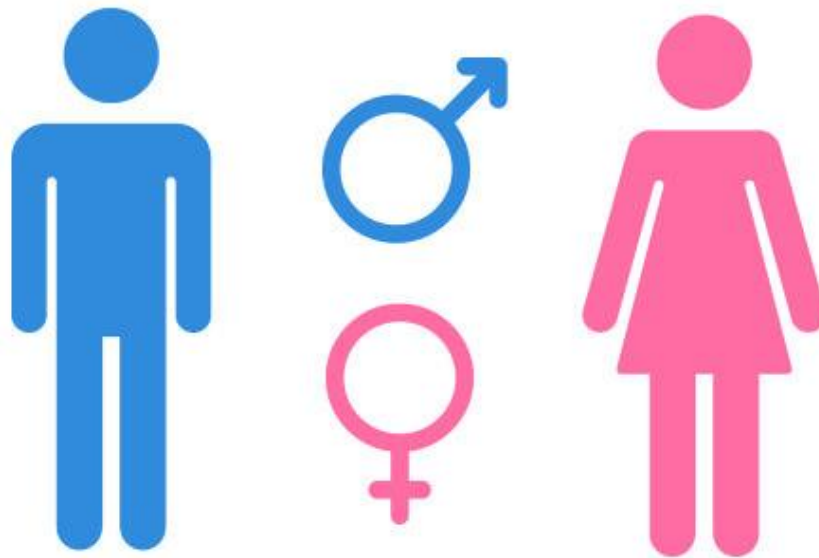




Gender Policies and Procedures

Health Education and Development Society (HEADS)



Abstract

This policy establishes HEADS' commitment to gender justice, inclusion, and equity across all operations and programs. It ensures gender-responsive planning, decision-making, and accountability, aligning with national and international standards. By integrating gender-sensitive frameworks, HEADS promotes equal access, non-discrimination, and safeguards against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). Reviewed in January 2025 for one year, the policy will be revised in January

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "H. K. Singh", written over a circular stamp.

Annex 1

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

Annex II

Introduction

This Gender Policy defines HEADS's unambiguous commitments to gender justice, inclusion, and equity and the principles expressed in National and International agreements and in treaties, the complementary implementation guideline and promoting gender equality, diversity, and inclusivity across all programs and operations. By embedding gender-sensitive frameworks and ensuring accountability, HEADS aims to create an enabling environment where all individuals have equal opportunities and representation. This policy provides a structured approach to ensure gender mainstreaming, equal opportunities, and non-discrimination in all aspects of HEADS' work.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure gender-responsive planning, implementation, and evaluation in all HEADS programs. Establish gender-sensitive approaches in decision-making and leadership, promote equal access to resources, opportunities, and leadership roles. Prevent gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence and align with the IASC Six Core Principles to prevent Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

Scope

This policy applies to all HEADS employees, volunteers, contractors, beneficiaries, and partners, as well as all organizational programs, operations, and funding decisions.

Equality and Non-Discrimination

HEADS is committed to foster an environment where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect by ensuring Zero tolerance for discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or any other characteristic, equal access to opportunities and resources across all levels of the organization, affirmative action strategies to support marginalized and underrepresented groups. Gender-sensitive policies and practices embedded in recruitment, promotions, and leadership roles and strict monitoring and enforcement to prevent any form of gender-based discrimination, harassment, or violence.

Key Definitions

- **Gender:** The social, cultural, and economic attributes and opportunities associated with being male, female, or non-binary.
- **Gender Equality:** Equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for people of all genders, without discrimination.
- **Gender Equity:** Fair treatment of all genders, considering their different needs and historical disadvantages.
- **Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** Any harmful act perpetrated against a person based on their gender.

- **Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA):** Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of power for sexual purposes.
- **Intersectionality:** The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, gender, and disability, creating overlapping systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

Integration of Gender in Program Design	All programs must address gender-specific needs
Use of Gender Markers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Gender Blind (0): No consideration of gender differences.▪ Gender Aware (1): Acknowledges gender differences but takes no action.▪ Gender Responsive (2): Addresses gender needs with proactive interventions.▪ Gender Transformative (3): Aims to shift power dynamics and eliminate inequalities.
Mandatory Gender Analysis	Programs will incorporate gender assessments to ensure inclusivity.

Section III

Gender Equality Markers

The Gender Equality Markers established by the Health Education and Development Society (HEADS) are a comprehensive set of guidelines crafted to gauge and enhance gender parity within health education and development endeavors. These markers encapsulate several key dimensions:

1. Healthcare Accessibility

Oversight to ensure fair access to healthcare services for individuals of all gender identities, especially those from marginalized and vulnerable groups.

2. Education and Awareness:

Advocacy for programs fostering understanding of gender-based health inequalities, reproductive health rights, and the dismantling of stereotypes and biases.

3. Inclusive Decision-making:

Promotion of meaningful involvement and representation of individuals of all genders in health policy, program, and service decision-making.

- Empowerment and Autonomy: Backing initiatives that empower individuals, notably women and marginalized genders, to make informed decisions regarding their health and actively engage in improving community well-being.
- Combatting Gender-Based Violence: Implementation of strategies to prevent and address gender- based violence, encompassing domestic abuse, sexual violence, and harmful traditional customs.
- Gender-Aware Healthcare: Ensuring healthcare services are attuned to the diverse needs and realities of individuals across all gender spectra, providing culturally sensitive and discrimination- free care.
- Research and Data Collection: Encouragement for research endeavors and data gathering endeavors that disaggregate data by gender, thereby enhancing understanding and resolution of gender-specific health challenges and discrepancies

Annex IV

Gender Main Streaming in Programme Strategies:

At HEADS, we are committed to fostering an inclusive environment that promotes gender equality and respects the rights and dignity of all individuals. Our Gender Policy serves as a guiding framework to ensure that our organization upholds principles of gender equity, diversity, and inclusivity in all aspects of our operations, programs, and interactions.

1. Commitment to Gender Equality:
 - HEADS is dedicated to promoting gender equality and eliminating discrimination based on gender, including but not limited to discrimination against women, men, transgender, non- binary, and gender non-conforming individuals.
 - We recognize that gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but also essential for achieving sustainable development and fostering social justice.
2. Non-Discrimination:
 - HEADS prohibits all forms of discrimination, harassment, and violence based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.
 - We ensure equal opportunities for participation and advancement within the organization, regardless of gender or gender identity.
3. Gender-Responsive Programming:

HEADS- Gender Policy and Procedures

- HEADS designs and implements programs and initiatives that are sensitive to the diverse needs, priorities, and experiences of different genders.
- We integrate gender analysis into all aspects of our work, including research, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
- 4. Capacity Building and Sensitization:
 - HEADS provides training and resources to staff, volunteers, and partners to enhance their understanding of gender issues and promote gender-sensitive approaches in their work.
 - We strive to create a supportive and inclusive work environment where individuals feel empowered to challenge gender stereotypes and biases.
- 5. Gender Mainstreaming:
 - HEADS mainstreams gender considerations across all organizational policies, procedures, and practices to ensure that gender equality is prioritized in decision-making and resource allocation.
 - We actively engage with stakeholders, including community members, government agencies, and civil society organizations, to advocate for gender-responsive policies and programs.
- 6. Gender-Responsive Workplace:
 - HEADS fosters a work culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion, where all employees are treated with respect and dignity, irrespective of their gender identity or expression.
 - We promote work-life balance and provide support mechanisms, such as parental leave and flexible working arrangements, to accommodate the diverse needs of our staff.
- 7. Accountability and Monitoring:
 - HEADS regularly monitors and evaluates the implementation of this Gender Policy to assess progress, identify gaps, and make necessary adjustments.
 - We encourage feedback from stakeholders and communities to ensure that our programs and policies effectively address gender inequalities and contribute to positive social change.

Annex V

Integration of Gender Mainstreaming in to The Program Strategy/Tools

HEADS ensures gender mainstreaming in its program strategies by taking the following steps:

- **Gender Analysis Tools:** HEADS utilizes gender analysis tools to understand the unique needs, roles, and challenges faced by different genders within the target communities. This may include tools such as gender analysis matrices, gender disaggregated data collection methods, and participatory gender assessments.
- **Gender-Sensitive Needs Assessment:** HEADS conducts gender-sensitive needs assessments to identify gaps and opportunities for addressing gender disparities in health education and development. This involves engaging with diverse groups of men, women, and non-binary individuals to ensure their voices are heard and their



perspectives are taken into account.

- **Gender-Responsive Program Design:** Based on the findings of the gender analysis and needs assessment, HEADS designs programs that are responsive to the specific needs and priorities of different genders. This may involve developing tailored health education materials, designing inclusive training curricula, and ensuring accessibility to services for all genders.
- **Capacity Building Workshops:** HEADS conducts capacity building workshops for staff, partners, and community members on gender mainstreaming. These workshops provide training on gender concepts, gender analysis techniques, and strategies for integrating gender considerations into program planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
- **Gender-Transformative Approaches:** HEADS adopts gender-transformative approaches that aim to challenge and transform harmful gender norms and stereotypes. This may involve engaging men and boys as allies in promoting gender equality, empowering women and girls to assert their rights, and creating supportive environments for gender diversity.
- **Gender-Sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation:** HEADS incorporates gender-sensitive indicators into its monitoring and evaluation frameworks to track progress towards gender equality and assess the impact of its programs on different genders. This includes tracking indicators related to access to services, participation rates, and changes in gender norms and attitudes.
- **Community Engagement Strategies:** HEADS employs community engagement strategies that ensure the active participation of all genders in program planning, implementation, and decision-making processes. This may involve establishing gender-balanced community committees, conducting gender-segregated focus group discussions, and organizing community dialogue sessions on gender issues.
- **Partnerships with Gender Experts and Organizations:** HEADS collaborates with gender experts, women's organizations, and LGBTQ+ rights groups to leverage their expertise and resources in mainstreaming gender into its programs. This may involve co-designing interventions, sharing best practices, and advocating for gender-responsive policies and practices within the broader health and development sector.
- **Adaptation and Learning:** HEADS fosters a culture of adaptation and learning, continuously reflecting on its gender mainstreaming efforts and incorporating lessons learned into its future programming. This involves soliciting feedback from beneficiaries, conducting regular gender audits, and adapting interventions based on changing gender dynamics and contexts.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Finally, HEADS engages in policy advocacy at the local, national, and international levels to promote gender equality and women's rights within the health education and development agenda. This may involve lobbying for gender-responsive policies, advocating for increased investment in gender equality programming, and raising awareness about the importance of gender mainstreaming among policymakers and stakeholders.

Annex VI

Preventive Harassment & Sexual Exploitation Measures

HEADS- Gender Policy and Procedures

- Explicit prohibition of sexual harassment and exploitation, including definitions of sexual harassment, SEA, and GBV.
- Zero-tolerance policy for any form of gender-based violence.
- Mandatory training for all staff and partners on recognizing and preventing gender-based harassment.
- SEA clauses included in all employment and partnership agreements.

Reporting & Accountability Mechanisms

- **Dedicated Gender Focal Points:** Assigned personnel to oversee gender integration.
- **Confidential Reporting Channels:** Through emails, letters, Toll-free hotline, In-person reporting to designated officers.
- **Regular Gender Audits:** Assess implementation and effectiveness of gender policies.

Structured Investigation Process for Gender-Related Complaints

Receipt & Acknowledgment of Complaint (*Within 3 Working Days*)

Initial Review & Risk Assessment (*Within 5 Working Days*)

Formation of Investigation Panel (*Within 5 Working Days*)

Evidence Collection & Interviews (*Within 10-15 Working Days*)

Analysis & Decision-Making (*Within 5 Working Days Post-Investigation*)

Investigation & Disciplinary Action

A diverse, impartial panel is formed, including HR, gender focal point, and legal advisors, complaint will receive via confidential reporting channels (email, hotline, in-person). Complainant receives an acknowledgment and assurance of confidentiality. The Gender Focal Point and other personnel in investigation Committee will conduct a preliminary review, take immediate protective actions (if required) such as separating involved parties. Decision will make whether to proceed with a full investigation. Formal notification will send to both complainant and accused. Confidentiality agreements will sign by members to protect privacy on gathering documents and physical evidences. Panel will conduct confidential interviews with complainant, accused, and witnesses ensuring strict impartiality throughout the process. Review of findings based on preponderance of evidence. Gender policy, national laws, and international standards will be referenced and investigation report will be compiled with recommendations for action.

If Gender-Based Discrimination or Violence is Proven, Possible Disciplinary Actions Include:

- Formal warning or mandatory retraining for minor offenses.
- Suspension, salary deduction, or demotion for moderate offenses.
- Termination of employment or contract for severe violations.
- Legal referral for criminal offenses such as SEA or GBV.
- Public disclosure of policy violations within the organization to prevent recurrence.



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If Complaint is Unsubstantiated:

- No disciplinary action is taken, but the case remains confidentially recorded for future reference.
- The complainant is informed of their right to appeal or seek external legal assistance.
- Further monitoring and supportive intervention may be recommended for workplace safety.

Survivor Support Measures:

- Immediate safety planning for affected individuals, including reassignment if necessary.
- Confidential counseling and psychological support services.
- Medical examination and legal support if required.
- Community and family support services for reintegration and healing.
- Follow-up care plans to ensure long-term protection and well-being.

Prevention Measures & Vetting

HEADS will comply with mandatory background checks for all job candidates, staff, and implementing partners to ensure alignment with gender equality principles. SEA and GBV clauses in employment contracts and partnership agreements to reinforce a zero-tolerance approach. Regular gender audits will be conducted to assess policy compliance and risk factors. Anonymous feedback mechanisms for employees and beneficiaries will be formed to report gender-related concerns. Proactive gender awareness campaigns will be arranged within the organization and its implementing communities.

Management Responsibilities

- **Executive Leadership & Board of Directors:** Oversee gender policy implementation and compliance across all organizational levels. Ensure allocation of adequate resources for gender mainstreaming efforts.
- **Human Resources (HR):** Conduct gender-sensitive recruitment and promotion processes, develop and implement mandatory training programs on gender equality and GBV prevention and ensure compliance with gender-sensitive employment policies and grievance mechanisms.
- **Gender Focal Points:** Monitor policy adherence and act as a liaison for gender-related concerns, provide regular updates to senior leadership on gender policy effectiveness.
- **Program Managers & Field Coordinators:** Integrate gender-responsive strategies into program planning and execution, conduct periodic gender impact assessments and implement necessary adjustments.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Teams:** Conduct independent assessments to evaluate gender policy effectiveness, collect disaggregated data to identify gender disparities and recommend corrective actions.

Training & Awareness

HEADS will arrange Mandatory gender sensitivity training for all employees, volunteers, and partners, arrange capacity-building workshops on gender-responsive programming and community outreach and advocacy to promote gender equality.

Partnerships & Cooperative Arrangements

HEADS will ensure gender-sensitive clauses in all partnership agreements, collaborate with women-led organizations, advocacy groups, and gender experts to enhance impact and promote equal representation of genders in decision-making roles.

Monitoring, Compliance, Review & Policy Updates

- Quarterly gender impact assessments to track policy effectiveness.
- Independent gender audits will be conducted annually.
- Feedback mechanisms platforms for beneficiaries to report gender-related concerns and recommendations.
- This policy will be reviewed annually by the concern personnel and updates will reflect new gender research, global best practices, and feedback from beneficiaries.

