

WANEP's gender policy

Introduction

In recognition of gender inequality and disparity especially as it relates to conflict and peacebuilding, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) is committed to gender equity and equality in its operations. Conflict is a gendered phenomenon which affects men and women differently. The prevalence of violent conflicts in West Africa and the impact it has on entire populations argue that the needs, issues and concerns of both men and women are considered when peaceful structures are being built. Thus, WANEP, a regional peacebuilding organization and advocate for social justice will ensure that its institutional policies and programs mainstream gender in the design, implementation and evaluation stages.

This policy will define WANEP's principles, commitments and strategies towards achieving gender justice and will form the basis upon which the organization and staff will be evaluated and held accountable.

Rationale

Since conflicts affect men and women differently, the effective participation of both sexes in peace processes is crucial to sustainable peace. WANEP recognizes that gender roles have contributed to discrimination and oppression across the sub-region and globe. We believe that in order to combat these inequalities, all our operations and peacebuilding initiatives should take into account that women and girls experience a high level of discrimination and bear more burden of conflict.

To address this, we commit to a gender perspective in all our operations. This means that we will work in a way that values women, men, girls and boys equally and at the same time recognizing their different needs, interests and challenges in both peace and conflict times.

The policy is informed by ongoing efforts at sub-regional, regional and global levels to promote gender equality for sustainable peace and equitable development.

In particular it draws from the following:

- The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- Vienna Declaration on Human Rights
- The Beijing Platform for Action
- The UNSCRs 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889
- Millennium Development Goals
- Affirmative Action Framework
- the African Charter on Human and People's Rights

Principles

In pursuant of gender equity and equality, WANEP:

- bases its operations, policies and activities on the understanding that gender equality is central to peacebuilding and the promotion of social justice
- considers the different needs of men and women in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes
- makes deliberate effort to promote the participation of women in all its activities to bridge existing gender gap
- ensures equity in resource allocation without gender bias
- ensure that Gender mainstreaming should be and seen to be cross cutting and not a “token” concept
- Continuously monitors all its work against gender indicators

Goal:

To contribute towards the achievement of gender equity and equality as a catalyst for a sustainable peace and development in West Africa

Objectives

- To promote gender equality in decision making processes
- To contribute to the elimination of gender injustices, inequities and inequalities in peace processes
- Engender peacebuilding policy and practice in West Africa
- To promote equal opportunities for all irrespective of gender

WANEP’s Commitment and Strategies for achieving gender equality

WANEP is committed to:

Decision making:

- Using in-depth analysis of the varied concerns, experiences, capacities and needs of women and men in guiding its operations and policies
- Ensuring that the composition of the General Assembly, the Board of Directors and Management team at all times must have fair representation of men and women (with a minimum of 30% of each sex).
- Using gender checklist and other gender related tools to guide all decision making.
- Being alert to any policies, practices, ideas and beliefs in its work that might perpetuate gender discrimination or inequality

Programming:

- WANEP will mainstream gender in all programming
- WANEP will continue to promote the participation of women in peacebuilding and peace processes through its Women in Peacebuilding Program (WIPNET)
- WANEP will work extensively with men and women in a manner that would promote gender equality
- WANEP in its research, publications and language will espouse gender equality
- WANEP will create and promote a free and conducive environment for the participation of men and women in all structures, meetings and activities of the network.
- Develop, promote and use creative ways of engaging men and boys (and not only women and girls) as women's allies and agents of change in the pursuit of gender equality
- Ensure program staff take responsibility for promoting gender equality and sensitivity in the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of programmes. (For example, the provision of financial allocation for childcare in budgets).

Membership, affiliation and Partnerships

- WANEP membership is open to all peacebuilding organizations irrespective of their gender affiliation
- WANEP is committed to forging partnerships with individuals, and institutions that are not sexist or prejudiced against men or women
- WANEP will seek to engage with networks that promote gender equality and facilitate the engagement of its partners with similar institutions.

Human Resource

- WANEP will encourage both men and women to apply for vacancies within the organization. Recruitment processes will not be discriminatory except for specialized areas that require the services of a particular sex (like WIPNET)
- Staff remuneration will be based on performance, qualifications and experience and not gender
- WANEP staff commit to use language in the work environment that is not sexist or degrading of any gender

- WANEP will raise the awareness of its staff and networks in the importance of gender equality and equity
- WANEP will ensure that staff or human resource development initiatives addresses the needs of men and women equitably
- WANEP will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment meted out to job applicants, employees, customers and suppliers by any employee of the network. Any form of sexual harassment is a violation of the policy and will be treated as a disciplinary matter

Health: Maternity and Paternity Leave

- Maternity leave shall be granted to females confirmed staff and it shall be limited to six weeks before and six weeks after confinement. Postnatal confinement may be extended to eight weeks in abnormal cases or where two or more babies are born.
- A male employee whose wife has given birth will also receive with full pay benefits 5 working days of paternity leave. This should be taken immediately (in the first 3 weeks) after wife's delivery to support her.
- Normal salary including other entitlements shall be paid during the period of maternity leave. An extension to the period of the maternity leave will be subject to recommendation of a medical adviser and each case treated on its merit.
- WANEP will not assign or temporarily relocate a pregnant female worker to a post outside her place of residence after completion of the fourth month of pregnancy if such an assignment or relocation in the opinion of a medical officer or such midwife will be detrimental to her health.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- WANEP will include gender sensitive indicators in monitoring and evaluating programmes
- The Administrative Manager will ensure implementation of the policy
- WANEP Board member responsible for Gender will evaluate compliance and actions related to this gender policy and report to the General Assembly

Review

The WANEP Regional Secretariat shall review this policy annually and as necessary in consultation with the Regional Board of Directors and recommend same for adoption at the General Assembly.

Annex

Definitions of Terms

Gender: refers to socially constructed roles ascribed to females and males on the basis of their sex. That is the social differences and relations between females and males.

Sex: The biological differences between males and females, e.g. females with womb can be pregnant while males are muscular. Biology influences behavior but does not determine it.

Equality: Equality is about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfill their potential

Equality is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and is also a necessary and fundamental pre-requisite for equality, development and peace (Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action: Mission Statement: para 1).

Gender Equality: Gender equality requires equal enjoyment by women and men of socially-valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Gender equality does not mean that men and women become the same, but that *their opportunities and life chances are equal*. (OECD-DAC: 13)

Gender equality is the absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex in opportunities, in the allocation of resource and benefits or in access to services. (WHO Gender Policy: 1)

Equity: Equity is often defined as a process toward equality. Equity then becomes an instrument or tool for reaching equality. Hence, there is a means-end relationship.

Gender equity: Gender equity refers to fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men. The concept recognizes that women and men have different needs and power and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies the imbalance between the sexes. (WHO Gender Policy: p. 1).

Equal Opportunity: Equal opportunity is about having the same life chances, possibilities and capabilities. It is about the existence of conducive environments and fair playing fields for competing at the same level. It presupposes the absence of undue barriers that block opportunities and possibilities and capabilities for reaching self-determined goals and for realizing one's potentials.

Mainstreaming: Mainstreaming requires change at different levels, within institutions, in agenda setting, policy making, planning, implementation and evaluation. Instruments for the mainstreaming effort include new staffing and budgeting practices, training programmes, policy procedures and guidelines (IDS, University of Sussex, 1997)

Gender Mainstreaming: Gender mainstreaming entails the integration of gender considerations in entire programme/project cycle or organizational systems, including policies, programmes, projects,

structures, systems, monitoring and evaluation. This should entail women-focused and institution-wide gender programmes.