

Gender Policy



Aiming Change for Tomorrow

Prepared by : Mr. Mubashir Banoori, Program Development Coordinator
Recommended by : Management Committee headed by CEO
Approved by : Board of Directors, ACT-International

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1 Introduction

ACT-International is a not-for-profit right based national organization focusing on women, youth, children and marginalized segments of society. The organization particularly works with disadvantaged segments of society to empower communities by building peoples engagement, capacity and partnership focusing on women and children for better tomorrow. Organization aims to develop partnerships and innovative programmes with the support of development actors to contribute in the efforts of **“Aiming Change for Tomorrow”**. ACT-International is registered as a non-profit organization under the Societies Registration Act, XXI of 1860.

2 Vision, Mission, Values

2.1 Vision

Aiming the world of opportunities for a better tomorrow.

2.2 Mission

Empowering communities to recover, progress and advance by building peoples` engagement, capacity and partnership focusing women and children for a better tomorrow.

2.3 We pursue this mission through:

- Grassroots institutional development and networking with local civil society groups and organizations;
- Sustainable economic development that integrates livelihoods, education, health, infrastructure, environment, youth development, social cohesion and local leadership management;
- Child development that integrates child rights, protection and improvement of service provision to reduce neglect, abuse and exploitation;
- Partnerships with civil society and public sector organizations that promote harmony and cohesion amongst development partners, integration of development initiatives and accountability;
- Policy advocacy that integrates evidence based research on socio-economic and political issues which are directly related to sustainable development of marginalized communities especially women and children;
- Emergency relief services and recovery and rehabilitation initiatives that assist people affected by conflict or disaster.

2.4 Our Core Values

- **Our mission and humanitarian values** impels us to act for a better tomorrow
- **Participation** for attaining ownership that leads to community empowerment
- **Transparency** for making humanitarian action accountable to stakeholders
- **Equality** for realizing the rights of disadvantaged and discriminated
- **Innovation** for achieving excellence to up-bring the lives of marginalized
- **Responsibility** for serving the underprivileged voluntarily

3 Purpose of the gender policy

Over the time, it was realized that ACT International should have its Gender policy formally written, approved and publicized so that it not only gives direction for the organization in practice, but also holds the organization accountable. It also comes from the understanding that, inequality between men and women is deep rooted and it is manifested in discrimination against women in different forms. To whatever extent, one might be sensitive; it needs conscious and continuous efforts to achieve a balanced environment both at organizational level and also in work with the partner, beneficiary and stakeholder at field level. Framing a Gender policy is a commitment towards those efforts. The overall effort is to provide an enabling environment for women within the organization, various development partners and the communities with whom we are working and strengthen the gender sensitivity among all.

3.1 Objectives of the Policy

- Explicitly state the organizational commitment towards gender
- Provide a framework for effectively integrating gender concerns into the organizational agenda and policy domain
- Create equal opportunities and a conducive environment for women and men at work place
- Promote equal representation and participation of women in decision making at the professional/ programmatic and administrative levels.

3.2 What we mean by Gender:

ACT International understands that gender refers to the attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the socio-cultural relationships between women and men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context, which also takes into consideration factors such as class, race, economic status, ethnic group and age. ACT adopts gender perspective, which means focusing on both women and men and their relationships with each other and resources. In addition, it means working with a global perspective that allows for and appreciates regional diversity. The organization aims at mainstreaming gender by creating an enabling working environment that in turn attracts and helps to retain gender sensitive staff. Since ACT is working to strengthen lives of women, children and deprived segment of society, only with a gender perspective a complete picture of human relationships and ecosystems can be built up. The gender policy is an integral part of all its organizational policies, programmes and projects and involves building a culture that understands the issues and policies, which respect diversity and gender, related concerns. A mere statement of policy and objectives does not ensure the concerns relating to addressing the gender. Towards achieving the above objectives, clear indicators need to be defined to evaluate and assess the organizations commitment towards gender equity on a periodic basis.

4 Application of the Policy

ACT follows some principle practice to ensure that the policy is practiced and applied in its true spirit for ensuring gender mainstreaming which are as follows:

A) Staff composition/representation

- Recruiting adequate women staff and ensuring the balance also at senior levels; 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

B) Workplace

- Providing a safe and secure workplace for women staff, free from sexual harassment with a Gender Response 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 the natural resources.
- Placing Gender in existing committees: A woman employee who has put in 3 Years of service after confirmation shall be entitled for 3 months of maternity leave on full pay and under probation, she will be eligible to utilize other leaves without pay.
- Men employees when their spouses have children shall be entitled for 5 days of leave either immediately after child birth or before child birth.
- Analysis of gender disaggregated roles and work patterns, and make special efforts to reduce the work load of women
- Ensuring equal opportunities for promotion of employee both men and women in the works as part of the programs
- Making special efforts to constantly identify vulnerable women and provide them the necessary support and guidance especially in field
- 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.

C) 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-sensitive.- 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 in all the field level meetings and trainings

D) Organizational policies and systems

- Making all HR systems and policies gender-sensitive and 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

E) 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

5 Networking:

- ACT would proactively make several efforts in promoting gender concerns with partners. It involves extending support to partners in organizing training programs, conducting gender studies, preparing resource material, providing documentation support etc.
- Sharing Gender reports with our network members and development beneficiary partner and also facilitating similar process within the partner beneficiary to promote gender sensitivity
- Supporting and expressing solidarity with beneficiary at field level in taking up issues of discrimination or harassment against women

6 Organizational arrangements for implementation

- Establishment of Gender response committee (four members with equal gender ratio) at head office level to promote gender equality and protect the rights of gender.

- Selection of Members of the committee will be the sole discretion of the Senior management team (SMT) and the committee will ensure effective implementation of the policy explained in section 4 (A to E)
- Members of the Gender response committee will be selected from the core team of ACT International regardless of position and scale.
- Successful realization of this policy will require consistent and active participation by all staff at head office and regional/district offices. Responsibilities and actions will require collaboration and effective linkages across different sectors and levels of ACT International.

The Board of Directors RESOLVED and unanimously approved the Complaint, dispute and grievance policy of Aiming Change for Tomorrow-International with additions and revisions under Agenda item no in the BOD Meeting held on .

Member Board of Directors

Member Board of Directors

Member Board of Directors

Member Board of Directors

Member Board of Directors / CEO

Member Board of Directors

Chairman, Board of Directors