



WOMEN ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME (WEP)

GENDER POLICY

PREFACE

As an NGO committed to empowering the poor, women in particular, WEP has played an important role in bridging the gender divide. While the increased participation of women in economic, political, religious and social activities has now become distinctly visible across all walks of life, Africa still has a long way to go in achieving true gender equality.

As an organisation, WEP continues to focus its interventions towards women and endeavors to adopt in all its practices a gender-sensitive approach that takes into account the inequalities prevalent in society. Towards this end, WEP has discerned this Gender Policy with the aim of achieving gender equity and integration in a systematic manner both within the organisation and in its scope of work. The policy provides the necessary guidelines for ensuring gender equality in the organization's activities.

Gender equality is a sensitive issue which requires commitment from every level of the organisation and the integration of gender-perspective into all activities. It is my sincere hope that each and every WEP staff member will make their best efforts to implement the Gender Policy.

I believe that the distinctive gender integration features of this policy will be very effective and provide a great level of support to all staff. I conclude with the hope that this policy will help all WEP staff to become more gender-sensitive, contribute further to achieving gender equality in all their work and ensure a gender-friendly work environment.

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RATIONALE FOR WEPS GENDER POLICY

Since its inception in 1997, WEP recognized women as the "change agents" within the family and community and realized that they play a vital role in ensuring their family's health, nurturing their children's education and, subsequently, ensuring the sustainability of their households. WEP also realized that on a day to day basis, women's mobility, decision-making capability and access to resources were being controlled by men. In order to achieve gender equality, redistribution of power through economic, social and political empowerment was necessary. WEP has therefore placed focus on the empowerment of women through all its interventions, directing the majority of its programmes towards them.

WEP has adopted a Gender Policy in order to eliminate discrimination against women and influence organizational change in the prevailing patriarchal social system which encouraged inequality. The policy experienced significant achievements in helping transform the perception of women's role in society and encouraged understanding of the experiences of minority groups, especially women, within the organisation and in its scope of work.

OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

This policy seeks to achieve the following:

- i. To provide the right direction and guidelines to all WEP staff in policy-making, formation and planning, designing and implementation of development programmes/projects in a gender sensitive manner; and
- ii. To create an amiable work environment within WEP which enables women and men to work together in an equitable, effective and mutually respectful manner?

Gender equity and integration is the goal, Gender Mainstreaming is the strategy.

What is gender mainstreaming to us? To us at WEP, it is:

- i. Consulting men and women, boys and girls, special care must be taken to ensure that women's and girl's needs are articulated.
- ii. Assessing gender differences and inequalities in roles, responsibilities, needs, constraints and access to opportunities and resources.
- iii. Disaggregating data by sex.
- iv. Setting explicit gender equality objectives.
- v. Developing gender equity and integration indicators to measure progress.
- vi. Supporting gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation system.
- vii. Drawing together good practice and lessons learned and sharing these with partners.
- viii. Building alliances with likeminded partners and encouraging coordination.
- ix. Promoting positive images of women and men and avoiding stereotypes.
- x. Using gender sensitive language in all communications.

CEDAW includes articles on the elimination of discrimination in public life, civil status, education, employment, healthcare and other aspects of social and economic life.

SDGs also cover the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

The implementation of this policy shall be hinged on the following principles:

- Gender equity is key to sustainable development: Poverty and gender inequalities are interrelated — one exacerbates the other. Due to gender discrimination within all levels of the social system, women are especially vulnerable to and the worst affected by poverty. On the other hand, women's poverty enhances the poverty of the whole family and affects the sustainability of the family, as women play a vital role in their family's education and health. WEP will therefore continue to promote gender equality and prioritize women's issues, focusing on gender equality as a central issue in all its development activities.
- Gender equity involves both women and men: It is impossible to achieve gender equity through the singular efforts of women. It is imperative that men's level of understanding is also developed so that they can adopt the necessary mindset and the willingness to contribute equally to achieving gender equity.
- Empowerment of women has always been a major focus of WEP: Women's empowerment is a human rights issue and key to achieving gender equity. WEP is therefore committed to women's empowerment through all its activities.
- Training, exposures and other opportunities will be provided to female staff in order to enhance their competency and improve their abilities to assume senior positions
- At least 40% of staff development funds will be used for performance development of female staff

AWARENESS AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

- i. Gender awareness training has continuously been provided to all staff in order to encourage development of correct attitudes.
- ii. All staff will be equipped through training with the appropriate skills necessary for gender integration in their respective programmes
- iii. Gender perspective will be integrated into on-going and future training programmes
- iv. Dialogue on gender issues will be facilitated among male staff through workshops and seminars, in order to encourage a positive attitude towards women's empowerment.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

- Open discussion on gender based discrimination and violence against women will be encouraged in order to create a gender-friendly working environment
- Special needs of female staff, such as maternity leave, flexibility during pregnancy, post-partum and lactation period, and issues related to travel time and work hours, will be fully considered
- Evidence of gender-bias at both individual and institutional levels will be challenged and special efforts made to recognize achievements of female staff
- Due importance will be given to the voice of women and other socially discriminated groups in all planning and decision-making processes
- Awareness will be created among male staff about the objectives of paternity leave and they will be encouraged to the provision accordingly

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Supervisors will be encouraged to play a strong role in the gender-mainstreaming process and to incorporate the concept in all activities, ranging from staff appraisals to programme monitoring
- To ensure staff accountability in implementing the gender policy, specific actions are to be included in the Job Descriptions (JD) which will be assessed and evaluated during staff appraisal

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- To ensure effective implementation of the gender policy, WEP will conduct internal gender audit of all programmes and departments in order to identify gaps and take necessary action
- WEP will conduct annual surveys to monitor attitude changes among staff and take action according to findings
- An Operation Plan will be developed to ensure proper implementation of the gender policy in which monitoring indicators will be established

PROGRAMME-RELATED MEASURES

Program designing planning and implementation

WEP will focus on the following areas in order to ensure that all development programmes and projects contribute towards gender equality:

- Incorporate gender equality measures into all project design documents and tools and at all stages of project life-cycle, including planning and implementation
- Develop Gender Analysis Frameworks (GAF) and checklists as tools to assist staff in integrating gender issues into programmes

The framework will focus on:

- i. Equal social and economic benefits in terms of secure livelihoods, human development and dignity for both women and men in the target population
- ii. Equal participation, decision-making, and influence of women and men in project, household and community structures
- iii. Solidarity and collective action by community members to reduce gender discrimination, exploitation and violence against women and girls
- iv. Equal participation and influence of women and men in local governance structures
- v. Increased and equal access for women and men to life management education required for secure livelihoods and personal development

To achieve the above, we shall:

- Develop capacity of staff in using gender analysis framework and assigning relevant persons to ensure gender policy implementation at programme level
- Incorporate gender strategic planning for programmes and projects in consultation with all stakeholders, especially women, using GAF
- On-going projects will be reviewed and revised as and when necessary, to ensure compliance with gender policy guidelines
- Clearly incorporate gender issues in Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) for all programmes and projects
- Design implementation strategies to take into account existing gender relations and attempt to redress inequalities

- Devise mechanisms for promoting women's participation in decision making processes at all levels and in all spheres — project, programme, community, and family
- Ensure equal access to technology related activities for women and develop necessary mind-set to encourage women's participation in technical matters
- Include resources in monitoring to assess the effectiveness of programmes in addressing gender issues
- Address the issues and special needs of adolescents in WEP's Programmes
- Explicitly acknowledge women's workload, responsibilities and contributions to family and community
- Emphasize and ensure male participation in addressing violence against women
- Incorporate gender as an essential component in project evaluation, analysis and research
- Ensure that documentation including reports and communication materials are gender-friendly and responsive
- Apply degree of gender sensitiveness as a criteria for partner selection

Advocacy and Networking

- WEP will actively participate in local, national, regional and international level networks promoting gender equality
- Through these networks, WEP will undertake advocacy initiatives for the formulation and implementation of policies promoting gender equality
- WEP will support women's organisations that are working to eradicate physical, mental or emotional violence against women and also encourage men involvement eliminating this type of violence
- WEP will extend support to all organisations working for women's empowerment and accept and adopt knowledge and best practices from them
- WEP will establish partnerships and network with organisations having gender expertise for project implementation, training or technical assistance

Information, Education and Communication

- Visual materials and campaigns should continuously emphasize more to target women specifically and the message should address women's as well as men's interests and concerns
- WEP will continue to ensure that promotional messages will be disseminated, highlighting women's empowerment
- Use positive messages, illustrations or presentations to highlight expected gender and parenting roles, as opposed to the stereotypical gender roles, that are interchangeable among women and men
- Disseminate/distribute information communication materials to both women and men throughout the organization

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Gender sensitivity will be ensured in monitoring mechanisms and subsequent processes that measure participation, outcome and changes for both women and men
- Project/programme information will be collected in a sex-disaggregated manner to provide gender-specific information and gender responsive qualitative analysis of the collected data will be emphasized
- All reports, studies and the evaluation of WEP's core programs should highlight gender issues in their findings.

EXPECTED OUTPUT:

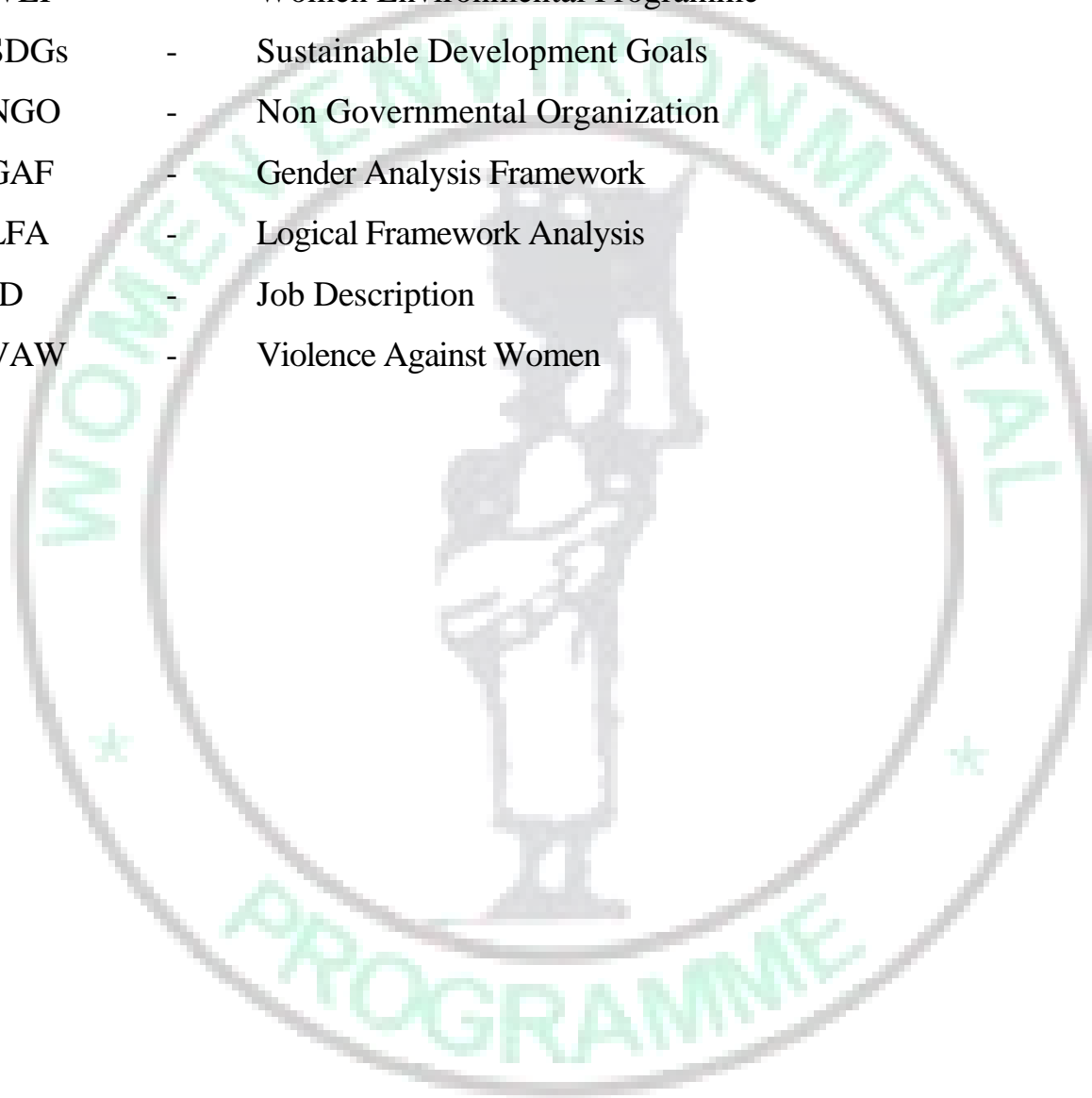
- i. Gender issues incorporated into all programmes and prioritized in discussions and training
- ii. Gender analysis framework developed and staff capacity built-up for its use
- iii. Gender issues specifically mentioned in the purpose and output parts of the LFA of all projects
- iv. Relevant person assigned to coordinate gender policy implementation process at programme level
- v. Violence Against Women (VAW) given high priority in all programmes and men's movement successfully initiated regarding violence against women
- vi. Monitoring indicators and logframes of all programmes reviewed to incorporate gender

- vii. Issues and special needs of adolescents addressed in programmes
- viii. Gender given high priority in all research activities and publications
- ix. Significant role played by BRAC in the advocacy of women's right issues at the national level
- x. Qualitative achievements on gender issue highlighted in programme analysis and evaluation



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	-	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
WEP	-	Women Environmental Programme
SDGs	-	Sustainable Development Goals
NGO	-	Non Governmental Organization
GAF	-	Gender Analysis Framework
LFA	-	Logical Framework Analysis
JD	-	Job Description
VAW	-	Violence Against Women



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Gender

Gender refers to socially constructed roles played by women and men that are assigned on the basis of sex. Gender is used as a means to distinguish similarities and differences between women and men without direct reference to human biology but rather to the behavioral patterns expected of women and men and their cultural reinforcement. These roles are usually specific to a particular area and time.

Gender Equity

Gender equity is the principle and practice of fair and equitable allocation of resources and opportunities for females and males — a stage in the process of achieving gender equality. In order to ensure fairness, measures must be taken to compensate historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field.

Gender Equality

Gender equality entails the concept that all human beings, both men and women, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally. It does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

Gender Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming focuses on the institutions, policies and programmes that have a broad impact on setting the conditions under which communities, households and individuals function. It seeks to ensure that these institutions, policies and programmes respond to the needs and interests of women as well as men and distribute benefits equitably between women and men. Finally, it seeks to redress the existing disparity between women and men in income generating activities, resources, responsibilities and opportunities.

Gender Awareness

Gender awareness is the recognition and understanding of the differing needs, interests and priorities of women and men and the different contexts, opportunities and constraints faced them as a result of their gender.

Practical Gender Needs

Practical Gender Needs are the needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. PGNs do not challenge, although they arise out of, gender divisions of labour and women's subordinate position in society. PGNs are a response to immediate perceived necessity, identified within a specific context. They are practical in nature and often inadequacies in living conditions such as water provision, health care and employment.

Strategic Gender Interests

Strategic Gender Interests (SGIs) are identified by women as a result of their subordinate social status and tend to challenge gender divisions of labor, power and control and traditionally defined norms and roles. SGIs vary according to their particular contexts and may include such issues as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages and women's control over their bodies.

Gender Analysis

Gender analysis is a systematic way of looking at the different impacts of development, policies, programmes and legislation on women and men that entails, first and foremost, collecting sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive information about the population concerned. Gender analysis can also include the examination of the multiple ways in which women and men, as social actors, engage in strategies to transform existing roles, relationships, and processes in their own interest and in the interest of others.