



GENDER POLICY

UGANDA HEALTHCARE FEDERATION

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BOD	Board of Directors
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO(s)	Civil Society Organization(s)
GAD	Gender and Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
MGLSA	Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development
NGP	National Gender Policy
NRM	National Resistance Movement
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
UHF	Uganda Healthcare Federation
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WID	Women in Development

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Gender: Gender refers to the state of being male or female, particularly about the social and cultural differences, rather than the biological ones.

Gender equality: Refers to the ability of men and women, boys and girls to enjoy the same status and have equal opportunity to realize their potential to contribute to social-cultural, economic and political development which is unaffected by their gender.

Gender responsiveness: Refers to the ability to create an environment that reflects understanding the experiences of women and girls and responds to their strengths and challenges that arise from the socially constructed differences between women and men.

Gender mainstreaming: A conscious approach of an organization to take into account gender equality concerns in all policy programs, administrative and financial activities or organizational structures and procedures.

Gender relations: Refers to those existing dimensions of social relationships that create differences in the positioning of women and men in social, economic, and political processes in any environment.

Gender awareness: Refers to the ability to identify problems arising from gender inequality and discrimination, even if these are not evident on the surface or are not part of the general and commonly accepted explanation of what and where the problem lies. Gender awareness results from observing the differences in power, status, and privileges between men and women.

Gender discrimination: Refers to prejudicial treatment made based on sex.

Gender issues: Refers to gender inequality that is undesirable and requires intervention.

Gender gaps: These show the male/female disparity in status regarding access to and control over resources, services, and power.

Gender analysis: This is a systematic approach for assessing/understanding the different impacts of development on women and men because of their different gender roles.

Policy: This is a principle or protocol to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. A policy is a statement of intent and is implemented as a procedure.

1.0 Background

Men and women tend to be clustered into different sections of society and are therefore likely to have different experiences, knowledge, and values. Integrating gender issues into the development process, when defining policy and developing programs, means recognizing and taking into consideration that being a man or a woman has a significant impact on the overall development of any given society, and the ability to participate in programs or decision making. It recognizes that men and women must have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for work that guarantees an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, despite their gender status (ILO 2009).

Since its inception, UHF recognizes women as change agents within society. UHF realizes the vital role women play in the health of their families, nurturing of children, education, and subsequently ensuring the sustainability of their households. Gender largely determines the means and resources to make decisions and choices in life. For long, women as compared to men globally, have command over fewer resources both in terms of political, social, and economic power. This deficit is global; women in all groups in society tend to be in command of less power, resources and opportunities as compared to men, hence explicitly or implicitly creating room for gender inequalities. UHF recognizes to achieve gender equality, redistribution of power through economic, social, and political empowerment is necessary.

For over 30 years, many efforts have been made to integrate gender issues into development work. The initial drive came from the realization that women were largely excluded from development processes. Furthermore, there was a belief that the benefits of general development efforts would eventually trickle down to women. A Women in Development (WID) approach suggests that separate activities and programs are focusing on women. The WID approach called for attentively integrating women into the development process by emphasizing their roles and needs in development policy and practice (Reeves and Baden, 2000). Unfortunately, these efforts did not yield the expected benefits as they deemed women as an exclusive and segregated group, rather than integrating their roles and embedding their gender into development policies and practices holistically.

Uganda has made remarkable progress in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. This has been mainly through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) policy of mainstreaming gender issues in all sectors. The MGLSD policy is implemented through sensitization and advocating for sectorial policy change.

The Constitution of Uganda (1995) Chapter 4 spells out the gender-responsive provisions under Article 21: this article guarantees equality of all persons before and under the law in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life and every other respect and shall

enjoy equal protection of the law. Article 33 further articulates the rights of women: women shall be accorded full and equal dignity of the person with men.

Uganda underlines gender equality within its policy framework and commitment as evident in the 1995 Constitution. In addition, the National Gender Policy (NGP), the Land Act, the National Development Policy (NDP), the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and other gender desks in the country promote gender equality. Despite these upholders for gender equality, there is laxity, disunity, and disparity in the approach to gender mainstreaming amongst all proponents. The existing disparities impede the effective implementation of gender-responsive policies in Uganda.

It is therefore against this background that Uganda Healthcare Federation (UHF) has developed a gender policy for its staff to mainstream gender in all programs / thematic areas and to guide them during implementation processes.

2.0 Purpose and Rationale

The goal of UHF's gender policy is to pursue gender equality and equal rights of boys, girls, men and women about the right to health. This policy enforces and establishes the basis for UHF programming with governments, donors, CSOs and individuals, to advocate for equality between girls and boys. This policy shall define expected and formulated performance standards as well as lay out the components to assist in bringing about results.

The policy describes UHF's mission and vision to be the representing, reference and advocacy body for the non-state health sector in Uganda by bringing all private sector stakeholders under one umbrella body to advocate policy change and promote and champion the interests of the private health sector.

UHF has made very good attempts at ensuring gender responsiveness. Not only do we ensure gender responsiveness through our work, but we also promote gender responsiveness through our partnerships with members of the Federation. Collectively, the Federation pursues gender equality through coordinated, results-oriented collective action. Examples include representation in its governance structure, its workshops, as well as human resource policy. For example, our human resource policy has the following provisions:

- 1) Principle of equality of opportunities in employment /equal opportunity employer (advertisements to be phrased in such a way that it encourages a gender balance)
- 2) Non-discrimination on grounds of, amongst other things, sex.
- 3) Gender balance amongst staff.
- 4) Nomination for in-house training will be based on, amongst other things, gender balance.
- 5) Nursing parents with children below the age of one will be supported to allow them to participate in official meetings/workshops or visits outside their usual work areas but within Uganda. The support will include the provision of meals, accommodation and

transport for both the child and the childminder.

- 6) Sexual harassment is gross misconduct warranting summary dismissal and without benefits.
- 7) Paid maternity leave of sixty working days, 10 days of which can be taken before delivery.
- 8) Paternity leave of 5 working days

Uganda Healthcare Federation Secretariat staff have gender competencies. UHF's work and organizational practices directly influence its performance on gender mainstreaming. Gender equality is a priority in UHF's performance management, information management, human resources policy, and practice, along with budget and supply management within the results-oriented framework of its mandate. UHF holds its values in achieving gender equality as a group. Respect and accountability are always kept within the UHF vision of achieving gender equality concerning the right to health when implementing projects and programs at the Secretariat.

UHF supports the developmental capacities of governments, CSOs, and individuals in the local, national, and global realms to achieve gender equality. By sanctioning institutions, environments, and cooperative programs, we prioritize the empowerment of women and girls, and the claiming of rights by women and girls, along with men and boys.

UHF strives to achieve gender equality in specific and transparent ways, as measured and evaluated by gender indicators, statements, and gender-disaggregated data. Such efforts need to be planned and guided by key principles and objectives. Uganda Healthcare Federation, therefore, finds it imperative to develop a gender policy to facilitate the processes of carrying out gender mainstreaming in all its programs.

3.0 Policy Compliance

Uganda Healthcare Federation Gender Policy is designed based on the internationally and nationally recognized guidelines that are meant to promote gender equality. The International Labour Organization's (ILO) mandate on gender equality is reinforced by related resolutions adopted by its highest decision-making body, the International Labor Conference. The most recent of these is the Resolution concerning Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work, adopted in June 2009. Other international instruments advancing gender equality include the UN Charter, the 1997 UN Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions on gender mainstreaming, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals.

At the national level, the UHF Gender Policy is designed about the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda; articles 21 and 33 guarantee equality of all persons before and under the law in all spheres of life and the rights of women. The Uganda Gender Policy specifically provides for gender balance, and fair representation of marginalized groups, along with recognizing the role of

women in society. Thus, the Uganda Gender Policy is key in the development of the UHF Gender Policy. Other guiding national instruments include the National Development Plan (NDP) since UHF works to bring all private (non-state) sector stakeholders under one umbrella body to advocate policy change and promote and champion the interests of the private health sector. In pursuit of this mission, UHF recognizes the role of both men and women in the realization of access to quality health services in the private sector while addressing various dynamics in the health sector.

4.0 Goal, Purpose, Objectives

Goal:

Gender-responsive planning, implementation and monitoring of Uganda Healthcare Federation programs.

Purpose:

Uganda Healthcare Federation staff successfully planned, implemented, monitored and evaluating organizational programs with a gender perspective.

Objectives:

1. To embed gender in all UHF policies, strategies and governance structures.
2. To build a cadre of Secretariat staff and federation members with competencies in gender mainstreaming, transformative learning, and allyship, free of gender discrimination.
3. To mainstream gender in all UHF programs.
4. To create a congenial working environment within UHF which enables women and men to work together in an equitable, effective, and mutually respectful manner.

5.0 Guiding Principles

The Uganda Healthcare Federation gender policy is guided by the following principles (adopted from the International Labour Organization (ILO) guidelines) and the UHF gender concept:

1. Promoting equal access to and control over power and resources between men and women.
2. Equality of opportunity and treatment and opposing all forms of discrimination on the grounds of sex, colour, class, religion, marital status, disability or HIV status.
3. Capacity building with explicit attention to women's needs and perspectives to promote their participation in decision-making that may foster sustainable development.
4. Ensuring that gender is key in all UHF programs and that gender mainstreaming is done right from project identification through all stages of a project cycle.
5. Equity
6. Inclusiveness
7. Resilience

8. Strengthening institutions within the federation, government, and CSOs, along with the individual level.
9. Organizational commitment, culture, accountability, and development about achieving gender equality.

6.0 Policy Strategies

To achieve the stated objectives, the following strategies shall be employed:

Objective 1: To embed gender in all UHF policies, strategies and governance structures.

Strategies

- Ensuring gender-responsive development planning at all levels in the organization.
- Equality of opportunity and treatment in employment coupled with equal remuneration unaffected by gender.
- Equality in obtaining career development.
- Equality in UHF BOD representation.
- Ensure gender-responsive policy development and review processes.

Objective 2: To build a cadre of Secretariat staff and federation members with competencies in gender mainstreaming, transformative learning, and allyship, free of gender discrimination.

Strategies

- Sensitization of gender issues at all levels of the organization.
- Promoting a Gender and Development (GAD) based approach based on developing policies and practices that focus on gender roles and emphasize the need to challenge existing roles and relations.
- Promoting Women in Development (WID) approaches which focus on women specifically.
- Promoting a gender-sensitive approach among the various actors who lead to the success of the organization.
- Emphasizing gender training, mentorships and workshops not only within the federation but to engage with the outside stakeholders as well.
- Up-scaling piloted and proven Gender methodologies within Uganda Healthcare Federation programs.
- Disseminating and ensuring clarity of the UHF Gender Policy among all staff members.

Objective 3: To mainstream gender in all UHF programs.

Strategies

- Carrying out gender-oriented research with data disaggregated by gender whenever possible to identify gender gaps and concerns.
- Analyzing the experiences of marginalized groups to understand how different identities and experiences of gender are faced with obstacles and therefore influence the bigger picture (e.g., rural, elderly, divorced, widowed, single women as compared to just “women”).
- Carrying out regular gender analysis that will help to document and understand the roles of women and men in any given context.
- Involving the target group in identifying measures to redress the gender disparities.
- Establishing gender-responsive planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for development.
- Reflecting gender equality in staff job descriptions/profiles.
- Assigned duty to the relevant person who coordinates the gender policy implementation process at the program level.
- Develop a gender analysis framework along with staff capacity to build up its use.

Objective 4: To create a congenial working environment within UHF which enables women and men to work together in an equitable, effective, and mutually respectful manner.

Strategies

- Promoting a “safe space” environment, where members can fully express themselves without fear of being made uncomfortable or unsafe on account of their sex, race, religion, age, physical or mental state, and cultural background.
- Immediately addressing harassment, namely:
 - Stop the offensive behaviour;
 - Publicly name the behaviour and describe why it is offensive;
 - Respond on behalf of the whole organization; and
 - Ask for a behaviour change.
- UHF Executive Director to discuss with Secretariat about safe space promotion. These discussions are centred on the safe space importance and the organization’s commitment to fighting oppression.
- Staff and volunteers to sign a contract that restates the boundaries set on interactions between staff members.
- Community values to be established, agreed upon and followed by all UHF Secretariat staff and all those who access the Secretariat.

7.0 Policy Implementation and Monitoring

Uganda Healthcare Federation Secretariat shall establish a gender policy committee to lead the implementation and monitoring of the policy. This committee shall then develop the implementation framework and time frames for the policy in consultation with other staff and management.

Policy reviews shall be done whenever the need arises and approved by the UHF Board of Directors.

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