

Gender Policy of SERAA



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Socio-Economic And Rural Advancement Association (SERAA)

Gender Manual

1. GOAL AND OBJECTIVE

1.1 Gender Policy Goal

To contribute towards making Socio-Economic And Rural Advancement Association (SERAA) a gender sensitivity organization with gender responsive program and projects.

The overall goal of this policy is to integrate and establish gender equity concerns with SERAA and improve its capacity for developing programs and projects that will improve the social, legal/civic, political, economic and cultural conditions of the poor, disadvantaged and marginalized people of Bangladesh. In particular it seeks to alter the subordinate position of women in all aspects, and provide a safe and dignified working environment for all staff.

Objectives for specific areas covered by the policy are given below:

1.2 Organizational Objectives

1.2.1 Objective related to political will

- To ensure appropriate political commitment of the mission at all levels.
- To ensure implementation of policies for achieving gender transformation.
- To ensure necessary allocation of resources for promotion of gender transformative/re-distributive initiatives across the organization.

1.2.2 Objective related to organization culture

- To ensure the support (including professional development) required to recruit retain and promote female staff, with particular emphasis on senior levels.
- To create an environment where women's voices can be raised and heard and gender issues resolved.
- To promote gender sensitivity of staff of the organization at all levels.

1.2.3. Objectives related to organizational accountability

- To ensure that all staff understands gender concepts and are aware of their roles and responsibilities with regard to the implementation of the policy.
- To ensure that a realistic system/mechanism is in place for the proper planning, monitoring and implementation of the policy.

1.2.4 Objective related to technical capacity

- To ensure all staff is equipped with the appropriate skills and knowledge needed to make SERAA a gender sensitive organization.

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1.3 Program Objective

1.3.3 Objectives on project design and planning

- To ensure gender analysis throughout the project cycle, including project design.
- To ensure women's participation in project design.
- To ensure identification and prioritization of basic problems and needs of women.

1.3.2 Objective related to program implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

- To ensure the active participation of women at all levels of project implementation.
- To establish and utilize monitoring and evaluation systems which measures gender impact (positive or negative) of projects and programs and which will include processes for review and corrective action.

2. STRATEGIES

The objectives shall be achieved through the following strategies:

- Sensitization of staff on gender issues at all levels.
- Promoting a Gender Analytical Framework that ensure gender is considered in all aspects of programming.
- Ensuring the translation and dissemination of policy to all staffs in SERAA.
- Adopting an explicit advocacy role in promoting gender equity.

3. ORGANISATIONAL MEASURES


SERAA Gender Audit was carried out in 2002 based on the following measures of organization's capacity to institutionalize gender awareness and equity:

- 3.1. Political will
- 3.2. Organizational culture
- 3.3. Accountability
- 3.4. Technical capacity

3.1 Political will

Political will has to be demonstrated through putting in place a comprehensive Gender Policy that will translate into practice at all levels. This will require the commitment of sufficient technical and financial resources, as well as structural changes, to bring about an overall orientation towards gender equity. The principles of equal opportunity of women and men need to be institutionalized. This includes equal opportunity in terms of access, use of resources and benefits and gender balance in all positions (not only in numbers), especially at strategic levels, whereby all staff, male and female are considered equal.

The dissemination of the Gender Policy must be carried out in a manner to ensure clarity among staff at all levels, particularly at management and program leadership


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levels. Both the conceptual underpinnings of the policy as well the policy formation process itself must be well understood by all.

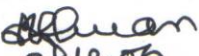
The adoption of gender equity as a strategic direction in programming has to be supported by adequate institutional capacity and appropriate orientation of staff. The following measures therefore need to be implemented:

- The empowerment of the Gender Committee to regularly monitor the policy instruments and other institutional measures adapted to achieve gender equity. The Committee should function in such a way as allow women's voices to be heard regarding policy issues related to staff administration.
- Regular gender sensitivity workshops will be held to maintain and reinforce the adoption of equality between women and men as a core value as well as to identify and address conflicts and problems arising out of resistance at different points and levels. Although both men and women need to have their consciousness raised with regard to equality issues and the need to counter social prejudice/stereotypes about women and men, especially prejudice against women, the gender sensitivity workshops will especially target the participation of men.
- Affirmative action in the recruitment of women will be a guiding principle for the achievement of a better balance in staff sex ratio, especially at senior management level.
- The performance appraisal system will not include any criteria that are prejudicial to the achievement of gender balance in the organization.
- The Human Resources Development and Management Department will prepare an annual work plan for competence building of female staff in areas such as leadership, technical skills and English.
- In cases of resignation of senior female staff and female staff who have served in SERAA for at least five years, the Executive Director or his designate will hold a meeting with the concerned staff to ascertain the causes of the resignation. The outcome of the meeting will be conveyed to Human Resources Management Section. The HRM has to respond to stated causes and integrate measures to retain competent women.

3.2 Organizational Culture

It is the responsibility of all staff in general and all section heads and management team members in particular to build and sustain an organizational environment or culture that is supportive of "Gender Equity" as a programming goal. All staff members must therefore:

- Believe in and value women's human potential
- Be congenial to the growth of and contribution by women;
- Ensure that men are not unfairly treated in the name of gender.
- Consider the gender disadvantage women experience in their ability to form networks. Mobilize resources and gain recognition for their contributions.
- Establish clear norms and rules regarding equitable distribution of facilities (support services) and opportunities (study tours etc)


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- Challenge unwritten rules that discourage women from availing special facilities for fear of hampering promotion prospects (e.g. women not asking for time off for breast feeding)
- Refrain from any comments or gestures that indicate a prejudicial view about women in management positions as not being merit based and about promotions being seen as linked to personal connections, including insinuations of sexual favors in the case of women.
- Understand the intent of the gender policy and other gender equity initiatives.

3.3. Accountability

The following measures will ensure accountability on equality issues within SERAA.

- A review of procedures to improve implementation of the policy:
- An international monitoring mechanism:
- Gender Committee to oversee the implementation of the Gender Policy and monitoring of gender issues:
- Indicators for staff performance with regard to adherence to gender policy.

3.4. Technical Capacity

The following steps will be taken to enhance the organization's technical capacity to equip staff with the skills and knowledge needed to make SERAA a gender sensitive organization:

- Gender awareness training for staff will be undertaken, with emphasis on building sensitivity to women's needs and issues and develop abilities to address women's special needs.
- Staff participation in gender training will be given positive priority and all projects, departments and sections should have annual training targets for improving gender sensitivity and building competence in gender analysis:
- Provision of gender training is a part of SERAA commitment and its relevance and use must be made clear in terms of both staff performance criteria as well as program enhancement criteria:
- Wherever possible, gender training should be integrated and incorporated into other training (project specific) or monitoring and evaluation training and should be taken into account in the planning phase of projects so that it is clearly stated in the project "Logical Framework"
- Ensure follow-up training and refreshers training on gender sensitivity and gender analysis"
- Design training which would ensure the maximum direct application of the tools learned (e.g. bring draft project designs for gender analysis and revision or conduct training in conjunction with a project needs assessment)
- Special initiatives will be taken to develop and foster growth of women staff, including provision of when necessary, counseling of female staff members facing abuse/violence at home as well as confidential of female staff facing abuse/sexual infringement at the workplace.

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- Competencies will be built on gender analysis and conceptual clarity on equality issues will be promoted:
- Special focus on violence against women will be built into training.
- Special emphasis will be placed on capacity building of gender points gender committee members:
- Special training on conflict resolution will be provided in order to minimize tensions and resistance in relation to equality issues:
- Skill will be developed to design gender sensitive monitoring indicators during project preparation.
- Management meetings will regularly assess progress in relation to gender equity.

4. PROGRAM MEASURES

4.1. Design Projects

- Identify and address difference between women and men in needs, priorities, access and control while designing projects (e.g. review existing knowledge on gender dynamics).
- Carry out participatory need assessment with both women and men.
- Ensure special focus on needs of girl children and women in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluation in order to ensure equal access and opportunities and reduce discrimination and abuse.
- Ensure at least one member of project design team has gender analysis skills.
- Assess how interventions will impact on women's control over resources.
- Assess whether the project will address women's practical needs or strategic interests or both.
- Analysis and clearly state various assumptions made regarding gender.

Planning tools.

- Include gender equity in SERAA programming principals.
- Incorporate gender questions and perspectives into all projects design documents and tools, including project planning guidelines.

Goal/Objectives

- Programs and projects should seek to contribute towards the empowerment of the disadvantaged people, especially women.
- Projects goals should seek to promote gender equity through gender redistribution. Therefore special measures may be taken for women to compensate for past inequalities and discrimination.
- Goal and objectives should make explicit reference to gender wherever appropriate, and explicitly address women and men's interest and concerns.
- Goals/objective should seek to challenge those gender stereotypes that impede the achievement of equality between women and men.


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4.2 Implementation

- Ensure that explicit strategies are articulated to address the gender issues identified in the design phase.
- Ensure that implementation strategies are revised according to information collected periodically on gender related impact and also according to new information gained through research on women's condition and position.

Promotion of equal participation of women in all activities

- Implementation strategies should take into account existing gender relations which are unequal and attempt to redress the inequalities.
- Special emphasis should be given to create women's access to information as it promotes participation, facilitation innovation in decision making and contributes to empowerment.

4.3 Networking/ Advocacy

- Establish and promote issue based networks with other NGOs including international NGOs women's organizations, human rights organizations, education institutions etc.
- In line with program/project objective, undertake policy advocacy on gender issues.
- Promote inter-organization coordination and cooperation with Government and NGOs on various gender issues.

4.4 Sensitization

- Review and revise on going projects as necessary, in the light of the gender policy guidelines.
- Involve women and men participations of projects and program monitoring and evaluation.
- Ensure that monitoring tools and processes are made gender sensitive.
- Ensure that all projects and programs analyses direct and indirect impact on women and men.
- Ensure that indicator selected are gender sensitivity i.e. are relevant to measuring the participation, results and changes for both women and men.


5. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE POLICY

Implementation

Responsibilities

The responsibility for the successful implementation of the policy rests with each of SERAA sections and programs and all the staff of SERAA.

In order to ensure that gender equality is a priority within SERAA solid and tangible support is required from top-level management. Management at all levels within SERAA are expected to develop strategies for providing leadership, setting standards, demanding accountability and rewarding efforts.


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The following decision-making and management bodies will have to play an active role in steering the process:

Special Structures

While the responsibility for programming equality is shared throughout the organization there is continued need for specialist resources and organizational structures to facilitate the work. These include the following.

The Gender Committee reporting to the Executive Director.

A Gender Section in the Organization based Gender Advisor
Field Office based Gender Focal Points.

A program Gender Adviser with in the Institutional Learning Team.

Gender Program Working Group

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