

NEDAN FOUNDATION

'GENDER POLICY'

Introduction

Before outlining the policy on mainstreaming gender equality and women's rights, some practical issues regarding this document should be clarified. This is a policy document and not a plan of action. Thus strategies and direct activities are not outlined in this particular document, but rather the principles, objectives and overall purposes that should guide NEDAN FOUNDATION'S (NEDAN) work. The policy includes two parts: a policy document and an action plan that will develop further on the direct strategies and activities for the implementation of the NEDAN'S Agenda with a gender perspective.

NEDAN's Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan will be directly linked to the objectives and aims in the policy document. The Action Plan will have the purpose of outlining how specific goals formulated in the policy should be implemented in the field and on the ground.

The Policy document is based on two equally important objectives:

1. Women's right to empowerment through participation in any development and,
2. Gender Mainstreaming in NEDAN's Comprehensive Developmental Approach.

These two objectives should always guide, and be mainstreamed within, the interventions planned and implemented by NEDAN, and be taken into account when reviewing such activities.

Mandate documents

NEDAN has a clear mandate, and is under strict requirement, to implement and promote gender mainstreaming in the national and international process towards equality between women and men, girls and boys through human development. This mandate is clearly outlined in a number of Country ratified and adopted documents and action plans, as well as in NEDAN's directly linked declarations and resolutions..

The following commitment was made by NEDAN and is of central importance to organisation in all its interventions:

" We commit ourselves to the goal of gender equality in human development work. We further commit ourselves to:

- a. Integrating gender perspectives in human settlement related legislation, policies, programmes and projects through the application of gender-sensitive analysis;
- b. Developing conceptual and practical methodologies for incorporating gender perspectives in human development's planning, and evaluation, including the development of indicators;
- c. Collecting, analyzing and disseminating gender-disaggregated data and information on human development issues, including statistical means that recognizes and make visible the unremunerated work of women, for use in policy and programme planning and implementation;
- d. Integrating a gender perspective in the design and implementation of environmentally sound and sustainable resources management mechanisms, production techniques and infrastructure development in rural and urban areas;
- e. Formulating and strengthening policies and practices to promote the full and equal participation of women in human development planning and decision-making."

Although there are several internationally adopted and ratified documents that are crucial to promoting gender and women's rights in all societies, which should be considered by NEDAN, as part of the community. These include internationally ratified Conventions such as CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women), 1979; as well as the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action (1995).

Based upon commitments made by all UN member states these should also guide the UN agencies in their work, as well as its Member States.

NEDAN's mandate to work with gender mainstreaming towards the goal of gender equality is also outlined in a number of points adopted by the Advisory Council of NEDAN.

All of the above mentioned documents demand gender aware and sensitive work from NEDAN and its staff. They demand that women's rights and the gender aspects of development in the field of development sector that are taken into consideration in all policies, planning, and implementation at all levels. In order to abide by these demands on gender mainstreaming, respect to women's as well as men's roles and responsibilities must be taken into consideration in all activities that the Programme takes active part in. The commitment that NEDAN has towards the large community is to follow these various guidelines and make sure that women and men take equal part in planning, and to equally share the benefits of programmes and projects implemented by the Programme.

Policy outline

NEDAN's Gender Policy is structured around three specific areas in order to clarify the policy framework and objectives for the Programme's gender mainstreaming strategy. The following three major areas will be addressed and outlined in the Gender Policy:

- i. NEDAN's Gender Policy and its overall Goal and Objectives.
- ii. NEDAN's gender mainstreaming approach.
- iii. NEDAN's roles and responsibilities among staff and management.

Overall Goal and Objectives

NEDAN's overall goal of mainstreaming gender equality and women's rights into all activities implies that the Programme has to be proactive regarding equality between women and men, girls and boys, in all areas of its mandate, according to the protocols commitment made.

The international community has affirmed and reaffirmed their commitment to women's empowerment and gender equality in a number of documents. The most important and strongest document in the area is CEDAW, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women from 1979. The binding commitments of the Convention (CEDAW) were reaffirmed in the equally important Beijing Declaration of 1995, and its Action Plan the Platform for Action. In this conference, the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China, Governments reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen equality between women and men, identifying 12 critical areas of concern to this cause. The Beijing conference also adopted the strategy of gender mainstreaming as the overall approach to reach the objective of gender. The following paragraphs from the Beijing Declaration are important in setting the framework for gender mainstreaming:

(Paragraph 13) Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace;

(14) Women's rights are human rights;

(24) Take all necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and the girl child and remove all obstacles to gender equality and the advancement and empowerment of women;

(25) Encourage men to participate fully in all actions towards equality.

The goal of gender equality should be seen as an over arching objective that NEDAN should contribute to as an active participant. NEDAN is expected to perform its role in an international context, as no single actor can alone achieve the goal of gender equality. The international community defines gender equality as women, and men's

equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities will take both time and much effort to reach.

However, it is something that NEDAN must strive for in its work within human development. It is in this process of reaching full equality between women and men that NEDAN has a mandate to act, and is required to contribute.

Mainstream a gender-perspective and practice a gender sensitive approach in all new and ongoing activities of the organisation

To mainstream gender equality into all its interventions and work is therefore the main contribution to the overall goal of gender equality and women's rights made by NEDAN. By being aware of the unequal status of women and men, boys and girls, contributing to lessen these gender-based gaps, the Programme will actively participate in the work towards the goal of gender equality.

NEDAN's Gender Policy Objectives

Common to a majority of Senior Managers and staff of NEDAN is the sincere belief in women's rights and gender equality. Although a gender mainstreaming approach of NEDAN's programmes and interventions has begun, and there is a real commitment within the organisation to implement this work, challenges remains in strengthening the capacity to mainstream a gender perspective. This policy aims to articulate the main areas of the gender mainstreaming strategy of NEDAN but the question of "how to" implement these still remains and will be further elaborated in NEDAN's Gender Mainstreaming Plan of Action.

The following four objectives has been outlined specifically for NEDAN FOUNDATION

(1) Adopt and develop a centre-wide approach and methodology for gender mainstreaming

An approach and methodology to be identified and developed for successful incorporation of a gender perspective into all of NEDAN's interventions in a manner which influences goals, strategies, resource allocation and outcomes. NEDAN must therefore outline its corporate gender mainstreaming strategy, which should be adopted, acknowledged and followed by management and staff.

(2) Identify entry points and opportunities within NEDAN's work

Opportunities and entry points must be identified for introducing gender mainstreaming into NEDAN's work and implementation of the Agenda. These opportunities should include all phases of the work from planning programmes and projects to policy development and decision making, in order for the NEDAN to produce gender aware outputs. The most important aim within this objective is to make these entry-points visible and accepted within the organisation so that they are used and developed within its particular context by NEDAN staff and management and routinely recognise them for their importance and necessity.

(3) Identify linkages between Gender Equality and Sustainable Development

This implies identifying and outlining linkages between gender equality and the issues/areas or sector of the agency's mandate. In NEDAN's case this means paying attention to linkages between gender roles and responsibilities within the area of human development. Outlining gender linkages in the areas of NEDAN's mandate will strengthen the understanding of why promoting gender equality and women's rights are important in achieving the goals of sustainable development that have been identified.

(4) To develop institutional capacity and knowledge to enable gender mainstreaming within Organisation

The final policy objective is in regard to the development of the institutional competence and knowledge within the Programme. According to NEDAN's regulations and mandate, develop guidelines for gender mainstreaming activities, utilising gender specialists whenever deemed necessary, and provide capacity building for all staff and management in the area of gender mainstreaming. This is a learning process that should be implemented at all levels. The responsibility of NEDAN's management is to set aside adequate resources and allocate staff time for the Programme to strengthen its knowledge and capacity of gender mainstreaming.

All the four mentioned objectives above imply a strengthened knowledge and competence of the staff in order to identify when gender mainstreaming should be carried out and how it could/should be done. This therefore demands a learning process, as was mentioned above, to take place among staff and management within NEDAN to be able to:

- a. promote and implement gender sensitive programmes,
- b. initiate analysis of gender roles and relationships,
- c. gender mainstream policies and activities guided by these objectives and,
- d. promote gender equality as a cross-cutting goal in all development.

The overall goal of gender equality for NEDAN's external work will naturally be to strengthen gender equality and women's rights among the stakeholders in the diverse activities in the field. A gender sensitive approach is not a goal in itself but a means to achieve equal rights between women and men, and to promote women's rights in particular through interventions in diverse countries and communities globally. There are often, although not always, national legal frameworks and laws promoting gender equality and women's rights which are equally important to follow in NEDAN's work, as well as lessons learned.

Specific commitments required reaching NEDAN's Gender Policy objectives

The above overall objectives for NEDAN's work imply that staff and management give regular input in order to gender mainstream their work within the field of social development. This has implications for all staff at the Programme in ensuring the following aspects in their roles as planners, decision-makers and implementers in human development.

(1) Adopt a programme-wide approach or methodology to mainstream gender

- a. Ensure that effort is made to mainstream programme-wide guidelines and policy documents to acknowledge and ensure that a gender perspective is a formal part of planning and decision making within the Programme's activities.
- b. Develop institutional guidelines for gender mainstreaming, linked to the work programme, are developed, both for specific issues/areas within the Programme's mandate, as well as on an overall level.
- c. Ensure gender mainstreaming is acknowledged on all levels and adopted as the strategy for integrating a gender perspective and supporting women's rights in all activities of the Programme.
- d. Ensure that all phases of the Project Cycle, from the appraisal to the follow-up/evaluation phase, are adequately gender mainstreamed.
- e. Identify and promote adequate tools/instruments for follow-up and monitoring, such as indicators and benchmarks, within all interventions implemented.
- f. Establish and strengthen accountability mechanisms within the organisation to ensure gender mainstreaming of all its interventions, such as the Project Review Committee (PRC) and other review processes.
- g. Ensure gender components are included in all interventions when collaborating with partners and agencies.

(2) Identify entry points and opportunities within NEDAN's work

- a. Promote the avoidance of discrimination and hardship for both women and men in order for the development processes to avoid impoverishment of women and men, boys and girls alike.
- b. Implement accountable processes of development for both women and men, within the field of human development in general and in the Programme's activities in particular.
- c. Collect and analyse relevant data on stakeholders (including target groups) for all activities and ensure that the outcome of these analyses is actively used in programme/project implementation.
- d. Promote and support the development of gender-disaggregated data.
- e. Ensure that knowledge within the field of gender mainstreaming is gained through the above mentioned aspects.

NEDAN's Gender Mainstreaming Approach

Mainstreaming is established as the overall strategy for promoting and strengthening gender equality at the international level, through documents such as the Platform for Action adopted by the Member States at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995). The mandate of mainstreaming in all interventions has been carried forward by a number of international and national policies, which all demand that attention, effort and resources are given to create a gender sensitive practice at all levels and in all sectors of society.

Gender Mainstreaming Principles

1. Initial definitions of issues/problems across all areas of the human development field should be done in such a manner that gender differences and disparities will be visible and diagnosed.
2. Assumptions that human development is neutral from a gender perspective should never be made.
3. Gender analysis should always be carried out in both recommendations to policy and planning as well as in operational areas of work before implementation and decisions are made.
4. Systematic use of gender analysis, sex-dis-saggregated data and commissioning of sector-specific gender studies and surveys are required for all areas of organisational activity.
5. Responsibility for implementing the mainstreaming strategy is system-wide, and rests at the highest level within the agency, and its departments; and adequate accountability mechanisms for monitoring progress in NEDAN's interventions need to be established within each and every area of work. The staff and management are also to be committed to promote and ensure a gender perspective in their collaboration with partners and other agencies.
6. Political will from the Senior Management by providing competent leadership and enabling allocation of adequate resources for gender mainstreaming, including necessary additional financial and human resources in the implementation.
7. Gender mainstreaming requires that efforts be made to broaden women's equitable participation at all levels of decision-making. Ensure that women are consulted equally with men, and that women are involved in projects and programmes, decision-making processes on an equal basis with men.
8. Provision of training to all personnel at NEDAN's headquarters and in the field is essential, as well as appropriate follow-up in order to reach strengthening of competence and knowledge regarding gender mainstreaming and awareness for staff and management.

All the above mentioned principles should be converted into acknowledged and visible objectives for the work of each and every staff member within NEDAN.

Accountability Mechanisms

Equally important to developing and promoting mechanisms and approaches for gender mainstreaming, is to make these mechanisms accountable within every phase of the work, from planning and decision-making to follow-up and evaluation. The staff and management of NEDAN should be accountable for mainstreaming a gender perspective within all interventions. For this the Programme needs to develop accountability mechanisms that will routinely review the work and ensure that gender mainstreaming is implemented.

Management Accountability

Management of divisions, branches and units should institutionalise mechanisms in their respective areas of responsibilities, to ensure that gender mainstreaming is implemented through using a gender perspective and that women's empowerment and participation is taken into consideration in all interventions. This could be done through checklists, branch/division specific Projects Review Committees and institutionalised follow-up mechanisms integrated already at the planning stage of activities.

NEDAN's roles and responsibilities among staff and management

Equally important to any policy document, aside from the goals themselves, are the owners of and decision-

makers behind the document. In this case the relevant questions to be addressed by NEDAN's Gender Policy would be the following:

1. Who is accountable and responsible for the implementation of the Policy?
2. Who will provide support to the process of gender mainstreaming?
3. Who is the Gender Policy written for?
4. Who will benefit from it?

Outlining the stakeholders of the policy document makes them visible to the user and therefore accountable to the objectives of the document. A policy document without a known owner is not likely to have an impact or be firmly founded in the organisation. On the other hand a policy document that openly identifies the responsibilities and roles of diverse stakeholders will be more useful and have a larger impact. This section of the Gender Policy will therefore outline the responsible and relevant stakeholders of the organisation.

Who is accountable and responsible for the implementation of the Policy?

The responsibility for the NEDAN's Gender Policy is at the highest level of management within the Programme, that is the Executive Director (ED) of NEDAN. The ED of NEDAN will always be ultimately accountable for the end result of the Programme's work as well as its policy decisions, and the implementation of the Gender Policy by the organisation..

However, as the overall owner of the Gender Policy, the ED will not be able to implement the direct demands of the policy. In every day work, the responsibilities outlined in the policy will therefore be delegated according to the structure of the Programme. Therefore, the Senior Management is responsible for gender mainstreaming in their specific Branches and Divisions.

This system of delegation will be followed throughout the Programme and in the day-to-day work of the staff acknowledging the Gender Policy in the overall framework of the organisation. This implies that the ED, together with the Senior Management, has the overall responsibility to ensure that NEDAN's Gender Policy is implemented, and they are accountable for the outreach and impact of its objectives. However, the professional staff of the Programme must be responsible for the direct implementation of the policy document in their day-to-day work and activities.

Who will provide support to the process of gender mainstreaming?

To support staff in implementing the objectives of the Gender Policy, the Gender Policy Unit (GPU) has been established with the aim of building capacity and strengthening awareness within the Programme. The gender specialists within the GPU will provide support to all levels of the Programme in order to enable a better understanding of and attaining the Gender Policy objectives.

Who is the Gender Policy written for?

The policy is designed to be used by all professional staff and management in their everyday work as a reference for planning, decision-making and implementation of interventions.

The identified implementers of the Gender Policy, NEDAN's staff and management, are the identified target group as they are crucial in the implementation of the policy objectives, as the agents of gender mainstreaming in NEDAN's work. This includes Senior Managers, middle managers and the professional staff within organisation.

Who will benefit from the Gender Policy?

The overall target group of the Gender Policy are the stakeholders of NEDAN's activities, or the women and men

among partners and within Member States. This includes the beneficiaries of programmes and projects, partners such as institutions and NGO's and the government bodies with whom the NEDAN collaborates and work.

This therefore includes a large number of people and bodies which should all be taken into account in all planning, decision-making and implementation of activities. To be able to reach this group it is crucial that implementers, e.g. staff and management, use the policy in their work to reach the end users or beneficiaries. This implies that these groups of beneficiaries are always kept in mind and analysed from a gender perspective at all levels in implementing the Habitat Agenda.

Stakeholders and Beneficiaries:

The secondary stakeholders of the Gender Policy, as was stated above, are the beneficiaries of the implementation of the NEDAN Agenda. These stakeholders must be visible and their presence articulated in all programme and project planning for NEDAN to be aware of gender differences.