

AFENET GENDER POLICY

JULY 2023

APPROVAL AND SIGNING OF POLICY

Name	Designation	Signature	Date
Prof. Ernest Kenu	Chair, AFENET Board of Directors		27/02/2024
Dr. Lazarus Kuonza	Chair, Policy Committee, AFENET Board of Directors		27/02/2024
Dr. Simon Antara	Director, AFENET		27/2/2024
Next Review Date			

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1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance and establish a framework to integrate gender equality, women's empowerment, and gender equity effectively and comprehensively across all AFENET programs and projects. It aims to ensure that the implementation of these initiatives adopts a gender-inclusive and gender-responsive approach, thereby promoting gender equity at all levels.

1.1 SCOPE

This Gender Policy applies to all individuals associated with AFENET including employees, contractors, volunteers, consultants, and any other individuals affiliated with the organization. It applies to all departments, divisions, and units within AFENET, regardless of location or hierarchical level.

1.2 OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to ensure a gender-inclusive, gender-responsive, and gender-equitable approach to the implementation of AFENET's program and project portfolio. This includes designing, planning, executing, monitoring, and evaluating programs as well as enhancing learning, communications, and advocacy efforts.

1.3 DEFINITIONS

1. **Gender Equality:** The principle that all individuals, irrespective of their gender, should have equal rights, opportunities, and access to resources and benefits in all areas of life.

2. **Gender Equity:** The principle ensures fairness and justice in the treatment, opportunities, and outcomes of individuals of different genders. It addresses historical disparities and aims to provide equal rights, opportunities, and benefits, challenging underlying gender-based inequalities and promoting an inclusive society.

3. **Women's Empowerment:** The process of enabling women to have control over their lives, exercise their rights, and achieve social, economic, and political equality.

4. **Gender Inclusivity:** Ensuring the active and meaningful participation of individuals of all genders in decision-making processes and activities, without discrimination or exclusion.

5. **Gender-Responsive Approach:** An approach that considers the specific needs, priorities, and experiences of different genders and integrates them into program and project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

6. **Marginalized and Vulnerable Populations:** Groups of individuals who are socially or economically disadvantaged and face a higher risk of discrimination, exclusion, or limited access to resources and services due to factors such as their gender, age, race, location, ethnicity, or religion.

7. **Equitable Access:** Ensuring fair and unbiased access to resources, technology, knowledge, and services for individuals of all genders, without discrimination or barriers.

8. **Gender Analysis:** A systematic examination of the roles, expectations, and power dynamics between genders to identify and understand the gender-specific issues, needs, and inequalities within a given context.

9. **Gender Data:** Information that captures and analyzes gender-related characteristics, experiences, and outcomes, providing insights into the differential impacts and effectiveness of programs and policies on different genders.

10. **Gender Indicators:** Measurable variables or metrics that track progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment, helping to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of gender-responsive initiatives.

11. **Gender mainstreaming:** The process of integrating a gender perspective into all policies, programs, and activities, aiming to promote gender equality and address the different needs and experiences of individuals based on their gender.

12. **Gender-Responsive Monitoring and Evaluation:** An approach that considers gender-specific indicators and collects sex-disaggregated data to assess the outcomes and impacts of programs and projects on different genders.

13. **Parity:** Achieving equal representation and balance between women and men in terms of recruitment, retention, and career progression within an organization.

14. **Zero Tolerance:** A policy of strictly prohibiting and taking immediate action against any form of discrimination, sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment within the organization.

15. **Gender-based violence:** Violence, harm, or discrimination based on gender. It includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, as well as economic coercion. Examples include intimate partner violence, sexual violence, domestic violence, harmful traditions, harassment, and human trafficking.

16. **Global Human Rights Frameworks:** Internationally recognized agreements and conventions that promote and protect human rights, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the International Labour Organization's (ILO) core conventions.

1.4 OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

To operationalize this policy, AFENET shall apply the following principles:

i. Proactively and publicly champion gender equality, women's empowerment, and gender equity as fundamental to the realization of AFENET's strategic priorities.

ii. Promote and demonstrate equitable and inclusive decision-making at all levels, and throughout the program/project implementation cycle, especially increasing the voice, participation, representation, and leadership of women and girls, providing them with equal opportunities to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from resources, services, and governance, regardless of anyone's background, age, race, gender, location, ethnicity, or religion.

iii. Facilitate active and meaningful engagement of women and girls who live within the most marginalized and vulnerable populations and groups.

iv. Promote and ensure equitable access to, use of, control over, and benefits from resources, technology, knowledge, and services for all individuals, regardless of their gender.

v. Foster a socially inclusive, empowering, and effective understanding of gender equity, including programs designed to ensure that all individuals understand, value, and realize gender equity as a benefit for all.

1.5 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

To reaffirm and strengthen AFENET's gender-responsive and gender-equitable approach and to realize gender-responsive and gender-equitable results across AFENET programs and project portfolios, AFENET shall:

a) Incorporate gender equality, women's empowerment, and gender equity in strategic planning, resource allocation, monitoring, evaluation, and communication.

b) Identify and address gender gaps, discrimination, and risks of gender-based violence in project planning and approval processes.

c) Conduct gender analyses, address risks, form gender-sensitive project teams, ensure equal opportunities, allocate resources, and collect gender data through the following specific steps:

i) Conduct gender analyses and apply key issues and recommendations identified to inform gender-responsive project design, budgeting, staffing, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

ii) Analyze risks that the project may experience or pose, and put measures in place to ensure activities do not exacerbate existing gender-related inequalities, including gender-based violence. Seize opportunities to address gender gaps and promote gender equity.

iii) Structure inclusive and gender-sensitive project teams that demonstrate appropriate capacities and technical expertise to support gender-responsive and gender-equitable action.

iv) Ensure women and men have equal opportunities for participation, decision-making, and benefits throughout the identification, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of activities.

v) Allocate sufficient resources for specific activities, technical support, and other actions to improve gender equity considerations, including the meaningful engagement of diverse stakeholders and beneficiaries.

vi) Collect, analyze, and apply gender data and use gender indicators to inform gender-responsive and gender-equitable monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and learning on AFENET programmatic activities.

d) Mainstream gender equity into AFENET monitoring and evaluation systems and account for the outcomes of such measures at the strategic, program, and project levels.

e) Support knowledge generation and sharing, capacity building, learning, and information exchange to enable all individuals and AFENET as an organization to be agents of change through gender-responsive and gender-equitable action and impact.

f) Work in partnership across sectors with organizations and institutions that have gender-equitable practices, collaborating with governments, multilateral agencies, funders, and partners.

g) Ensure the achievement of gender parity in addressing recruitment, retention, and career progression for its male and female staff, ensuring equal career opportunities for both women and men.

h) Practice zero tolerance for discrimination, sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment, creating a safe work environment that upholds gender equity.

1.6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a) The Director will provide oversight concerning the implementation of this policy, reporting periodically to the AFENET Board of Directors.

b) Program Directors and Project Managers are accountable for ensuring the implementation of this policy, with results tracked through work plans, appraisals, and collated to monitor institutional implementation and trends. They are also responsible for ensuring that teams and individuals working under their supervision are familiar with their obligations under this policy and equipped to meet them.

c) Each program and project is responsible for ensuring implementation requirements of this policy are adequately met.

d) To ensure transparency, accountability, and effective resolution of gender imbalance and disparity issues, we encourage all staff members to report any instances of gender imbalances or disparities they observe. In case of an observed situation of gender imbalance or disparity, staff members shall report such issues to the office of the Executive Director through the Human Resources Unit.

1.7 POLICY ALIGNMENT

This policy aligns with the global human rights frameworks, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the International Labor Organization's (ILO) core conventions.

Related policies, processes, and documentation include:

a) AFENET policy on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

b) Anti-Sexual Harassment and Exploitation policy

c) Child Protection Policy