

# WOMEN RELIEF AID

---



**WOMEN RELIEF AID**  
*Hope for Women and Children in Crisis*

## GENDER POLICY

Approved by WRA Board Member, January, 2022

## Table of Contents

## Page

1. Background and Rationale of WRA's Gender Policy	04
2. Purpose, Goal and Objectives of Gender Policy	05
3. Key Principles	06
4. Organisational Development	06
5. Programmatic Measures	08
6. Advocacy, Networking, Partnership	09
7. External Representation	09
8. Financing and Resourcing	10
9. Implementation and Accountability	10
10. Annex	11

## List of Abbreviations

AoP: Annual operating plan
GA- Gender analysis framework
GFP-Gender Focal Person
GTA- Gender Transformative Approach
GBV- Gender Based Violence
VAWC: Violence against women and children
SHRC: Sexual Harassment redressal committee
GEWE: Gender Equality and women Empowerment
SDG- Sustainable Development Goals
PMS- Performance Management system
JD- Job description
NGO-Non-governmental Organisation
CSO-Civil society Organisations
BGS- WRA Gender strategy
EMC-Executive Management Committee
SMC-Senior Management Committee
PCC-Programme coordination Committee

## Introduction

### 1. Background and Rationale:

**WRA's vision** is of a South Sudanese women and children free from all forms of exploitation and discrimination where everyone has the opportunity to realize their potential. Creation of this equal world is not possible keeping half of its population, the women and girls, disempowered. Women and girls do not enjoy the same status, power or access to and control over resources as men and boys. This situation is unacceptable. Principles of equity and social justice require us to work to ensure that everyone has equal opportunity for expressing and using their potential, irrespective of sex, age, race, colour, class, caste, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation, HIV status or disability.

Since its inception in 2017, WRA recognized women as the "change agents" within the family and community for poverty alleviation. They play a vital role in ensuring their family's health, nurturing their children's education and, subsequently, ensuring the sustainability of their households. WRA also realized that women's mobility, decision-making capability and access to resources were controlled by men on a day to day basis.

In order to achieve gender equality, redistribution of power through economic, social and political empowerment is necessary. There is a strong need for safeguarding, and therefore, WRA aims to create a safe guarding culture at organizational level where staff gives of their best, allowing them to develop, grow and achieve their full potentials without any gender based discrimination. Also safe guarding culture promotes the rights of the target beneficiaries and other relevant stakeholders.

In addition, a men and boys engagement approach should be part of the process of empowering women and girls through addressing gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination and abuse that will be applicable for employees, participants and the wider community.

The Gender Policy is the guiding document for WRA to be a high performing gender transformative organisation ensuring commitment at the highest level to the staff as well as to the community. To be a truly inclusive and diverse organisation, we have also looked at the inclusion of other gender identities in this policy in order to address emerging needs. Promoting gender equality, women's empowerment, addressing VAWC, and mobilizing men and boys are the core priority areas of interventions and organisational commitments of WRA. In Bangladesh, WRA has been at the forefront of addressing gender inequalities and women are placed at the center of all of WRA's interventions.

To ensure the revised gender policy reflects the organization's priorities, values, as well as changing local and global contexts it is important to ensure that everyone takes ownership of the process. It is also important that all members of WRA actively engage in this effort to build a just and inclusive society promoting gender equality.

This policy considers the Human Rights Declaration and The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Sustainable Development Goals 5, 10, 16, and others (2016-2030) also provide guidance in the policy to accelerate efforts of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through adopting holistic action plans and proper implementation.

### 2. Purpose, Goal and Objectives of the Gender Policy

#### Purpose

The purpose of the Gender Policy is to create a clear vision for the organization in terms of what it would

like to achieve for gender equality. It also aims to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are central to WRA's:

- Programmes at all levels;
- Organizational culture and behaviors;
- and External representation..

## Goal

The overall goal of the policy is to set the standard and principles of gender equality, under which all WRA entities create systems, programmes, processes and practices for mainstreaming Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) towards WRA's vision of a world free from all forms of exploitation and discrimination where everyone has the opportunity to realize their potential.

## Objectives

- a. clearly define the principles of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) and take appropriate measures to adopt a shared vision to guide WRA staff in their work with a clear direction to promote Gender Equality and equity at organizational and programmatic level;
- b. develop an organisational culture that demonstrates WRA commitments towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

## 3. Key Principles

**Gender equality, equity and nondiscrimination** are central to WRA's activities and operation.

**The empowerment of women and girls** is recognized as fundamental to WRA's vision and mission.

**Every individual understands clearly and demonstrates** attitudes and behaviours that promote gender equity and equality.

**Adequate resources are allocated** to work on promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.

All work is continuously **monitored against gender indicators** based on different country contexts.

The **cross-cutting nature of gender equality and equity issue** is recognized (and is both everyone's responsibility and an area that warrants/ deserves specialized attention and resources in programme development.

WRA recognizes that the path towards gender equality must also take into account **gender diversity and intersectionality**, i.e. inequalities between women resulting from all other forms of embedded discrimination to which they may be subjected based on sex, gender, ethnic origin, class, nationality, skin color, age, disability, sexual orientation, genderidentity or political beliefs.

**Men and boys are prepared to be active agents** in transforming the unequal society into an equal one

## 4. Organisational Development

Uphold gender equality, and integrate gender and diversity perspectives through organisational policies,

procedures, systems and practices; ensuring all the relevant policies, plans and measures and systems related to organisational development is gender responsive.

Strengthen the commitment to women's rights and diversity at all levels of the organization, guiding all staff and stakeholders on the importance of gender equality with an intersectional approach.

Ensure that specialized gender functions, programmes and projects are in place and adequately resourced. Recognize knowledge related to gender concerns and gender analysis as one of the core areas of building capacity for staff and build capabilities throughout the organization.

Develop core competencies that address core values and gender awareness and equity and equality.

Build a common understanding around gender through induction and training.

Ensure that all training across the organisation is gender-sensitive; and staff are trained on gender equality, intersectional perspectives and gender responsive behavior.

Make all Human resource (HR) systems and process gender-sensitive and responsive, and integrate gender indicators into staff objectives in performance management systems (PMS) towards a gender responsive work environment.

Prioritize gender sensitivity in all terms of reference documents, including Terms of references (TORs) for external consultants.

Determine the nature, structure, and causes of gender imbalance in staff throughout the organisation and set targets for recruitment, retention and promotion of staff accordingly, particularly women in senior positions.

Develop strategies for reaching gender targets, including: affirmative action; career development opportunities including development posts, training and internal promotion; family friendly and flexible working policies to allow staff to fulfil care responsibilities (including job-sharing, maternity, paternity and parental leave, and policies on childcare provision and/or subsidies for staff).

Promote a gender equity approach, aimed to ensure justice in the way women and men are treated and involving the adoption of special measures to tackle gender inequalities and to increase women's independence.

Ensure child safe guarding, child protection, sexual harassment prevention and protection policies are in place and applied properly.

Make best endeavours to provide suitable transport and accommodation when travelling for work purposes, particularly for women staff and persons with disability.

Ensure an equal pay for equal work value for all staff irrespective of sex, gender, religion, race, language, HIV status, disability, class, ethnicity and other sexual orientation and sexuality etc.

Ensure that access to and use of information technology is gender equitable.

Encourage women's participation throughout the organisation and develop strategies to increase their

representation at decision making levels.

## **5. Programmatic Measures**

WRA is also committed towards gender mainstreaming in all programmes and enterprises. As a part of this process the following measures will be taken:

Support development of women's inclusion, leadership, socio-economic empowerment, and decision making of all levels from family to public spaces.

Promote intersectional analysis of gender inequalities and transform power relations at every sphere of life.

Promote participation of women and girls as active citizens.

Promote positive masculinities for changing gender relations, patriarchal mindset/ attitudes, norms and harmful practices to women and children, and support value for gender roles and responsibilities.

Recognize the impact of climate change and exploitation of natural resources on women and support them for different initiatives for ecological justice.

Support women and children survivors/victims of violence and support protection of their human rights.

Ensure that women actively participate in humanitarian work in all stages (preparedness, response, recovery and rehabilitations).

Integrate gender equality and gender justice dimensions in all new programmes and project cycles (e.g. context analysis, planning, implementation, management and monitoring and evaluation, setting objectives, indicators and budgeting).

Ensure that throughout the proposal development process, the programs and projects seek to contribute towards gender diversity, gender equality and empowerment of the disadvantaged people, especially women and girls.

Develop, promote, and use transformative ways of engaging men and boys for self-reflection and to promote gender equality and addressing VAWC.

Integrate representation issues when developing BCC materials, reviewing text, pictures/ images/illustration to identify the gender norms communicating by the materials and to also pay attention to norms regarding age, sexual orientation, ethnicity and functional ability.

Initiate cross-programme interventions to address emerging issues and priorities to promote gender equality and justice.

Assess how interventions will impact women's access to and control over resources and assess whether the project/ programme will address women's practical needs or strategic interests or both (transformative potentials).

Develop Annual Operational Plans (AOP) based on gender objectives and indicators in achieving programmatic outcomes.

Ensure that staffs at all levels are able to identify examples of behaviour and attitudes that promote gender

equality and those that reinforce gender stereotypes in programmedelivery.

Ensure gender as a cross-cutting issue in all key strategic pillars of WRA nationally and internationally.

Highlight gender perspectives in all research and evaluation findings of WRA's core programmes and ensure that WRA programmes/ departments/ enterprises develop ownership for collecting gender disaggregated data and capturing gender equality results for analysis and reporting.

Ensure periodic documentation of gender mainstreaming lessons learned, challenges and good practices for learning and generating evidence advocacy

## **6. Advocacy, Networking, Partnership**

Policy advocacy and networking will create a greater impact in reinforcing progress towards **gender equality**. Human rights defenders and policy makers have the data and evidence to support women's movements by guiding efforts to reach national and global goals of gender equality and women's empowerment. Therefore, WRA will build partnerships/allies, networkingwith like-minded organisations and forums at national, regional and global level.

Ensure women and girls participation with gender diversity and intersectionality in different forums/ committees/ meetings at local, national and global levels.

Build partnerships/ allies by networking at national and global levels with like-minded organisations who believe in gender equality and women's empowerment.

Influence national policies for empowerment of women, gender equality and justice andfor implementation of policies by upholding women's human rights at different levels.

Support partners in developing their capacity to undertake gender analysis at the policy, program, and institutional levels, and to design and carry out programming that supports gender equality.

## **7. External Representation**

The external presentations and communications of WRA should promote a balanced view of the issues surrounding gender equality and equity.

Ensure representation of women and girls at every setting with respect and dignity at programmatic and organisational levels of different countries.

Ensure that gender analysis is central to the development of all marketing, fund raising, sponsorship and campaign work and incorporate gender equality and equity concernsinto different activities wherever and whenever possible.

Design and develop fundraising proposals/concept notes that consider gender equality and equity concerns and gender transformative approach (GTA).

Inform donors about WRA gender equality goals and objectives and shared good practices of WRA gender mainstreaming work and its positive impact, respecting rights of privacy.



Formulate all materials and general communications to reflect WRA's goals and objectives on gender equality and equity, challenging gender stereotypes and recognizing gender diversity.

Use gender-sensitive language and images in all internal and external communications.

Endeavour to participate in public events only if there is gender diversity, taking into consideration the context and purpose.

Whenever possible, ensure women's and girl's voices are heard in the first person, and ensure that women and men are proportionately represented during press briefings and other public relation activities.

Ensure the organisation's internal and external communications and public engagement initiatives reflect the directions of this Gender Policy.

## **8. Financing and Resourcing**

Adequate financing and resource arrangements are crucial for implementing the Gender Policy to achieve gender mainstreaming across the organisation. Adequate resources will be allocated to all programmes, enterprises and departments to implement the Gender Policy throughout the organisation, and evaluate results. All programmes will document the operational cost for this with the respective annual account, and present on it if and when necessary.

## **9. Implementation and Accountability**

Each Staff of WRA and WRA entities, programmes, projects, divisions, departments, and enterprises is accountable for successfully implementing the Gender Policy. Each team under a supervisor will be responsible in taking appropriate steps for ensuring gender mainstreaming to promote gender equality.

Every staff of WRA and WRA entities should make all necessary efforts to study and become fully acquainted with the Gender Policy and its implementation. This policy also requires documenting or disclosing reasons for not having diversity in any item mentioned in this document with the intention to review the reasons towards ensuring progressive increase in inclusion.

The policy will be available to all staff both in Bengali and English.

Specific roles and responsibilities are outlined below:

### **WRA Governing Body**

Members of the Governing Body will be responsible for the approval of the Gender Policy and its revisions to the previous version that reflects the changes in the organisational culture and development challenges.

The Governing Body will ensure accountability of WRA senior management towards implementation of this policy.

### **Gender Steering Committee**

The gender steering committee will ensure WRA's commitment for effective implementation of this policy and coordination to ensure gender equality promotion and gender justice in alignment with WRA's strategic priorities.

### **WRA Senior Management Authority**

WRA's senior management (EMC, SMC, and PCC) will play a crucial role for the process of gender policy implementation and resource allocation. They will lead and be accountable for mainstreaming implementation processes in their own programmes/departments/enterprises. This will be different for state. The Country Management Team (CMT) will play the leading role for gender policy implementation.

### **Gender Justice and Diversity (GJD) Programme**

The main responsibilities of the GJD programme are to disseminate this policy, maintain an overview of the implementation of this policy within WRA, set monitoring indicators for its implementation, and provide technical assistance to different levels of the organisation as necessary, either directly or by recommending external resources. The division will play the role of secretariat to the Gender Steering Committee. It will work towards building ownership and accountability over the policy among staff at different levels. It will work with various programmes and departments to create gender goals and strategies to achieve those. It will follow up on the gender policy monitoring mechanism and the gender policy operational guideline action plans of all programmes and departments. WRA headquarter as secretariat of Gender Steering committee will be responsible for coordination among other states.

WRA headquarter will provide technical support.

### **Gender focal persons (GFP)**

Gender focal persons (GFPs), consisting of mid management representatives from each programme, enterprise and department in the organisation, will work closely with GJD to incorporate the gender policy into the respective programmes interventions and organisational level. GJD will provide appropriate training to the GFPs to enhance their leadership capacity for integrating gender concerns into their respective programme operations. The GJD team will also provide appropriate guidance to prepare and monitor the gender action plans using the gender policy operational guideline and technical support to Blother countries GFP??

### **Safe Guarding Unit**

The Safeguarding unit under the Human Resources Division will be responsible for providing all necessary technical support such as formulation of gender related policies and procedures (including Safeguarding Policy and other subset policies, such as, Child and Adolescent Protection Policy, Sexual Harassment Elimination Policy, Adults with Special Needs policy, Prevention of Workplace Bullying and Violence Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Code of Conduct). This Safeguarding unit works to establish a high ethical safeguarding culture and practices within the organization to protect its staff, volunteer, partners, programme participants and community people from all kinds of abuse that is, against sexual harassment, intimidation and violence, bullying, humiliation and discrimination, neglect and exploitation ("safeguarding").

## Annex: 01

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

**Gender as crosscutting: Cross-cutting issues** are topics that affect all aspects of a programme (i.e. cut across) and therefore need special attention. They should be integrated into all stages of programmes and projects, from planning through to impact assessment but this has not always been the case. Therefore, it's really important to keep in mind that gender will be always one of the cross-cutting issues at programmatic and organizational level of WRA.

**Gender Equity:** Gender equity means the fairness of treatment for women, men and other sexual identities, according to their respective economic, social, cultural needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. In order to ensure fairness, measures must be taken to compensate historical and social disadvantages and create a level playing field for both men women and other sexual identities. It is a means to achieve the ultimate goal of Gender Equality.

**Gender Equality:** Gender equality entails the concept that all human beings, men, women and other gender identities, 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 behaviors, aspirations and needs of women men and other gender identities are considered, valued and favored equally. It does not mean that women men and other gender identity have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender Equality is the ultimate goal in sustainable development.

**Gender diversity** is an umbrella term that is used to describe **gender** identities that demonstrate a **diversity** of expression beyond the binary framework. For many **gender diverse** people, the concept of binary **gender** having to choose to express you as male or female is constraining. (Gender Rights Org.)

**Gender justice** as the full equality and **equity** between women and men in all spheres of life, resulting in women jointly, and on an equal basis with men, **defining** and shaping the policies, structures and decisions that affect their lives and society as a whole.

**Intersectionality:** Awareness of all forms of discrimination combined and simultaneously experienced by women. This theory asserts that it is necessary to examine how the many forms of discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, social class or disability interact to fully understand the experiences of women. All women are therefore not equal. (Adapted from CECI/Uniterria, Key Concepts for Equality Between Women and Men).

**Gender Mainstreaming:** Gender mainstreaming has been empowering internationally as a strategy towards realizing gender equality. This involves making gender perspectives what women and men do and the resources and decision-making processes they have access to more central to all policy development, research, advocacy, development, implementation and monitoring of norms and standards, and planning, implementation and monitoring of projects. Both dimensions gender representation and gender responsive content need to be taken into consideration in all phases of project/ proposal/ institutional development.

Gender mainstreaming does not entail developing separate women's projects within work programmes, or even women's components within existing activities in the work programmes. It requires that attention is given to gender perspectives as an integral part of all activities across all programmes. Organisational culture and Organisational values are important in terms of creating work environments which are conducive to gender mainstreaming.

**Practical Gender Needs:** Practical gender needs (PGNs) 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 positions in society. PGNs are a response to immediately perceived necessities, identified within a specific context. They are practical in nature and often inadequacies in living conditions, such as water, provision of health care and employment.

**Strategic Gender Needs:** The necessary requirements of women and men to improve their position or status in the community or society is termed as Strategic Gender Needs. Addressing these needs allow people to have control over their lives beyond socially-defined restrictive roles. Strategic gender needs for women might include land rights, more decision-making power, equal pay and greater access to credit. This strategic gender need link with dignity and position of women at family, workplace and wider society.

**Gender transformation** refers to efforts to change gender and social norms to address inequalities in power and privilege between persons of different genders, in order to free all people from harmful and destructive norms. These norms include gender roles, expectations, stereotypes, and harmful attitudes, customs, and practices, including gender-based violence (Men Engage Alliance, 2017). Gender transformation enables individuals to question and critically analyze issues of gender inequality and injustice, and provides them with opportunities to challenge harmful norms.

**Women's Empowerment:** WRA defines Women's empowerment as the capacity of women to be economically self-sufficient, with control over decisions affecting their life options, and to be free from violence.

**Transformative Gender Programmes/Policies:** These programmes/projects include policies and programs that seek to transform gender relations to promote equality and achieve program objectives. This approach attempts to promote gender equality by: 1) fostering critical examination of inequalities and gender roles, norms and dynamics, 2) recognizing and strengthening positive norms that support equality and an enabling environment, 3) promoting the relative position of women, girls and marginalized groups, and transforming the underlying social structures, policies and broadly held social norms that perpetuate gender inequalities.

**Gender Socialization:** The process of girls and boys, women and men learning social roles based on their sex, which leads to different behaviours and creates differing expectations and attitudes by gender. An example is that concept that girls and women do more household chores, such as cooking and cleaning, while boys and men do more work out of the home. Gender roles often lead to inequality.

**Gender Gap:** The gap includes the disproportionate difference between men and women and boys and girls, particularly as reflected in attainment of development goals, access to resources and levels of participation. A gender gap indicates gender inequality.

**Gender Analysis:** Gender analysis is a systematic way of looking at the different impacts of development, policies, programmes and legislation on women men and other sexual identity 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 men and other sexual identity, as social actors, engage in strategies to transform existing roles, relationships, and processes in their own interest and in the interest of others.

**Gender Responsive Work Environment:** Creating an environment that reflects an understanding of the realities of women's lives and addresses the issues of the women. A gender responsive work environment recognizes several important differences in life circumstances and behaviours between female, male and other sexual identity staff and takes these differences into account when designing logistics, culture, practices in the institution that produce the best outcomes for women, men and other sexual identity.

**Gender Responsive Behaviour:** Gender responsive behaviour includes having a non-discriminatory attitude, promoting dignity and respect of all human beings irrespective of their sexual identity. Staff feels comfortable with this type of behaviour from their colleagues and is able to fulfill their career aspirations in a safe working environment.

## **Annex: 02**

### **History of WRA's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

As an Organisation, WRA continues to focus its interventions towards women and endeavorsto adopt in all its practices a gender-sensitive approach that takes into account the inequalities prevalent in society. Towards this end, in 2018, WRA adopted a gender policy with the aim of achieving gender equality 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 theorganisation's activities. Later, in 2019 WRA's gender policy was reviewed in the face of new challenges so that it could continue to contribute more precisely and effectively towards gender equality in a changed landscape. From 2020 WRA shifted its approach to adopt a gender mainstreaming approach to amplify the results of its work by integrating gender equality perspectives in all of WRA's programmes.