

# [Organization Name]

## Gender Policy

# [Organization Logo]

*Note: This is an example of a stand-alone gender policy. It is not necessary for every organization to have a separate policy to promote gender mainstreaming. Ideally, gender inclusion would be fully integrated into all other policies, such as the financial policy, staff rules, and guidelines for monitoring and evaluation. Such integration would make a stand-alone policy unnecessary. Similarly, gender can be one component of a more general inclusivity plan than includes other characteristics of marginalized groups such as ethnicity and disability. However, a gender policy is a good way to begin the process of intentionally acting to improve how well an organization responds to the specific needs of staff, beneficiaries and partners of all genders. This policy can be a stepping stone to a transformative approach to gender throughout all aspects of an organization's work.*

Notes are in brown.

Sample text to be adjusted for the specific organization is in green.

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## CHAPTER 1 – General Principles

### 1A. Introduction

This document is the Gender Policy for [Organization Name].

[ORGANIZATION NAME] acknowledges that while its fundamental mission is to promote education to all girls, thus including gender equality in our founding tenets, we also have the responsibility to ensure that that our own staff and members embody this principle in their daily practices. [Note: personalize to reference the specific organization’s mission.] Therefore, we are adopting this policy to ensure that all persons representing [Organization Name] are educated about what substantive equality means, how to promote gender equality in daily life, and how to break the cycle of stereotypes, routines, and conduct that impedes the ability of women and girls to meet their full potential. This policy addresses violence in the home and workplace and how [ORGANIZATION NAME] can create a healthy and safe work environment for all staff. This policy will also explain the steps which the organization will take to ensure its role as a women-led NGO according to the definitions of UN Women. [It can improve the quality of an organization’s work to be self-led. Thus, an organization promoting LGBTIQ rights should have a director and majority of management/board/decision-makers who identify as LGBTIQ. Grants to organizations sometimes require that the recipients be self-led.]

### 1B. Principles, Values & Beliefs

[ORGANIZATION NAME]'s core values include adopting a human rights approach and promoting equality and fairness. [List any policies that relate to this here.] [ORGANIZATION NAME]'s Code of Conduct, Anti-Corruption Policy and Child Protection Policy require all staff and board members to act in accordance with national laws and human rights laws, in particular in relation to women, LGBTIQ persons, and children, as stipulated in the Cambodian Constitution and the human rights documents of the United Nations. The Code of Conduct bans any act of harassment or discrimination. [ORGANIZATION NAME]'s Internal Regulations consider rape and sexual harassment to be serious misconduct for which employment contracts will immediately terminated. Moreover, [ORGANIZATION NAME] is committed to the enforcement of Neary Rattanak (the Cambodian national gender policy), the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims, The National Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence against Children, and the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women.

It is understood that women and LGBTIQ individuals are at a disadvantage in Cambodia in terms of attaining leadership roles in their organizations, in salary, and in working conditions. [ORGANIZATION NAME] will adopt special measures to promote women’s and LGBTIQ persons’ role in the organization as a whole and to offset historic discrimination.

[ORGANIZATION NAME] recognizes that men are valued partners in the effort to achieve gender equality. [ORGANIZATION NAME] will include men and boys in its membership and activities to build awareness and capacity of men. We support programs to educate men and boys about gender equality, harassment and violence because we believe in the importance of prevention before

problems occur as a positive approach to gender equality in addition to enforcing penalties to provide accountability and respond to issues that have already occurred.

## 1C. Scope

In accordance with [ORGANIZATION NAME]'s internal regulations, this gender policy will be followed by all staff, volunteers, contractors, and board members. It is the responsibility of the executive director and the board to ensure its effectiveness.

While [ORGANIZATION NAME]'s members and community partners are not bound by this policy, members are encouraged to adopt their own gender policies if they have not already done so.

## 1D. Definitions

**Gender:** According to the UN, “gender” refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context and time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age.

**Gender mainstreaming:** A strategy to accelerate progress on women’s and girls’ rights and equality in relation to men and boys. This strategy assesses the implications of plans on different genders and ensures that the concerns and experiences of women, men, and non-binary persons are an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs so that persons of all genders benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.<sup>1</sup>

**LGBTIQ:** Umbrella term used to denote individuals from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer/Questioning Community.<sup>2</sup>

**Non-binary:** The gender binary system is the classification of all persons as either female or male. Non-binary persons do not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. They may identify with some female characteristics and some male characteristics; or they may be gender-fluid, meaning that they have a gender identity that shifts from female to male at different times; or they identify as neither female nor male.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1493>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hrc.org/resources/transgender-and-non-binary-faq>  
[https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/Born\\_Free\\_and\\_Equal\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/Born_Free_and_Equal_WEB.pdf).

**Sex:** Sex refers to biological differences between males and females, such as the genitalia and genetic differences.

**Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC):** A term used to describe a wide range of gender-related descriptions and ways in which individuals identify themselves in the gender context.<sup>4</sup> This is the term used by the Royal Government of Cambodia for the school curriculum covering gender.

**Discrimination against women:** CEDAW Article 1 states that “discrimination against women’ shall mean 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.” Steps taken to address historic discrimination, such as quotas to ensure the participation of women, are not discrimination.

**Substantive equality** – the ability of all persons regardless of gender or sex to actually realize their human rights. This goes beyond equal rights on paper or by policy to actual equal status in daily life.

**Violence against women:**

Violence that is directed against a woman/girl because she is a woman/girl or that affects women and girls disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, mental and/or financial harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. Violence against women is a form of discrimination and is a human rights violation.

**Gender-based violence:**

Violence that is directed against any person because of that person's sex, gender identity or sexual orientation or affects a group disproportionately based on their gender identity. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, mental, and/or financial harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. Gender-based violence is a form of discrimination and is a human rights violation.

**Domestic violence:** In addition to any violence included in the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims (2005), [ORGANIZATION NAME] will consider domestic violence to include any kind of physical, mental, emotional, financial or sexual harm experienced by one person as a result of acts by someone related to the victim by blood, marriage, adoption or a past or present romantic relationship (regardless of whether there is also a sexual relationship) or who lives within the same building or household. Domestic violence is a form of gender-based violence and is a violation of human rights, including the right to life, right to security of person, right to education, right to employment, right to food and right of freedom of association and expression. Domestic violence often targets children, women, gay and transgender persons, persons with disabilities, and domestic workers.

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<sup>4</sup> CCHR has published a thorough introduction to SOGIE at:  
<https://cchrcambodia.org/admin/media/report/report/english/SOGIESC-Module-Participant-en-final.pdf>

**Intimate Partner Violence (IPV):** any physical, sexual, emotional, or economic violence committed by a person against their partner in a past or present romantic or marital relationship (regardless of whether there is also a sexual relationship).

**Sexual Assault:** Sexual assault is any type of sexual contact or related behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient. It is not consent if the recipient of the contact or behavior is threatened by or fears retaliation by the person initiating or demanding sexual contact. Most sexual assault is also a criminal act.

Sexual assault can include:

- Rape, which is any penetration of a person's body without consent (e.g. vaginal, oral or anal), using any part of the body (such as genitals or fingers) or any object.
- Any unwanted sexual touching, such as stroking, kissing, or groping.
- Any unwanted exposure of genitals or simulated sex acts
- Any sexual behavior in which the recipient is incapable of giving consent because they are underage, unconscious, drunk or under the influence of drugs or medication.
- Unwanted sexual requests, messages or gestures, including electronically such as via SMS or social media
- Being made to view pornography or other sexual images against one's will. This includes leaving sexual images or words on another's computer or workstation
- Unwanted taking and/or sharing of nude or intimate photographs or videos, e.g. upskirting.
- Unwanted taking of sexually suggestive images of others.
- Cat-calling or whistling at others.

Sexual assault is never the fault of the victim, no matter what they were wearing, how they were behaving, how much they had to drink or their sexual history. Victims of sexual assault may not always physically struggle or verbally express disapproval (e.g. by screaming or saying, "No") due to shock, fear, or financial and/or emotional dependence on the attacker. Even if no extra force is used, or someone submits to an attack or a threat, there may not be consent. It is still sexual assault.

**Sexual Harassment:** Includes all sexual assault as well as any unwelcome remarks, non-verbal behavior or other conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel uncomfortable, offended, humiliated and/or intimidated. It includes situations which create an environment which is hostile, intimidating or humiliating for the recipient. Sexual harassment can occur in any area of public and private life, including schools and offices. Any person can perpetrate sexual harassment against any other person, although the main perpetrators are men, and the main recipients of harassment are girls and women. Persons in positions of authority can commit harassment, but so can peers and subordinates. Sexual harassment is prohibited in the Labor Code for workplaces covered by that law.

## CHAPTER 2 – Active promotion of women in the workplace

### 2A. Recruitment of new staff and board members

[ORGANIZATION NAME] is a women-led organization, meaning that more than 50% of staff are female and more than 50% of managerial and leadership positions must be held by women. [Each organization should determine the desired percentages. Usually, it will range from 40 to 60% women and may also include a separate numerical goal for LGBTIQ. An organization aimed at intersectional target groups, such as lesbians, may further require that that specific target group be well-represented within the organization's staff and leadership.]

There are reserved spots for [target group] in the positions of executive director, deputy director, chairperson and vice-chairperson. Men currently holding these positions at the time of adoption of this policy will be permitted to hold their position until the next election in the case of board members.

Criteria and qualifications for positions will be reviewed to ensure that women are not disqualified because they did not have the same opportunity as men to obtain the qualifications. Alternative types of experience will be considered to permit as many women as possible to apply for all contracts and positions with [ORGANIZATION NAME].

There will be no penalty for time spent in child-rearing and maternity leave when calculating salary and benefits. For example, number of years of work experience will include work done without pay, work done within one's home, and domestic work.

The hiring committee must be a majority female (more than 50%) each time recruitment is conducted.

Studies show that men are more likely to apply for any position regardless of their qualifications, but women tend to apply only to positions that they are more than qualified to do. Therefore, [ORGANIZATION NAME] will actively seek out female candidates and encourage them to apply. [ORGANIZATION NAME] will make every effort to ensure that the application pool is at least 60% LGBTIQ and/or female before closing any position to new applications.

#### Risk Management in the Recruitment Process

[ORGANIZATION NAME] will take steps to protect staff and partners by ensuring that potential new staff do not have a history of violence against women or of promoting ideas contrary to gender equality. Each new applicant for volunteer and/or staff positions must provide [ORGANIZATION NAME] with a detailed Curriculum Vitae as well as the names and contact details of two referees who can verify their experience and knowledge as well as their work ethic and character. Also required is a letter detailing what they can offer [ORGANIZATION NAME], as well as what they wish to personally gain from their association with [ORGANIZATION NAME]. Interviews will be conducted in accordance with [ORGANIZATION NAME]'s staff policy and recruitment policy. In addition, for any position which requires working directly with children, the recruitment interview shall include

behavioral-based questions. Questions can include asking applicants about their attitude towards children, or protection of children.

- A verbal referee check and viewing any reference documents must be confirmed and recorded.
- All applicants will be asked to provide verification that they have no criminal convictions for abuse of children or gender-based violence that would affect the safety of other staff or participants in [ORGANIZATION NAME]'s activities. Acceptable forms of verification are a criminal record check, statutory declaration, or certified affidavit.
- Staff and volunteers must abide by the [ORGANIZATION NAME]'s Code of Conduct as a condition of their employment/participation with [ORGANIZATION NAME].
- Each successful candidate who works with [ORGANIZATION NAME] including volunteers will be required to sign a statement agreeing to abide by the Gender Policy. The statement will state that they received a copy of the full gender policy, **Child Protection Policy**, **staff policy** and **Anti-Corruption Policy** and that they are clearly understood. Contracts will also include consequences for breaches of the gender policy including dismissal.

## 2B. Orientation

All new staff, regardless of role and/or responsibility in [ORGANIZATION NAME] will undertake an orientation which will cover the following information:

- Roles and responsibilities of the specific position
- Structure of [ORGANIZATION NAME]
- Constitution
- Staff Policy
- Anti-Corruption Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- The Gender Policy and an overview of gender and the harm caused by gender stereotypes
- Consequences of breaches of the Gender Policy and/or Child Protection Policy
- An overview of women's rights LGBTIQ rights and how they apply in the [ORGANIZATION NAME] work environment

## 2C. Staff Training

When the Gender Policy is initially introduced a general staff meeting will be conducted to discuss and explain all requirements within the policy. For those external organisations who work on a regular basis with [ORGANIZATION NAME], a copy of the policy will be forwarded to them for their reference.

To ensure that the importance of the Gender Policy is prevalent in the minds of the staff and members, [ORGANIZATION NAME] will conduct an annual training session on gender equality in the workplace as a matter of priority. The training will be conducted prior to the review date of this policy. This training session will be interactive whereby staff and stakeholders will discuss any incidents that have been reported over the previous year, without any identification of victims,

participate in brainstorming activities to develop contingencies to identify and mitigate risks and make recommendations to update the policy.

Moreover, all staff will be required to participate in refresher workshops on women's rights and gender and sexual harassment at least once per year.

During the annual **staff retreat / annual meeting**, one session will be set aside for reflection on gender mainstreaming and inclusion.

## 2D. Code of Conduct for promoting gender equality

This Code of Conduct addresses the minimum appropriate levels of behavior, practice and conduct required from **[ORGANIZATION NAME]** staff, volunteers, contractors and board members. Everyone involved in our programs and activities should accept the roles and responsibilities that they undertake as we commit ourselves to promoting the full participation of women and girls and LGBTIQ persons and maintaining a healthy and safe environment for all genders.

This Code should be used in line with the position responsibilities outlined for each position within **[ORGANIZATION NAME]**. All **[ORGANIZATION NAME]** staff, volunteers, contractors and board members should ensure that women, girls, and LGBTIQ persons benefit significantly from **[ORGANIZATION NAME]** programs by promoting a positive, healthy and participatory approach in our work. Participants should always remember that they are role models for the beneficiaries they meet, and their behavior will reflect on **[ORGANIZATION NAME]**'s reputation and image.

**Positive Behaviors:** Everyone involved in **[ORGANIZATION NAME]** activities should:

- treat all staff, members, volunteers, activity participants, partners and others, including domestic workers, with respect
- comply with all relevant legislation, including those on domestic violence and trafficking, in their personal lives, including with respect to domestic workers.
- be aware of what constitutes abusive behavior or indications of abuse
- listen carefully to those who choose to disclose that they have experienced violence, and let them know that they are not at fault
- offer referrals and other resources to help victims of any kind of gender-based violence
- report concerns or allegations of gender-based violence and/or abuse in accordance with appropriate procedures (listed in Chapter 5 below)
- immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence, which occurs during their association with **[ORGANIZATION NAME]** that relate to discrimination and/or domestic violence.
- Deliberately engage women, girls, and LGBTIQ persons in discussion and decision-making. This can be done by specifically inviting women/LGBTIQ to events, asking them to give presentations, encouraging them to apply for consultancy opportunities, and calling on them to ask questions during meetings, and nominating women/LGBTIQ for leadership roles.

**Negative Behaviors:** Everyone involved in **[ORGANIZATION NAME]** activities should:

- avoid words and actions that give preference to men. For example, a female supervisor might make only positive comments on a male worker's presentation while being overly critical of a female worker's presentation.
- avoid actions or behavior that could be perceived by others as sexual assault or harassment
- not use language or behavior towards others that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
- not use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media to harass, spy on, or otherwise discriminate against others.
- never to belittle or harass others because of their gender or gender identity.
- use common sense and avoid actions or behaviors that could be construed as exploitation and abuse of women.
- not directly confront someone suspected to be a victim of home or workplace violence; respect their privacy and instead address specific indicators such as lateness and let them know that it is safe to bring any issues they have to a supervisor or colleague.
- not judge or blame survivors of abuse or tell them what to do.

## 2E. Female and LGBTIQ-friendly work environment

[ORGANIZATION NAME] will encourage women's full participation in its activities and operations by creating a female-friendly work environment and by encouraging its partners and members to do the same. [ORGANIZATION NAME] will similarly promote inclusion of LGBTIQ persons.

**Benefits:** As part of this policy [ORGANIZATION NAME] will provide the following benefits to staff:

- Paid parental leave of equal length for all parents, including those who are newly adoptive parents
- Additional medical leave to address complications of pregnancy and recovery from childbirth
- Flexible hours to allow staff to work around children's school hours and vacations, other family needs, or staff's own vocational training and university studies.
- Caregiving assistance for all staff to allow them to travel to the field, such as by supporting a caregiver to travel with them and their children.
- Additional leave with pay for non-perpetrators to address GBV and domestic violence. This can include time to travel to court, attend counseling, and meet with lawyers.
- Pay scale that adjusts for the increased demands on women to bear and care for children by not paying less money to any person (who is most likely to be female) who took a break from work to raise children.
- Allowing employees extra time with pay to address personal hygiene, with the understanding that female and transgender employees need extra time to use toilets and deal with menstruation and may have to wait for the facilities or travel farther to reach a restroom.

**Dress codes:** It is recognized that dress codes are disproportionately enforced against women, girls, LGTIQ, and ethnic and religious minorities. The use of dress codes has a practical effect of controlling these groups and preventing their full participation in education, workplaces, and political life. Compliance with dress codes also has a disproportionate cost to girls and women in

terms of time spent preparing for school and work, in money spent on clothing, makeup and haircare, and in injuries caused by footwear such as high-heeled shoes. No dress code other than to wear clothes, including a top and bottom, shall be applied. Workers will not be sent home for dressing “too sexily.” Makeup will not be required or banned nor will certain hairstyles be required or banned.

**Children:** Additionally, the children of staff and members are welcome to accompany their family to the [ORGANIZATION NAME] office and to all [ORGANIZATION NAME] events and meetings. If an event is out-of-town, funding should be sought to ensure that primary caregivers of child or elderly family members may still attend. Separate accommodation, transportation and food allowances will not be provided to additional family members in other situations. However, staff can arrange to bring their family if they pay for any difference in cost. [Every organization will have different degrees of flexibility in their budgets to ensure greater participation by primary caregivers. Other strategies, such as holding events closer to participants home communities or holding virtual events, may be used to promote inclusion in attendance.]

## CHAPTER 3 – Ensuring Gender inclusive Programming

### 3A. Principles

All aspects of [Organization Name]’s programming from design to implementation and monitoring and evaluation, should incorporate steps to ensure that the needs of participants and target groups of all genders are met.

### 3B. Program design

Every year, [Organization Name] will conduct a needs assessment of its target community to assess gaps in services, concerns of the targeted community, and suggestions for future programming to respond to those gaps and concerns. Efforts must be made to survey women/girls and LGBTIQ persons. Gender-disaggregated data will be included in the assessment report to ensure that needs of all genders are met.

Grant proposals will be written to include gender-specific results from the needs assessment and evaluation reports of past similar projects. Goals and targets will include gender-inclusive participation and results.

### 3C Implementation

In implementing programs and projects, procurement and selection of vendors will take into account whether a company promotes gender equality, and whether it is owned and/or managed by women or LGBTIQ persons.

Participation of all genders will be actively encouraged throughout the project, and records of attendance will be reviewed to ensure that the gender breakdown accurately reflects that of the community or target group. If it does not, special efforts including additional outreach to target groups will be made to improve the participation rate before the end of the project.

### 3D Monitoring and Evaluation

Gender-disaggregated data is crucial for monitoring and evaluation of every project. Data collection will go beyond collection of statistics of attendance at events and workshops. For example, responses to questions such as how useful the topics covered were, and how much participants learned should also be gender-disaggregated to ensure not only that all genders were included in programming, but that they received similar benefits from that participation.

## CHAPTER 4 – Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment

### 4A. Principles

Sexual assault and sexual harassment are defined in Chapter 1 above. All sexual assault and sexual harassment is a violation of CEDAW and a violation of the recipient's basic human rights.

[ORGANIZATION NAME] recognizes that sexual harassment is pervasive in society and poses a major obstacle to the achievement of gender equality in Cambodia. Harassment causes girls and LGBTIQ youth to perform worse in school, drop out of school early, or pursue a change in fields of study or career in the hope of avoiding further harassment.

Street harassment makes women, girls, and LGBTIQ persons feel unsafe and avoid activities that require them to travel. In rural areas, this even includes traveling to school, to collect water, or even use toilet facilities.

Harassment in the workplace causes emotional harm to the immediate victim and to others who work in the same location. Harassment costs both employers and victims to lose money and productivity and morale.

[ORGANIZATION NAME] is committed to ending sexual harassment in society in general, and is beginning within its own staff and board with this sexual harassment policy. Sexual harassment additionally grounds for dismissal and/or termination of contracts under the Staff Policy and

**Anti-Abuse Policy.** This policy expands upon those policies. [Organizations should review and revise all other policies to ensure consistency with this gender policy.]

## 4B. How to recognize harassment:

Harassment may take many forms. It can be conducted through words, gestures, touching, or leaving pictures where the recipient will see them. Harassers might deny their behavior or claim that others are “being too sensitive.” The key way to recognize harassment is that the recipient of the act or behavior is uncomfortable or experiences harm. The intent of the harasser is not a defining factor. All staff and partners must learn to recognize what behavior can cause harm, then avoid conducting that behavior.

All forms of harassment are serious because any harassment may have harmful effects on the survivor as well as a negative impact on other staff and the organization as a whole.

[ORGANIZATION NAME] will have zero tolerance for any behavior included in the definitions of sexual assault and sexual harassment in Chapter 1 whether it occurs at the workplace or elsewhere.

Sexual harassment can be committed by men or women. Harassment can be unintentional. Harassment can also take the form of being critical by reinforcing gender stereotypes. For example, a supervisor might comment that a woman’s clothing doesn’t meet societal standards of modesty. Such behavior would be harassment.

## CHAPTER 5 – Domestic and Family Violence

### 5A. Principles

Domestic violence in Cambodia often takes the form of older family members against younger ones, or by an intimate partner. Any person could be a survivor of domestic violence. According to a 2019 study by Rainbow Community Kampuchea (RoCK), 81% of LGBT youth under age 35 in Cambodia had experienced some form of violence (emotional, economic, sexual such as forced marriage, or physical) from their own family. According to a 2015 national survey, up to 8-11% of ever-partnered Cambodian women from age 15-49 have experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner in the last 12 months. Additionally, 3% of all women experienced such violence by a non-partner in the last 12 months. Surveys in Australia have shown that 20% of survivors of intimate partner violence see an effect at work of this violence.

[ORGANIZATION NAME] therefore recognizes that domestic violence is very likely to affect its staff either directly or indirectly, and that violence will influence the workspace. It is necessary, therefore, to take steps to make all staff aware of their rights, to make the office a safe space to report violence and seek assistance, and to provide assistance to help employees escape violence.

One of the key components of domestic violence is controlling behavior such as preventing victims from working outside the home and limiting their access to money and friends. The loss of employment may further hinder a person's independence and ability to plan to leave an abusive situation. [ORGANIZATION NAME] will adhere to the principle of not causing a double-victimization of staff experiencing violence by blaming them for the consequences of domestic violence and terminating their employment because of that abuse. A person will not be considered to be a perpetrator of violence against children solely because they are being abused and also have children.

It is understood that survivors of violence may miss time from work, endure stress that makes them perform below expectations at work, and that their abusers may visit the workplace or otherwise cause disruptions in the office. It is particularly important not to blame the employee for these negative effects or to impose disciplinary procedures or dismissal as a result of these effects, because to do so is to make the person a victim twice over. This causes additional financial and emotional stress for a survivor of violence and weakens their support system and independence. The abuser's control over the victim is therefore strengthened, reducing the opportunity for the survivor to escape the situation.

It may be difficult for others to understand why a person would remain in a violent home situation; yet, psychological research shows that it is a common practice to do so, with both strong biological and social pressures influencing the survivor's actions. Statistics show that it is extremely difficult for a person to leave an abusive situation, and the abused person is at increased risk of heightened abuse and death when they do attempt to leave. It is important to provide as healthy and safe a workspace as possible in order to minimize these risks.

All forms of domestic violence are serious because domestic abuse follows a cycle, where violence appears to stop, but in fact is gradually escalating. When domestic violence is not addressed, it can place the recipient of the violence at greater risk of future harm. All domestic violence can have harmful effects on the survivor as well as a negative impact on other staff and the organization as a whole.

## **5B. How to recognize domestic violence:**

Domestic violence can affect an employee's work performance through behavior such as the following:

- increased lateness or absenteeism without explanation. Abusers may sabotage their partners' ability to get to work on time, or may force them to leave work early
- needing time off beyond usual life commitments.
- being obsessed with time or needing to always leave on time.
- partner visiting at work in inappropriate ways. Domestic violence is about power and control, and abusive partners may constantly monitor their partners by calling to check on them or by showing up at the workplace unexpectedly.
- receiving repeated upsetting phone calls/emails/texts.
- apologizing for a partner or family member's behavior
- partner seems controlling over work schedule – i.e. dropping off and picking up from work

- employee staying at work for times beyond what is reasonable
- changes in quality of work performance
- appearing withdrawn, sad, or angry. Trauma, depression, and PTSD – all common among survivors – can result in survivors displaying emotions that appear to be inappropriate or extreme.
- not participating in meetings, work lunches and parties or other activities. Individuals experiencing abuse may withdraw from activities and engagement with co-workers that they used to enjoy.
- making last minute cancellations
- wearing clothing in a way that tries to cover up bruises
- changes in health, such as increased headaches, digestive problems or gynecological issues
- inability to concentrate. Trauma and fear can significantly impact brain function triggering a flight or fight response which can diminish cognitive functioning
- appearing sleep-deprived.

## Chapter 6 – Reporting and Response

### 6A. Complaints and Investigations

[Note: Some organizations may already have a separate harassment and abuse policy and/or a child protection policy with a detailed complaints mechanism. If so, then this section should be adjusted to reference the existing policy and procedures.]

All staff, volunteers, contractors, and board members of [ORGANIZATION NAME] agree to promptly report violations of this Gender Policy.

For violations of this Gender Policy which involve child abuse, the Child Protection Policy reporting mechanism will be applied first.

For situations involving sexual assault, sexual harassment, and/or domestic violence, the mechanism described in this Chapter will apply first.

- A report of abuse from anyone associated with [ORGANIZATION NAME] will be brought to the attention of the Executive director.
- If the complaint is against the Executive director, then a member of the Board must be notified instead.

If the complaint is verified after the initial investigation and the perpetrator is a staff member, contractor, volunteer, board member, or leader of a member of [ORGANIZATION NAME], then the matter will be referred to the Ethics Committee set up under the Code of Conduct for Ethical Behavior and the Prevention of Corruption.

For any other violations of this policy, the [ORGANIZATION NAME] Anti-Corruption Policy will be applied first. The case will be immediately referred to the Ethics Committee for further action.

Steps in [ORGANIZATION NAME]'s response to complaints of abuse and violence:

**1. Immediate needs of the victim will be addressed first.**

- If the victim is injured and is in need of immediate assistance, any person connected to [ORGANIZATION NAME] who is aware of the situation will call for emergency medical attention and take the victim to the nearest hospital for emergency assessment and treatment.
- With the victim's consent, the case will be then referred to an [ORGANIZATION NAME] member organization providing legal and/or social services to GBV victims. In all cases, the representative of [ORGANIZATION NAME] who is handling the complaint will refer the victim to an agency or person who can advise them of all of their rights, including the right to make a criminal complaint.

**2. Investigation**

- The recipient of the complaint verifies the report and performs a preliminary investigation of the claim. This may involve interviewing the alleged perpetrator, victim and witnesses.
- If the alleged perpetrator is a participant of [ORGANIZATION NAME] activities or a staff member, they will be suspended from active participation in the organisation, even when there is no criminal investigation.
- The investigation will result in a conclusion that a claim is verified or not proven.
- Verified complaints in which the perpetrator is subject to the [ORGANIZATION NAME] Code of Conduct for Ethical Behavior and the Prevention of Corruption will be referred to the Ethics Committee for further action. A more thorough investigation will be conducted to determine whether the alleged perpetrator should be terminated from employment or future participation, or instead be allowed to return to [ORGANIZATION NAME] on the grounds that the claim is unprovable. Even if the claim is unproven, the alleged perpetrator will still be required to attend training on gender-based violence and be referred to counseling and/or anger management. Trainings can be conducted for a large group to protect confidentiality.

**3. Report**

A report will be written detailing the facts of the complaint, including names, dates and times. Each activity in the investigation must also be detailed. For example, if a witness was interviewed, the report will include a summary of the date, time, and location of the interview, the names of the interviewer and interviewee, as well as a summary of the witness's statement. The investigator's conclusion as to whether or not the claim has been verified will be written down as well. The names of the investigator and decision-maker of each step of the process must also be recorded.

## 6B. Follow-up Action

In addition to the written investigation report, there also needs to be a written record of any agreed action or whether no further action is to be taken. If no further action is to be taken, then a detailed reason as to why not needs to be included. The names of the investigator and decision-maker of each step of the process must also be recorded.

[ORGANIZATION NAME] will provide assistance to survivors. This will include benefits mentioned in Chapter 2E such as flexible hours, paid leave for medical care including counseling for mental health consequences of domestic violence, and paid leave for accessing the justice system, such as making police reports and testifying in court.

[ORGANIZATION NAME] will provide referral services to legal aid, medical care, sexual and reproductive health care, social services, vocational services, shelters, and other available services.

If contacted by an abuser or their family or friends, [ORGANIZATION NAME] will not acknowledge a previous complaint of abuse or reveal any information that might put the victim at further risk of harm.

Conversely, if an employee appears to be a perpetrator of violence, [ORGANIZATION NAME] will make any referrals or reports to authorities or service providers that may be necessary to protect the victims from retaliation by the abuser.

## 6C. Confidentiality

The organization should ensure that any records made in relation to a referral should be kept confidentially and in a secure place.

All verbal and/or written information in relation to concerns about sexual harassment, child protection or domestic violence should be shared on a "need to know" basis. However, the sharing of information is vital to prevention of violence and therefore, the issue of confidentiality is secondary to a person's need for protection.

## 6D. Non-Retaliation

No one will be disciplined, have their pay reduced, have their work schedule changed without their consent, or otherwise threatened or punished because they reported an incident of abuse or gender-based violence. Likewise, protection from retaliation is provided to victims of abuse or witnesses who cooperate in an investigation.

Adopted on 25 May 2023s

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[Name of representative]  
[Title]  
[ORGANIZATION NAME]