

Collaborating Against Poverty (CAP) Gender Policy 2025

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List of Abbreviations

AoP: Annual operating plan
CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
GA- Gender analysis framework
GFP-Gender Focal Person
GTA- Gender Transformative Approach
GBV- Gender Based Violence
VAWC: Violence against women and children
SHRC: Sexual Harassment redressal committee
GEWE: Gender Equality and women Empowerment
SDG- Sustainable Development Goals
PMS- Performance Management system
JD- Job description
NGO-Non-governmental Organisation
CSO-Civil society Organisations
EMC-Executive Management Committee
SMC-Senior Management Committee
PCC-Programme coordination Committee

Approved and placed into action on this 1st day of August, 2020

Signed: _____

Selah S. Ngangawulo
Executive Director



Introduction

1. Background and Rationale:

Collaborating Against Poverty (CAP) Liberia's vision is a Liberian national entity free from all forms of exploitation and discrimination where everyone has the opportunity to realize their potential. Creation of this equal world is not possible keeping half of its population, the women and girls, disempowered. Women and girls do not enjoy the same status, power or access to and control over resources as men and boys. We believe that this situation is unacceptable. Principles of equity and social justice require us to work to ensure that everyone has equal opportunity for expressing and using their potential, irrespective of sex, age, race, colour, class, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation, HIV status or disability.

Since its inception in 2020, CAP recognized women as the "**change agents**" within the family and community for poverty alleviation. They play a vital role in ensuring their family's health, nurturing their children's education and, subsequently, ensuring the sustainability of their households. CAP also realized that women's mobility, decision-making capability and access to resources were controlled by men on a day to day basis.

In order to achieve gender equality, redistribution of power through economic, social and political empowerment is necessary. There is a strong need for safeguarding, and therefore, CAP aims to create a safe guarding culture at organizational level where staff give of their best, allowing them to develop, grow and achieve their full potentials without any gender-based discrimination. Also, safe guarding culture promotes the rights of the target beneficiaries and other relevant stakeholders.

In addition, we strongly believe that men and boys engagement approach should be part of the process of empowering women and girls through addressing gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination and abuse that will be applicable for employees, participants and the wider community.

The Gender Policy is the guiding document for CAP to be a high performing gender transformative organization ensuring commitment at the highest level _ to the staff as well as to the community. To be a truly inclusive and diverse organization, we have also looked at the inclusion of other gender identities in this policy in order to address emerging needs. Promoting gender equality, women's empowerment, addressing VAWC, and mobilizing men and boys are the core priority areas of interventions and organizational commitments of CAP.

To ensure this gender policy reflects the organization's priorities, values, as well as changing local and global contexts it is important to ensure that everyone takes ownership of the process. It is also important that all members of CAP actively engage in this effort to build a just and inclusive society promoting gender equality. This policy considers the Human Rights Declaration and The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Sustainable Development Goals 5, 10, 16, and others (2016-2030) also provide guidance in the policy to accelerate efforts of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through adopting holistic action plans and proper implementation.

2. Purpose, Goal and Objectives of the Gender Policy

Purpose: The purpose of the Gender Policy is to create a clear vision for the organization in terms of what it would like to achieve for gender equality. It also aims to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are central to CAP's:

- ❖ Programmes at all levels;
- ❖ Organizational culture and behaviors;
- ❖ and External representation.

Goal: The overall goal of the policy is to set the standard and principles of gender equality, under which all CAP entities create systems, programmes, processes and practices for mainstreaming Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) towards CAP's vision of a world free from all forms of exploitation and discrimination where everyone has the opportunity to realize their potential.

Objectives:

- a. clearly define the principles of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) and take appropriate measures to adopt a shared vision to guide CAP staff in their work with a clear direction to promote Gender Equality and equity at organizational and programmatic level;
- b. develop an organizational culture that demonstrates CAP commitments towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

3. Key Principles

- 3.1 **Gender equality, equity and nondiscrimination** are central to CAP's activities and operation
- 3.2 **The empowerment of women and girls** is recognized as fundamental to CAP's vision and mission
- 3.3 **Every individual understands clearly and demonstrates** attitudes and behaviors that promote gender equity and equality
- 3.4 **Adequate resources are allocated** to work on promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment
- 3.5 All work is continuously **monitored against gender indicators** based on different country contexts
- 3.6 The **cross-cutting nature of gender equality and equity issue** is recognized (and is both everyone's responsibility and an area that warrants/deserves specialized attention and resources in programme development
- 3.7 CAP recognizes that the path towards gender equality must also consider **gender diversity and intersectionality**, i.e. inequalities between women resulting from all other forms of embedded discrimination to which they may be subjected based on sex, gender, ethnic origin, class, nationality, skin color, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or political beliefs
- 3.8 **Men and boys are prepared to be active agents** in transforming the unequal society into an equal one

4. Organizational Development

- 4.1 Uphold gender equality, and integrate gender and diversity perspectives through organizational policies, procedures, systems and practices; ensuring all the relevant policies, plans and measures and systems related to organizational development is gender responsive
- 4.2 Strengthen the commitment to women's rights and diversity at all levels of the organization, guiding all staff and stakeholders on the importance of gender equality with an intersectional approach
- 4.3 Ensure that specialized gender functions, programmes and projects are in place and adequately resourced

- 4.4 Recognize knowledge related to gender concerns and gender analysis as one of the core areas of building capacity for staff and build capabilities throughout the organization
- 4.5 Develop core competencies that address core values and gender awareness and equity and equality
- 4.6 Build a common understanding around gender through induction and training
- 4.7 Ensure that all training across the organization is gender-sensitive; and staff are trained on gender equality, intersectional perspectives and gender responsive behavior
- 4.8 Make all Human resource (HR) systems and process gender-sensitive and responsive, and integrate gender indicators into staff objectives in performance management systems (PMS) towards a gender responsive work environment
- 4.9 Prioritize gender sensitivity in all terms of reference documents, including Terms of references (TORs) for external consultants
- 4.10 Determine the nature, structure, and causes of gender imbalance in staff throughout the organization and set targets for recruitment, retention and promotion of staff accordingly, particularly women in senior positions
- 4.11 Develop strategies for reaching gender targets, including: affirmative action; career development opportunities including development posts, training and internal promotion; family friendly and flexible working policies to allow staff to fulfil care responsibilities (including job-sharing, maternity, paternity and parental leave, and policies on childcare provision and/or subsidies for staff)
- 4.12 Promote a gender equity approach, aimed to ensure justice in the way women and men are treated and involving the adoption of special measures to tackle gender inequalities and to increase women's independence
- 4.13 Ensure child safe guarding, child protection, sexual harassment prevention and protection policies are in place and applied properly
- 4.14 Make best endeavors to provide suitable transport and accommodation when travelling for work purposes, particularly for women staff and persons with disability.
- 4.15 Ensure an equal pay for equal work value for all staff irrespective of sex, gender, religion, race, language, HIV status, disability, class, ethnicity and other sexual orientation and sexuality etc.
- 4.16 Ensure that access to and use of information technology is gender equitable
- 4.17 Encourage women's participation throughout the organization and develop strategies to increase their representation at decision making levels

5. Programmatic Measures

CAP is also committed towards gender mainstreaming in all programmes and enterprises. As a part of this process the following measures will be taken:

- 5.1 Support development of women's inclusion, leadership, socio-economic empowerment, and decision making of all levels from family to public spaces
- 5.2 Promote intersectional analysis of gender inequalities and transform power relations at every sphere of life
- 5.3 Promote participation of women and girls as active citizens
- 5.4 Promote positive masculinities for changing gender relations, patriarchal mindset/attitudes, norms and harmful practices to women and children, and support value for gender roles and responsibilities.
- 5.5 Recognize the impact of climate change and exploitation of natural resources on women and support them for different initiatives for ecological justice
- 5.6 Support women and children survivors/victims of violence and support protection of their human rights
- 5.7 Ensure that women actively participate in humanitarian work in all stages (preparedness, response, recovery and rehabilitations)
- 5.8 Integrate gender equality and gender justice dimensions in all new programmes and project cycles (e.g. context analysis, planning, implementation, management and monitoring and evaluation, setting objectives, indicators and budgeting)
- 5.9 Ensure that throughout the proposal development process, the programs and projects seek to contribute towards gender diversity, gender equality and empowerment of the disadvantaged people, especially women and girls
- 5.10 Develop, promote, and use transformative ways of engaging men and boys for self-reflection and to promote gender equality and addressing VAWC
- 5.11 Integrate representation issues when developing BCC materials, reviewing text, pictures/ images/illustration to identify the gender norms communicating by the materials and to also pay attention to norms regarding age, sexual orientation, ethnicity and functional ability
- 5.12 Initiate cross-programme interventions to address emerging issues and priorities to promote gender equality and justice
- 5.13 Assess how interventions will impact women's access to and control over resources and assess whether the project/ programme will address women's practical needs or strategic interests or both (transformative potentials)

- 5.14 Develop Annual Operational Plans (AOP) based on gender objectives and indicators in achieving programmatic outcomes
- 5.15 Ensure that staff at all levels are able to identify examples of behavior and attitudes that promote gender equality and those that reinforce gender stereotypes in programme delivery
- 5.16 Ensure gender as a cross-cutting issue in all key strategic pillars of CAP nationally
- 5.17 Highlight gender perspectives in all research and evaluation findings of CAP's core programmes and ensure that CAP programmes/departments/enterprises develop ownership for collecting gender disaggregated data and capturing gender equality results for analysis and reporting
- 5.18 Ensure periodic documentation of gender mainstreaming lessons learned, challenges and good practices for learning and generating evidence advocacy

6. Advocacy, Networking, Partnership

Policy advocacy and networking will create a greater impact in reinforcing progress towards **gender equality**. Human rights defenders and policy makers have the data and evidence to support women's movements by guiding efforts to reach national and global goals of gender equality and women's empowerment. Therefore, CAP will build partnerships/allies, networking with like-minded organizations and forums at national, regional and global level.

- 6.1 Ensure women and girls participation with gender diversity and intersectionality in different forums/committees/meetings at local, national and global levels
- 6.2 Build partnerships/allies by networking at national and global levels with like-minded organizations who believe in gender equality and women's empowerment
- 6.3 Influence national policies for empowerment of women, gender equality and justice and for implementation of policies by upholding women's human rights at different levels
- 6.4 Support partners in developing their capacity to undertake gender analysis at the policy, program, and institutional levels, and to design and carry out programming that supports gender equality

7. External Representation

The external presentations and communications of CAP should promote a balanced view of the issues surrounding gender equality and equity.

- 7.1 Ensure representation of women and girls at every setting with respect and dignity at programmatic and organizational levels of different countries
- 7.2 Ensure that gender analysis is central to the development of all marketing, fund raising, sponsorship and campaign work and incorporate gender equality and equity concerns into different activities wherever and whenever possible
- 7.3 Design and develop fundraising proposals/concept notes that consider gender equality and equity concerns and gender transformative approach (GTA)
- 7.4 Inform donors about CAP gender equality goals and objectives and shared good practices of CAP gender mainstreaming work and its positive impact, respecting rights of privacy
- 7.5 Formulate all materials and general communications to reflect CAP's goals and objectives on gender equality and equity, challenging gender stereotypes and recognizing gender diversity
- 7.6 Use gender-sensitive language and images in all internal and external communications
- 7.7 Endeavour to participate in public events only if there is gender diversity, taking into consideration the context and purpose.
- 7.8 Whenever possible, ensure women's and girls' voices are heard in the first person, and ensure that women and men are proportionately represented during press briefings and other public relation activities
- 7.9 Ensure the organization's internal and external communications and public engagement initiatives reflect the directions of this Gender Policy

8. Financing and Resourcing

Adequate financing and resource arrangements are crucial for implementing the Gender Policy to achieve gender mainstreaming across the organization. Adequate resources will be allocated to all programmes, enterprises and departments to implement the Gender Policy throughout the organization, and evaluate results All programmes will document the operational cost for this with the respective annual account, and present on it if and when necessary.

9. Implementation and Accountability

Each Staff of CAP and CAP entities, programmes, projects, divisions, departments, and enterprises is accountable for successfully implementing the Gender Policy. Each team under a

supervisor will be responsible in taking appropriate steps for ensuring gender mainstreaming to promote gender equality.

Every staff of CAP and CAP entities should make all necessary efforts to study and become fully acquainted with the Gender Policy and its implementation. This policy also requires to document or disclose reasons for not having diversity in any item mentioned in this document with the intention to review the reasons towards ensuring progressive increase in inclusion.

The policy will be available to all staff.

Specific roles and responsibilities are outlined below:

CAP's Board of Directors

Members of the Board of Directors will be responsible for the approval of the Gender Policy and its revisions to the previous version that reflect the changes in the organizational culture and development challenges.

The Board of Directors will ensure accountability of CAP's senior management towards implementation of this policy.

Gender Steering Committee

The gender steering committee will ensure CAP's commitment for effective implementation of this policy and coordination to ensure gender equality promotion and gender justice in alignment with CAP's strategic priorities.

CAP Senior Management Authority

CAP's senior management team will play a crucial role for the process of gender policy implementation and resource allocation. They will lead and be accountable for mainstreaming implementation processes in their own programmes/departments/enterprises. The Country Management Team (CMT) will play the leading role for gender policy implementation.

Gender focal persons (GFP)

Gender focal persons (GFPs), consisting of mid management representatives from each programme, enterprise and department in the organization, will work closely with GJD to incorporate the gender policy into the respective programmes interventions and organizational level. GJD will provide appropriate training to the GFPs to enhance their leadership capacity for integrating gender concerns into their respective programme operations.

Safe Guarding Unit

The Safeguarding unit under the Human Resources Division will be responsible for providing all necessary technical support such as formulation of gender related policies and procedures (including Safeguarding Policy and other subset policies, such as, Child and Adolescent Protection Policy, Sexual Harassment Elimination Policy, Adults with Special Needs policy, Prevention of Workplace Bullying and Violence Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Code of Conduct).

This Safeguarding unit works to establish a high ethical safeguarding culture and practices within the organization to protect its staff, volunteer, partners, programme participants and community people from all kinds of abuse that is, against sexual harassment, intimidation and violence, bullying, humiliation and discrimination, neglect and exploitation (“safeguarding”).

Annex: 01

Glossary:

Gender: Gender refers to socially constructed roles played by women, men and other gender identities that are assigned on the basis of sex. Gender is used as a means to distinguish similarities and differences between women, men and other sexual identity people without direct reference to human biology, but rather to the behavioural patterns expected of women and men and their cultural reinforcement. These roles are usually specific to a particular area and time.

Gender as crosscutting: Cross-cutting issues are topics that affect all aspects of a programme (i.e. cut across) and therefore need special attention. They should be integrated into all stages of programmes and projects, from planning through to impact assessment – but this has not always been the case. Therefore, it’s really important to keep in mind that gender will be always one of the cross-cutting issue at programmatic and organizational level of CAP.

Gender Equity: Gender equity means the fairness of treatment for women, men and other sexual identities, according to their respective economic, social, cultural needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms

of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. In order to ensure fairness, measures must be taken to compensate historical and social disadvantages and create a level playing field for both men women and other sexual identities. It is a means to achieve the ultimate goal of Gender Equality

Gender Equality: Gender equality entails the concept that all human beings, both men, women and other gender identities, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women men and other gender identities are considered, valued and favoured equally. It does not mean that women men and other gender identity have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender Equality is the ultimate goal in sustainable development

Gender diversity is an umbrella term that **is** used to describe **gender** identities that demonstrate a **diversity** of expression beyond the binary framework. For many **gender diverse** people, the concept of binary **gender** - having to choose to express yourself as male or female – **is** constraining. (Gender Rights Org.)

Gender justice as the full equality and **equity** between women and men in all spheres of life, resulting in women jointly, and on an equal basis with men, **defining** and shaping the policies, structures and decisions that affect their lives and society as a whole.

Intersectionality: Awareness of all forms of discrimination combined and simultaneously experienced by women. This theory asserts that it is necessary to examine how the many forms of discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, social class or disability interact to fully understand the experiences of women. All women are therefore not equal.(Adapted from CECI/Uniterra, Key Concepts for Equality Between Women and Men) .

Gender Mainstreaming: Gender mainstreaming has been embraced internationally as a strategy towards realizing gender equality. This involves making gender perspectives – what women and men do and the resources and decision-making processes they have access to – more central to all policy development, research, advocacy, development, implementation and monitoring of norms and standards, and planning, implementation and monitoring of projects. Both dimensions - gender representation and gender responsive content - need to be taken into consideration in all phases of project/proposal/institutional development¹.

Gender mainstreaming does not entail developing separate women's projects within work programmes, or even women's components within existing activities in the work programmes. It requires that attention is given to gender perspectives as an integral part of all activities across all programmes. Organizational culture and Organizational values are important in terms of creating work environments which are conducive to gender mainstreaming².

¹European Institute for Gender Equality

²Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), UNWomen

Practical Gender Needs: Practical gender needs (PGNs) are the needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. PGNs do not challenge, although they arise out of, gender divisions of labor and women's subordinate positions in society. PGNs are a response to immediately perceived necessities, identified within a specific context. They are practical in nature and often inadequacies in living conditions, such as water, provision of health care and employment

Strategic Gender Needs: The necessary requirements of women and men to improve their position or status in the community or society is termed as Strategic Gender Needs. Addressing these needs allow people to have control over their lives beyond socially-defined restrictive roles. Strategic gender needs for women might include land rights, more decision-making power, equal pay and greater access to credit. This strategic gender need link with dignity and position of women at family, workplace and wider society.

Gender transformation refers to efforts to change gender and social norms to address inequalities in power and privilege between persons of different genders, in order to free all people from harmful and destructive norms. These norms include gender roles, expectations, stereotypes, and harmful attitudes, customs, and practices, including gender-based violence (MenEngage Alliance, 2017). Gender transformation enables individuals to question and critically analyze issues of gender inequality and injustice, and provides them with opportunities to challenge harmful norms.

Women's Empowerment: CAP defines Women's empowerment as the capacity of women to be economically self-sufficient, with control over decisions affecting their life options, and to be free from violence.

Transformative Gender Programmes/Policies: These programmes/projects include policies and programs that seek to transform gender relations to promote equality and achieve program objectives. This approach attempts to promote gender equality by: 1) fostering critical examination of inequalities and gender roles, norms and dynamics, 2) recognizing and strengthening positive norms that support equality and an enabling environment, 3) promoting the relative position of women, girls and marginalized groups, and transforming the underlying social structures, policies and broadly held social norms that perpetuate gender inequalities.

Gender Socialization: The process of girls and boys, women and men learning social roles based on their sex, which leads to different behaviors and creates differing expectations and attitudes by gender. An example is that concept that girls and women do more household chores, such as cooking and cleaning, while boys and men do more work out of the home. Gender roles often lead to inequality.

Gender Gap: The gap includes the disproportionate difference between men and women and boys and girls, particularly as reflected in attainment of development goals, access to resources and levels of participation. A gender gap indicates gender inequality.

Gender Analysis: Gender analysis is a systematic way of looking at the different impacts of development, policies, programmes and legislation on women men and other sexual identity that entails, first and foremost, collecting sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive information about the population concerned. Gender analysis can also include the examination of the multiple ways in which women men and other sexual identity, as social actors, engage in strategies to transform existing roles, relationships, and processes in their own interest and in the interest of others.

Gender Responsive Work Environment: Creating an environment that reflects an understanding of the realities of women's lives and addresses the issues of the women. A gender responsive work environment recognizes several important differences in life circumstances and behaviors between female, male and other sexual identity staff and takes these differences into account when designing logistics, culture, practices in the institution that produce the best outcomes for women, men and other sexual identity.

Gender Responsive Behavior: Gender responsive behavior includes having a non-discriminatory attitude, promoting dignity and respect of all human beings irrespective of their sexual identity. Staff feel comfortable with this type of behavior from their colleagues and are able to fulfill their career aspirations in a safe working environment.

Annex: 02

History of CAP's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

As an Organization, CAP continues to focus its interventions towards women and endeavors to adopt in all its practices a gender-sensitive approach that considers the inequalities prevalent in society. Towards this end, in 2020, CAP adopted a gender policy with the aim of achieving gender equality in a systematic manner both within the organization and in its scope of work. The policy provides the necessary guidelines for ensuring gender equality in the organization's activities.