relationship to water. The impacts of climate change on precipitation are projected to cause more extreme flooding and droughts, resulting in pollution of freshwater resources and increased water scarcity. '**Water poverty' is increasingly affecting developing and richer nations, due to pollution, over-consumption and more.** WB and Nature • **Women and groups with insecure land tenure may also be prevented from adopting climate-smart innovations, infrastructures etc.** On the contrary because of barriers faced, they may be forced to adopt climate risky options, which can lead to income/savings/profit losses, and new risks. ODI • Climate induced crises have disproportionate impacts on the agriculture, manufacturing, and informal sectors where women represent between 50-70% of the workforce. ILO	• Poverty and the **feminization of poverty** impact water use. Unequal access not only to water but clean water exacerbates potential for disease, **pandemics** and more, with disproportionate impacts on women and other at-risk groups. Global Citizen • Land ownership ultimately influences decisions over management and distribution of income from existing or potential resources. As women own less than 10% of land supply globally, their potential for decision-making power on acquiring, using, investing key resources is low. This has direct impact on combatting food, income, and social insecurity. Ethnic/ indigenous, differently abled, and/or single/widowed women face additional challenges in this regard. UNEP. • Women tend to be more bipartisan, cutting across party lines to address issues of common concern. Increasing women's representation in national parliaments leads to the adoption of more **stringent climate change policies**, resulting in lower emissions. At the local level, the participation of women in natural resource management is associated with better resource governance and conservation outcomes. UNFCCC • Women have a greater tendency to make more sustainable consumption choices, e.g., eating less meat or a showing preference for organic food. There is also strong evidence that women place greater emphasis on and are more open towards behaviour and lifestyle changes in **combating climate change** while men tend to rely more on technological solutions. GCC	**GSE is understood and treated as essential in our commitment to greener, more inclusive, and sustainable economies.** Women's representation in leadership/ management positions across all sectors, and the Circular economy is a more inclusive and sustainable model for more decent employment for all, more secure resources and incomes for all, more resilient economies and equitable societies for all.	HELVETAS, together with key implementing partners and system actors will ensure that: • In the frame of our programs/projects, **women, youth and un/der represented groups gain access to land and other assets/ resources** where the national law allows it e.g. land titles; and where the law does not allow it, we will facilitate their 'informal but recognized access by family/ community leaders, local authorities' while engaging in local/national multi-stakeholder policy dialogue with others to formalize it in the law. • Education, employment, and income promotion, with related **access to services for women, youth, migrants, and un/der represented groups, focus on climate smart food systems, the green economy and renewable/alternative energy,** leveraging the circular economy across different sectors. • In the frame of our programs/projects, we enhance **cooperation on climate change and resilience with chambers of commerce, business associations, producer associations, consumer associations, climate, health, and security sector experts/ think tanks**, actively involving women, youth, and un/der represented groups' **networks,** to enhance data availability and inform policy dialogue for more sustainable and resilient solutions.

- Investing in renewables, in the green energy transition, are key measures to mitigate not only climate change but also mitigate energy driven geo-political tensions/conflicts resulting in financial and **migration/refugee crises** which in turn disproportionately impact **forcibly displaced women** and already vulnerable groups. So, while there is talk of green transition there is also concern for a just transition.

- 80% of **people displaced** by climate change are women. AAH

- Until recently, the share of women in top management positions made up only 1 per cent and 6 per cent of technical employees, 22% women overall in the fossil energy sector worldwide, However, the share of women in the renewable energy industry has grown over the last ten years and amounts to about 32 per cent in 2019. By 2050, it is estimated that clean energy jobs will to 29 million globally. IKI

- The circular economy, model can be seen as a facilitator and tool to achieve several SDGs. Closing the gender gap is not only just, but it also helps accelerate the circular economy transition. According to a 2020 study "companies with improved gender diversity on boards were 60 per cent, 39 per cent and 46 per cent more likely than those without to reduce the intensity of energy consumption, GHG emissions and water use respectively. Firms with greater gender diversity at the management level reduced their CO_2 emissions by about 5% more than firms with more male managers. ECB

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Pandemic	• **The crisis has highlighted the extent to which society depends upon frontline workers.** These workers pay double. They are higher risk of both income loss, when their hours are cut or their jobs terminated, and infection when they continue working. These workers were disproportionately young, low educated, migrants, ethnic minorities and employed in low-paid occupations. Frontline workers – who continued to work in their physical workplace and in proximity of other people during the pandemic – are often in lower quality jobs. During the crisis, they reported more job insecurity, and lower overall health and mental well-being. OECD • **Women account for 70% of the global health and social care workforce**. It is estimated that women provide essential health services for around 5 billion people worldwide. The financial value of women's input into health systems is estimated to be over US$3 trillion annually. WHO • The pandemic has exacerbated existing care needs, transformed conditions of paid and unpaid care work and, ultimately, **increased the volume of women's unpaid care work, deepening the associated gender gaps**. CEPAL • GBV increased globally during the COVID-19 pandemic due to higher stress related to health, income, confinement, isolation with abusers, movement restrictions, deserted public areas, and therefore reduced security and related services access. UN-WOMEN • During the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been **significant variations in the level of adoption of public health recommendations across international jurisdictions and between cultural groups**. Such variations have contributed to the dissimilar levels of risks associated with this world-changing viral infection and have highlighted the potential **role of culture** in assigning meaning and importance to personal protective behaviours. The cultural factors of collectivism, information seeking behaviour, symbolism of masks, and previous experience with SARS or Ebola emerged as themes driving the early adoption of personal protective behaviours. These findings have implications for the development of future interventions and campaigns targeting personal protective behaviours in the case of future pandemics. Kantar	• Not usually associated with vulnerability, an at-risk group emerged in the early stages of the pandemic, MSMEs. Both formal and informal MSMEs owned by migrants, women, youth, family run micro-small businesses, were challenged by their market access being hindered by inter- and intra-national restrictions on the movement of people, goods, and services. Many MSMEs today are on the cusp of closure or have already been forced to exit. Many those still trading remain highly vulnerable. Surviving firms will also have to deal with a changed business landscape in the future, with many patterns of sales, distribution and consumer behaviour having been substantially and permanently altered. UNCTAD • Studies show that both as frontline care workers and as women, women's mental, physical, and sexual health is disproportionately affected, in part due to poorer access to services, including protection from abuse and violence, which increase during crisis, including **Climate Change** induced crises. Relief Web • Social protection programmes can reinforce inequalities. **Social protection** programmes may only address the outcomes of exclusion, rather than its drivers. Cash transfers can improve people's purchasing capacity and enable access to services and opportunities. However, the transfers might not tackle the root causes of income deprivation, which could be affected by structural factors such as lack of secure land ownership. GSDRC • **The social contract** between state and the people, as well pre-existing policies and systems help manage pandemics and other crises better, this includes more authoritarian versus more democratic countries – trust and legitimacy of the authorities is key. Carnegie; ISPI; Frontiers	**GSE is understood and treated as essential in all contingency plans, social protection and social security measures** developed and/or reinforced in both our development and humanitarian interventions linking people, public/private service providers, and authorities. We do so by leveraging and improving existing informal and formal, local with national preventive, protective, responsive and recovery measures for more effectiveness and resilience, all the while applying Do No Harm.	HELVETAS, together with key implementing partners and system actors will ensure that: • **Unpaid care work, gender-based violence (online/offline) and psychosocial wellbeing** are integrated into all contingency planning considering cultural and gender norms with potentially compounding negative impacts on wellbeing, safety, and livelihood security. • **Public, private and people partnerships are invested in before, during and after pandemics** to develop joint social protection and security plans, which consider those most at risk, including women, children/youth, migrants, informal workers, people with disease/reduced mobility, local MSMEs (led/owned by women, youth, un/der represented groups etc.) • More **cooperation with local public/private health practitioners, social workers, meteorologists, security, media** (information access but also 'positive' representation of primary stakeholders in the media) **and more**, facilitates links with and reinforces local/ /community-based early warning, prevention, and response measures. Thus, we enhance community-based services whilst linking with formal public/private services: para-legals, para-medics, para-security (civilian) by training more local women, men, youth and un/der represented groups in first aid, midwifery, mediation, protection/self-defence, etc.

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Humanitarian Response	• Many humanitarian trends cut across geographic boundaries. Some intersect, ready to deal a **double or triple or worse blow in 2023 to people who were likely already vulnerable**. They live in places where **drought** has sucked dry livelihoods; **conflict** has ravaged homes, schools, and hospitals; and faraway **wars or stumbling governments** closer to home have stymied their ability to feed themselves and their families. • **Soaring public debt**: Public wealth has dropped significantly, in contrast to private wealth. Governments limit spending that help communities withstand crises – social services, healthcare, safer infrastructure, smarter disaster recovery – towards paying off debt. **Austerity measures also drive inequality and disproportionately hurt the most marginalised.** WID • In key conflict settings, **peacekeeping operations face crises of legitimacy and confidence**, because local populations and/or host states have lost faith in UN peacekeeping missions, paving the way for rebel gains, mercenary deployments, or security vacuums. • **The climate crisis**, skyrocketing prices on the back of the pandemic, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine drove millions to cross borders to escape **conflict, disasters, poverty, and hunger** around the globe. At the same time, many countries demonstrated an ever-more brazen willingness to **erode protections for refugees and to violate rights** of irregular migrants. • Worldwide, a **surge in youth-led activism** is lifting some of the gloom around the reactionary drift. Passionate and digital-savvy, employing constitutional paths to reform, young people have had a direct impact. Gen-Z mobilisation, typically issue-based, is also leaving its mark on broader global campaigns, from the climate to reproductive rights. **While activism may prompt positive change down the road, upheaval can, in the shorter term, trigger various problems like violent crackdowns, hunger, and instability.** The New Humanitarian	• The Grand Bargain target of 25% of humanitarian funding to **local and national actors.** • When the political will exists, countries can mobilise a humane and dignified response to mass **displacement and migration**. • Public debt has ballooned because of the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical turbulence, and disasters made worse and more frequent by **climate change**. In 100 of the worst-hit countries, public debt as a share of GDP rose by some $2 trillion between 2019 and 2021, according to UN figures. The cost of paying down loans – largely held in foreign currency – is also climbing given high interest rates. • Recommendations for improving peacekeeper performance **include more women** and stronger measures to prevent misconduct. Others include focus more on **local peace efforts**, recruiting staff with contextual knowledge, and serving communities rather than host states. • As pandemic-related hardships slow in some parts of the world, the incidence of GBV has not necessarily fallen – especially for women amid other crises, who are particularly vulnerable. According to research by CARE USA and ActionAid International, the failure of donors and aid organisations to fund local, women-led GBV work **contradicts the localisation commitments of the Grand Bargain**, as well as the evidence that local involvement is especially crucial to GBV prevention. Their 2019 report attributes this persistent failure to patriarchy in the humanitarian system, "with positions of power occupied predominantly by men, limiting space for women and [women-led organisations] both at the local and international level". • Democracy is retreating in many countries; illiberal regimes are consolidating. That's bad news, given the well-documented **correlation between authoritarian rule and humanitarian crises.**	**GSE is understood and treated as essential to do no harm, in the planning of mitigation, response and recovery strategies.** Humanitarian crises are on one hand recognized as **exacerbating inequalities, vulnerabilities and risks for women, youth, migrants, IDPs/refugees, and un/der represented groups,** while on the other hand, crises can be **leveraged as potential gender and socially transformative opportunities** to both raise awareness and intervene on gender and social inequalities and injustices.	HELVETAS, together with key implementing partners and system actors will ensure that: • **We have the resources, capacities, and instruments** in place **to actively involve women, youth,** and **un/der represented groups in our rapid and ongoing situation analysis and interventions:** mitigation, protection, shelter, response, distribution, storage etc., monitoring and assessment of activities, including participatory and inclusive public reviews/audits: do no harm. • **Safe spaces** are available for women, youth (girls/boys separately and together) and under/represented groups, where these can **seek protection** if needed, or **peer and/or professional psychosocial support and engage in activities which contribute to their individual wellbeing and overall social cohesion** (stress/trauma/shock absorption): family games, cross-cultural/inter-generational activities, arts, mobile libraries/literacy (reading, writing, counting, digital, financial literacy), sports/play, hobby/theatre/music/singing, skills development (soft (non-violent communication; mediation;) and technical (carpentry; hair/barber) etc. • **While we prioritize bridging basic needs gaps, we invest in safeguarding/restoring dignity, self-sufficiency, self-determination, and sense of purpose** by targeting and networking women & youth, engaging men and involving un/der represented groups through **income & food security, and civic engagement activities.**

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Migration	• **1.2 billion people** could be displaced globally by 2050 due to climate change and natural disasters. The country with the largest number of people at **risk of mass displacements** is **Pakistan**, followed by **Ethiopia** and **Iran. Haiti** faces the highest threat in Central America. In these countries, even small ecological threats and natural disasters could result in mass population displacement, affecting regional and global security. • **Migrants** may themselves **contribute to overall earnings inequalities** in the countries in which they settle. There are also large **inequalities between migrants**. • **More female migrants are migrating independently** for work, education and as heads of households. Female migrants comprise somewhat less than half, 135 million or 48.1 per cent, of the global • Gender is central to any discussion of the causes and consequences of migration, whether forced, voluntary, or somewhere in between. **Gender influences reasons for migrating, who migrates and to where, how people migrate and the networks they use, opportunities and resources available** at destinations, and relations with the country of origin. **Risks, vulnerabilities, and needs are also shaped in large part by one's gender, and often vary drastically for different groups.** The roles, expectations, relationships, and power dynamics associated with being a man, woman, boy or girl, and whether one identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex (LGBTI), significantly affect all aspects of the migration process, and can also be affected in new ways by migration. IOM • The US State Department (2019) counts some 80 countries where consensual same-sex acts are criminalized and highlights the need for special protection. **LGBTQ adults and children often face the very same discrimination they escape in home countries during their journeys and upon arrival**. Research has found that **LGBTQ-identifying children often face discrimination or outright rejection of care in destination countries** while others are less likely to seek medical support due to fear of discrimination perpetuating a downward spiral of worsening health, which can lead to inability to attend school and so on. UNICEF	• Although most people displaced or migrating because of climate impacts are staying within their countries of origin, the accelerating trend of global displacement related to climate impacts is increasing cross-border movements, too, particularly where **climate change interacts with conflict and violence**. ReliefWeb • Global remittance flows are large – approximately USD 702 billion in remittances transferred globally by migrants and diaspora – and dwarf traditional types of development financing and can be more stable. Despite predictions of a large decline in international remittances due to COVID-19 **pandemic**, 2020 saw only a slight drop (2.4%) from the 2019 global total. IOM • Migrants often face a gap between their skills or qualifications and the returns they get to these skills. Migrants (particularly more recent migrants) tend to have high levels of qualifications, but many with high qualification levels are working in jobs that require much lower levels of skills IFS • **Xenophobia**: research suggests that xenophobia and racism may be a driving force of exploitation, violence and abuse against adult and child migrants. IOM • **Citizenship, human development, and migration pathways/corridors**: nationals from countries with very high levels of human development can travel visa-free to around 85 per cent of all other countries worldwide. These countries are also preferred destination countries. However, the visa restrictions in place for countries with very low levels of human development indicate that regular migration pathways are problematic. Irregular pathways are likely to be the most realistic (if not the only). IOM • **Foreign born populations account for 20% or more of urban residents** in the main destination cities hosting international migrants. IOM	**GSE is understood and treated as essential in mitigating or responding to forced migration or supporting informed, safer, and more beneficial chosen migration, be it internal or cross-border.** We are aware of the GSE dimensions which make certain groups more vulnerable, or exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, be it gender, age, dis/ability, orientation, education, ethnicity, religion, identity, language, location, un/accompanied etc. We understand that these differences do not only exist between groups but also within groups. These differences can shape and influence inter-intra group dynamics and power relations etc. Hence, we do not assume nor treat groups as homogenous.	HELVETAS, together with key implementing partners and system actors will ensure that: • In the frame of our programs/projects no matter the context, **we invest in social equity** (services, basic, advanced, and transferable skills, decent jobs, and better managed incomes) **alongside social cohesion** (inter-generational, inter-cultural, inter-gender relations) as part of our strategies to **mitigate women and youth brain drain**, and **departure/host inter-intra community tensions**. • We **invest in inclusive, safe, secure, and responsible financial and digital literacy and inclusion** targeting women/girls, engaging men/boys, and involving families and un/der represented groups considering gender and cultural norms, divides, and risks: do no harm. • We raise awareness about **rights** (human, women, child, labour, migrant, etc.), **benefits, risks, and services** among potential and existing migrant departure, in transit and destination/host communities. We **leverage culture and cooperate with media** for positive gender, identity, and migrant & host community representation.

- **Child migrants, 19yrs & less, accounted for 14.6%;** and **youth migrants, 15-24yrs, accounted for 11.3% of total migrants. Un/accompanied, un/documented child/youth migrants** may turn to irregular work and crime to get money to support their family or continue their journey, increasing their vulnerability to exploitative work. In addition, vulnerabilities may change as children move through different countries and regions. This often creates **a chain of further vulnerabilities** such as lack of schooling, a life on the street and affiliations with crime networks that can be difficult to break.

- Equally important to **shaping the vulnerabilities specific to children is gender**. **Girls and young women** typically face and fall victim to a larger degree **sexual abuse or other certain kinds of exploitation**, as shown by trafficking research. Boys and men are also vulnerable to trafficking. **65 per cent of detected cases of trafficking for forced labour involved boys (10%) and men (55%).** IOM

- **Education and employment are key and can act as safe spaces** and mitigate probability of GBV, trafficking, radicalization, violent extremism, criminalization, urban gang, or armed group recruitment, etc.

- **Vulnerability is increasingly recognized by the European Court of Human Rights** as a relevant criterion to provide international protection for migrants.

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Urbanisation	• A **Gender-Responsive Urban Environment** can address inequality and foster equitable economic growth • Cities are sites of a range of intersectional injustices, such as those in **informal settlements and in the workplaces of informal workers**. Both are extremely vulnerable, and gender, age, sexuality, as well as other factors exacerbate this vulnerability. CitiesAlliance • **Mobility is key to addressing exclusion and inequality**. Inaccessible public transport, spaces, services, due to safety issues, accessibility issues or the prohibitive cost of such services, which in turn can affect economic and education opportunities as well as access to critical services such as health, political decision-making as well as community and public participation compound gender and social disparities and divides. https://www.urbanagendaplatform.org/women • By 2050, 7 in 10 people would be urban dwellers, the first time in history that most of our global population will be urban. There is **a higher proportion of women within the urban population** overall, and a concentration of women-headed households in urban centres. Also, the **population is becoming younger, and women and youth will continue to make up most people living in poverty** with limited control over assets. Safe and productive cities for all – the new Urban Agenda, Habitat III • Cities are also a major contributor to climate change, as they are responsible for around 75% of global greenhouse gas emissions (UNEP). **Urban areas also generate considerable amounts of waste, much of which remains poorly managed and becomes hazardous to people's and eco-systems' health. Air pollution, which is responsible for 9% of deaths worldwide and many health issues** (Ritchie & Roser, 2017), is also a particularly acute problem in cities, due to transportation and production patterns. • **Around one-third of the world's population lives in cities at risk** of cyclones, floods, droughts, earthquakes, landslides or volcanic eruptions (UN DESA, 2018) **Climate change** further exacerbate these risks with more frequent and intense floods, droughts, sea level rise, heatwaves, landslides and storms (WMO, 2021).	• **Greener and more sustainable cities and communities** are in part defined by their degree of gender, inclusion and equity in every day social, cultural, economic, and public/political spaces and affairs. Cities and communities which are more socially inclusive and cohesive, often are also top performers economically, because they are more stable, more secure, and therefore less vulnerable to poverty, crime, violence, conflict, crisis, and other disruptive factors including **climate change**. CAP, GCC & W4C • In addition to income and food affordability constraints, the **urban poor** generally have less access to both formal and informal **social protection** support, such as cash or food transfer programs, and often lack potential financial or food support from extended family networks or informal friends or neighbour groups, especially in unsafe, high-crime urban environments. Generally, while in urban areas there are more services, the over dependence on these services when they become cut off due to crisis, leaves urban dwellers, especially the more poor, more vulnerable. Urban culture tends to be more individualistic, comparing to rural culture, which may have less services, thus to an extent less external dependencies and more community solidarity during crisis. Global evidence from 100 countries. • The effects of climate change are worse among **poor and low-income communities, in part because many live on the margins of society**, in informal settlements, unstable structures, and in areas more susceptible to flooding, landslides, earthquakes, but also because of inadequate capacities, inadequate resources and reduced access to emergency response systems. This is even more pronounced in cities in developing countries. UN • During the **pandemic**, either due to un/der employment, personal safety preferences, family obligations, peri-urban and rural areas experienced an influx of city dwellers. The urban-rural coping strategies, culture dynamics and synergies during crisis are worth considering as part of Urban (rural) contingency planning. OECD	**GSE is understood and treated as essential in navigating rural-urban mobility, and settlement,** recognizing that gender and social vulnerabilities and inequalities are not only transferable, but new ones can be created. **Urbanization needs not exclude peri-urban or even rural areas.** **A more territorial and therefore interconnected and inclusive approach** can help more people not only benefit from more space, services, and opportunities, but also contribute more, **considering greener options for people, economy, and environment.** *(link with migration, circular economy, climate change etc.)*	HELVETAS, together with key implementing partners and system actors will ensure that: • We support **participatory, inclusive, socially, and environmentally responsible urban and territorial planning, and budgeting**. • We integrate and **invest in waste/pollution, energy and other consumption behaviour, awareness, change and management, mobilizing women, youth, schools, community committees / centres**, etc. in our rural, peri and urban contexts. • We promote **home gardens, school gardens, health clinic/hospital gardens, vertical and rooftop gardens, and public gardens enhancing more local food availability and greener communities**, considering eco-friendly, people friendly options e.g. bio/natural, access, costs, maintenance, safety, security, in our rural, peri and urban contexts. • We integrate systematically as part of contingency planning in all our projects, **community-based DRM mobilizing women, youth, and un/der represented groups**, in cooperation with local schools, faith and community centres, health centres, police, emergency services etc. in our rural, peri and urban contexts.

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Geography of poverty	• In 2021 an estimated 698 million people, or **9% of the global population, are living in extreme poverty – that is, living on less than $1.90 a day**. Over one-fifth of the global population live below the higher $3.20 poverty line (1,803 million people), and over two-fifths (3,293 million people) live below $5.50 a day. DEVINIT • **Women account for 50% of people in poverty.** Women who are from minority groups, LGBTQI, living with disability or disease, widowed or single parents, rural, un/der educated and/or skilled and more, are even more vulnerable to being poor, becoming poor or falling into extreme poverty. WB. **Youth comprise 24% of all working poor**. UN 1 in 6 children were living in extreme poverty and that **50% of the global extreme poor are children** even prior to the COVID-19, mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. WB • **Women's unemployment rates run from 50 to 100 percent greater than for men, and 65 to 90% part-time workers are women**, compounded by persistent pay gaps, result in global GDP losses of approx.160 Trillion ILO • In developing countries, an estimated **2/3 of the youth are not fulfilling their economic potential. 2 out of 3 countries do not consult young people** as a part of the process of preparing poverty reduction strategies or national development plans. UN • Countries and/or areas within countries which are **natural resources rich, but suffer from good governance and inclusive policy deficits, tend to suffer from inequality, poverty, hunger, and displacement**, especially among the groups who rely on or reside in the natural resource rich locations (rural, remote etc.) because on their main livelihood resource is compromised, with little to no alternatives supported. MIT • By 2025 most **absolute poverty will be concentrated in low-income countries.**" However, the **number of poor people is growing in "fragile" states**. Economist	• It is estimated that an additional 68 to 135 million people could be pushed into poverty by 2030 because of **climate change**. This has direct impact on inclusive economic opportunities and growth, especially for women who already account for 50% of people who are poor IMF & WB • When shocks, crisis or disaster strike, **women** are often the first to **spend** their income, **or lose their income to** take **care** of family. ILO • Since the **pandemic**, there have been backslides to women's economic empowerment and inequality/poverty reduction progress due to women's and other groups employment & income losses, movement restrictions, and care work increases. • Unpaid Care work contributes 9% to GDP gains, while GBV costs 3% of GDP losses, in both cases, can be more, depending on the country. APEC • By 2025 **climate change** will be a contributing factor in preventing at least 12.5 million girls each year from completing their education. Other reports also show that educated women have better coping strategies against poverty and survival rates during shocks, crisis, or disaster. • Income inequality is on the rise, hand in hand with rising fragility. Income inequality between countries remains important, however trends show rising inequalities within countries. Crisis contributes to this: poor become poorer, and rich stay rich or get richer in comparison. WID • Majority of developing countries will still have at least one region where extreme poverty is likely to persist in 2030. These regions have a combination of characteristics that make development difficult: poor agricultural suitability, a high burden of **communicable disease, a high risk of natural disasters**, water stress, and other geographic factors. Typically, these are areas that are **away from urban areas** where economic opportunities are concentrated. These poverty hotspots represent a serious challenge to the "leave no one behind" Sustainable Development Goals. Brookings	**GSE is understood and treated as essential to break current poverty cycles and mitigate new poverty among those at risk.** This requires a multi-dimensional strategy, which advocates and requires at the very least more women to be in leadership, to be represented, to be serviced, and to be protected. Women are the key entry point, to equalize power and redistribute benefits, to influence and transform social inequity with more inclusive leadership, representation, decision, and policy making. *(The above does not assume nor imply that women alone are the silver bullet solution, however based on data, the persistent and endemic global gender gap is a first stronghold barrier to poverty alleviation, social inclusion, cohesion, equity, and security. Hence involving women, diverse in age, ethnicity, cultural, social, and educational background is fundamental to social equity. Gender equality and social equity do not exclude each other, rather social equity seems to depend on gender equality to be achievable)*	HELVETAS, together with key implementing partners and system actors will: • **Recognize, value and integrate unpaid care work into all project designs and PCM**, targeting women/girls, engaging men/ boys and involving influential family/community members. E.g. gender norms and rights • **Include women/ girls and youth in all digital and financial inclusion initiatives**, developing their capacities to manage safely and responsibly. • **Integrate transferrable skills and contingency plans development**, in all education, income, value and market chain projects, targeting women/girls, engaging men/ boys, and involving influential family/community members and un/der represented groups. • Target women, engage men and involve influential family/community members and un/der represented groups as part of our support to **inclusive leadership and decision-making processes,** including community development committees, community education or health committees, community mediation/security committees, community disaster risk management committees etc.

Topic	Key GSE Analysis	GSE nexus w/ other key topic/s	GSE Vision	GSE Action
Digital transformation ICT4D	• **Digitalization is not gender neutral.** Social and gender norms and deep-rooted gender stereotypes prevent women and girls from harnessing the myriad opportunities offered by digital technologies for personal and professional advancement. Technology facilitated gender-based violence is a growing phenomenon, exacerbated by the widespread use of social media and digital platforms, as is the targeting of adolescent women, LGBTQI women, women in politics, civil society, and human rights. **A study conducted in 50 countries across all continents, showed that between 74%(Europe)-98% (MENA) of online users have been exposed to some form of online violence.** Women are still scarce among decision-makers in the digitalization sphere. UNDP • **Migrants look for information online, governments explore new technologies including artificial intelligence (AI) to manage migration** more efficiently and experts delve into new data sources to understand migration processes and the future of migration. Digital innovation can bring opportunities and risks to **social connections and cohesion among migrants and host communities**. Digitalization provides new opportunities but also raises new questions about data protection, privacy, and ethics. Challenges and, opportunities to migrants and migration during COVID-19, highlight the need to incorporate human rights throughout design and development stages, considering inclusivity and transparency and requires analysis of systemic risks to migration and mobility regimes UN MDPI • Digitalization today permeates every aspect of our **economic, political, and social lives**. E**ntrepreneurs** can leverage digital technologies to scale up their businesses, **citizens** can make use of the mobile internet and digital devices to participate in consultations and democratic processes, **migrants** can use mobile money operators to send remittances back home, **older people and people with disabilities** can access telemedicine services more easily, and **workers** can take advantage of flexible work arrangements and teleworking opportunities to balance their private and public lives. • Digitalization is part of the problem and solution to modern day slavery. It exacerbates modern day slavery e.g. **inhuman work conditions in mines and factories sourcing and producing digital technologies**, while using digitalization to illegally recruit/ groom, traffic and then control workers. But, if used responsibly it can disrupt and reduce, prevent, and identify crimes, and provide remedy mechanisms to victims/survivors.	• **Fewer girls/women choose to study science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), a critical field for success in the green economy**. Their education and participation in these fields can drive innovation in green technologies and green industry. However persistent barriers to education in STEM and as a result jobs in STEM, are potentially contributing to missed GDP gains of 610-820 billion. • **Digitalization is not carbon neutral. nexus of green and digital**: An opportunity or a challenge? Both. Digital innovation creates new possibilities for climate change mitigation and adaptation but expands the carbon footprint of the ICT sector. There is also an urgent need to green the ICT sector itself. The rapid digital transformation increasingly generates more demand for networks, data centers, computing power, and data-enabled analytics and applications. The manufacture of devices, telecom networks, and data centers contribute the most to GHG emissions. • **Digitalization, migration, and the future of work** Digitalisation has also enabled significant changes in employment. Skilled occupations are now much more accessible on a global scale, as well as more temporary and compartmentalised in nature. Workers can participate in the digital economy at any time from any place. While migration has long been thought of as the physical movement of humans from one place to another, **we are now witnessing a form of virtual labour migration. Work is crossing national boundaries through online capital, labour, and information flows**. LowyInstitute • Through the provision of **digital (green) infrastructure** for its transactions with business, governments can spur digitalisation among the enterprises themselves; access to well-designed, user-friendly digital services for citizens can help build digital skills among the population; and public-private collaboration can lead to new innovative digital solutions that serve citizens and customers. FT • **Governments are embracing digitalisation to engage more deeply with citizens**, to improve people's access to public services, improving their accountability and earn trust by moving towards collaborative systems and reshaping how they engage with citizens and businesses. However, as governments collect more data and information about citizens through digital platforms, governments have a responsibility to use that data well and to keep it secure. FT Hence leveraging and influencing standards which are gender responsive is key. UNECE	**GSE is understood and treated as essential** to digitalization and digital tools being considered or developed in the frame of our programs and projects, recognizing that while these hold immense promise as key enablers of women's, youth and marginalized group's empowerment, digitalization and so called '**digital solutions**' can become '**digital harms**' which seriously imperil their safety and rights.	HELVETAS, together with key implementing partners and system actors will ensure that: • **The end users of all foreseen/planned digital tools are meaningfully involved** from design and testing/piloting to evaluation e.g. deciding whether or not the digital tool is really the solution or not; and in case a digital tool is developed, jointly monitoring and assessing it, applying a do no harm lens throughout the PCM. • No digital tools are developed or implemented without the **resources and capacity to provide digital rights, literacy, security and responsibility training** to key partners, public/private service providers and end users. • **Gender and social divides (cultural, economic, educational, political) are addressed to mitigate digital divides and digital harms.** E.g. gender norms, social discrimination; gender based violence (online/offline), financial exclusion; under-representation in key sectors like STEM etc. *(Digital inclusion, divides and harms are closely linked to financial inclusion, divides and harms e.g. mobile banking, remittances, micro-finance: avoiding indebtedness, gambling, online scams, fraud, corruption, economic violence…)*

Topic	Key GSE Analysis	GSE nexus w/ other key topic/s	GSE Vision	GSE Action

Our work in CH	• Switzerland's international cooperation strategy focuses on:
	1. creating **decent local jobs**
	2. addressing **climate change**
	3. reducing the causes of **forced and irregular migration**
	4. promoting peace and the **rule of law**
	• **Humanitarian Aid** strategy focuses on:
	1. Protecting the civilian population
	2. Disaster risk reduction
	3. Water and sanitation
	4. Gender-based violence
	
	• The FDFA, Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) co-ordinates and contributes to Switzerland's foreign policy on the environment The Swiss-supported Geneva Environment Network (GEN) is an important centre of **global environmental governance**, which includes engagement with the UN Climate Security Mechanism (CSM). As a member of the Green Climate Fund, Switzerland contributes to Funding Climate Protection and works to ensure that the needs of those most affected by climate change are given consideration. Under the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), has committed itself to mobilizing public and private funds for this, acknowledging the strength of existing synergies to mitigate climate change and the impact of weather- and climate-related natural disasters. Switzerland has a high degree of credibility in this area because of its careful and sustainable approach to its own environment.
	
	• **Women's, girls' and gender rights, empowerment and protection** are committed to among others, in Switzerland's ratification of the Convention Against All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), in its Gender Equality Strategy 2030, and its adherence to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.
	
	• Switzerland is a non-permanent member of the UN Security council and **cooperation with the UN and other multi-laterals** is part of core work, beyond UN Security Council.
		• SDC has launched a series of thematic global programmes and is engaged in international policy dialogue in a bid to address global challenges and to promote global policies and strategies that favor inclusive and sustainable development. Climate change, food, water and health crises as well as migration increasingly affect the development prospects of low- and middle-, and the stability of developed countries. These global crises are each and in combination exacerbating inequality, insecurity, instability, and fragility.
		
		• The SDC Gender Policy defines gender mainstreaming as the main instrument to implement the policy. Gender equality mainstreaming means that any proposed action is reviewed with respect to its implications for women and men. It aims at promoting gender equality in all different fields such as health, education, employment, and income, to name some. Furthermore, the SDC helps to ensure respect for the rights of women and girls and to integrate a gender perspective in all conflict prevention and peacebuilding work. SDC's work on gender in conflict and fragility contributes to the implementation of the Swiss National Action Plan 1325 on Women, Peace and Security
		
		• The 'fit for purpose' new SDC structure, sees Humanitarian aid and development moving closer to each other. The the new PGE Section, which covers Peace (Fragility, conflict & Human Rights), Governance, Gender and Social Equality, exemplifies this (Helvetas is part of a backstopping mandate which ends in April 2027)
		
		• HELVETAS team members are either backstoppers and/or active members of SDC sections' networks focusing on Economy & Education, Climate, DRR & Environment, Migration & Forced Displacement; and Water.
		
		• HELVETAS VIC team members are part of KOFF/Swisspeace working groups on Peacebuilding, and Women Peace & Security; and (funded by SDC); and the Swiss Federal Bureau's consultations and reporting to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in Switzerland.
		
		• HELVETAS has increasing experience engaging with various Human Rights instruments including CEDAW and UPR.
		
		• Also considering Switzerland/SDC's well established engagement & programs with the private sector, in collaboration with SECO, as well commitments to human rights,. E.g. Business & Human rights; and the fact that the private sector is key to achieving sustainable development because it can be as much part of the problem as part of the solution e.g. resources conflicts, emissions, circular economy, women business leaders, decent employment, digital & financial inclusion etc.
			GSE is understood and treated as essential in our work in Switzerland, recognizing that it is interlinked with our work abroad, thus the two inform, and can reinforce each other.
			While the contexts may be different, the root causes of gender inequality and social inequity remain quite similar and ever-present both in Switzerland and abroad.
			Acknowledging that achieving GSE is also a challenge in Switzerland, contributes to **HELVETAS' legitimacy and reputation on GSE matters, by walking our talk**, and addressing endemic inequalities equally in the developed and developing or fragile contexts we work in, linking Swiss national policies, with Swiss Foreign policy, with Swiss international cooperation strategy.
				Advocate for Gender equality focusing on women and youth in Switzerland and abroad; linking w/ unpaid care work and decent work.
				
				Advocate for Social equity in Switzerland and abroad focusing on social inequality & migrant rights; link w/ business and human rights.
				
				Advocate for green transition/ climate change in Switzerland and abroad; link w/ gender & migrant rights; and business & human rights.
				➢ CEDAW, UPR
				   ○ CEDAW Switzerland
				   ○ UPR Switzerland
				   ○ https://www.ohchr.org
				➢ UN Global Compact on Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)
				   ○ Unpaid Care Work in Switzerland BFS
				   ○ Gender Inequality in Switzerland
				   ○ Pay Gap in Switzerland
				   ○ FCWI
				   ○ https://ngocsw-geneva.ch/
				➢ UN Global Compact on Migration
				   ○ http://www.enfants-migrants.ch/en/statistics Racism/discrimination in Switzerland
				➢ UN Global Compact (Business
				   ○ UN Global Compact Network Switzerland
				   ○ KOVI (Bernd/Helvetas already active)
				➢ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
				   ○ Swiss CSW

ORGANIZATION

Topic	Key Questions	GSE analysis and nexus w/ other key topic/s	GSE Vision	GSE Action

Human Resources and localization	• How can Helvetas ensure continued efforts toward gender balance and diversity in its teams at head office and in the field, especially in increasingly complex and fragile contexts, where female and minority staff safety can be more challenging to secure?
	• How do we see **Helvetas' (and in general INGO) role** evolving as national partners get stronger?
	• How do we assess the present **Localisation** debate?
	• How do we assess the present **Decolonizing Aid** debate? Which impact on our future **role, positioning and funding** do we expect?
		• Helvetas has a longstanding organizational practice to encourage country directors/representatives to be from the country where the position is, and over 90% of Helvetas employees in the countries where we work are nationals of said country
		
		• Increasing shifts toward more authoritarian and conservative governments and rule, leading to:
		  - More patriarchal norms and policies
		  - Shrinking civic space
		  - Shrinking space for gender equality and women
		  - Shrinking space and resources for women led and/or focused organizations
		  - Shrinking space and resources for minority led or focused organizations e.g. ethnic, religious, gender and other minorities
		
		•
			• Helvetas **continues to invest in gender and social equity in its own organizational culture**, policies and practices **while contributing to more equitable and effective localization efforts** that self-empower women and promote gender equality, social inclusion and equity.	• Facilitate safe and inclusive work environments that respect and value diversity.
				• Continue to promote gender balance in all organizational levels, from staff to leadership positions.
				• Continue the GSE diamonds and GSE marker
				• Continue inclusive leadership trainings
				• Enhance awareness of zero tolerance of GBV, PSEAH and other forms of discrimination, abuse, harassment etc.
				
				• Promote collaboration and coordination among organizations working on gender equality and localization
				• Build genuine and equitable partnerships with women's/minority rights organizations (W/MROs) and women-led or minority led organizations (W/MLOs). recognizing their expertise and leadership.
				• Support W/MROs and women-led organizations W/MLOs Providing capacity-building opportunities tailored to the specific needs of W/M ROs/LOs.
				• Support and advocate for policies and procedures to prevent and respond to gender based discrimination, abuse or violence within the organization and in organizations and the communities we partner and work with.
				• Work to reduce power imbalances that may prevent women and minorities from fully participating in and benefiting from localization efforts.
				• Ensure women's & minority representatives' meaningful participation and leadership in local organizations and decision-making processes.

Topic	Key Questions	GSE analysis and nexus w/ other key topic/s	GSE Vision	GSE Action
Funding trends and models	• What are **overall ODA** trends? How are they likely to provide funding opportunities, challenges (thematically, geographically, approach-wise? • In particular, how might **localisation** impact our funding? Which options do we see to anticipate? • How do we assess **mega-philanthropy** (100 MCHF proposals), and what would we need to do to position effectively? • How could we grow **unrestricted funding**? Which new **unrestricted funding sources** do we see?	• Global military spending has reached an all-time high of USD 2.1 trillion—while funding for women's organizations in conflict-affected countries is dropping. UNWOMEN • Private sector funding as part of CSR, companies who are members of the UN Global Compact Women's Empowerment Principles (WEP) and gender or other social impact investors • Foundations; networks of foundations which support women, human rights and other social issues • Other forms of sponsorship e.g. diaspora engagement etc.	• Helvetas continues to be resourced by a **diverse group of supporters of gender and social inclusion and equity**, enabling Helvetas to continue to invest in GSE principal and/or significant programs, projects and collaborations.	• Continue to lobby donors and governments on the social, economic, environmental and security benefits of gender equality • Ensure that funding reaches W/MROs and W/MLOs directly, and that funding mechanisms are accessible. • Continue to seek funding opportunities which focus on gender equity, social inclusion and equity

For more information, visit the GSE public website page: https://www.helvetas.org/en/switzerland/what-we-do/our-topics/gender-social-equity

For more resources, for Helvetas team members, visit the GSE space on our Pamoja intranet https://pamoja.helvetas.org/display/Directorate/Gender+and+Social+Equity

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