



Foundation for Rural Development (FRD)

Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

Foundation for Rural Development

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INTRODUCTION:

Pakistan is the sixth most populous country of the world. Almost half of population comprises of women. Like many other developing countries, Pakistan also has its own share of gender issues, Women suffer discrimination and violence. Long periods of dictatorship, weak political leadership and worldwide economic crises during the last few decades have adversely affected the status of women in Pakistan, where women were already living in a subordinate situation. The progressive efforts advanced by both the Muslim Family Ordinance of 1961 and the later Constitution of 1973 (which were respectively meant to ensure women's rights in divorce, inheritance, and polygamy, and prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex), were curtailed by Zia Regime in 1979 and the passing of the Shariat Bill and Hudood Ordinances. The situation deteriorated further by rapidly spreading extremism, and weak governance. As a result, Pakistan stands at 145th place (out of 187 countries) in the 2011 Human Development Index, 115th out of 146 countries on Gender Inequality Index. Pakistan is ranked in 133rd place in 2011 Global Gender Gap index (out of a total of 135 countries with data).

The Constitution of Pakistan upholds the principles of equal rights and equal treatment of all persons. During last few years, the government has passed a few pieces of legislation to promote gender equality including the Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2010 and the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices Act, as well as amendments to the PPC to address acid violence against women. Women experienced serious difficulties in accessing assistance after natural disasters like earthquake 2005 and flood 2010, due to culturally imposed restrictions on their mobility and increased vulnerability to gender-based violence. Pakistan ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1996. In practice, however, women are subjected to systematic discrimination. Women still have limited access to education, employment and health services. Lack of government resources, high poverty and low levels of literacy all contribute to the fact that very few women are aware of their rights, while also complicating the implementation and enforcement of reforms intended to improve their situation. The Optional Protocol of CEDAW has yet to be ratified hence limiting women's right to demand justice from international institutions in case all local remedies failed.

The whole situation mentioned above demands for organized efforts by civil society to raise awareness about legislation on the one hand and to work with the state departments to make effective legislation and their effective implementation on the other. FRD developed the gender strategy to ensure gender mainstreaming in all its actions, policies and programs.

BRIEF ABOUT FRD

FRD envision a prosperous, peaceful, productive and socially inclusive society where every human being can realize its potential. FRD's mission is "to improve the quality of life in the underdeveloped areas through improving the socioeconomic conditions of people through equitable and sustainable utilization of resources and empowering the vulnerable and excluded groups." The cross-cutting themes of FRD are

- Social Mobilization
- Capacity building and
- Gender Mainstreaming.
- Disaster Risk Reduction
- Climate Change



FRD has been providing services to the poor community in Emergency Humanitarian response, early recovery and long-term development in the sectors of WASH, Shelter, Camp coordination and Camp management, Linkages` development of grass root communities with government and non-government agencies, Community infrastructure, Livelihood development, non-formal education and Natural resource management.

FRDs main target groups are poorest and the poor segments, but being an inclusive organization working to bring harmony and peaceful co-existence principles in to the society, FRD works with almost all socio-economic classes with in the society for establishing open communication channels among various groups. Currently FRD is actively managing programs in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regions of Pakistan.

The main decision-making body of FRD is its board of directors, who oversee the strategies and operations of the organization through the chief executive officer. The chief executive officer of the organization also works as general secretary of the BoD. BoD is headed by the Chairman and 7 executive members. At operational level the CEO manages the organization through various departments. FRD right after its inception is engaged in development and welfare activities and has developed a rich and diverse experience of working in various locations and thematic areas.

FRD'S POSITION ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING:

FRD believes that sustainable and effective change can only be brought through active participation of men and women, boys and girls in all stages project Cycle. Supported by the Govt. legislation an affirmative action to ensure inclusion of women and girls in the development process.

FRD takes this belief along during policy development, planning and implementation of its programs in communities. FRD urges to ensure gender sensitive policies for its staff and for the beneficiaries of its various projects/programs. Moreover, FRD is committed to build the capacity of its CBOs/Networks to ensure gender mainstreaming in all aspects.

All the programs and projects of FRD ensure gender sensitivity in its planning, implementation and evaluation.

FRD staunchly believes that sustainable and meaningful change can only be achieved through the active involvement of all segments of society, irrespective of gender or age. This conviction guides FRD's approach throughout the project cycle, emphasizing the critical role played by men and women, boys and girls, in nurturing positive and lasting transformations. Aligned with government legislation, FRD actively pursues affirmative action to ensure the meaningful inclusion of women and girls in every facet of the development process.

This belief is not confined to theoretical frameworks; rather, it permeates FRD's practical initiatives from policy development to the planning and execution of programs within communities. FRD advocates for the establishment and adherence to gender-sensitive policies, both for its internal staff and the beneficiaries of its diverse projects and programs. FRD recognizes that creating a gender-inclusive environment requires not only policies but also concerted efforts to build the capacity of its Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and networks.

FRD's commitment extends beyond rhetoric, as all its programs and projects are designed to incorporate gender sensitivity at every stage. This entails not only planning with a gender lens but also implementing initiatives that address the unique needs and challenges faced by both men and women. Importantly, FRD ensures that gender considerations are woven into the fabric of project evaluations, emphasizing a holistic and accountable approach to gender mainstreaming. In essence, FRD's position underscores a deep-seated commitment to fostering equity and inclusivity through practical, on-the-ground actions.



GENDER STRATEGY OF FRD

FRD recognizes the pivotal role of gender equality in sustainable development and social inclusion. This Gender Strategy serves as a comprehensive guide for FRD staff, offering a reference framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating programs across diverse areas. Developed through a participatory approach, this strategy aligns with FRD's commitment to ensuring that all initiatives are inherently gender-sensitive.

Strategic Focus Areas:

Mainstreaming Gender Equality in the Organization/Workplace:

FRD prioritizes gender equality within its own organizational structure. This involves creating a work environment that upholds equal opportunities for men and women. The strategy outlines a commitment to achieving gender-balanced team compositions, ensuring gender-sensitive hiring practices, and implementing policies that support a conducive work environment for women.

Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Projects and Programs:

Gender equality is integrated into the core of FRD's programs and projects. The strategy emphasizes reviewing project proposals through a gender lens, ensuring equal participation of men and women at all stages, from planning to evaluation. Gender Core Groups are established to oversee and guide the integration of gender perspectives in the implementation process.

Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Community Networking and Alliance Building:

FRD acknowledges the importance of community networks and alliances in advancing gender equality. The strategy outlines initiatives to build the capacity of these networks, including local Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), through training sessions. FRD encourages the promotion of leadership roles for women within these structures, fostering inclusivity and empowerment.

Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Emergency Response:

In times of emergencies, FRD commits to a gender-sensitive approach. Quick responses are informed by situation analyses conducted by teams comprising both men and women. Special attention is given to the needs of women affected, ensuring their voices are heard. The strategy also addresses long-term rehabilitation, emphasizing gender-sensitive project designs and standards.

Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Research and Publications:

FRD acknowledges the need for gender-sensitive research and publications. The strategy allocates a specific portion of publications to address gender issues. It highlights the importance of having a communication person sensitive to gender concerns, involving both male and female researchers, and ensuring that research undergoes thorough gender reviews.

MAINSTREAMING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ORGANIZATION/WORKPLACE

Mainstreaming gender at workplace is the first step in order to achieve the results in programs and projects. FRD will follow the following strategy to mainstream gender at workplace.

Gender Equal Team Composition

FRD is an equal opportunity employer. A special effort is made to bring almost equal number of women at all levels including senior management. In case there are lesser women at some specific cadre, some vacancies will be specified for women only. Keeping in view the working conditions and different context, efforts will be made to maximize the female staff deployment and to maximize the women participation in the project programs in culturally appropriate manner without undermining the culture and traditions of the area.



Integrating gender equality into the workplace is a foundational step for FRD to realize positive outcomes in its programs and projects. The organization is committed to a strategic approach aimed to ensure gender mainstreaming within its internal structures. The following initiatives outline FRD's strategy for mainstreaming gender equality in the workplace:

Gender Equal Team Composition:

FRD proudly upholds the principles of equal opportunity employment. The organization endeavors to maintain a balanced gender composition at all levels, including senior management positions. In instances where there is an underrepresentation of women in specific job cadres, FRD takes proactive measures by designating vacancies exclusively for women. This affirmative action is implemented to ensure equitable representation and participation. The organization recognizes the importance of addressing contextual nuances and working conditions, making conscious efforts to maximize the deployment of female staff. FRD is dedicated to increase participation of women in project programs, ensuring that these efforts align with cultural norms and respect the traditions of the communities in which it operates.

Gender Sensitive Hiring:

In alignment with its commitment to gender equality, FRD has developed a comprehensive strategy for gender-sensitive hiring practices. FRD recognizes that creating an inclusive work environment begins with the recruitment process. The following key measures outline FRD's approach to gender-sensitive hiring:

Clear Communication in Advertisements:

FRD ensures transparency and inclusivity in its hiring process by explicitly stating "gender-sensitive/aware" in the section outlining required qualities within job advertisements. This overt declaration reflects FRD's dedication to attracting candidates who share a commitment to gender sensitivity.

Diverse Hiring Committees/Interviewers:

To enhance the gender sensitivity of the hiring process, FRD mandates the inclusion of at least one woman in the hiring committee or among the interviewers. This deliberate step not only contributes to a more conducive environment for women candidates but also brings diverse perspectives to the assessment of candidates' suitability for the role.

Incorporating Gender Sensitivity in Reference Checks:

FRD extends its commitment to gender sensitivity beyond the interview phase by incorporating relevant questions in the reference check process. This ensures that the organization evaluates candidates not only based on their qualifications but also on their demonstrated commitment to gender equality in previous professional engagements.

Measuring Promotions and Benefits through a Gender Lens:

FRD recognizes the importance of ongoing commitment to gender equality throughout an employee's tenure. Therefore, the organization ensures that all promotions and benefits are assessed through a gender lens. Evaluation forms include a specific section designed to measure the employee's dedication to gender equality. This index encompasses questions related to the individual's transformative efforts, encompassing changes in beliefs and attitudes and initiatives undertaken to mainstream gender within the organization.

Gender Sensitive Policies and Systems

FRD is committed to ensure gender-sensitive policies and their effective implementation. Recognizing the importance of establishing a conducive and equitable work environment, FRD has instituted a set of policies in its HR framework to address gender-related issues. The Key statements includes, but are not limited to:



Gender mainstreaming:

FRD is committed to promote gender equality across all facets of its operations. Our gender policy serves as a guiding framework for integrating gender sensitivity into every aspect of FRD's work.

Anti-Harassment Policy:

FRD places a high priority on creating a workplace free from harassment. The Anti-Harassment Policy is designed to ensure a safe and respectful environment for all staff members, emphasizing zero tolerance for any form of harassment.

Equal Opportunity Policy:

FRD actively upholds the principles of equal opportunity employment. The Equal Opportunity Policy reinforces the organization's commitment to providing a fair and inclusive workplace where individuals, irrespective of gender, have equal access to opportunities.

IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

To translate these policies into actionable practices, FRD has established a Gender Advisory Group (GAG). Comprising an equal number of men and women from various departments, including administration, finance, monitoring, and program teams, GAG serves as a crucial oversight body. This group is strategically composed to facilitate easy access for all staff, ensuring convenience, especially for women to discuss gender-related concerns.

The primary responsibilities of GAG include:

Monitoring Policy Implementation:

GAG oversees the overall implementation of gender policies, ensuring that they are effectively integrated into the organization's daily operations.

Support and Facilitation:

The group provides support to team members, enhancing their understanding of gender-related issues and facilitating the appropriate channels for addressing concerns or complaints.

In addition to GAG, FRD has instituted an Inquiry Committee with a central role in addressing complaints of sexual harassment. As part of staff capacity building, specific training sessions on the policies and procedures are integrated into project orientation and periodic training sessions. FRD's commitment to zero tolerance against sexual harassment is underscored by the establishment of inquiry committees across all its offices, ensuring a swift and fair investigative process. This proactive approach aligns with FRD's dedication to fostering a work environment where every individual feels safe, respected, and empowered.

Training and Capacity Building

In order to ensure effective implementation of FRD's programs, it is necessary to have well informed, gender sensitive staff at the first place. The human resource department in collaboration with Senior Specialist staff will design and conduct a training need assessment. A training will be designed based on the assessment report and a training calendar for all staff will be established. The gender training will be mandatory for all staff.

Conducive Work Environment for Women

FRD commits to provide conducive work environment for women. Human Resource policy covers this issue through providing specific services to women. Moreover, code of conduct against sexual harassment is part of the policy so that a harassment free work environment can be ensured.

MAINSTREAMING GENDER EQUALITY IN ITS PROJECT AND PROGRAMS

Gender equality will be ensured in projects and programs through two-way approach.



Gender equality in Projects and Programs

FRD ensures gender equality in all its programs and projects. As a strategy, each project proposal being submitted to the donors will be reviewed by the gender focal person or GAG. All the activities planned in the programs and projects will ensure equal participation of men and women at all levels starting from planning to implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Gender Core Group will play its role in looking at the gender aspects of implementation. Specific team of men and women will be ensured in monitoring and evaluation department so that gender dynamics of each program and project can be ensured. The MIS system will provide gender segregated data to have an idea about gender equality and to take timely actions for getting the gaps addressed. 7

Specific Projects and Programs on Gender equality

The program section of the organization will strive to initiate specific projects on addressing gender disparities in the society. FRD through its civil society networks and partner organizations will address the issues like gender-based violence and empowerment of women in political, social and economic spheres. Specific project aiming to address gender-based violence and discrimination will be submitted different donors. Networks with the organizations providing psychosocial support to the violence survivors will be developed in order to strengthen referral system in all the program districts.

MAINSTREAMING GENDER WITH PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

FRD is working with a variety of partner organizations and communities in its program districts. All Civil Society organizations that FRD is working with comprise of independent local organizations or CBOs formed as part of project interventions, with whom FRD commits to build their capacity through trainings. In order to achieve its mission of an equal and just society, it becomes crucial for FRD to ensure gender mainstreaming in these CBOs as well. Following is the strategy to be followed to ensure gender equality.

Capacity Building of the Networks /CBOs on Gender:

FRD will assess the networks and the CBOs and based on the assessment specific trainings and orientation sessions will be organized.

FRD works with Civil Society Networks including local CBO representatives, teachers, journalists etc. and these are the informal, voluntary and loose structures. The assessment might not be possible while in mobilizing stage as it would be an individual based mobilization. However, once the network is formed, the assessment can be done as a group and areas of improvements can be identified for the capacity building.

Some key actions in this regard could be

1. Information dissemination about different laws through trainings and awareness raising campaigns
2. Promoting leadership roles for women in different programs and management structures of partner organizations
3. Encouraging the establishment of complaint mechanisms in case of any gender related issue
4. Using appreciation awards for the partners who performed well in terms of gender mainstreaming.
5. Inviting different experts to deliver talks on gender issues.
6. Ensuring participation of minorities and persons with disabilities (especially women) in each program activity.

Mainstreaming Gender through Advocacy and Lobbying

Pakistan is a patriarchal society; therefore policies, laws and establishment structures do not support gender equality. Therefore, policy and structural reforms are crucial to address gender disparities in the society. FRD joins hands with other organizations to advocate for legal and structural reforms. In order to bring gender sensitive reforms, following strategy has been followed and will be followed in future.



1. **Networking with Likeminded organizations:** Networking and collaboration will be encouraged with likeminded organizations for advocacy and lobbying purposes. A gender focal person having an experience of working on the issues will be one of the core positions of FRD staff to ensure this networking. Moreover, GAG members will ensure this networking and a collaboration mechanism will be defined among GCG members to further strengthen the cause.
2. **Review of existing laws using gender lens:** FRD will engage experts to review the existing laws, suggest amendments and to develop advocacy and lobbying plan to make necessary changes.

Mainstreaming Gender in Research and Publications

Research and Publication is one of the areas where women of Pakistan are least covered. Normally the idea of gender as crosscutting theme actually crosses the gender issues. The assumption that each research will automatically cover gender context is not enough. FRD would assign a specific number of publications each year based on gender issues.

Following strategy would be adopted to ensure research on gender issues.

1. **Sensitivity of Communication Person:** An effort would be made to have a female communication person and to bring her in the gender advisory group so that gender sensitivity of research could be ensured. Gender focal person and communication person will collaborate in order to keep a consistency in research initiatives.
2. **Allocation of Research Topics and Researchers:** At least three discussion papers out of 12 will be specified for gender issues. While the others will include a clear-cut gender component highlighted. Each proposal/program being implemented at regional level will include a component of research on gender issues in their local context. Equal number of male and female researchers will be hired to write discussion papers.
3. **Conducting Research:** All research conducted by FRD shall ensure equal participation of women as data collectors and responders. The data collectors will go through a full fledged training on gender issues and how to explore the issue in a gender sensitive way.
4. **Review of research using gender lens:** Any research being done will be shared with GAG or a research expert for gender review before finalization.
5. **Publication of Research:** The standard ethics like using gender sensitive title pages, permission from the responders before publishing the photos or other identities, using gender sensitive animations etc will be strongly followed during the publication.

Mainstreaming gender in Emergency Response:

FRD has been actively involved in the humanitarian sphere since its inception and has been providing assistance in emergencies. The core value of gender mainstreaming runs within this department also to ensure women's inclusion in all programs. In order to ensure it further, following strategy would be used.

1. **Quick response:** The quick response will be based on situation analysis done by team of male and female staff members. Women affected will be given higher priority while providing relief. Meeting with women will be ensured through door-to-door meetings so that their voices can be included in planning for quick response. Distribution points shall be made easily accessible for women/elderly
2. **The Emergency Cell:** If an emergency cell is needed, employment of female staff will be ensured so that women can contact them easily. It is better to engage some senior female staff for leading emergency cell, so that quick decisions can be made for the issues highlighted by women affected. The female staff of the emergency cell will be using quick assessment tools to assess the gender issues in emergency situation.
3. **Long term Rehabilitation Phase:** Staff will be trained on sensitivity of the emergency and gender aspect of the issues. The projects will be designed in a gender sensitive way and the designing phase will involve men and women both. In emergency response, HAP standards and Sphere Standards will be the key guiding principles.



4. Sexual Abuse and harassment: FRD's gender policy will be the lead document to address gender issues especially sexual abuse and harassment by community or by aid workers. The other international guidelines specifically defined for emergency response will be used as reference. Some of these documents include;

- a. Receiving and investigating allegations of abuse and exploitation by humanitarian workers, by International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)
- b. Model Complaints and Investigation Procedures and Guidance Related to Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation by Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
- c. Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse by UN Secretary General.

Conclusion:

The strategy is developed to provide guideline to FRD staff in order to implement its programs in a gender sensitive manner. The strategy is a living document and can be reviewed based on field experiences. However, the document will only be reviewed after having a concrete reason to do so.

By having a gender strategy, FRD has proved itself to be committed towards gender mainstreaming in letter and spirit. The gender strategy will enhance the initiatives of the organizations to be compatible with international standards of gender sensitivity.

Foundation for Rural Development