GENDER POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

Gender equality contributes substantially to improving the well-being of women, men, girls and boys in Zimbabwe, which is at the heart of the Poverty Reduction Forum Trust's mission. Although important progress has been made in recent years toward achieving gender equality, much remains to be done. PRFT remains committed to creating, with other like-minded players, a better Zimbabwe for all- a Zimbabwe where equality on any grounds, be it gender, class, race or ethnicity is overcome.

VISION

A Zimbabwe free from poverty

PURPOSE

This Gender Policy provides internal guidance on how PRFT will ensure that a gender perspective and integration of both women's and men's human rights are reflected throughout policy formulation, programme development and activity implementation, including project monitoring and evaluation.

GOAL

The goal of PRFT's gender policy is to support the achievement of equality between women and men, girls and boys to ensure sustainable development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE GENDER POLICY

1.1. To explicitly state the organizational commitments towards gender equality;

1.2. To provide a framework for effectively mainstream gender into the organizational culture & agenda, policy domain and programming;

1.3. To advance women's equal participation with men as decision makers in shaping the sustainable development of their societies;

1.4. To support women and girls in the realization of their full human rights; and;

1.5. To reduce gender inequalities in access to and control over resources and benefits of development.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY

1.6. Gender equality is a cross-cutting theme and as such must be considered as an integral part of all PRFT policies, programs and projects: Gender equality is a cross-cutting goal for PRFT's programming priorities. Addressing gender equality as a cross-cutting goal requires that women's views, interests and needs shape the development agenda as much as men's and that the development agenda supports progress toward more equal relations between women and men.

1.7. Achieving gender equality requires the recognition that every policy, program and project affects women and men differently: Women and men have different perspectives, interests, needs, roles and resources. PRFT's programs and projects must address the differences in experiences and situations between and among women and men.

1.8. Women's empowerment is central to achieving gender equality: Through empowerment, women become more aware of unequal power relations, gain control over their lives and acquire a greater voice to overcome inequality in their home, workplace and community. Empowerment is about people- both women and men- taking control over their lives, setting their own agendas, gaining skills, building self-confidence and developing self reliance.

1.9. Promoting the equal participation of women as agents of change in economic, social and political processes is essential to achieving gender equality (Equal participation goes beyond numbers): It involves women's equal right to articulate their needs and interests as well as their vision of society and to shape the decisions that affect their lives.

1.10. Gender equality can only be achieved through partnership between women and men: When choices for both women and men are enlarged, all society benefits.

At Corporate Level

1.10.1.   Staff composition/representation:

- Recruitment should aim to achieve a numerical gender balance in all posts at all levels
- Ensure equal opportunities among male and female staff for personal growth, in promotion benefits, training and working conditions
- Ensure equitable representation and participation of men and women in the core group, Board of trustees and in various functional committees of the organization

1.10.2.   Workplace

- Provide a safe and secure workplace for both female and male staff, free from sexual harassment. If possible put in place a Gender Complaints committee to look into specific concerns.
- Provide 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
- Review the organizational structure in relation to gender imbalances among staff and the work environment from time to time and taking definite steps to address the same
- Make efforts to develop infrastructure for childcare facilities in the office premises in order to ensure that the parents can bring their children in circumstances where they cannot leave them at home.

1.10.3.   Staff capacity building

- Facilitate staff capacity building processes and trainings to enhance conceptual clarity on Gender issues and effective Gender Mainstreaming. for all the staff members. This will be an important component of the induction programme
- Ensure that all trainings (internal and external) facilitated by the organization are gender-sensitive in terms of.

a) Training content/methodology/mode of facilitation

b) Logistics- time and location of venue facilities/other logistics/first-aid kit

- Conduct Gender trainings for both men and women; and ensuring participation of women in all the field level meetings and trainings
- Reward gender sensitive proactive actions by staff members.

Organizational culture, Policies and Systems

- Senior management is committed to gender equality;
- There are sufficient resources and knowledgeable personnel, along with an enabling corporate environment to promote gender equality;
- There are accountability frameworks, which ensure that the gender equality policy is implemented;
- Qualified gender equality specialists (especially locally-based ones) are employed on a regular basis;
- Gender equality is treated as an objective in and of itself.
- 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 advocacy around gender balance and making efforts to integrate gender concerns into the scaling up and mainstream developmental programs
- Carry out periodic Gender Audits at both corporate and programming levels to assess organisational alignment with Gender Policy

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

At Programming Level

Planning process

- Gender equality is recognized as relevant to every aspect of programming
- Gender analysis is carried out at the earliest stages of the project or program cycle and the findings are integrated into project or program planning;
- Institutional weaknesses or cultural biases that could constrain the achievement of gender equality results are recognized in policy, program, or project design, and strategies are developed to address them;
- Means are identified to ensure there is broad participation of women and men as decision makers in the planning process;
- Clear, measurable, and achievable gender equality results are developed in the earliest phases of the process;
- Gender-sensitive indicators, both qualitative and quantitative, are developed (this requires the collection of baseline data disaggregated by sex, as well as by age and socioeconomic and ethnic groups);
- A specific strategy and budget is provided to support the achievement of gender equality results;
- Gender equality specialists are involved from the start of the planning process.

Implementation

- 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.
- Extend support to partner organizations (Residents Associations) in developing their own gender policies, strategies and programs.
- Sharing Gender reports with network members and partner organizations and also facilitating similar processes within the partner organizations to promote gender sensitivity.
- Gender equality specialists are part of project teams.
- Sensitizing men and mobilizing their support towards gender balance.

- There is flexibility and openness to respond to new and innovative methods, and to opportunities for supporting gender equality that present themselves during implementation;
- There is analysis of information on constraints to the achievement of gender equality and progress in the reduction of gender inequalities and the promotion of gender equality.

Performance measurement

- Gender equality results are expressed, measured and reported on using qualitative and quantitative indicators;
- Data, disaggregated by sex, as well as by age and socio-economic and ethnic groups, is collected;
- Qualified gender equality specialists (especially locally-based ones) are involved in performance measurement;
- Information on progress in reducing gender inequalities is collected and analyzed as an integral part of performance measurement;
- A long-term perspective is taken (i.e., social change takes time); and
- Participatory approaches are used, where women and men actively take part in the planning of performance measurement frameworks, in their implementation, and in the discussion of their findings.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Key Term	Definition
Gender	Refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes
Gender Awareness	Recognition that women and men perform different roles in society and therefore have different needs which must be recognized
Gender Discrimination	A difference in treatment of people based entirely on their being male or female. This difference contributes to structural inequality in society
Gender Equality	Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys in all sectors, political, social , legal and economic
Gender Equity	Recognizing that different approaches may be needed to produce equitable outcomes by taking account of and addressing the differences between and amongst the lives of women and men, boys and girls and the diversity of different groups of women/girls and men/boys
Gender Mainstreaming	An organizational strategy to bring a gender perspective to all aspects of an institution's policies and activities, through bringing gender capacity and accountability
Practical Gender Needs	Immediate necessities (water, shelter, food, income and health care) within a specific context.
Strategic Gender Needs	Relative status of women and men within society related to roles and expectations, as well as to gender divisions of labour, resources and power
Gender Analysis	A tool to diagnose the differences between women and men regarding their specific activities, conditions, needs and access and control over resources and their access to development benefits and decision making.