

**PATH WELFARE SOCIETY**  
**GENDER POLICY (DRAFT)**

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**Background for developing a Gender Policy**

This Gender Policy defines PATH's explicit commitments to support gender equality and the principles expressed in these international agreements. The accompanying implementation guideline sets out mechanisms and minimum common standards for all PATH members and Field Offices. 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 thereby sets the stage for increased accountability.

**Objectives of Gender Policy:**

- To state 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.

**Glossary of Gender Policy:**

**Definition of Gender by WHO-** "Refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men. It varies from society to society and can be changed. The concept of gender includes five important elements: relational, hierarchical, historical, contextual and institutional. While most people are born either male or female, they are taught appropriate norms and behaviours – including how they should interact with others of the same or opposite sex within households, communities and work places. When individuals or groups do not "fit" established gender norms they often face stigma, discriminatory practices or social exclusion – all of which adversely affect health."

<sup>1</sup>**Gender equality or equality between women and men**, refers to the equal enjoyment by women, girls, boys and men of rights, opportunities, resources and rewards. Equality does not mean that women and men are the same but that their enjoyment of rights, opportunities and life chances are not governed or limited by whether they were born female or male.

**Gender Equality Programming** is an umbrella term encompassing all strategies to achieve gender equality. Important examples include gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, prevention and response to GBV and SEA, promotion and protection of human rights, empowerment of women and girls, and gender balance in the workplace.

Gender equity Justice in the distribution of resources, benefits and responsibilities between women and men, boys and girls. The concept recognises that power relations between girls and boys, men and women are unequal, and that such inequalities should be addressed.

**Gender mainstreaming** is a globally recognized strategy for achieving gender equality. The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations defined gender mainstreaming as the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. For CARE, mainstreaming gender means applying gender analysis to all aspects of our work, including advocacy and communications. Gender is not a separate issue; it crosscuts all issues and sectors.

**Gender-based violence** is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between females and males. The nature and extent of specific types of GBV vary across cultures, countries and regions. Examples include sexual violence, including sexual exploitation/abuse and forced prostitution; domestic violence; trafficking; forced/early marriage; harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation; honour killings; and widow inheritance.

**Sexual Exploitation:** The abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. (UN SGB Definition)

**Sexual abuse:** The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, including inappropriate touching, by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

**Women's Empowerment** Involves awareness-raising, building of self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality. Empowerment comes from within; women empower themselves. Increase women's power through power to; power with and power from within which focus on utilizing individuals and collective strengths to work towards common goals without coercion or domination.

## Applicability of the policy

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<sup>1</sup> Source- CARE Gender Policy

PATH 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.

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.

For this following system would be put in place and necessary strategies would be tried out internally and externally: *at organizational level and at partners level.*

### **At Organizational level:**

#### **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
- Ensuring equitable representation and participation of men and women in the Governing Body 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 **Committee on Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place** 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 12 months of service after confirmation shall be entitled for 4 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 10 days of leave either immediately after child birth or 10 days before child birth and 10 days after child birth for primary parenting and child nurturing based on the requirement shared by the applicant. 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 child PATH 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.

In the field

- Facilitating participation and even representation of women in various institutional structures created for the management of natural resources like committees, user groups etc.
- 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 PATH 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.

### **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/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

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.

#### **Networking:**

- PATH 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.
- Supporting and expressing solidarity with partners at field level in taking up issues of discrimination or harassment against women

**Note:** This is a policy statement, which outlines PATH's approach towards gender and its operational framework to address the related concerns. The exact operational procedures would have to be worked out in detail for all the above outlined statements in a consultative process; internally involving all the staff with possible external facilitation support.