



Gender Inclusion Policy

Health Education and Development Society (HEADS)



Abstract

HEADS' Gender Inclusion Policy promotes gender equality, inclusion, and social justice across all operations. It ensures fair representation and participation, especially for women and marginalized groups, through a Gender Action Plan, training, and gender-disaggregated data. Aligned with national and international laws, the policy fosters an inclusive environment and supports equitable, community-driven development.

This policy has been revised in January 2025 for a period of one year and will be revised in January 2026. However, changes or amendments will be incorporated earlier if required due to any revisions in relevant government policies, global standards, or donor requirements

www.heads-ngo.org



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Raj" or similar, written over the website address.

Background:

Health, Education and Development Society (HEADS), is a non-profit, non-political and non-governmental organization registered in Pakistan under the Societies Act 1860. Since its establishment in 2013, HEADS has been actively engaged in the developmental and humanitarian sectors. The organization is led by a dedicated Board of Governors (BoG), consisting of professionals with diverse educational backgrounds and capabilities. HEADS operate under a comprehensive set of policies designed to ensure transparency, accountability and efficiency in its systems and operations. HEADS Currently registered in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and established an office in the capital city, Kabul.

Throughout its history, HEADS has worked closely with communities and various stakeholders, addressing a wide range of issues, including but not limited to Education, Health, Protection, Livelihoods, Community Infrastructure (CPIs), Shelter and Settlement, Community Development, Institutional Capacity Building, Research, Gender Equality, Legal Counselling, Referral Mechanisms, Social Accountability, Right to Information, and Governance.

In addition to these programmatic areas, HEADS place a strong emphasis on cross-cutting themes, including social mobilization, gender mainstreaming, inclusion, and resilience in all its core programs. These themes reflect the organization's commitment to addressing the holistic needs of communities and promoting sustainable development.

Vision: Every Individual regardless of background or circumstances enjoy equal opportunities and rights with dignity.

Mission: Empowering Communities through strategic investment in human capital and institutional capacity development, raising sustainable development at the grassroot level.

Objectives:

- Support and develop replicable models and strategies for sustainable human resource development through skills development initiatives.
- Network and collaborate with the Govt. Departments, NGO's, CBO's, WOs and international agencies/donors for sustainable development.
- Support initiatives for sustainable community-based gender sensitive development with particular focus on; Human and institutional Development, Natural Resource Management, Drinking Water Supply, Environmental Sanitation, Education, Agriculture, Health & Nutrition, Disaster Management and Micro Credit & Enterprise.
- Create economic and recreational opportunities for youth through skill enhancement programs for peace promotion.
- Enable equitable access to quality education and healthcare, raising holistic community development and well-being.
- Promoting Social Inclusion and Empowerment;
- Strengthen Resilience to Climate Change and Environmental Degradation.
- Advocacy for Peace, Human Rights, and Social Justice.
- Building Disaster Resilience and Preparedness

Introduction

This Gender Inclusion Policy underscores HEADS' commitment to gender justice, inclusion, and equity. By embedding gender-sensitive frameworks and ensuring accountability, HEADS aims to create an enabling environment where all individuals have equal opportunities and representation. HEADS ensures that all programs, policies, and operations promote the rights, dignity, and participation of all individuals, particularly women and marginalized groups. This policy ensures the integration of gender-sensitive approaches and gender markers to track progress and impact.

Purpose of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Integrate gender equality and social inclusion across all programs and institutional practices.
- Ensure compliance with national and international gender policies and laws.
- Establish gender-responsive mechanisms for program planning, implementation, and monitoring.
- Develop a Gender Action Plan with clear objectives, accountability, and reporting structures.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all HEADS staff, volunteers, partners, and beneficiaries across all programs and operational areas. It covers workplace policies, program implementation, stakeholder engagement, and gender-responsive budgeting. All projects and initiatives under HEADS must adhere to this policy to ensure a gender-inclusive approach.

Key Policy Outlines

- **Gender Action Plan:** Implementing measurable steps towards gender mainstreaming and equity.
- **Gender Focal Points:** Dedicated personnel responsible for gender integration.
- **Mandatory Gender Training:** Enforcing gender sensitivity training for all staff.
- **Compliance with Gender & Disability Laws:** Adhering to national and international regulations.
- **Data Collection & Analysis:** Ensuring gender-disaggregated data informs programming.
- **Gender-Responsive Program Design:** Integrating socio-economic and gender analysis.
- **Equal Representation & Inclusion:** Setting targets for women's and differently-abled individuals' employment.

Key Principles

- **Gender Equality & Equity:** Ensure fairness in opportunities, rights, and responsibilities.
- **Inclusion:** Recognize and support diverse gender identities and needs.
- **Non-Discrimination:** Prohibit gender-based bias, harassment, and violence.
- **Empowerment:** Strengthen leadership and participation of women and underrepresented genders.
- **Accountability:** Ensure all staff and partners uphold gender-sensitive practices.



Gender Action Plan

Gender equality requires a structured and actionable plan to ensure progress and accountability. The Gender Action Plan provides a roadmap for integrating gender considerations into all aspects of organizational operations and project implementation.

Objectives & Implementation

- **Short-term:** Conduct gender audits, ensure staff training, and integrate gender markers in programs.
- **Long-term:** Achieve full gender mainstreaming in policy development, decision-making, and field implementation.
- **Measurable Outcomes:** Set gender parity goals, track program inclusivity, and document progress.

Dedicated Gender Staff & Responsibilities

- **Gender Officer:** Leads policy implementation, staff training, and program oversight.
- **Gender Focal Points:** Assigned at each department to track gender compliance.
- **Executive Oversight Committee:** Ensures accountability and gender-sensitive decision-making.

Gender-Disaggregated Data & Analysis

To design and implement effective gender-responsive programs, it is essential to collect and analyze gender-disaggregated data. This section outlines how data is used to improve inclusivity and measure impact.

Data Collection & Utilization

- Mandatory gender-disaggregated data collection at all project levels.
- Annual reports on gender inclusion and impact assessments.
- Use of Gender Equality Markers (GEMs) to evaluate project effectiveness, ensuring that at least 30% of all programs have specific gender-focused components.

Socio-Economic & Gender Analysis

- Pre-project analysis of gender disparities.
- Evaluation of social and economic factors affecting gender inclusion.
- Tailored interventions based on diverse community needs.

Gender-Responsive Program Development

To ensure gender mainstreaming, all programs must integrate gender-sensitive approaches at every stage, from planning to evaluation. This section outlines gender-inclusive project design strategies.

Integrating Gender in Project Planning

- All programs must include gender-responsive indicators.
- Specific gender objectives, outputs, and impact assessments at every stage.
- Program designs must actively address the different needs of men, women, and marginalized communities.

Equal Representation & Inclusive Work Environment

- **Staff recruitment targets:** At least **40% representation of women** and a defined percentage for differently-abled individuals.
- **Leadership roles:** Encouraging and promoting women's participation in decision-making bodies.
- **Workplace inclusivity measures:** Providing facilities for differently-abled staff, parental leave, and gender-sensitive HR policies.

Compliance with National & International Standards

Compliance with gender laws and international frameworks ensures the effectiveness and legitimacy of gender policies. This section highlights relevant regulations and best practices.

Legal & Policy Compliance

- **Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act** – Enforcing zero-tolerance policies on gender-based violence.
- **National Policy for Persons with Disabilities** – Ensuring accessibility and workplace accommodations.
- **United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality)** – Aligning HEADS' programs with global commitments.
- **IASC Gender Policy & UN Women Guidelines** – Incorporating international best practices.

Complaint Redressal & Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit

Gender-Sensitive Grievance Mechanism

- Dedicated gender complaints desk to handle workplace and program-related grievances.
- Confidential reporting channels for gender discrimination and harassment cases.
- Independent Gender Review Committee to investigate and resolve complaints.

Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit

- Guidance on integrating gender considerations in project planning.
- Templates for gender assessments and impact measurement.
- Training materials for staff on gender sensitivity and policy compliance.

Mandatory Training & Awareness

Raising awareness and building staff capacity is essential for gender mainstreaming. This section details training programs and awareness campaigns.

- Gender sensitivity training is mandatory for all staff and must be conducted annually.

- Workshops and capacity-building sessions will be held to strengthen gender-responsive programming.
- Regular awareness campaigns on gender rights, workplace policies, and inclusive practices.

Partnership & Cooperative Agreements

Effective gender mainstreaming requires collaboration with stakeholders. This section outlines guidelines for gender-sensitive partnerships.

- All partnerships and agreements must align with HEADS' gender policy.
- Partner organizations must demonstrate commitment to gender equity.
- Collaboration with women-led and marginalized community organizations is encouraged to amplify impact.

Monitoring & Compliance

To ensure effective policy implementation, monitoring and compliance mechanisms are critical. This section outlines tracking and evaluation processes.

- Regular monitoring and evaluation of gender integration in programs and workplace policies.
- Clear performance indicators for gender equity in staffing, programs, and impact measurement.
- Compliance tracking through external audits and donor reporting requirements.

Review & Policy Updates

Policies must evolve to address emerging gender challenges. This section outlines the process for reviewing and updating the gender policy.

- Annual policy updates to incorporate new legal requirements and best practices.
- Feedback from staff and beneficiaries will be used to improve the policy.
- Training and awareness programs updated regularly to align with evolving gender needs.