

HEAR INTERNATIONAL (HI) GENDER POLICY



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

GAD - Gender and Development

HI – Hear International

HIGP - Hear International Gender Policy

WID -Women in Development

AKF- Aga Khan Foundation

TORs- Terms of References

UWONET- Uganda Women’s Network

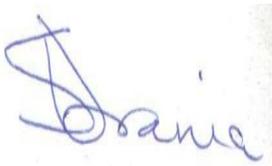
Foreword

The development of the Gender Policy confirms the organization's unequivocal commitment to undertake actions that will bring about more equal gender relations. It is a framework for redressing gender imbalances hence fourth ensuring that all organizational policies and programmes in all areas and at all levels are consistent with the long-term goal of eliminating gender inequalities.

The aim of this policy is to guide planning at all levels including resource allocation and program implementation with a gender perspective. Emphasis on gender is based on the recognition that "gender" is a development concept useful in identifying and understanding the social roles and relations of women and men of all ages, and how these impact on development.

The policy gives a clear mandate to Hear International to mainstream gender in all its activities. The ultimate objective of this policy therefore is to evolve a society that is both informed and conscious of gender and development issues and concerns. Indeed sustainable development calls for maximum and equal participation of both men and women in economic, political and social cultural development.

The challenge ahead of us is to ensure that we scale up best practices and measures articulated in the policy so as to achieve gender equality for women and men throughout the internal and external operations of the organization. As we move forward there is need to keep the gender mainstreaming process on track to achieve the organizations gender equality targets.



DRANIA Silvano

BOARD Chairperson- Hear International (HI)

1.0 Background

1.1 Introduction

Over the time it was realized that Hear International (HI) should have its Gender policy formally written, approved and publicized so that a clear course of direction be provided for implementation and also holds the organization accountable on gender issues. This policy comes from the understanding that inequality between men and women has been deep rooted and it is manifested in the discrimination against women in different forms for example through gender based violence standing at over 60%, gender parity index for primary schools stands at only 0.94% escalating from the high dropout rates especially among the girls. Enrollment rates for both and girls in lower primary are high but by primary seven, only 15% of pupils enrolled in primary one able to complete primary education.

Agriculture is the back born of Uganda's economy providing a means of livelihood for 80% (majority of whom are women) of the population and yet it only contributes 20% towards the country's Gross Domestic Product. A decimal 0.5% of that population is engaged in commercial agriculture, 9% are in formal employment, 3.8% in petty trade, and 2.3% in cottage industry while an insignificant 0.7% is engaged in formal trade. Gender inequalities are continually escalated within the agricultural sector through denial of access to and control over resources especially land for the women

To whatever extent one might be sensitive on gender issues it needs conscious and continuous efforts to achieve a balanced environment both at organizational level and also in work with the partners at different levels. Framing a Gender policy is a commitment towards those efforts. The overall effort is to provide an enabling environment for men and women within the organization, in various partner organizations and the communities with whom we are working and strengthen the gender responsiveness among all.

1.2 Legal and policy context

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and the Uganda Gender Policy provide legal frame works for HI Gender Policy. They recognize equality between women and men. Specifically providing for gender balance and fair representation of marginalized groups; recognizing the role

of women in society; according equal citizenship rights, freedom from discrimination, affirmative action in favour of women and other marginalized groups and articulates specific rights of women including outlawing customs, traditions and practices that undermine the welfare, dignity and interests of women.

The HI Gender Policy is in conformity with National and International obligations on gender equality and women's empowerment that Uganda is party to.

2.0 Goal, Objectives and Guiding Principles

2.1 Goal

Achieve gender equality as an integral part of transforming precious lives for sustainable development in Uganda.

2.2 Purpose of the HI Gender Policy

The purpose of the HI Gender Policy is to establish a clear framework for identification, implementation and coordination of interventions designed to achieve gender equality. The policy is also aimed at guiding the organization in planning, resource allocation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of all projects and programs with a gender perspective.

2.3 Objectives

- To explicitly affirm the organizational commitment towards gender.
- To provide a direction towards building gender related agenda.
- To provide a framework for effectively integrating gender concerns into the organizational agenda and policy domain.
- To create equal opportunities and a conducive environment for women and men at work place.
- To promote equal representation and participation of women in decision making at the professional/ programmatic and administrative levels.

- To reduce gender inequalities that manifest within the community so that all women and men, girls and boys, are able to move out of poverty and to achieve improved and sustainable livelihoods.
- To address gender inequalities and ensure inclusion of gender analysis in policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

3.0 Guiding Principles for implementation of the Hear International Gender Policy

Implementation of this policy is guided by the following principles.

- Gender equality
- Gender is cross cutting
- Affirmative Action
- Household and family relations
- Promotion of Gender and Development (GAD) and Women in Development (WID) approaches

4.0 Policy Strategies

The policy objectives shall be achieved through the following strategies:

- Sensitization and promoting community dialogue on gender issues at all level.
- Promoting a Gender and Development (GAD) approach that is based on the understanding of gender roles and social relations of women and men as well as the Women in Development (WID) approach, which focuses on women specifically
- Ensuring that the gender policy shall be understood and implemented throughout the internal and external operations of Hear International
- Ensuring gender is integrated into the HI Strategic plan and also development planning at all levels namely community, district and national when involved.
- Establishing gender responsive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for development.
- Advocating for gender equity and equality

5.0 Policy Priority Action Areas

The priority interventions and action areas are arranged into four thematic areas;

- Agriculture
- Environment
- Health
- Education

6.0 Institutional Framework for Implementing HI Gender Policy

Implementing the HI Gender Policy is premised in the acknowledgement that the pursuit of gender equality is a multi stakeholder responsibility. The cross cutting nature of gender implies that the different stakeholders will be brought on board to help in implementing the HI Gender policy

7.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

Assessment of progress, outcomes and impact of interventions to address gender inequality will specifically be done by HI using the tools for gender analysis. The tool will be developed by the organization in relation to needs of the different partners.

7.1 Overall Evaluation indicators

The following overall indicators, among others, will be used to assess the extent to which the purpose of the policy is achieved as well as evaluate impact of the policy on gender equality

- Proportion of population below the poverty line by sex and type of head household
- Proportion of women and other vulnerable groups in decision-making
- Proportion of girls completing formal education by level
- Incidence of gender based violence within the community
- Adult literacy rate by sex and location
- Proportion of girls in leadership positions by level

8.0 Time Frame of the HIGP

The time frame for the HIGP shall be 10 years (20015-2025). A mid-term evaluation of the policy will be carried out within the fifth year of implementation. Terminal and ex-post evaluations will also be conducted as appropriate.

9.0 Elements of HIGP

The following systems shall be put in place and necessary strategies shall be tried out internally and externally: at organizational level and at partner level.

9.1 At Organizational Level:

a) Staff composition/representation

- Recruiting adequate women staff and ensuring there is balance at senior level with an objective of achieving a numerical gender balance in all posts at all levels
- Ensuring equal opportunities among male and female staff for personal growth, in promotion benefits, training and working conditions
- Ensuring equitable representation and participation of men and women in the core group, Board of Governors and in various functional committees of the organization

b) Workplace

- Providing a safe and secure workplace for women staff, free from sexual harassment with a Gender Complaints committee to look into specific concerns.
- Providing an enabling and friendly work environment where both men and women enjoy and actively participate in work. This includes providing flexible working hours and allowing working from home, wherever possible
- Extending work related concessions and relaxations for women staff depending upon the situations and requirements; e.g. providing secure transport facilities when they work late hours; giving relaxation over travel time for the next day for those in the field; ensuring security measures along with minimum basic facilities for women staff traveling in the field.

- Reviewing the organizational structure, functioning, problems in relation to gender imbalances among staff and the work environment time to time and taking definite steps to address the same
- Strategic orientation to staff in the field based programs and advocacy initiatives towards increasing women's access, control and ownership over resources.
- Placing Gender in existing committees: A woman employee who has put in 3 months of service after confirmation shall be entitled for 3 months of Maternity Leave on full pay and under probation, she will be eligible for leave without pay for the same length of period.
- Men employees when their spouses have children shall be entitled for 30 days of leave either immediately after child birth or fifteen days before child birth and fifteen days after child birth for primary parenting and child nurturing. In case of miscarriage / abortion, women staff can avail 2 weeks of Maternity Leave with full pay and spouses are entitled for one week's leave.
- Making efforts to develop infrastructure for childcare facilities in the office premises in order to ensure that the parents can bring their children in circumstances in which the child cannot be taken.

c) In the field

- Furthering deliberate and intense efforts to promote participation of women and their collectives in various aspects
- Facilitating participation and even representation of women in various institutional structures created for the management of various activities.
- Analysis of gender disaggregated roles and work patterns, and make special efforts to reduce the work load of women
- Ensuring equal wages to equal work for both men and women in the works as part of the programs, where HI is directly or indirectly involved either as an anchor of the program or as a facilitating support service provider.
- Making special efforts to constantly identify vulnerable women and provide them the necessary support and guidance

- Sensitizing the men and mobilizing their support towards gender balance
- Building awareness and sensitivity by processing information and publishing communication material in diverse media to appeal different strata of people in our functional domain.

d) Staff capacity building

- Facilitating staff capacity building processes and trainings to enhance perspectives and conceptual clarity on Gender issues (for all the staff members). It will be an important component of the induction programme.
- Ensuring that all trainings (internal and external) facilitated by the organization are gender-responsive:
 - a) Training content/methodology/mode of facilitation
 - b) Logistics part -time/location of venue/crèche facilities/other logistics/first-aid kit
- Conducting Gender trainings for both men and women; and ensuring participation of women and men in all the field level meetings and trainings

e) Organizational policies and systems

- Making all HI systems and policies gender responsive and integrating gender indicators into staff performance appraisal systems.
- Incorporating and explicitly mentioning gender sensitivity as an essential element in the tasks/job profiles in all terms of reference, including TORs for external consultants.
- Ensuring that the conceptual clarity and sensitivity on gender issues will be one of the important selection criteria in recruitment processes and capacity building efforts of staff
- Initiating and building the advocacy around gender balance and making efforts to integrate gender concerns into the scaling up and mainstream developmental programs

f) Staff benefits

- Following all statutory requirements related to maternity and paternity leaves.
- Ensuring that staff access to and use of information technology is gender equitable

Arrangements should be made for recording all information and open access for reviewing the performance of tasks mentioned at organizational level regularly in different forums from staff meetings to Annual meetings.

9.2 Networking

- HI would proactively make several efforts in promoting gender concerns in the work with partners. It involves extending support to partners in organizing training programs, conducting gender studies, preparing resource material, providing documentation support etc.
- HI would extend support to partner organizations in developing their own gender policies, strategies and programs.
- HI would further strengthen linkages with international agencies to work on various women issues. Participation and contribution to the common platforms like Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) will further help the organization.
- Sharing Gender reports with our network members and partner organizations and also facilitating similar process within the partner organizations to promote gender sensitivity.
- Associating with networks and organizations working on this agenda.
- Supporting and expressing solidarity with partners at field level in taking up issues of discrimination or harassment against women.

10.0 Gender Policy Commitments

Through this policy, HI seeks to promote equal realization of dignity and human rights for girls, women, boys and men, and the elimination of poverty and injustice. Specifically, this policy is intended to improve the explicit incorporation of gender in programmatic and organizational practices.

HI commits to:

1. Promote Gender Equality as an explicit internationally recognized human right.
2. Address systemic and structural practices that create barriers to the realization of women's rights and Gender Equality; including prevention and response to gender based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse.
3. Support the empowerment of women and girls as a key strategy toward ending poverty and gender inequality.
4. Actively involve men and boys as allies in promoting Gender Equality.
5. Engage and coordinate with partners, local governments, funders and other civil society organizations to promote and support effective, creative and impactful ways to promote gender equality.
6. Monitor, evaluate and institutionalize organizational learning regarding specific Gender Equality results.
7. Actively hold ourselves and others accountable to Gender Equality standards.
8. Ensure that key organizational policies, systems and practices include but not limited to budgeting, human resource recruitment, training and management, and decision making support gender equality.
9. Ensuring adequate funding to realize our commitments.
10. Apply these commitments within all programme areas using integrated planning approaches and recognized Gender sensitive tools and techniques such as Gender Analysis frameworks, collection of age/sex disaggregated data, and results-focused design and evaluation.

11.0 Policy Implementation

The policy is accompanied by proposed implementation arrangements, common standards and supporting definitions. More operational guidance and enforcement will be developed by HI members supported by the HI Gender Officer as required to support the policy implementation so as to ensure the policy is effectively applied and achieves expected results.

HI Gender Policy Implementation Guidelines

HI will implement, monitor and evaluate this policy. Each HI member is encouraged to devise a context-specific and realistic implementation plan / process, with appropriate investment of resources, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Common Standards in Support of Gender Equality, HI members are required to meet these standards in order to end poverty and support gender equality. HI members will ensure that the following standards are applied, monitored, adhered to and reported on:

1. Key organizational policy, planning and programmes will:

- Incorporate gender and power analysis as a mandatory operational and/or design feature.
 - Be based on data disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant diversity factors such as religion among others.
- i. Explicitly state gender equality results and
 - ii. Include relevant and feasible gender sensitive indicators for every stage of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
 - iii. Ensure sufficient funding to meet gender requirements.
 - iv. Formulate staff work plans and budgets accordingly.

2. Human Resources policies and practices will adequately address Gender Equality.

HI members will track and report annually on gender balance in staffing and governance structures and implement specific strategies to balance male/female representation.

3. HI executive and senior management staff report regularly to beneficiaries, donors and the public on progress on Gender Equality in HI's work through appropriate reporting channels.

4. Each HI member must assess and enhance accordingly the organizational capacity for the implementation of the policy.

12.0 Policy Review

HI will work collaboratively to undertake a review of this Gender Policy. This will take place after every five years. The HI member representatives will report annually their progress in regard to their respective implementation plans. An annual summary report will be submitted by the Gender Officer to the HI Board via the HI Coordinator.

13.0 Conclusion

This is a policy statement, which outlines HI's responsiveness towards Gender and its operational framework to address the related concerns. The exact operational procedures shall be worked out in detail for all the above outlined statements in a consultative process involving all the staff with possible external facilitation support. The idea of formulating gender policy for the organization started some time back. There were initial rounds of internal discussions within the team.

The Gender policy of HI is an outcome of collective efforts of HI team especially Chandini Peace Immaculate (Programme officer community services / Gender Focal Person), Ababo Stephen (Coordinator), Okuiti Stephen (Training Officer) and Drijaru Nesta (Administrative Assistant) in collaboration with **Agha Khan Foundation (AKF)**. We sincerely acknowledge their contribution.

This Gender Policy defines HI's explicit commitments to support Gender Equality. The accompanying implementation guideline sets out mechanisms and minimum common standards for all HI members. This policy statement therefore strives to make our collective programming efforts more effective, builds on commitments made in the existing Policy Statements and reflects subsequent developments in Gender Equality Policies of development organizations working to end poverty and social injustice. It therefore sets a stage for increased accountability.

APPENDICES

Glossary

Gender: is the social and cultural construct of roles, responsibilities, attributes, opportunities, privileges, status, access to and control over resources and benefits between women and men, boys and girls in a given society.

Sex: refers to biological characteristics that make an individual male or female. Sex differences are God given, universal and unchangeable.

Gender equality: is the ability of men and women, boys and girls to enjoy the same status and have equal opportunity to realize their potential to contribute to dimensions equality in capabilities as in education and health levels; opportunities to utilize capabilities to earn incomes and live to full potential; and agency which is the ability to influence outcomes.

Gender Equity: is fairness and justice in the distribution of resources, benefits, and responsibilities between men and women, girls and boys in all spheres of life.

Gender Issue: is a point of gender inequality that is undesirable and requires intervention. It results from some form of gender discrimination or oppression. A Gender issue arises when there is inequality, inequity or differentiated treatment of an individual or a group of people purely on the basis of social expectations and attributes.

Gender relations: are principally about power. The term gender relations refer to those dimensions of social relations that create differences in the positioning of women and men in social processes. Through gender relations, men are often given greater capacity than women to mobilize a variety of resources and cultural roles. Gender relations consist of social distribution of space, the norms governing the space, and the social, political and economic rights. Hence, gender relations entail the ways in which a culture or society defines entitlements, responsibilities and identities of men and women in relation to one another.

Gender mainstreaming: is a conscious approach of an organization to take into account gender equality concerns in all policy, programme, administrative and financial activities as well as organizational structures and procedures. It's based on a political decision to work towards and finally achieve the goal of gender equality within the organization thus contributing towards gender equality in the respective society. It involves applying a variety of measures, providing resources (financial, human, time, information) and ensuring a process of learning and transformation.

Gender responsive: is the ability of an individual or agency, to take into account the social relations of women and men as well as differences in their needs in any undertaking or decision.

Gender sensitivity: is being conscious of the different situations and needs of women and men, throughout the decision-making process. It entails the ability to recognize the differences in perception and interests between males and females arising from their different social position and different gender roles.

Women in Development (WID): WID is a concept, which denotes an approach that advocates for women targeted interventions within the mainstream of development so as to improve their condition.

Gender and Development (GAD): is an approach that affirms and supports women's equal role in development. It also questions the direction of development, advocates for structural transformation, and insists on the transformation of gender relations. GAD does not mean a de-emphasis on women; rather its goal is women's empowerment and equality of women and men in the reproductive as well as productive spheres.