

## UMN Gender Policy August 2012

### 1.0 Rationale

#### 1.1 Nepal Context

In Nepal there is abundant evidence of gender inequality and inequity. This situation, given the Biblical mandate that women and men are created equally in God's image, is the prime rationale for this gender policy, since the prevailing inequality between men/boys and women/girls is clearly not God's purpose.

UNDP's MDG needs assessment (2005) states that: *"Though the country's Gender Development Index is slowly inching towards equality, geographical differences are striking. Women and other socially excluded groups living in the rural areas comparatively suffer the most, with those living in the mountains being the worst off."*

To address these inequalities, the Government of Nepal has committed to action through its laws, and the key international instruments that it has signed up to. These **international instruments** include:

**(a) Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)**, including:

- "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They ... should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood"
- "Everyone is entitled to the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."

**(b) The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)** was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 and came into force in 1981. This convention defines discrimination against women as: 'Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

**(c) The Millenium Declaration (2000)**: MDG 3 is to "Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women".

**(d) The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (2002)**, integrating gender perspective into legislation, policy, programs and projects.

**(e) The SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for prostitution (2002)**

**(f) The Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs for 2011-20 (2011)**: this states that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (eg equal access to education, health-care, economic opportunities and decision taking at all levels) are central to achieving better development outcomes

At a **national level**, the Interim Constitution of Nepal enshrines the principles of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, and the Constituent Assembly has pledged to improve the lives of women and marginalized communities. Various rights of women have been recognized, including health and reproductive rights, and 33% representation in the Constituent Assembly. Other specific action taken by the GoN to promote gender equality includes:

1. The Gender Equality Act of 2006;
2. The Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment) Act of 2008;
3. The Civil Service Act: includes special provisions for women's inclusion at the policy making level;
4. The National Women Commission Act (2007) which has established a National Women Commission with recommendatory and investigatory powers.

However, as confirmed by the 2012 World Bank Development Report on Gender much remains to be done. Stereotyped roles, trafficking, gaps in education, health, economic opportunities, disability, violence, social status and other issues continue to make life difficult for many women and girls. The report argues that "closing... persistent gender gaps matters. It matters because gender equality is a core development objective in its own right. But it is also smart economics. Greater gender equality can enhance productivity, improve development outcomes for the next generation, and make institutions more representative". Building on a growing body of knowledge on the economics of gender equality and development, the report identifies four priorities for public action:

1. Reducing excess female mortality and closing education gaps where they remain
2. Improving access to economic opportunities for women
3. Increasing women's voice and agency in the household and in society
4. Limiting the reproduction of gender inequality across generations.

UMN gives broad support to the efforts of the GoN in addressing gender inequalities.

### **1.2 UMN Context**

UMN's vision is 'Fullness of life for all in a transformed Nepali society'. "All" means that women/girls should enjoy the same "fullness of life" as men/boys.

The UMN mission indicates that "...we will serve the people of Nepal, particularly those who live in poverty: to pursue peace and justice for all; to address the root causes of poverty...". It has been clearly shown that low status of women/girls is a root cause of poverty which is why (for example) it is included as a specific goal in the MDGs.

The UMN "Fullness of Life" model reflects many aspects of life that can only be fulfilled for women and girls if gender issues are addressed. These include dignity and respect; well-being and security; justice and equity; peace and reconciliation; and hope and freedom.

UMNs values of special concern for the poor and marginalized, and equity and social justice clearly indicate the need to work on issues of injustice and discrimination on the basis of gender.

The UMN strategic plan (2010-1015) has also given high importance to gender by identifying it as a crosscutting issue which affects and impacts all UMN's work.

Therefore, UMN has based this Gender Policy on Biblical perspectives; international instruments; the interim constitution and laws of Nepal; and the vision, values and strategy of UMN.

### **2.0 Related References**

- UMN Strategic Plan 2010-15
- UMN People Management Framework
- Other policies of UMN

### **3.0 Principles**

- 3.1 Each man and woman is created in the image of God as equals, and therefore should have an equal opportunity to realize his or her potential; to enjoy his or her rights; to equally enjoy the fruits of God's creation; and to share an equal responsibility for the stewardship of God's creation;
- 3.2 All people have different life experiences and use different decision-making practices. Women and men often view life in different ways therefore it is important that voices of both men and women are heard;
- 3.3 Differential impact of decisions and interventions on men and women must be analysed, understood and acted upon (Gender and "do no harm" analysis" can be used as tools);
- 3.4 To be effective, this gender policy, including the definitions of terms used, must be understood by all staff, to the degree appropriate to the post holder.

### **4.0 Definitions of terms used in this policy**

**Gender** and **Sex**: the term "**sex**" refers to the biological differences between male and female. The term "**Gender**" on the other hand refers to the sociologically and culturally based distinction between male and female i.e. the roles that men and women are given by society and which are not biologically determined. Because "gender" is not biologically given, the attributes of both male and female gender can (and do) change over time and across cultures.

**Gender Analysis**: Also referred to as **gender-sensitive, gender-based or gender-aware analysis**. This is analysis that (a) makes visible any disparities between genders and (b) analyzes these disparities according to established sociological (or other) theories about gender.

**Gender Balance**: Gender balance refers to the ratio of women to men in any given situation. Gender balance is accomplished when there are approximately equal numbers of men and women.

**Gender Based Violence**: any act of violence, or threat of such an act, that happens because of the gender of the victim (most commonly women/girls), and results in physical, sexual or psychological harm.

**Gender Equality**: Equality exists when both men and women are attributed equal social value, equal rights and equal responsibilities, and have equal access to the means (resources, opportunities) to exercise them.

**Gender Equity** is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, measures must be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent men and women from otherwise operating on an equal basis.

**Gender Mainstreaming**: is a process that consists in bringing what can be seen as marginal into the core business of an organization. When mainstreamed, gender is considered in all decisions and all actions that are taken.

**Gender Sensitivity** is the ability to recognize gender issues and especially the ability to recognize different perceptions and interests arising from different gender roles. Gender sensitivity is considered the beginning stage of gender awareness. **Gender awareness** is more analytical, more critical, and more "questioning" of gender disparities.

## **5.0 Policy**

### **5.1 Internal**

UMN commits to be gender sensitive within the organization by:-

- a) Adopting a 'Code of Behavior' for staff and volunteers (See below).
- b) Identifying the barriers that prevent the recruitment and retention of women, and working to remove those barriers where it is feasible to do so, thereby working towards a gender balance at all levels of the organization;
- c) Including the understanding of, and attitude toward, "gender" issues in the staff recruitment process and Annual Performance Review, appropriate to the level of the post
- d) Encouraging appropriate staff to support/attend gender awareness programs which inform about gender related issues.
- e) Providing support to improve and sustain gender mainstreaming in UMN operations.
- f) Raising awareness of UMN staff of CEDAW, the Civil Code, and other gender related regulations and government policies of Nepal, appropriate to level of post
- g) Encouraging concerns to be shared with the Human Resource and Support Services Director (for internal) and the Technical Director (for programmatic/external).

#### **Code of Behavior - for all UMN staff and volunteers**

##### **DO:**

1. Be familiar with and follow the UMN Gender Policy;
2. Promote gender equity and equality within both the workplace and community;
3. Facilitate the meaningful participation of women, as well as men, in project design and implementation;
4. Take responsibility for own behavior towards others, including gender issues;
5. Report any concerns about the behavior of staff or volunteers to the appropriate authority;
6. Follow all guidelines in the People Management Framework regarding the creation of a conducive working environment

##### **DO NOT:**

1. Use inappropriate physical contact;
2. Use inappropriate conversation or activities in the workplace or community, even in fun;
3. Take inappropriate images (photos, video, etc.)
4. Indulge in any other behavior that is degrading, demeaning, discriminatory (direct or indirect) or detrimental to others, or in any way contrary to the principles outlined in this policy.

### **5.2 External**

UMN commits to be gender sensitive in its programmes by:

- a) Ensuring data for programmes is routinely disaggregated by sex;
- b) Practising gender analysis in planning, programming, implementing and monitoring and evaluating, and using appropriate tools for this purpose - this includes reviewing current programmes with a "gender lens" as well as new programmes;
- c) Using the results of the gender analysis to address gender inequalities in UMN programmes;
- d) Developing the capacity of partner organizations to address gender issues in their plans, policies and programs, and including gender issues in partner evaluations;
- e) Designing programs with partners to address and prevent Gender Based Violence;
- f) Giving priority to the promotion of gender equality with innovative learning and advocacy methods; working with both women/girls and men/boys for this purpose
- g) Promoting equitable participation of women and men in programmes (identifying and addressing barriers to participation) and equitable access to project benefits;

- h) Ensuring institutional support for gender mainstreaming, capacity development, accountability, advocacy, partnerships, research and resources;
- i) Raising awareness of gender inequality and gender-based violence in all UMN's thematic areas and approaches;
- j) Considering any additional burden to women created by development work and adapting interventions accordingly;
- k) Encouraging partner staff to observe CEDAW, Civil Code, and other gender related acts, regulations and government policies of Nepal;
- l) Joining and participating in networks and forums that promote gender equality.

## 6.0 Implementation

UMN will implement this policy by making it explicit to all staff and any other relevant parties, so that it can be embedded in both internal and external approaches to our work. In this context UMN continues to be in a position to work towards gender equality through its activities, and also to model good practice through its own procedures. The policy will be implemented by taking it as an integral part of the work orientation and working methodology of staff, and as an integral part of all planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating of UMN activities.

The overall monitoring of the implementation of the gender policy will be the responsibility of the PEC who will consider an annual report on implementation from the Human Resource and Support Services Director (HRSSD) for internal implementation, and from the Technical Director for external implementation.

*Externally (i.e within our programmes (see 5.2 above), the Technical Director, along with the Clusters Director and all technical and cluster based programme staff, will be responsible to ensure that this policy is implemented. This will be achieved through processes such as training programmes, Technical Forum, including gender issues routinely in proposals and reports, and adoption or development of appropriate tools.*

Reporting and investigation of any breach of the gender policy will follow the guidelines in the People Management Framework.

### UMN Partners

- Where a staff/volunteer of a UMN partner organization is suspected of being involved in sexual abuse or harassment, UMN will strongly advise the organization to deal with the issue and will offer advice and expertise as required
- If a staff/volunteer of a UMN partner organization is suspected of abuse but is unwilling to address the matter, UMN may take further measures e.g. end the partnership; report the matter to the appropriate authorities; etc.

## 7.0 Change History

Date	Status/Modification	Approved by
22.8.12	Gender policy approved	Leadership Team