

Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Action Plan Manual 2023



Version 1.0

Document History

Date & Approval Ref	Version	Issues Addressed	Description of Change *

*Any changes in text/expression/entitlements/limits/policy or procedures through amendment or revision or review after due approvals are the examples of Description of Change and have to be recorded in chronological order.

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Introduction :-

Guidelines for policy formulation were prepared under an initiative taken up by The Rural Support Programme Network (MDF) which was established on July 28, 2000. MDF initiated the idea of developing Gender Mainstreaming Policies/strategies for Rural Support Programs. To facilitate the process of policy formulation, a workshop titled (MDF Gender Policy Guideline Workshop) was held on October 2000. During the workshop, policy formulation guidelines were developed and later on circulated to the management of MDFs for their consideration. As a result, there was an active movement within MDFs to have their gender mainstreaming policies including MDF.

MDF ensured that all its programs were gender sensitive since 1992. A Gender & Development Unit was set up and centralized. The GAD Unit was assigned the responsibility of mainstreaming gender concerns in MDF's core program. A decentralized mechanism was also carried out by assigning responsibilities to all the Programme Managers so that Gender was integrated in all the activities. Women focused activities were carried out after approval in their respective sectors. Focus on women community Organization's (WCOs) formation accentuated the importance of addressing women's need, which the organization met in a best possible way. The Board and Management of MDF always recognized that in order to promote Gender Equality within organization and its communities there is a need to document a Gender Mainstreaming Policy, subsequently a strategy endorsed and owned by the Board and the management (at the head office and regional levels) resulted following a participatory approach.

The Board of Directors approved the Gender Mainstreaming Policy in its 36th meeting held in June 28, 2004. The policy was advised to be operationalized with immediate effect. This policy document evolved out of serious deliberation by the management of MDF. The draft document was prepared based on organizational experience spread over 12 years. Before presenting to the Board of Directors it was widely shared with the regional and sector professionals of MDF. The draft was revised several times to attain a widely shared and owned document incorporating feedback and comments received because of regional consultations.

This policy was reviewed in 2007 and the agenda was carried forward by GAD MDF to ensure implementation in all areas. Affirmative Actions were taken after an exposure visit to Andhra Pradesh to witness Social Mobilization of Women from a marginalized background, Gender Sensitization and Gender Mainstreaming Workshops for Senior Managers and Staff (All Tiers) and resulting Participatory Gender Action Plans 2008 spear headed by GAD MDF.

The Draft Gender Mainstreaming Policy of MDF has been finalized in 2016 in a participatory approach after being updated by GAD MDF. It was approved in 2017 by the Board. This Policy has been updated again to be more in line with the GCF Gender Policy even though Climate Change and Disaster Management was part of it.

MDF's Vision of Gender Mainstreaming

Gender has been identified by MDF as a crosscutting theme. This implies gender integration into policy planning, programming, implementation, and evaluation of activities including disaster response. As an IE initial socio economic/gender assessment related baseline.

MDF believes that its efforts to reduce poverty cannot achieve their full potential unless the organization addresses the constraints that limit the capabilities of the marginalized men and women to improve their standard of living and quality of life. Key aspects of this are:

- 1) Recognizing and harnessing the full potential of rural men, women, girls, boys, single/divorced

women, elderly, handicapped, orphans, minorities and transgender etc.

- 2) Increasing their productive capacity
- 3) And reducing barriers limiting their participation in society.

MDF acknowledges Gender Mainstreaming a means of consciously raising the visibility and support to women's (a majority in among the marginalized segments) contributions to poverty alleviation. This is different from assuming that women will benefit equally from gender- neutral development intervention. MDF is committed to encourage gender justice. MDF also acknowledges that Discrimination at the workplace can be passive i.e. not providing conducive environment/facilities for women or their exclusion from professional discussions on "Social Grounds" which hinder their exposure and limit their capacity as professionals. Active Discrimination takes place if women are deliberately excluded from recruitment, job security or promotion based on their being women. The HR Manual has mandatory gender training for all staff with refreshers. As a policy matter MDF will strive to increase women participation in the Board besides keeping and issuing gender disaggregated data of all interventions with actions to ensure this at all levels. MDF will develop capacities of the staff by using a gender mainstreaming manual and accordingly develop capacities of the community institutions.

The Guiding Principles

MDF's policy on gender mainstreaming is guided by the following principles.

Gender Integration: -

MDF realizes that addressing gender inequality as a crosscutting theme requires that the marginalized segments & women's views, perceptions, needs, and aspirations shape the development agenda as much as those of men.

Diversity and Intersection:

Gender equality requires recognition that every policy, program and project affect the marginalized segments, women, and men differently. While diversity is often used in reference to race, ethnicity, and gender, we embrace a broader definition of diversity that also includes age, national origin, religion, disability, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance.

Partnership between women and men:

Partnership between men and women is inevitable to enlarge choices. It involves working with men, women from different segments, minorities & other downtrodden communities e.g. those assigned menial jobs to bring about changes in attitudes, behavior, roles and responsibilities at home, in the workplaces, communities and the society at large. MDF has also adopted AASHA Code since 2010 and trained its staff and inquiry Committee Members besides arranging a "briefing" for the Board by Mehr garh, to discourage Sexual Harassment at the Workplace.

Empowerment and Agency:

Empowerment enables the marginalized and the decision-making women, men & transgender to identify unequal power relations and unequal access to and control over resources and the implications of unequal power relations for a prosperous society. Empowerment begins with consciousness raising and leads to self-realization e.g. capacity building and confidence building of women/ marginalized to become agents of change instead of victims. The link between Gender Policy & ESSF for a Baseline will ensure response to need assessment specifically related to Climate Change Issues. Drivers of

Change can be identified in this manner

Gender Equality/Equity: an effort to promote sustainable humane development:

Achieving gender equality does not mean that women become the same as men or the vulnerable follow the same pattern and exploit the uninformed / marginalized after attaining awareness and empowerment. Rather, it is a conscious effort to ensure that one's rights or opportunities do not depend on being man woman or rich or poor. MDF is aware that its efforts and contributions to poverty reduction must be coupled with actions to address Climate Change issues and eliminate gender inequalities so that impacts can be measured to promote sustainable humane development.

Commitment: -

By adopting a gender-sensitive approach in its mandate on climate change, the MDF commits to contributing to gender equality, as enshrined in international agreements and national constitutions, and other human rights agreements.

The MDF thereby also commits to:

- Understand the sociocultural factors underlying climate change-exacerbated gender inequality, and the potential contribution of women and men to societal changes in order to build resilience to, and the ability to address, climate change.
- Adopt methods and tools to promote gender equality and reduce gender disparities in its climate funding; and
- Measure the outcomes and impacts of its activities on women and men's resilience to climate change

The Goal and Objectives of MDF's Gender Mainstreaming Policy the Goal:

The goal of MDF's gender mainstreaming policy is to support the achievement of humane governance to reduce poverty, achieve gender equality and ensure sustainable humane development.

Objectives:

From this goal, MDF derives the following objectives.

- To integrate gender equality concerns into policies, planning, programming, implementation, and evaluation of activities in all areas including environment, climate change, gender digital divide and peace building.
- To highlight and value similarities and differences instead of making them the same.
- To develop institutional mechanisms (organizational structures, culture to not just strive for equal numbers but equal recognition and status) and sector specific strategies to carry forward the gender integration process.
- To establish linkages with other MDF's, and governmental and non-governmental organizations striving to achieve gender equality, peace & disaster risk reduction through a gender perspective.
- To show practice non-discriminatory in terms of benefits and remuneration for both men and women beneficiaries and employees; during implementation of all programs/projects to be implemented by MDF (applicable of all relevant programs/manuals of MDF implemented by MDF (applicable of all relevant programs/manuals of MDF including Social Mobilization, Microfinance and Enterprise Development, Social Sector Services,

Physical Infrastructure and Technology Development, Environment and Natural Resource Management and Social and Human Protection.

Conclusion: -

MDF Gender Mainstreaming Policy is based on the institutional and programmatic priorities of the organization. This is in line with the national and international commitments of the Government of Pakistan especially the SDGs to reduce poverty, ignorance and attain gender equality.

Comprehensiveness, in scope and coverage

- The MDF applies its gender policy to all its climate mitigation and adaptation activities, whether implemented by partners, communities and executing entities.

Accountability

- The MDF accounts to its Board for gender and climate change results and outcomes and reports annually in a transparent manner. Qualitative and quantitative gender monitoring, impact, and outcome indicators are included in the Gender Action Plan.
- MDF's entities and implementing partners will be required to meet the MDF's gender policy. They will also be required to have policies, procedures, and competencies in place with which to implement the MDF's gender policy.
- Gender-related complaints and grievances that may occur in projects and programs are processed through the MDF's redress mechanism.
- The MDF's management and staff are accountable for gender results. This is reflected in the MDF's administrative policies and procedures, including human resource management and the procurement of contractors.

Competencies

- The MDF strives to reach gender balance in key advisory and decision-making bodies, including in the appointments of its Board members and staff.
- The MDF commits to knowledge generation as experience is gained on gender and climate change. It also commits to capitalize on knowledge and expertise gained from other organizations. Such knowledge is to be used to strengthen the competencies of all stakeholders.

Resource allocation

- The MDF's resource allocation for adaptation and mitigation projects and programs contributes to gender equality and women's empowerment. The MDF seeks to ensure that its projects and programs support initiatives addressing the inequity of climate change impacts and to provide gender-sensitive solutions to climate change mitigation, adaptation or readiness. When it is necessary to correct for climate change-exacerbated gender inequality which affects women, the MDF will target funds to support women's climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives.

Implementation framework

- The MDF adopts a gender action plan in order to implement its gender policy. The plan includes priority areas in general and MDF's program sectors specific.
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Implementation framework: -

- The MDF adopts a gender action plan in order to implement its gender policy. The plan includes priority areas in general and MDF's program sectors specific.
- The proposed duration of the gender action plan is one years, in order to allow the MDF to get activities off the ground and then assess the implementation afterwards.

Review and revisions: -

The MDF is a nascent, growing and learning institution. As experience is gained and lessons are learned in the implementation of the gender policy in the MDF's activities and operational modalities – including activities with the private sector – the MDF will be able to adjust its policies, processes, procedures, and project and program design. In the light of this, the MDF will review its gender policy after three years of being operational.

Annex –1) Definitions of key Gender Concepts

Sex and Gender

Gender refers to the characteristics and roles that society defines for men and women. It determines how we are perceived and expected to think and act as men and women because of the way society is organized. Gender is a set of roles, which communicates to people that we are feminine or masculine. Sex describes the biological differences between men and women, which are universal and determined at birth.

Gender includes: -

- Roles:** What we think men and women should do
- Stereotype:** What we think men and women should
- like Values:** What we think is good for men and women.

The roles, stereo types and values are context, time -specific and Changeable as Gender determines what is expected, allowed, and valued in a woman or a man, a girl or a boy in each context. Other important criteria for socio -cultural analysis include class, race, and disability, and poverty level, religious or ethnic group.

Gender Analysis: -

Gender analysis is the collection and analysis of gender desegregated information. Men, boys, girls & women both perform different roles. This leads to different experiences, knowledge, talents, and needs. Gender analysis explores these differences so policies, programs and projects can identify and meet the different needs of women, boys, girls, and men. Gender analysis also facilitates the strategic use of distinct knowledge and skills possessed by women and men. Sex-disaggregated data is based on whether people are men or women. It is not gender-based because it is limited to raw data. It is useful to carry out gender analysis and it leads to gender equality. Gender statistics, presents an image of the conditions, contributions, specific needs and problems of men and women. gender statistics must reflect gender issues, that is, questions, problems and concerns related to all aspects of women's and men's lives, including their specific needs, opportunities, and contributions to society. In every society, there are differences between what is expected, allowed, and valued in a woman and what is expected, allowed, and valued in a man. These differences have a specific impact on women's and men's lives throughout all life stages and determine, for example, differences in health, education, work, family life or general well-being.

Gender Equality:

Gender equality means that there is no discrimination on the grounds of person's sex in the allocation of resources or benefits. This is therefore the equal valuing of society for women and men and the rules they play.

Gender Equity:

The term refers to fair measure/ conditions to improve the disadvantaged situation of women and men. Girls and women need to be provided with a comprehensive range of activities/ programs choices that fulfill their interests, needs and experiences. In 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, has affirmed the principles of equity while making provisions for affirmative action programs to eliminate disadvantages. MDF has also taken affirmative action by focusing on women only social mobilization in this regard. Positive initiatives that target specific groups are important because they take into account years of socialization and historical traditions that have created imbalances, subsequently marginalizing sectors of the population because these conditions are accepted as the norm. e.g. promoting more women and girls as affirmative action.

Equality

focuses on creating the same starting line for everyone.

Equity

has the goal of providing everyone with the full range of opportunities and benefits – the same finish line.

Empowerment:

Empowerment is about people-both women and men taking control over their lives, setting their own agendas, gaining skills, building self- confidence. No one can empower the other person. It the conscious decision of the individual herself /himself. The institutions like MDF can initiate processes that can nurture self-empowerment of individuals.

Gender Division of Labor:

This concept refers to the societal division of tasks and responsibilities among women and men. More precisely, it is the determination of what is suitable for women and what is suitable for men.

Women in Development (WID):

The WID approach aims to initiate women specific interventions by targeting women only. Another aspect is that the practitioners tend to forget the role of men in women empowerment.

Gender and Development (GAD):

GAD approach seeks to have both women and men participate, make decisions and share benefits equally.

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Practical Needs:

Practical needs refer to what women (men) perceive as immediate necessities such as water, shelter and food.

Strategic Interests:

It refers to interests that often relate to structural changes in society regarding women's subordinating status. The measures include legislation for equal rights, reproductive choice and increased participation in decision – making.

Humane Governance:

Humane Governance is transparent, democratic and gender sensitive. It is rights- based, pro-poor, promotes gender equality and is inclusive in concept and practice.

Sustainable humane development increases choice and leads to poverty reduction. It is the means, the process and the ultimate end of expanding human capabilities. Sustainable human development is based on empowerment and inclusion in social processes. Its benefits derive from equal access to rights and services. Sustainable human development protects future generations through sustainable resource management and responsible financial management.

Gender mainstreaming:

Attention to gender equality is central to all rural development interventions. Mainstreaming gender in MDF's core program and Projects means including gender in planning, implementation, analysis, policymaking, advocacy, legislation, research, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Gender mainstreaming will strengthen MDF's ability to alleviate rural poverty.

Gender Action Plan 2017-18

The purpose of the gender action plan is to provide a time-bound framework within which to operationalize the gender policy. Implementation of the gender action plan will provide MDF and all implementation partners, with the tools and processes in order to achieve gender sensitivity in all areas within the MDF's mandate. It will also provide the Board with the necessary information to exercise its oversight responsibility for the MDF's gender policy as mandated by the Governing Instrument.

Governance and institutional structure:

The overall implementation of the gender policy will be the responsibility of all components of the MDF's operational structure. The main operational responsibility for the implementation of the gender policy will be with the Communities, Staff, and Entities including implementing entities (IEs) and intermediaries and partners.

The Board approves the gender policy and will oversee the implementation of the action plan, at least once per year, through the review of periodic monitoring reports from the Gender and Development (GAD) Department, impact evaluation reports from the MER Unit and reports from the redress mechanism. The BoD will undertake its due diligence for the implementation of the gender policy through the Regional Offices and the project approval and monitoring process. A senior social development and gender specialist will be appointed within the MDF's Programming Division, with operational responsibility to manage the implementation of the gender policy and action plan.

Operational guidelines

The policy will be implemented throughout the MDF's administrative and operational processes. Guidelines will be issued for the benefit of external partners. The guidelines will apply to all activities and for which core elements will include the following:

- Determine how the project/program can respond to the needs of women and men in view of the specific climate change issue to be addressed.
- Identify the drivers of change and the gender dynamics in order to achieve the project/Programme adaptation or mitigation goals.
- Identify and design the specific gender elements to be included in the project/Programme activities.
- Estimate the implementation budgets.

- Select output, outcome, and impact indicators; and
- Design project/program implementation and monitoring institutional arrangements.
- Gender equitable stakeholders' consultations with the gender parameters provided in the policy.
- Inclusion of gender perspective in the application of the mandatory project/program social and environmental safeguards in line with ESSF
- Project screening for gender sensitivity at the various stages of the project preparation, appraisal, approval, and monitoring process.

Capacity-building:

It is expected that the MDF will complement its own staff capacity with experts, and that additional gender-competent staff/focal points will be allocated as its activities and staffing increase over time.

- Outputs, outcomes and impact indicators for monitoring and reporting purposes
- To monitor the gender policy implementation, a specific portfolio indicator is proposed:
- Quality at entry: The percentage of adaptation and mitigation projects that include specific gender elements and gender-sensitive implementation arrangements

Resource allocation and budgeting

As the rationale for the MDF's gender policy is to generate greater and more sustainable gender-equitable climate change results, the project approval process may consider giving additional weight to projects with well-designed gender elements.

Knowledge generation and communications

As a learning institution, MDF will document the experience and knowledge that it will acquire from the implementation of its gender policy and action plan. In particular, it will seek to identify good practices from countries and entities/partners. At the same time, it must tap into the considerable knowledge already available on gender and climate mitigation and adaptation programs and projects implemented by other partners. The MDF will support knowledge exchange activities on gender and climate change finance.

Communicating the MDF's commitment to gender equality, its gender sensitivity policy and its implementation guidance will be a strategic communications activity and an integral part of the MDF's communications plan. It will be important to communicate to the public not only how the MDF is implementing its gender policy, but also to seek periodic feedback from stakeholders and partners on the implementation of the policy and on possible improvements in the action plan.

Gender Action Plan in General for all MDF's Programme

Following are the basic elements of Gender Action Plan 2017-18; though program sector wise elements/ indicators have been elaborated further:

- Gender should be mainstreamed in all the following areas/levels:
 - Policy
 - Field/ Intervention level
 - External Level (partners, executing entities and Donors)
 - Local Support Organizations
- Specific needs of men/women to be taken in account while designing projects
- Climate resistance and Low Emission to be a priority while designing projects
- Address & prevent gender imbalances in resource allocation, service provision and access to opportunities

- Preventing exclusion of women and ensuring inclusion of the marginalized segments especially women. (Failure of women specific projects (1970s & 1980s) were due the marginalization of women {Mehra & Gupta})
- More Exposure to women staff for international training
- Project design to be gender sensitive and aligned with the gender policy and ESSF, as well as with climate change policies and priorities.
- AASHA Code to be displayed at every office.
- Internal Audit to include Gender Analysis.
- Follow up and monitoring to take place at Regional Programme Planning Meetings
- Approval process to include clearance from the Gender & Development Unit
- Gender Trainers and Gender Mainstreaming Professionals at the regional level reporting to the Gender Department to ensure implementation & Documentation with ownership
- Updated Gender Mainstreaming Policy to be displayed at every region, district, field unit and settlement office
- Mandatory Gender Training for F/A, MEDP, PITD, IT and ENRM
- Resource Allocation for Capacity Building in Gender for the Board, Staff (all tiers) and Community.
- ESSF to be linked with the Gender Mainstreaming Policy
- Gender Elements to be included in the Implementation Budgets
- Financial Audit to ensure Gender Budgeting
- Accountability for Gender & Climate Change results/impacts
- Equitable Resource Allocation
- Resources Allocation for Climate Change related adaptation /Mitigation Projects or initiatives with a Gender Perspective to support implement Gender Policy
- Gender Trained Competent Staff to facilitate implementation of Gender Policy
- Gender related work to be highlighted at Board Meetings
- Conducive Environment for Women Staff
- Day Care Centre for women

Programme Sector Wise Elements of Gender Action Plan 2017-18

Micro-finance & Enterprise Development

- MF Products to be assessed from a Gender Perspective to make them Gender responsive
- To ensure non-discrimination in lending a specific policy statement will be included in the credit manual.

Social Mobilization Strategy

- Women activists to be acknowledged and encouraged
- Contents of Programme Introduction to be the basis of a Gender Sensitive Situational Analysis
- Mandatory involvement of women in getting primary information (SM team & activist)

Human Resource Development/Personnel Management (RO)

- Gender Sensitization Training of newly inducted staff to be conducted
- TOT for male/women gender trainers for community preferably husband /wife
- Staff training to focus on gender analysis
- Exit interviews of women staff (mandatory)
- Staff to be arranged if Office premises not suitable
- Training of young women professional in technical skills, administration, and logistics

- HR Policies to be reviewed to make them sensitive to the needs of men and women
- Follow up of Gender Mainstreaming at all tiers
- Sessions on Gender Sensitization in all training
- Gender Concerns to be added to Minutes and schedules of PMM
 - % of staff
 - % of community member to be trained
 - % of male staff to be gender sensitized

Environment and Natural Resource Management

- NRM Workshops must have - % women participation
- Other NRM interventions must have % women participation
- Designing interventions which benefit very poor women, minorities, transgender, single women, disabled, girls and boys directly

Social Sector Services

- Awareness Raising related to Water, Sanitation, Immunization and Education thru a Gender Perspective
- Adult Literacy (with Climate Change and Disaster Mitigation) & Financial Literacy Program to be designed for communities in collaboration with HRD & Gender Department

Monitoring, Evaluation and Research

- Reviewing all projects with a Gender Checklist to revise methodologies, targets, logistics etc.
- Gender Sensitive Impact Assessment to be budgeted in projects
- An Analysis of MDF's current Programme areas/Interventions to identify bottlenecks and measures for improvement in Program Planning Meetings for all regions
- Review of all administrative, financial, HR Systems from Gender Perspective

New Initiative

- Design of projects to enable women to become agents of positive change instead of victims to be protected (economic, social and cultural, environmental).