

Centre for Mental Health and Counselling – Nepal (CMC-Nepal)

Thapathali, Kathmandu

GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION POLICY (GEDSI POLICY)

(Revised December 2020)

SECTION ONE

Introduction and Definition

1. Introduction

Based on clause no 28 of the constitution of CMC-Nepal, and as approved by the organization's general assembly, this Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Policy has been formulated as a reference document for CMC-Nepal to address the issues of gender inequality and social exclusion. This Policy, in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 5 “Gender Equity”, aims to ensure that there is an end to discrimination against women and girls in CMC and its projects, inequalities in access to paid employment and significant gaps between men and women, and sexual violence and exploitation.

As a nonprofit organization that –

- expressly prohibits and does not tolerate all forms of discrimination based upon gender, race, color, religion, language, ethnicity, national or regional origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, health status, veteran status, or any other classification or group protected by law,
- strives to create within and outside the organization a socially inclusive and gender friendly environment to recognize excluded women and disadvantaged groups as equal development partners,
- challenges conventional thinking to address issues of unequal power relations between women and men and between different social groups,

CMC Nepal has developed this GESI policy as a guideline for its employees and members to ensure mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion in its planning, implementation of all projects and programs. In this regard, this GESI policy is a reference document that sets out a consistent intervention to address identified problems or existing situation of inequality and exclusion, to promote equal, respectful and dignified environment for people of all gender and different identities, and to mainstream GESI in projects and programs. The policy prioritizes actions for GESI mainstreaming and provides a guiding framework for monitoring and following up on the related interventions.

2. Definitions

- a. “Gender” refers to the socially constructed power relations between women and men that establish the roles, responsibilities, opportunities and decision-making authority of women and men in society.
- b. “Gender equality and social inclusion” refer to a societal state where women, men and people of third gender from all social groups enjoy the same status and have equal access to

all resources and benefit from all opportunities. It focuses on affirmative actions to create a level playing field between disadvantaged and advantaged women, men and groups.

- c. "Gender equality" means exercising an equal/equitable opportunity, empowerment and participation of both women and men in all spheres of public and private life. This does not mean providing girls and boys, women and men, equal treatment in all spheres of society but to recognize that men's and women's living conditions and position are different due to sex and gender role and ensure that these differences should not discriminate against them but contribute to an equal sharing of power in socio-economic and political processes. Thus, gender equality calls for accepting and valuing the differences between women and men and the diverse roles they play in society AND change unequal power relationships between women and men, for a better balance in the values and priorities.
- d. "Social inclusion" is understood as the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase the access of excluded individuals and groups to development opportunities. Social inclusion is the process to include all sectors of society in planning and decision-making which affects their lives and making space for them to improve their living standards and their overall well-being.
- e. "Disadvantaged Groups (DAG)" is defined as those people who are discriminated based on gender, caste and ethnicity and being economically poor.

SECTION TWO

GESI Integration in Project/Program Cycle

2. CMC will integrate GESI in its projects and programs by:

- 2.1 Identifying in the organization's catchment area the specific groups of women, poor, excluded and the vulnerable people and the reasons for their exclusion/ vulnerability regarding access to services and opportunities.
- 2.2 Designing program-level responses that attempt to address the barriers in the program cycle.
- 2.3 Ensuring adequate budget allocation and expenditure processes to account for additional costs that may be associated with equitable and improved access and delivery of services across the community.
- 2.4 Implementation.
- 2.5 Monitoring and evaluating to check whether and how effectively planned resources and actions have reached women, the poor, the vulnerable and the excluded; and (if M&E findings show the need). CMC-Nepal will review the practice of GESI integration in the project in bi- annually in review and planning meetings.
- 2.6 Adjustment/redesign and continued M&E.

SECTION THREE

GESI Integration in Internal and External Institutional Mechanism

3.1.1 GESI Integration in Internal Institutional Mechanism

CMC-Nepal will take the following steps for integrating GESI in its internal mechanisms:

- 3.1.1 **Balanced Team:** Creating staff database, workforce diversity will be prioritized during the recruitment process to ensure an inclusive and gender balance composition of staff, board and general membership. Diversity in staff will be promoted to ensure that different experiences and perspectives are available in the organization, by Identifying and monitoring the ratio of women, and disadvantaged represented in the workplace and at various roles or grades, by ensuring that there are women and disadvantaged represented on panels and committees and by encouraging independent representatives on selection panels to ensure appointments are made on the basis of merit.
- 3.1.2 **Job Descriptions/ToRs and Performance Evaluation:** Job descriptions and ToRs will have GESI incorporated into objectives, responsibilities and required qualifications. Staff performance evaluations will include an assessment of efforts to address GESI-related issues and GESI-sensitive behavior/actions within staff's area of responsibility. Where a staff fails to apply GESI principles in his or her role, it should be treated as an under-performance issue which should be managed or developed appropriately.
- 3.1.3 **Working Culture:** Working culture will be GESI supportive, with zero tolerance of any discriminatory behavior, use of discriminatory language or gestures. Training and development opportunities will be provided equally.
- 3.1.4 **Grievance and Redressal Mechanisms:** Management Team or an ad-hoc committee (if necessary) comprising of Board member/s and staff will promptly and appropriately handle sexual harassment and language/cultural/caste discrimination issues. The committee thus functioning will prepare a report for recommendation of actions, after investigation and analysis. Staff can freely make a complaint if they are being unfairly treated. It will be ensured that staff confidentiality will not be breached when reporting and investigating GESI issues.
- 3.1.5 **Identification of GESI Focal Persons:** The role of GESI focal person/s is not to take full responsibility for GESI work but to act as a catalyst in supporting and promoting GESI related initiatives within CMC-Nepal. GESI focal person/s may assist and become involved in implementation of activities but their contribution can also be focused on helping colleagues and management to identify strategies and work methods that will enable and further build capacity of others to integrate GESI principles into their own areas of work. It is critical that GESI is the responsibility of everyone in the workplace.
- 3.1.6 **Capacity Building:** Provide gender sensitivity training to staff members at all levels: Implementing gender-related activities often face difficulties due to a lack of understanding of gender issues and a lack of seriousness by projects/programs staff. Building capacities of staff members to enable them to understand gender and inclusion as a crosscutting issue will be addressed in all elements of the projects/programs.
- 3.1.7 **Language:** Organization will have clear and strict directives on and practice of use of gender sensitive languages
- 3.1.8 **Facility:** The organization will invest in developing provision of gender and physical disability friendly physical facilities, ensuring safety and wellbeing of children, women and people living with disabilities.
- 3.1.9 **Monitoring:** Regular GESI assessment will be conducted at organization to provide input into org policy and to improve program implementation.
- 3.1.10 **Awareness:** Promote the message that staff individually and collectively has a responsibility to integrate GESI perspective into all aspects of CMC Nepal's work at all levels.

3.2 GESI Integration in External Institutional Mechanism

In its external institutional mechanisms, CMC Nepal will focus on the following:

- 3.2.1 Service and Program Delivery: CMC-Nepal will focus on ensuring equity, access and social inclusion considerations across its goods, services and programs delivered to the community.
- 3.2.2 Role Model: CMC-Nepal will role model best practice to the community. This in turn will encourage change in the community and will establish the organization's image and leadership in this area.
- 3.2.3 Partner Selection: When selecting its partners, service providers, and sub-contractors, CMC-Nepal will ensure that they exhibit similar principles and values and embrace GESI principles.
- 3.2.4 Special Considerations: CMC-Nepal will take GESI principles into account when designing and delivering programs and services to the community. Typical considerations include ease of physical and practical access to services, style of community consultation, personal security, communication strategies, monitoring and evaluation of services, openness to feedback and change and commitment to best possible GESI practice.
- 3.2.5 Communication Strategy: CMC-Nepal will employ a variety of communication strategies and styles to ensure its messages are received and understood by all members of the community.