Contents

Introduction.................................................................................................................. 4

The Overall Goal........................................................................................................... 5

The Objectives .............................................................................................................. 5

Expected outcome:........................................................................................................ 5

Definitions:.................................................................................................................. 5

Gender.......................................................................................................................... 5

Gender roles: ............................................................................................................... 5

Gender relations .......................................................................................................... 6

Gender gap .................................................................................................................. 6

Gender equality & Gender equity .............................................................................. 6

Gender mainstreaming ............................................................................................. 6

Gender Needs:............................................................................................................. 6

Practical Needs ........................................................................................................... 6

Strategic Interests ...................................................................................................... 6

Recommended steps for women’s empowerment in the rural communities: .......... 7

Education: ............................................................................................................... 7

Elimination: ............................................................................................................. 7

Elevation: ............................................................................................................... 8

Empowerment: ....................................................................................................... 8

Gender Equality Through Human Resource Practices............................................ 10

Recruitment:............................................................................................................. 10

Person specification: ............................................................................................. 10

Advertising ............................................................................................................. 10
Selection ................................................................................................................................. 10
Remuneration and grading......................................................................................................... 11
Promotion and advancement ..................................................................................................... 12
Training and development ........................................................................................................ 12
Family friendly practices .......................................................................................................... 12
Working Environment, culture and practices ........................................................................ 12

Sexual harassment .................................................................................................................. 13
Afghan Development Association

Gender and Sexual Harassment Policy and Guidelines

**Introduction**

Afghan Development Association (ADA) as a visionary organization, with the passage of time has played a significant role to improve the living condition of Afghans through implementing Integrated Rural Development programmes. Since its inception, ADA has worked with individuals, communities and villages to enable them to take charge of their own destinies and become less vulnerable.

Practical approaches and methodology, based on the analysis of social, economic, political and human resource conditions of the target areas, have been introduced as a strategy for implementing cost effective development programmes. The aim is to increase the awareness, knowledge and capacity of participating communities both men and women through mobilization and organization in order to take part in the decision making process of their villages, to get rid of their dependency on external sources and make sustainable livelihood within their villages.

Since the beginning, ADA has been promoting the participation process in its development work. ADA believes that in order to enable Afghans to have a just society, it is necessary to strengthen civil society at the grassroots level. It is essential to help people become organized in order to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

Being half of the population, women can play a significant role in the overall socio-economic development of the country. Women share a major responsibility with the men inside as well as outside the home. However, their contributions have always been undermined by the traditional male-dominated society.

ADA based on its development approaches and goals in its community development programme tried to develop a workable strategy on how to involve both men and women in the development process. For this purpose ADA assess the social and political condition of the target communities and contacted other stakeholders for development of a policy for gender.

This guideline has been so designed to consider all aspects of the life of the community in order to do not act as a divider or create problems among the target communities.

This policy puts greater emphasis on the eradication of discrimination against women and girls as part of ADA's concern for social justice and development effectiveness
The Overall Goal

To contribute substantially to improving the well-being of women, men, girls and boys in ADA work.

The Objectives

- To support women and girls in the realization of their full human rights;
- To reduce gender inequalities in access to and control over the resources and benefits of development.
- To strengthen and maintain an institutional environment that support and encourages gender mainstreaming in ADA.

Expected outcome:

- Increased knowledge and awareness among communities for realization of their (Women, Men, Boys and Girls) full human rights
- Increased knowledge and skill among ADA staff for addressing gender in policy development and programming.
- Improved and sustainable gender mainstreaming in ADA programs and activities.

Definitions:

Gender

Refers to the socially constructed differences and relations between men and women which are learned, vary widely among societies and cultures, and change over time. The term is used to characterize the differing roles, responsibilities, constraints, opportunities, and needs of women and men in all areas and in any given social context.

Gender roles:

Are learned behaviors in a given society, community or other social group, they condition which activities, tasks and responsibilities are perceived as appropriate to males or females.
Gender relations
The ways in which a culture or society defines rights, responsibilities, and the identities of men and women in relation to one another. Gender relations are also relations of power which affect who can access and control resources (financial, material, time, participation chances, bargaining and decision power).

Gender gap
Disparity in any area between women and men in terms of their levels of participation, access to resources, rights, power and influence, remuneration or benefits.

Gender equality & Gender equity
Gender equality requires enjoyment of equal rights, opportunities and treatment by men and women in all spheres of life.

Women and men do not have to become the same, but their rights, responsibilities and opportunities do not depend on whether they are born male or female. Fairness of treatment for women and men according to their respective needs and interests† equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men. Equity leads to equality.

Gender mainstreaming
Involves the incorporation of gender considerations into all policies, programs and practices so that at every stage, an analysis is made of the effects for women and men. There is no area of work, which is gender-neutral.

Gender Needs:

Practical Needs
Practical needs can be defined as immediate necessities (water, shelter, food, income and health care) within a specific context. Projects that address practical needs generally include responses to inadequate living conditions.

Strategic Interests
Strategic interests, on the other hand, refer to the relative status of women and men within society. These interests vary in each context and are related to roles and expectations, as well as to gender divisions of labor, resources and power. Strategic interests may include gaining legal rights, closing wage gaps, protection from domestic violence, increased role in decision making, and women's control over their bodies.
To ensure sustainable benefits, both practical needs and strategic interests must be taken into account in the design of policies, programs and projects.

Gender issues must be addressed through a comprehensive strategy of education, elimination, elevation and empowerment.

---

**Recommended steps for women’s empowerment in the rural communities:**

**Education:**

1. Increase representation through mobilization of like-minded individuals.

2. Undertake training and create guidelines for what is expected of community representative and define roles and responsibilities for participating women, men, boys and girls.

3. While keeping in mind the local context, source relevant information from a variety of mediums on gender awareness and how best implement gender policy

4. Establish or create links between existing women’s groups to strengthen the framework for community action. Share information and ideas regarding how best to highlight women’s issues in the public forum.

**Elimination:**

1. Push for equal access to all work related services, i.e. transport, office equipment, office space, decision-making processes and information network

2. Organize financial and strategic support for women and increase program funding, make prospects attractive and purposeful.

3. Make opportunities widely available to women, men, boys and girls of all standards of literacy and competency. Where additional skills are required, provide training. Link any training with income generation projects.

4. Support women and make allowances for their responsibilities as an active member of the society.

5. Define women’s needs based on their own requirements and desires.

6. Provide opportunities for disadvantaged/isolated groups that may have restricted opportunities for training and earning.
Elevation:

1. Strengthen exiting women’s decision-making organizations. Encourage wider representation of female interests.

2. Give disadvantaged or isolated women (particularly in the rural areas) Training in leadership roles asking them to identify key qualities required being a good leader.

3. Facilitate the formation of various community based women’s organizations i.e. mother groups, parent/teacher association. Coordinate active communication between all representative groups.

4. Expose both male and female to political, non-political and civil society Frameworks to promote an understanding of how different sectors work.

5. Provide specific training in development including problem solving, professional development, communication, conflict resolution and individual capacity building.

6. Involve established women’s networks, NGO’s in rural areas where their expertise can be put to best use.

Empowerment:

**Empowerment** means increased opportunities to control one’s own life.

It gives:

a. Power to make decisions.

b. Power to have your voice heard.

c. Power to put things on the agenda.

d. Power to negotiate new issues.

e. Power within yourself to challenge past customs.

Following are factors enhance the empowerment:

**Control over/access to money and assets:**

f. Level of control.

g. Which money and which assets do they have control over?
h. Variations/changes with age or status (i.e. marriage).

i. Access to money and loans.

j. Saving mechanisms.

k. Access to markets.

l. Methods of spending.

m. Improvement/changes over year- positive and negative impacts.

**Women and decision-making:**

n. In what areas do women make decisions/what areas do women not make decisions?

o. Variation with age or status.

p. Established decision-making bodies in the areas (i.e. community shura, women’s group etc.).

q. Perception of women’s role as decision-maker.

r. Women’s influence in community decision-making.

**Women’s access to information:**

s. What sought of information is commonly available for women.

t. Women’s access to information mediums.

u. Literacy levels and ability to communicate.

v. Variation with age and status.

w. Positive/negative impacts of information.

x. How can information be used to support women’s participation and access to services.

**Women’s economic contribution:**

y. Women’s financial contribution to household income.

z. Women’s contribution to labor activities and the amount of time spent on household activities.
aa. Methods of reducing the time or intensity of women’s activities.

bb. Providing methods of rewarding women’s dedication/skill through income generation opportunities and more rewarding work.

c. Raising awareness of the value of women’s activities inside and outside the household.

dd. Eradicating the exploitation of women.

Gender Equality through Human Resource Practices

Discrimination in; recruitment, remuneration, inflexible working conditions, as well as insufficient services such as child care continue to restrict employment and advancement opportunities for women.

ADA will strictly observe the following areas of human resource or people development practice:

**Recruitment:**

**Person specification:**

- Include gender awareness in all job specifications e.g. female are encouraged to apply.
- Specifications that will discourage certain groups from applying are not acceptable.
- Include gender competence as a requirement in job specifications.
- Subjective and sexist language or requirements is not allowed, for example, "out-going, fun-loving female preferred". Such a specification would automatically discourage some married women with children.

**Advertising**

- Use media that is accessible to women, for example, radio, local radio, magazines or newspapers that are popular among the particular group.
- Reach out to relevant women’s groups, networks, and systems to widen recruitment possibilities.

**Selection**

- All questions must focus on what is required for the job.
• Comparable questions must be posed to female and male incumbents.
• Ensure that gender aware and gender competent persons sit on the selection panel.

• Have some female candidates in every interview, even if the women may not meet all requirements on paper.
• Use gender awareness as criteria for selection, particularly for senior management
• Subjective and sexist criteria is not acceptable, for example; marital status, dress, physical attributes. These have no relation to the job.

**Remuneration and grading**

• There must be equal pay for equal work.
• Jobs must be graded in terms of their content and value, not in terms of which sex does them.
• Women are entitled to benefits in their own right, for example a married woman can choose to be on her own medical aid, not on her husband’s and she can put him on her medical aid as her spouse if she wishes.
• Performance management and appraisal must be equitable and not subtly discriminate against women.
• Job descriptions must reflect the full complexity of the job.
• Job evaluations processes and methodologies must be fair and equitable. Subjective criteria and considerations must be eliminated.
• Use evaluation criteria which reasonably reflect the range of skills in the entire workforce.
• Recognize and reward skills that an employee gains through work, life, and informal training.
• Vague language, ambiguous or subjective evaluative criteria must be eliminated.
• Have an objective way of assessing skills for example competency based assessment, rather than relying on the length of service or the "reputation", of a person.
• Acknowledge and reward women's hard work and level of responsibility particularly in what are seen as typically female jobs or in lowly paid jobs.
• Measuring levels of responsibility only in terms of supervision may obscure the amount of work involved in jobs women do. For instance, secretaries tend not to supervise anyone, yet they perform a very wide range of tasks.
• Performance evaluation should not penalize women for trying balance their social and professional responsibilities. For example judging a woman who cannot work over-time less "committed" than her male colleague.
Promotion and advancement

- Promotion must be based on a valid set of clearly articulated criteria.
- Recognize women's disproportionate family responsibilities and do not use these as an excuse to down-grade them.

Training and development

- Provide equal opportunity for training both for male and female.
- Increase expenditure on basic literacy training.
- Implement gender sensitivity and awareness workshops for all in the organization from the junior to senior management.
- Ensure that training times, facilities, and opportunities are appropriate and friendly to women’s participation. For example organizing three-week training away from the place where women with young families live would be a way of discouraging them from participating!

Family friendly practices

- Where possible have child and dependent care facilities.
- Ensure enough leave and benefit provisions for women and men to balance family and professional responsibilities, e.g. paid maternity/paternity leave.
- Do not just comply with the minimum legal requirements, do what would be most beneficial to all workers and would make you attract and retain the best employees.
- Do not penalize women for trying to balance professional and social responsibilities, e.g. not promoting a woman whose child is ill or has a disability.

Working Environment, culture and practices

- Provide feasible working environment for women, e.g. separate room if they feel comfortable.
- Do not make assumptions about what women "should do", e.g. going on overnight field trips without proper facilities, pouring out the tea at meetings, or taking minutes.
- Eliminate sexist practices and cultures, for example dress codes that make women appear like sex objects.
Sexual harassment

All human beings have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Sexual harassment is a manifestation of the power relations existent in society, between women and men. It is rife in the workplace, because the majority in positions of power and authority are men.

Some of these men abuse their positions of power culminating in sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is one of the biggest problems affecting women’s entry, retention, productivity and advancement in the workplace. It is therefore not only in the women’s interests but in the organization’s as well, to have a sexual harassment policy and redress system.

- The definition of sexual harassment must be clear and understandable to all employees in ADA.
- Structure a reporting channel which is friendly to complainants. Insisting that all cases must come through the normal hierarchy might be problematic since it is often in this channel that the harassment comes from in the first place.
- Investigation and disciplinary procedures should be effected in a short time frame. Dragging cases further traumatizes complainants.
- Set and effect strong penalties. This will send a message to both complainants and perpetrators that the company takes sexual harassment seriously.
- Provide counseling where possible. If not provide possibility for complainants to take time off to get counseling, as well as some financial support.
- Conduct awareness raising programs to sensitize both women and men at all levels of the company.
- Provide possibility for women to report cases anonymously e.g. "suggestion boxes".