

Embracing Equity: International Women's Day 2023

To mark this year's International Women's Day, one of our staff members shared their impressions of what embracing equity means in the workforce.

The theme of this year's International Women's Day (IWD2023) is 'Embrace Equity', recognising the importance of gender equity in the DNA of societies. In order to contribute to this goal, it is important to first start embracing equity in one's own organisation. Practice what you preach, so to speak. At Health Action International (HAI) we have been doing this for many years now and our progress has even been recognised by the Global Health 50/50 index as a front-runner in the field.

Global Health 50/50 is an independent, evidence-driven initiative to advance action and accountability for gender equality in global health

So how is HAI embracing equity in the workplace? Compared to other organisations I've worked for (and with) I can proudly say that HAI truly is a leader when it comes to embracing gender equity in the workplace. At its core lies our *Gender Policy*, which ensures we will deliver on our commitment to equal opportunities and diversity in a growing network of nongovernmental organisations, healthcare providers, health professionals, academics, media and individuals from across the world to whom we make the commitment to:

- reflect the diversity of its global network in its workforce, as well as in its perspectives, policy positions, campaigns and outputs.
- give every employee the same opportunities, whatever their background, colour, race, religion or belief, ethnic or national origins, gender, marital/civil partnership status, sexuality, disability, or age.
- create and sustain an inclusive and safe work environment, which provides equality of opportunities for everyone.
- put in place a comprehensive Gender Policy (this Policy) that will translate into practice at all levels.
- maintain a gender balance among members of its Board.
- maintain the gender balance found in its Senior Management Team.

More specifically our employee entitlements and conditions for employment go well beyond the legal requirements within The Netherlands to provide opportunities to staff members for personal and career choices. Examples include: (1) being mindful of various gender identities in our internal communications and policies; (2) openness to various forms of relationships (a long-term partner is viewed as the legal spouse, and the partner not giving birth is entitled to paid parental leave of

four weeks.); (3) flexible working hours and working from home; and (4) specific articles on office environment for parents and the promotion of breastfeeding.

Being part of a non-traditional family, this environment has enabled me to combine work and my private life with a lot more ease than I had anticipated. It's this active support and embracing of equity within its own sphere of influence that makes it a special place to work

In an ideal world that would make us the norm, not an exception, and achieving that is what the theme of this International Women's Day is all about.