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CONSCIENCE INTERNATIONAL GENDER POLICY 2009

SAVING HUMANITY FOR THE COMMON GOOD OF MANKIND

Gambia Registered Local Non Government Organization No. 107
Organisation Non-Gouvernementale Gambie enregistree sous le N0.107
CI has observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights
CI a le statut d' observateur aupres de la Commission Africaine des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples

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Shaka Ceesay
Director

INTRODUCTION

This Gender policy is aimed at providing practical guidelines for mainstreaming gender in all the structures and programs of the Conscience International (CI). By mainstreaming we mean taking into account gender dimensions in the organization policies, administrative structures, programmes and operations to ensure that women are adequately represented at all level of decision making. It also provides mechanisms of ensuring that women and men participate both qualitatively and quantitatively in all of CI's areas of operation. In particular the policy should help identify existing gender gaps in CI's programme and management structures and hopefully lead to the closing of those gaps.

At a broader level, the policy guideline suggests steps that other organizations too could take in order to move towards the goal of full integration of gender issues into their operations. They call on organizations to place special efforts on achieving equity within their organizational structures as well as those of their partners. The CI hopes that this policy will be a model and a guide for organizations which have made a strategic decision to mainstream gender into their work, and for those that have the will to do the same but have not had the framework for implementation.

In order to maximize on the use of this policy, it is important for the user to put in place mechanisms that will ensure the policy's implementation. These may include:

- developing indicators to guide the effective monitoring of the implementation of the policy
- the setting of a realistic time frame within which the policy is to be implemented
- creating the position of a gender co-ordinator or team whose primary responsibility will be to oversee the implementation of the policy.

These mechanisms are based on the best practices obtain from various documents that CI has reviewed and also from our own experiences.

PART A delineates principles that CI specifically is working with to mainstream gender in its managerial and administrative structures, while

PART B contains the general principles for mainstreaming gender within program activities.

Preamble

Conscience International (CI) is independent, non-partisan and non-profit NGO committed to the promotion and protection of human rights, and to enhance the awareness of human rights work through linkages with national, sub-regional, regional and international like-minded entities.

CI works to end all forms of discrimination based on race, creed, sex, sexual orientation, class or political opinion.

CI subscribes to all the international declarations covenants for gender equality including CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action.

CI recognizes the existence of embedded gender disparities as a deterrent to the achievement of human rights for all, and especially for women. Therefore, CI will work towards gender equity within the organization by:

1. Mainstreaming gender in the organization's administrative set-up and programmes. Specifically, taking into account gender dimensions in the organization policies, administrative structures, programmes and operations to ensure that women are adequately represented at all level of decision making.
2. Developing, advocating and promoting gender responsiveness among its staff, partners as well as the international constituency and being itself a model of gender responsiveness in all its operations and areas of work.
3. Building the capacity of its staff for gender responsive programming and organizational orientation.
4. Undertaking gender analysis as a pre-requisite in programme identification, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
5. Designing programmes which target both men and women as equal beneficiaries, participants and sources of information.
6. Dis-aggregating all data by gender.
7. Undertaking affirmative action to correct historical gender imbalances.
8. Stating its commitment to gender equality in all CI documents and media packages whether for internal or external consumption.

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9. Working to create the understanding that the process of changing relations between men and women is not a stereo-typed struggle over power and resources, but a provocative of change towards societal equality, justice and development.
10. Reviewing and updating the policy periodically to re-align it to new experiences and information on gender mainstreaming.

To realize this policy, CI will implement specific actions in its administration and programmes as herein under described and monitor the same using qualitative and quantitative indicators.

PART A:

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES AND ADMINISTRATION

1. Management Responsibility

Conscience International's management will:

- a. Ensure that gender is part of the agenda of dialogue at inter-agency and political levels where CI has an active role to play.
- b. Use every available opportunity to articulate CI's commitment to gender equality and the measures it is taking to do the same.
- c. Foster participatory management practices that encourage gender responsiveness e.g. team work, shared decision making, rotative leadership and in all other areas as necessary.
- d. Hold staff responsible and accountable for the mainstreaming of gender and reward them for doing the same.
- e. Encourage, support and participate in all forms of learning related to gender issues.
- f. Provide support for the Gender Action Team at policy and operational levels.
- g. Develop a conducive atmosphere for staff development that does not discriminate on the basis of gender.
- h. Ensure that gender dimensions and implications are included in all existing organizational policy and procedures documents.
- i. Ensure that administrative resources are equally accessible to all members of staff
- j. Lead in the pursuit of gender equity by example.

2. Staffing Procedure

Conscience International will ensure that:

- a. The board of directors consist of 50% women and 50% men (minor deviation over or below is allowed if complete equality is impossible).
- b. All committees, teams and managerial organs consist of 50% women and 50% men (minor deviation over or below is allowed if complete equality is impossible).
- c. Secretariat and programme staff consists of 50% women and 50% men (minor deviation over or below is allowed if complete equality is impossible).
- d. At least one member of the Gender Action Team (GAT) sits in all decision making organs e.g. the Board, Management, disciplinary, recruitment and procurement committees and media, welfare and security teams. No one such member will sit in two or more committees.
- e. All cadres of staff are numerically gender balanced.
- f. Undertake affirmative action to employ women in jobs that have been dominated by men and men in jobs that have been dominated by women and create working conditions conducive to those members.
- g. Apply gender balance in the recruitment of interns and ensure that the interns benefit from all CI's capacity building initiatives

3. Recruitment

Conscience International will:

- a. When advertising vacancies, indicate that **CI is an equal opportunity employer** and that preference for the advertised post will be given to qualified female or male candidates as the case may be in furtherance of its commitment to eliminating stereotyping of jobs and implementing affirmative action.
- b. Include awareness of gender issues and demonstration of relevant gender expertise in the terms of reference for all posts regardless of sex.
- c. Ensure that a candidate goes through three levels of interview: the secretariat, the panel and written interview. All levels will have question

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to test the interviewee's awareness of gender issues and ability to promote gender responsiveness in the CI and its programs.

- d. Develop standard questions for interviews to eliminate gender bias and intimidation from members of the interviewing panel.
- e. Include in the interviewing panel a member of the GAT and/or any other member (recommended by the GAT) who has a demonstrated knowledge of gender issues and dynamics, principally to determine the candidate's gender awareness, expertise, pro-activity and readiness to promote gender responsiveness in the organization and its work.
- f. Not recruit people who have demonstrated record and background of harmful gender related practice (e.g. wife beating, female genital mutilation and other such abuses).

4. Orientation

- a. All staff members will be briefed on and provided with the gender policy during their induction period.
- b. All staff members will be required to sign the gender policy as a commitment to upholding it.
- c. Within the first three months of employment, new members of staff will go through gender sensitization.
- d. Staff members will be informed that they will be assessed on their progress towards assisting CI achieve its commitment to gender equality and required to indicate in their work plans how they are going to do it.

5. Emoluments

- a. Posts will attract a standard pay package and benefits to the holder of that post regardless of sex.
- b. The Organization commits itself to ensuring that the gap between the highest and the lowest paid member of staff is at the ratio of 1:7 to close the gap between the lowest paid member of staff "who have historically usually been female" and the highest paid member.

6. Medical Cover

Conscience International will:

- a. Constantly review its medical scheme to ensure that it does not discriminate on the basis of sex and that it offers women appropriate cover for conditions that are specific to them due to natural factors.
- b. Set up a maternity fund to cover maximum three children.

7. Leave

- a. Female members of staff will be entitled to four months (90 working days) maternity leave the timing and distribution of which the staff member will discuss and agree on with her team leader / management. This leave will not be prejudicial to the annual staff leave.
- b. Male members of staff will be entitled to two weeks (10 working days) paternity leave the timing and distribution of which the member of staff will discuss and agree on with his team leader / management. This leave will not be prejudicial to the annual staff leave.
- c. A breast-feeding staff member will be given two (2) hours off daily for one month after maternity leave. The timing of this time off will be discussed and agree upon by the staff member and her team leader / management.
- d. If a staff member (male or female) has to nurse an invalid child, provision will be made to allow the affected staff member take time off official hours to carry out this reproductive role.

8. Career Development

Conscience International will:

- a. Provide equal access and opportunities for both men and women staff to carry development without gender roles being a deterrent.
- b. Take affirmative action where two members qualify for the same opportunity. The opportunity will accordingly be allocated to the gender that is under-represented in that department or context.

- c. Base promotion of staff members on pure merit in job performance including contribution towards assisting the organization meet its commitment for gender equality.

9. Training

The Gender Action Team will:

- a. As a matter of routine conduct a Staff Needs Assessment (SNA) to identify necessary capacities to build for gender mainstreaming.
- b. Based on the intricacies of the SNA, design appropriate approaches to meet the needs identified e.g. briefing, training, study tours, provision of literature.
- c. Ensure that staffs are trained on gender issues and offer “refresher courses” at appropriate intervals either in forums organized by CI or accessible to CI.
- d. Establish budgetary support for gender training.
- e. Integrate a gender perspective into all training activities.
- f. Strengthen capacity of staff for collection, evaluation and exchange of gender related information.
- g. Identify and procure relevant gender resource materials for reference in the Resource Centre and for training purposes.
- h. Establish appropriate mechanisms for evaluating the impact of gender training, conduct such evaluation and use the results to improve future training interventions.

10. Sexual Harassment

Conscience International believes in a working atmosphere devoid of all forms of interpersonal activities that create intimidation, fear, harassment and reduced productivity.

CI will not tolerate sexual harassment of or by its staff members.

Conscience International defines sexual harassment as any kind of sexual conduct that is unwelcome and uninvited by the person it is directed to from a person of the opposite or same sex. Such conduct may include, but is not restricted to, verbal, non-verbal, physical, literary or audio-visual acts and forms of communication. It may be explicit or implicit.

Thus, Conscience International will:

- a. Provide each staff member with a copy of its policy on sexual harassment and educate staff on the subject.
- b. Lay down objective procedures for reporting of cases of sexual harassment and encourage staff to take advantage of them.
- c. Follow up and decisively act on proven cases of sexual harassment in accordance with its disciplinary code outlined in the staff manual and the law.
- d. Advocate against sexual harassment as a violation of human rights in all its programme activities and lobby for appropriate legislation on it.

11. Spousal / Family Violation and Neglect

- a. CI will not tolerate spousal violence of / or by any of its staff members.

Where such violation is proved to occur, CI will require that the member of staff who is violated or is a violator appear before the Gender Action Team for dialogue, counsel and appropriate remedial action (including punitive).

- b. CI takes the neglect of one's family as a form of violation of human rights. Any CI employee who is proved to be neglecting his / her family will appear before the disciplinary committee for dialogue, counsel and appropriate remedial (including punitive) action as determined by the committee.

12. Linkages

Conscience International will:

- a. Work with women's groups, NGO's other organizations and specialized individuals / consultant who have a demonstrated history of gender sensitivity and appreciation and who are therefore

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technically and morally useful to CI. Under no circumstances (except to sensitize them) will CI associate with organizations and individuals involved in harmful gender practices or notorious for resistance to gender equality.

- b. Enhance work relations with partners who have a demonstrated commitment towards gender equality and have mechanisms for gender mainstreaming.

13. Gender Action Team

The CI will form a Gender Action Team consisting of not less than five (5) and not more than seven (7) staff members representative of all cadres of staff /department/ programmes and whose membership shall be 50% male and 50% female (minor deviation over or below is allowed if complete equality is impossible). These will be appointees of their respective department / programme.

The Gender Action Team will be led by the Gender Coordinator. This team will, as its terms of reference:

- a. Organize a forum (happy hour) every month during which staff will discuss, update and raise issues on gender and their work.
- b. Convene meetings, in consultation with the management, and determine the agenda of such meetings.
- c. Arbitrate on gender related disputes.
- d. Maintain a roster of gender experts who can provide assistance to the Organization.
- e. Provide a linkage to women's group, NGOs, other organizations and specialized individuals who have gender on their agenda and who can provide technical services to CI and ensure that such expertise is available when needed.
- f. Increase and sustain the flow of and access to data and information on gender dimensions of development for the creation of a proactive CI agenda and design of programmes.

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- g. Prepare a catalogue of accountability measures including performance indicator to monitor and evaluate progress in gender mainstreaming programmatically and institutionally to be used by all departments.
- h. Recommend operational policies and activities to mainstream gender.
- i. Vet proposals to meet the goals articulated in the policy statement.
- j. Spearhead the establishment of CI Gender Resource Centre.
- k. Carry out regular content gender analysis and assessment of all CI publications and make relevant recommendations.
- l. Conduct needs assessment and recommend on relevant capacity building and training needs of staff members for gender mainstreaming.
- m. Represent CI in public forums where gender issues are being discussed.
- n. Provide support in terms of advice, information in any other form to CI staff so they are able to systematically articulate gender issues in public forums in which they participate.
- o. Provide guidance for inclusion of gender dimensions in all training activities undertaken by CI.
- p. Network actively with other human rights organizations in disseminating CI's ideas and publications on gender mainstreaming and seek similar information from the networking organizations.
- q. Monitor implementation of the gender policy, brief the management on progress made towards mainstreaming gender and provide feedback to all staff members.

PART B: PROGRAMMES

General Principles

Conscience International will:

1. Undertake gender analysis prior to programme development in order to identify the relevant components to include for gender mainstreaming, anticipate outcomes and provide a baseline for development for indicator.
2. Design project that target both women and men equally at all project stages (identification, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation).
3. Deliberately create structures and opportunities that will enable women to participate in decision making among target communities.
4. Develop and implement programmes that meet not only practical needs but also address strategic interests of men and women.
5. Ensure that the control of benefits and resources of its programmes is shared equally between men and women.
6. Dis-aggregate data and information by gender in baseline information, research reports and publications.
7. Conduct an annual external evaluation on implementation of gender mainstreaming and the achievement of stated goals and objectives in programmes.
8. Keep an updated list of gender specialists for technical use if and when necessary.
9. Include awareness of and adherence to gender issues in all terms of reference for external consultants.
10. Brief all visiting missions on achievement of gender mainstreaming in CI programmes.

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11. Hold regular forums for sharing experiences and information among the programme staff members.
12. Ensure gender balance among programme staff.
13. Keep the media constantly informed about the gender dimensions of CI programmes, activities and special events.
14. Hold annual gender refresher courses and training for all staff members.
15. Design and develop a CI gender style book to ensure conformity in publications and research reports.
16. Ensure the use of gender sensitive language in all its activity reports and publications.