



GHANA INTEGRITY INITIATIVE (GII)

(Local Chapter of Transparency International)

GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

Accra,
January, 2012

1. Introduction

In development programmes, gender is defined as being different in sex, i.e. the biological difference between women and men, and being about the socially determined characteristics of being a woman or a man. The main focus is on the power imbalances between women and men in given societies and their socio-economic implications. Ensuring gender equality and justice is a matter of basic rights and a means of addressing poverty as policies and practices that benefit women and other marginalized persons have other positive outcomes for the economy and society as a whole.

In Ghana, women form the majority of Ghanaians and the majority of those living in poverty but have fewer resources, less power and less influence in decision making when compared to men. They are exposed to various forms of violence and exploitation and, in addition, experience inequality because of their ethnicity, age, (dis)ability, nationality, caste, religion, or sexual orientation.

Gender equality and women's rights, in all their dimensions, are essential for realizing sustainable development outcomes. The empowerment of women through gender equity promotes the goal of gender equality – equal access for women and girls to opportunity, resources, and decision-making at all levels. The promotion of gender equity goes beyond improving practical conditions for women, to redressing strategic inequalities in power among men and women, tackling discriminatory laws, policies and practices. Gender equality strategies and activities must be informed by international human rights standards, in which gender equality and women's rights are recognized to be essential components of any strategy for poverty reduction, sustained peace, human rights, and social justice.

Guided by its values and principles, Ghana Integrity Initiative recognises that all people should be born free and be equal in dignity and rights, regardless of their sex or other status. GII, therefore, sees gender equality as a matter of both social justice and human rights. In Ghana, the male bias in decision-making bodies and at senior management levels is still the dominant reality. Systems of leadership and hierarchies that exist often exclude the less powerful and are detrimental to the vision of transformation in which women and men are equal in freedom, responsibility, and rights. It is in line with this thinking that GII is designing this gender policy to guide its employees and partner agencies.

2. The Main goal of the Gender Policy

GII's Gender Policy has the goal of ensuring that many more women gain power over their lives and live free from violence through changes in attitudes, ideas and beliefs about gender relations, and through increased levels of women's active engagement and leadership in institutions, decision-making and change processes.

3. The Aim of the Gender Policy

The aim of this policy is to explain, inform and to set out Ghana Integrity Initiative's expectations of all staff as well as its partners in regard to gender within the organisation.

4. The Scope of the Gender Policy

This policy applies to all members, Board and staff members as well as any consultants that are engaged to undertake work on behalf of Ghana Integrity Initiative.

5.0 The Gender Policy

5.1 Internal structures

GII will ensure that there is equity in its membership, its Board and its management and staff composition with regards to its determination to ensure gender equality.

In its recruitment of members of GII, deliberate efforts would be made to ensure gender equality in the composition of the membership.

In its election of members to the Board of Directors, GII has always made an effort to ensure gender equality in the membership of the Board.

In appointment to management and other staff positions, GII will ensure that there is gender equality as much as possible.

GII is committed to undertaking a deliberate training for its staff members to ensure that all of them understand gender equality and how this affects all other socio-economic aspects of citizens' lives. In line with this, GII will ensure that regular training on gender equality and related issues will be conducted to enable staff members comply with the provisions of this policy.

To help the organization implement its gender policy and ensure that all staff members and other stakeholders comply with this policy, GII will appoint and always have in place a gender equality focal person who will be responsible for organizing gender training and ensuring that GII programmes and activities always incorporate gender equality issues.

5.2 External structures

Moreover, it is Ghana Integrity Initiative's policy to ensure that gender awareness and gender sensitivity are included and understood in all its work within the organisation and applied to its programmes and activities.

GII is hereby establishing a bold stance on gender equality and women's rights among its members, Board and staff members as well as its partner agencies by systematically and effectively repositioning gender equality and women's rights as central to the Organization's mandate, its programming and policy promotion, and by collaboration with like-minded civil society organizations in Ghana.

GII's Gender Policy recognizes the need to increase support for the central role played by women and women's organizations in advancing women's rights in development, in ensuring national policies and plans to reinforce those rights, and in holding governments to account through democratic participation, particularly in the fight against crime and corruption.

GII will support activities aimed at ensuring women's decision-making and women's access to resources and benefits, which will be most effective and sustainable where there is increasing respect, protection and fulfillment of women's human rights.

GII's key strategy is, therefore, to support Ghanaian women and women's organizations to work to uphold women's rights to hold governments and other key players in society accountable.

5.3 Working practices

In all working practices the gender focal person of Ghana Integrity Initiative will:

- Report regularly to the Executive Director on gender issues that arise at the office and at GII's programmes, including instances of sexual harassment;
- Ensure that there are opportunities for male staff members to support their spouses whose work performance will be affected by their childbearing roles, including granting paternity leave to help them support their wives following child birth.
- Ensure that gender is understood, analysed and addressed in all aspects of its work - its policy, planning, management and communications by all employees and representatives.
- Monitors how gender features at the personal level of individual staff attitudes, priorities and behaviours, as well as in our programme work and negotiation with partners.
- Review on a regular basis, employment policies, procedures and guidelines for gender sensitivity and makes appropriate recommendations to the Executive Director for necessary action;
- Monitors GII's human resource systems and policies to ensure they are gender sensitive and responsive, including its recruitment, induction, and staff performance management systems.
- Ensure that all staff and representatives are provided with the necessary resources to meet its commitment to gender.
- Ensure that all staff and representatives are provided with appropriate training and support to ensure that they have adequate awareness, knowledge and skills with which to concretely address gender issues in their work and to demonstrate gender awareness and sensitivity in their behaviour and work.
- Take positive action to minimise the difficulties faced by staff with dependants, and to minimise the discrimination that women may face in employment because of their roles in society.
- Raise awareness of and challenge the structures that maintain gender inequalities, both through the materials it produces and its ways of working.
- Use stories, images and language that challenge gender stereotypes and present alternatives.
- Develop appropriate systems and procedures to challenge gender stereotypes.
- Include and present a clear gender perspective in all its policy and advocacy work and raise the issue of women's and girls' rights wherever appropriate.

GII is committed to building the capacity of staff and partners to focus on women's rights and ensure that its programmes directly contribute to strengthening these rights. GII's internal processes and systems will, therefore, reflect this commitment.

6.0 Conclusion

Ghana Integrity Initiative will continue to monitor its organisational culture and promote a working environment that promotes gender equality.

Adopted by **the Board of Directors**