

GENDER EQUA LITY, DISABILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION (GEDSI) POLICY 2023-2027



**HEALTH NUTRITION EDUCATION AND AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT NEPAL**



HEARD GEDSI POLICY

1. Background:

The issue of uneven power relations based on caste, class, ethnicity, age, disability, gender, location, and language, or a combination of these aspects, is addressed by the global movement known as gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI). The goal of GEDSI is to guarantee fair treatment and equal rights, opportunities, and obligations for men, women, LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) people, and young girls and boys. All residents of Nepal are now considered to be equal under the 2015 constitution, which also mandates GEDSI's efforts to include disadvantaged, vulnerable, and excluded populations in development together with women, people with disabilities, and other groups. The most disadvantaged group, the Dalits, continue to experience significant gender inequality and caste/ethnic discrimination despite these efforts.

The HEARD Nepal views the Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Initiative (GEDSI) as a significant strategy for ensuring the equality and empowerment of its target groups, which include marginalized and disadvantaged communities like women, people with disabilities, Dalits, young people, workers and indigenous people. Based on this knowledge, we developed the GEDSI policy for 2023-2027. The policy's aim is to eradicate institutional, cultural, and interpersonal structures of privilege and oppression that continue to support discrimination and exclusion against women and other disadvantaged and excluded groups. In order to guarantee that target beneficiaries, participate fairly in society and its decision-making processes, activities, and programs, HEARD Nepal will execute the GEDSI policy in accordance with Nepal's legislative mandates and regulations.

We are certain that the GEDSI policy will be successfully implemented, assisting in the mainstreaming of women as well as excluded and disadvantaged groups into the HEARD Nepal operations and programs. We are convinced that we can put these concepts into reality, both inside our company and with our focus population. Every two years, we will evaluate this policy to make any required updates based on our ongoing experiences and growing knowledge.

The term "gender equality, disability and social inclusion" (GEDSI) refers to the idea of addressing uneven power relations that individuals may encounter based on their caste, class, race, age, gender, location, or a combination of those factors. Gender equality refers to equal opportunities, rights, and duties for men, women, LGBTIQ

people, young children, and boys and girls. The mechanism by which gender equality is finally sought after is known as gender equity. It speaks about treating men, women, boys, and girls fairly in accordance with their individual needs and viewpoints.

A developing non-profit, non-political, non-governmental organization called HEARD Nepal seeks to reduce poverty and provide opportunity for all Nepalese. In order to contribute to the sustainable humanitarian development, HEARD Nepal wants to make it possible for even the most vulnerable citizens of Nepal to have access to food security, clean water, health and nutrition, child protection, child labor prevention, quality health services, disability and inclusion, gender equality, disability & social inclusion (GEDSI) education, and livelihood. HEARD Nepal is registered in DAO Saptari, Regd No: 1761/077/78 as a non-governmental organization under the Registration of Institutions Act 2034 BS and continues to work with marginalized and disadvantaged communities of Nepal such as women, people with disability, Dalits, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, youth, ex-bonded labor and indigenous people. HEARD Nepal respects and values diversity and inclusion both within its own organizational structures and in the communities in which it serves. Considering the intersectionality of the curriculum, it is devoted to eradicating institutional, cultural, and interpersonal systems of privilege and oppression that uphold discrimination against women and excluded and through this GEDSI policy, HEARD Nepal pledges to completely include gender equality and social inclusion into all of its projects in order to more effectively combat poverty and social injustice as well as uphold gender equality as a fundamental human right. This GEDSI policy will be put into practice in accordance with Nepal's legislative requirements and mandates disadvantaged groups.

2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This policy aims to empower HEARD Nepal to actively advance social inclusion and gender equality throughout all of its activities and inside the company.

The policy specifies two distinct aims to accomplish this goal:

- a) To ensure that HEARD Nepal, its Implementing Partners (IPs), and allies adopt a practical approach to gender equality, disability and social inclusion.
- b) To guarantee social inclusion, disability and gender equality in all aspects of HEARD Nepal's activities, including systems, planning, implementation, evaluation, and risk management.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding concepts for HEARD Nepal's approach toward GEDSI are as follows:

3.1: Gender Justice: HEARD Nepal is dedicated to promoting equality and enabling the full and equal involvement of both men and women in society's decision-making processes, activities, and initiatives. In light of the intersectionality of the program, we pledge to recognize and eliminate the obstacles, bias, and oppression that prevent women from participating fully and fairly.

3.2: Respect for one's innate dignity, individual freedom, especially the right to make one's own decisions, and independence from other people: By adopting the Humanitarian Charter, we are expressing our belief that everyone impacted by a disaster or armed conflict, including refugees, has the right to protection and aid to guarantee that their basic needs are provided with security and dignity.

3.3: Full and effective societal involvement and engagement: The objective of "gender equality, and inclusive development" in our development work is to make sure that excluded groups actively participate in the development process and benefit from initiatives and programs on an equal footing with community members.

3.4: Respect for humanity, tolerance for variety, and acceptance of individual differences: The diversity of people is something we affirm and cherish. Responses are generated based on the assumption that women are a homogeneous group. Women come from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicities, and life experiences, though. They need to be respected for their variety of identities, needs, abilities, and skills.

3.5: Equality and Non-discrimination: The stigmatization and prejudice experienced by the excluded groups are some of the biggest barriers to ensuring equitable chances. We offer equitable chances for everyone via our humanitarian and development work, regardless of handicap, age, sex, caste, race, origin, religion, or economic or other position. We pledge to create our humanitarian and development initiatives to be open to everyone. Every Individual affiliated to HEARD Nepal regardless of their higher or lower position be treated with the same dignity and respect.

3.6: Accountability: The policy is binding with all individuals associated with HEARD Nepal. Both institutional and individual accountability is integral to ensure the effective implementation of policy.

4. DEFINITION

For the purpose of this policies:

Disability: Any physical or mental condition (impairment) that makes it harder for the person with the condition to engage in particular activities (activity limitation) or interact with the environment around them is referred to as a disability (participation restrictions)

GEDSI mainstreaming: In order to achieve better gender equality, disability and social inclusion in institutions and across all programmatic issues, GEDSI mainstreaming refers to tactics, approaches, and instruments.

Gender: Women's and men's social interactions and relationships, as well as the socially manufactured distinctions in attribution and opportunities associated with being female or male, are collectively referred to as gender.

Gender equality: When women and men have equal rights, opportunities, and entitlements, gender equality has occurred. Women and men should be treated equally and according to their individual requirements. The idea that everyone is impacted by an issue in the same manner, independent of their settings, is contested in light of the awareness that the same issue impacts men and women differently and disproportionately.

Gender equity: In order to achieve gender equality, gender equity refers to the equitable treatment of all individuals, regardless of gender, in accordance with their needs and viewpoints.

Gender context: The examination of women's situations in terms of power dynamics, workloads, mobility, access to and control over resources, seasonal calendar, and cause and effect analysis is known as gender context analysis.

Gender based violence: Any act of violence committed against a person based on that person's biological sex, gender identity, or perceived conformity to socially established ideals of femininity and masculinity is referred to as gender-based violence.

“Sexual harassment” means an unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, or · Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or

such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment

Social inclusion: Social Inclusion means the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights in the HEARD Nepal activities.

Women's empowerment: The process through which women gain their voice, rights, freedom of choice, strength, alternatives, and control over resources is known as women's empowerment. It stands as a purpose unto itself. Women must be able to use these chances and rights to make decisions as full, equal members of society if they are to feel empowered.

5. APPROACHES

HEARD Nepal uses a variety of track ways to create and carry out humanitarian and development programs/projects by practically putting the GEDSI principles to use, and to maintain the effects. The following approaches are listed:

5.1: Be a welcoming organization: Every employee of HEARD Nepal is required to have a fundamental awareness of GEDSI, its importance, and ways to strive toward GEDSI. A few of HEARD Nepal's tactics for improving organizational capacity on GEDSI include staff training and smart human resource practices, as well as through hiring people with GEDSI experience. The purpose of gender and social inclusion audit activities is to analyze findings and pinpoint areas that need improvement. The GEDSI team, which consists of personnel from management and field levels, will make sure that the organization's activities comply with the fundamental GEDSI principles. In addition to supervising its implementation, the GEDSI team will be in charge of creating the GEDSI and disability inclusion work plan. HEARD Nepal will spread awareness among implementing partners and work to increase GEDSI responsiveness and disability inclusion. HEARD Nepal will improve the efficacy of its organizational strategies and programs via organizational learning and adaptation, which will be informed by and tailored to the skills and needs identified by excluded groups.

5.2: Mainstreaming GEDSI: HEARD Nepal is required to incorporate a GEDSI viewpoint into all facets of project management and programming, from baseline preparation through implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.

Experience has demonstrated that include historically disadvantaged groups and members of oppressed communities earlier rather than later has greater beneficial consequences and benefits for everyone. HEARD Nepal will concentrate on carrying out a GEDSI self-assessment each year. A GEDSI action plan with indicators will be implemented based on the needs identified through this assessment to determine whether projects carried out by HEARD Nepal have helped to empower excluded groups, have increased their participation in M&E processes and mechanisms, and what adjustments to organizational plans, policies, and procedures should be made as a result of GEDSI mainstreaming.

5.3: GEDSI advocacy: An advocacy action's ultimate purpose is to build a more just and fair society for everyone, not to prioritize the rights of one group over another, but to make it possible for marginalized groups like women, Dalit's, to exercise their human rights equally in Nepalese society. Planning for advocacy will take into account the worries of disadvantaged and excluded groups.

5.4: Discussions with these groups will help identify the problems they face, how they are impacted, the underlying reasons, and potential solutions. Putting the human rights advocates who represent these communities at the forefront of our efforts. In order to provide fair access to livelihoods, high-quality services, protection, and social cohesion, this is achieved through supporting their advocacy efforts, bolstering their organizations, and amplifying their voices.

5.5: GEDSI transformative support: HEARD Nepal will concentrate on innovative methods for GEDSI and disability inclusion in the following areas:

- Assure the excluded and marginalized groups receive real advantages in terms of improved access to services and necessities including food security, stable income, asset development, confidence, and dignity, which reduces vulnerability.
- Reinforce laws, rules, and customs that give them a bigger say in how decisions are made and how they share the rewards.
- Through transformational education programs and support for female human rights defenders, strengthen the network, capacity, and ability of disadvantaged and excluded individuals to speak out, defend their rights, and influence choices and benefit sharing, among other things.
- Engage men and boys in activities that aim to combat the unequal distribution of wealth, status, and power as well as to prevent and address societal prejudice based on gender. Strategic collaborations at all levels must be created in order to ensure that the excluded groups receive their rights and realize their potential.

HEARD Nepal will support collaboration between a variety of stakeholders (such as politicians, other I/NGOs, academics, local, provincial, and federal governments), leaders of various faiths or religions, and human rights activists for actions that will contribute to the crucial changes required in informal institutions (values, norms, attitudes, and practices) that support gender and social disparities and discrimination.

6: Framework and Vision:

6.1: The Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Policy is informed by International Human Rights Framework, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

6.2: The concept of gender equality refers to "fairness of treatment for women, sexual/ gender minorities and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

6.3: The policy recognizes that gender equality is crosscutting and intersectional issue: experiences of inequality, discrimination and disadvantage are shaped by intersections of caste/ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, regional location. Individuals belonging to marginalized groups, religious minorities, sexual/gender minorities are more vulnerable to gender-based inequalities.

7. Policy:

The policy is divided into three broad areas:

7.1. Gender Equality in Policy and Practice

7.2. Fostering Gender and Disability Sensitive Organizational Culture

7.3. Grievance Mechanism

7.1 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy and Practice

7.1.1 All policies, programs and activities of HEARD Nepal shall be gender sensitive. To ensure the institutional accountability, all programs shall be approved and audited by the board before final decision to assess gender implications across all activities and then taking action to achieve gender equality. To ensure the effective implementation of the policy, all administrative staff shall be undertaken training in gender sensitive programming and budgeting.

7.1.2 Equal opportunities shall be ensured for women and men in all aspects of training, personal and professional development. To ensure women with caring responsibilities are not unfairly disadvantaged to attend out of office trainings, childcare support HEARD Nepal shall pursue the policy to provide a priority to aid women's growth and professional development.

7.1.3 Gender specific needs of women and sexual/gender minorities shall be respected to ensure their safety and dignity within and outside premises of HEARD Nepal.

7.1.4 Women employees are entitled to maternity protection (leave and benefits as well as protection against discrimination) in accordance to national laws, regulations and HEARD Nepal policy. Women staffs experiencing challenging pregnancy, reproductive health issues and miscarriage shall be considered the special provision of leave or work from home, in case of expiry of provisions of medical and other leaves. Workplace safety and security shall be maintained to ensure women employees in above mentioned condition do not face consequences due to hazardous work environments.

7.1.5 Day-care room/ breastfeeding corner shall be established at all the HEARD Nepal working office so that mother can conveniently breastfeed her baby and established the breastfeeding right of infant.

7.1.6 All resources and opportunities shall be fairly allocated and transparent for all regardless of position and gender.

7.1.7 HEARD Nepal shall prioritize equitable gender representation and social inclusion within the institution and through its external outreach program including in the collaborative programs with the stakeholders.

7.1.8 HEARD Nepal shall coordinate with excluded or disadvantaged groups to enhance the social inclusion in all of its response and efforts. These groups confronting barriers that prevent them from fully participating in political, economic, and social life are in the priority of the HEARD Nepal programs. They include the gender, age, location, occupation, race, ethnicity, religion, citizenship status, disability, and sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), among other factors.

7.1.9 HEARD Nepal shall pursue the gender balance while forming the different committees and task forces in its Central office firstly and in branch office in future.

7.1.10 HEARD Nepal shall pursue the policy of reviewing the existing laws enacted by the government of Nepal to make ease to amend or abolish laws, regulations and policies that discriminate on the sexual orientation ground to bring them in line with international human rights instruments.

7.1.11 HEARD Nepal shall pursue the policy of equitable gender representation including the office heads in its each of the offices.

7.1.12 HEARD Nepal shall develop safe, effective, easily accessible and child-sensitive, gender sensitive complaint handling mechanisms in office in compliance with international human rights norms and standards.

7.2. Fostering Gender and Disability Sensitive Organizational Culture

7.2.1 Gender and disability sensitive organization culture is an important precondition to guarantee the realization of gender equality. This requires both institutional and individual accountability of commissioners and administrative staff working in senior level.

7.2.2 HEARD Nepal as a social and Non-political organization needs to be a safe and dignified workplace, regardless of the position, caste/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age and regional location. Everyone needs to be treated with dignity and respect without experiencing any form of discrimination and prejudice.

7.2.3 All forms of violence and harassment in the workplace, including verbal, physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, are prohibited. Sexual harassment, including unwelcome sexual advances, unwanted hugs and touches, suggestive or lewd remarks, requests for sexual favors, or the display of indecent, derogatory, or pornographic pictures, posters, drawings, or videos, are prohibited.

7.2.4 All staffs joining the service in HEARD Nepal need to receive gender sensitization training including a module on workplace harassment. To establish accountability of the institution and to ensure effective implementation of this policy, brochures and posters on zero tolerance policy on workplace harassment need to be displayed where they are clearly visible. Refresher training and regular discussion about workplace harassment needs to be conducted to establish the organizational culture that promotes safe and dignified workplace.

7.2.5 HEARD Nepal as a safe and dignified workplace needs to foster an organizational culture where all staff feels safe to seek formal procedure in an event of experiencing harassment. Complaints of workplace harassment need to be dealt

with sensitivity, privacy and confidentiality. Staffs, who seek grievance mechanism, need to be protected from retaliation for complaining about harassment.

7.3. Accountability and Grievance Mechanism

7.3.1 "Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy Committee" needs to be formed to ensure effective implementation of the policy and also to receive complaints and to address the problems.

The committee will be comprised of following members: Internal complaint mechanisms shall be managed now in Central office and trickle down in province, local level in future. Under the internal complaint handling mechanism having the authority to decide on administrative matters, as per the HEARD Nepal Staffs Rules or head of the department of the entity handling administrative matters; handles the complaints. Gender balance will also be considered in case the women staffs are not heads of the divisions while forming the Committee.

1. Founder President - Convener
2. Legal focal person- Member
3. Admin and HR Focal Person- Member
4. Investigation focal person- Member
5. GEDSI focal person- Member Secretary

7.3.2: Staffs at HEARD Nepal will have the right to make confidential complaints to the committee. Committee will organize an impartial hearing to both victims and alleged perpetrators to decide the case and take necessary action to ensure justice is served.

7.3.3 The policy must recognize the need to identify the specific barriers faced by women and disable. Anyone experiencing any form of gender-based discrimination should feel safe to seek grievance mechanism without fearing loss of dignity and retaliation in case of perpetrator being a person working in higher level. It is responsibility of members of the grievance committee that victims feel safe and supported during and after the process of seeking justice.

7.3.4 Annual Gender Responsive Auditing will be carried out to ensure the policy is being effectively implemented. Any gaps in policy and practices will need revision on "Gender Equality Action Plan" through consultative and participatory process.

7.3.5 The GEDSI approach must focus on delivering equal rights, opportunities, and mainstream services to all employees notwithstanding only needy. The approach

must also recognize embedded, power relations within the organization that disempower women, and the vulnerable creating a vicious cycle of intended and unintended exclusion.

7.3.6 As part of the GEDSI policy, make it mandatory for all its partner organizations and stakeholders to address women's empowerment, disability, gender equality and social diversity issues. This also must include; gender/GEDSI mainstreaming, targeted/ focused service delivery, social mobilization/empowerment, group formation and capacity strengthening.

8. REVIEW

Every five years, this policy will be reviewed. HEARD Nepal will still conduct a yearly audit exercise for gender, disability and social inclusion as well as an assessment of the GEDSI Action Plan's execution. Any adjustments that should be made to the structures, processes, techniques, and activities will be determined with the aid of experiences and lessons learned from the plans.





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