



GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

Baylor College of Medicine Foundation Uganda

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1. Introduction

Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation-Uganda (BFU) is a leading provider of Integrated, High-Quality, High Impact comprehensive HIV, TB, RMNCAH and Global Health Security (GHS) services in Uganda. Our mission is to provide high-quality family-centered health care, education and research. Our goal is to reduce morbidity and mortality due to infectious, non-communicable, maternal, and childhood conditions.

This Gender Equality Policy outlines BFU's commitment to mainstreaming gender equality and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout all aspects of the organization's work

2. Purpose

2.1 This policy is informed by the human rights-based approach and provides internal guidance on how BFU aims to integrate a gender perspective throughout policy formulation, programme development and activity implementation, including project monitoring and evaluation.

The policy will be complemented by a detailed strategy as well as a set of tools on gender integration.

3. Rationale

3.1 This policy aims to create an environment and shape a culture conducive to promoting and advancing gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) and mainstreaming gender at both the organizational and programmatic level.

3.2 By mainstreaming GESI, BFU will seek to remove additional barriers or constraints to women and men's equal participation in the planning and implementation of the projects/programmes as well as addressing harmful gender norms and inequalities. Ultimately it will help to contribute to enhancing capacity to integrate gender in planning and programming and ensure outcomes are more sustainable.

4. Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all staff and associates of BFU who must comply with its requirements and understand the sanctions that may be applied for breaches of the policy. It is spearheaded by the Board of Directors and Executive Director

Staff include:

- All staff, national and international

- All volunteers and interns

Associates include:

- All contractors e.g., consultants
- All board members/all partners including local community-based partners
- Guests and visitors
- Trainees (interns, clinical attachments, field students)

5. Policy Framework and vision

5.1 This Gender Equality Policy is based on the international human rights framework, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It reflects the application by the Office of international human rights standards, norms and principles, which include gender equality and non-discrimination.

6. Definitions

6.1: Gender

While 'sex' refers to the biological differences between males and females, gender describes the socially constructed roles, rights, and responsibilities that communities and societies consider appropriate for men and women. We are born as males and females, but becoming girls, boys, women, and men is something that we learn from our families and societies (ILO 2009).

6.2 Gender Equality

Is at the very heart of **human rights** and United Nations values. A fundamental principle of the United Nations Charter adopted by world leaders in 1945 is "equal rights of men and women" and protecting and promoting women's human rights is the responsibility of all States. Gender equality, besides being a fundamental human right, is essential to achieve peaceful societies, with full human potential and sustainable development.

6.3 Gender mainstreaming

Is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's, as well as men's concerns and experiences, an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes; and this in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, hereby ensuring that inequality is not perpetuated. Gender integration goes hand in hand

with the promotion and protection of women's human rights and the elimination of discrimination against women.

6.4 Gender diversity in the workplace

Is the equal treatment, acceptance and promotion of all genders in an organization. It is about the ability of all in the organization to sustain conditions that work for everyone. Regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, class, religion, sexual orientation or disability, at all levels, employees and employers must interact with one another with respect, confidence and effectiveness. Baylor defines diversity in the context of the collective and rich mixture of individuals who bring a complex blend of attributes, perspectives, behaviours, common interests, and talents.

Gender diversity in the workplace thus involves the consideration, recognition and promotion of different skills, resources and potential of all genders in all their diversity. It is achieved when all employees, regardless of sex, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, and age, receive equal respect and recognition and are able to access and benefit from the same rewards, resources and opportunities.

6.5 Gender inequality in the workplace

Is a type of discrimination in the workplace that involves an individual being denied certain rights or privileges due to their gender. Baylor acknowledges the importance of creating an atmosphere where its workplace policies and practices incorporate the different needs and experiences of all.

7. BFU commitments

7.1 Non-discrimination and harassment

BFU shall not discriminate in hiring, promotion, training, compensation of employees and employment practices on grounds of race, colour, religion, age, nationality, social or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, marital status, pregnancy, political affiliation, protected genetic information or disability, or covered veteran status. Baylor will create a work environment free of discrimination or harassment based on the noted categories.

7.2. Workforce diversity

The employees of BFU represent a talented and diverse workforce. Achieving the full potential of this diversity is a priority. A key element in our workforce diversity programs is Baylor's long-standing commitment to equal opportunity. HR practices such as hiring, promotion, and compensation of employees, are conducted without regard to race, colour, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, political affiliation or age. In respecting and valuing the diversity among our employees, and all those with whom we do business, managers are expected to ensure a working environment that is free of all forms of harassment.

7.3 Gender Equality Initiatives

To promote gender equality in the workplace, BFU commits to.:

- a. Ensure equal participation and benefit for all genders in both institutional and programmatic activities;

- b. Ensure that key organizational policies, systems and practices, such as but not limited to finance (budgeting), human resource, training and management, support women's rights and gender equality, are reviewed regularly and implemented consistently throughout the organization;
- c. Address systemic and structural practices that create barriers to the realization of women's rights and gender equality;
- d. Promote gender equality in policies and all its development interventions;
- e. Actively involve men and boys as allies in promoting gender equality;
- f. Analyze current processes and implement strategies to mitigate potential gender-based risks and harm to women, girls, boys and men;
- g. Monitor, evaluate and institutionalize organizational learning regarding specific gender equality results;
- h. Actively hold staff and management accountable to national and health, safety and gender equality standards as outlined in the Labor laws of Uganda.

8. Gender and Equity Diversity and Inclusion

Gender is intrinsically linked to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) because it addresses the systemic inequities and biases that can limit opportunities for individuals based on their gender.

a. Equity

Gender equity ensures fair treatment, access, and opportunities, recognizing that individuals may need different resources or support to achieve equality. For example, policies on maternity and paternity leave address gender-specific needs to level the playing field.

b. Diversity

Incorporating gender diversity acknowledges the value of different gender identities and expressions, ensuring representation and voice in decision-making processes. This helps create diverse perspectives that enhance problem-solving and innovation.

c. Inclusion

Gender inclusion involves creating an environment where people of all genders feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute fully. This includes addressing cultural and structural barriers, such as unconscious bias or gender stereotypes.

By embedding EDI considerations in the Gender Equality Policy, we will address intersecting inequalities, creating a workplace and community where everyone can thrive regardless of their gender

At the core of EDI is respect and dignity. BFU will ensure that all employees are treated with respect and dignity and will not use threats of violence, or other forms of abuse, physical coercion or harassment.

Disciplinary policies and practices in support of these requirements shall be clearly defined and communicated to all staff

Baylor will seek to champion diversity and respect in the organization, as outlined below:

- a. Eliminate Discrimination and Bias; Ensure no individual receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged due to age, gender, disability, race, or other personal attributes, unless justified by legitimate criteria.
- b. Promote a Safe and Respectful Workplace; Enforce zero tolerance for any form of violence, harassment, or abuse, with clear guidelines for reporting and accountability mechanisms.
- c. Foster Organizational Change for Inclusion; Align organizational policies and practices with EDI objectives to embed gender equality and diversity into the organizational culture.
- d. Encourage Collaborative and Inclusive Practices; Engage all staff in the planning process, actively seeking their input to better meet diverse needs within the organization.
- e. Support Equal Opportunities in Employment and Advancement; Provide equal access to employment, training, and promotion opportunities, ensuring fair consideration for individuals of all genders and backgrounds.
- f. Capacitate and Empower Employees; Invest in professional development and empowerment programs to ensure all staff feel valued and motivated to advance within the organization.
- g. Ensure Equitable Compensation; Maintain transparent and merit-based systems for wages and benefits, free from gender-based disparities.
- h. Enable Open Dialogue on Gender Issues; Facilitate safe and non-judgmental discussions on gender-related topics to identify and address existing biases and prejudices.
- i. Commit to Reasonable Accommodations; Provide workplace accommodations for employees with disabilities and address unique challenges, respecting the diverse needs of all staff.
- j. Monitor and Act on Representation Data; Collect and analyze demographic data to track recruitment, training, and promotion processes. Use insights to implement positive actions for underrepresented groups when needed.

BFU has a zero tolerance to all forms of discrimination, abuse and mistreatment. This means that every single concern is fully responded to and where necessary prompt action (including investigating and taking disciplinary action, if applicable) is taken. It means that we will hold our people to account against the same standards and subject them to the same processes, as everyone else regardless of their position or reputation.

9. Putting Policy into Practice

Baylor's commitment to gender integration is demonstrated by translating this Gender Equality Policy into practice, as follows:

- All organizational policies and manuals will be reviewed regularly by the Senior Management Team (SMT) and revised in accordance with this policy;
- All new policies and projects/programs will be aligned with this Gender Equality policy;
- Assure a workplace which is safe for women, men and vulnerable groups and is free from gender discrimination, violence, sexual harassment and abuse;
- Ensure all new staff receive an orientation to the gender equality policy;
- Regularly allocate the required budget for the implementation of the Baylor Gender Equality Policy;
- Designate a gender focal person for the Organization and designated officer in charge if she/he/they are on leave;
- Conduct regular gender audits (every 3 years) and apply results to improve organizational processes.

10. Accountability for Implementation

- a. The Board of Directors shall be responsible for the approval, integration, and regular review of gender equality policies, SOPs, and progress reports and ensuring that the policy and SOPs align with organizational goals, legal frameworks, and strategic objectives.
- b. The Executive Director shall be responsible for institutionalizing the Gender Equality Policy and shall lead on ensuring the provision of resources, information, training or technical support and champion opportunities for female staff to equitably hold positions of leadership in the organization;
- c. The Senior Management Team shall champion gender equality and equity at both the organizational and programmatic levels, and ensure the operationalizing of this policy; ensuring gender parity at all levels of leadership i.e board, senior management, middle management etc
- d. The Senior Management Team will commit to the availability of funding to advance gender equality at the institutional and program/project level and ensure gender inclusive budgeting, including provisions for Gender Analysis and Gender Audits;
- e. The Senior Management Team will ensure that all levels of organizational performance are held accountable in the case of failure to implement this policy;
- f. The Senior Management Team, and Middle Management Team shall be responsible for supporting employees under their supervision to properly apply the Gender Equality Policy and its SOPs at each level of program planning and implementation;
- g. The Director of Strategic Development & M&E shall ensure that monitoring, evaluation and learning is carried out properly in order to achieve the goal and objectives of the Gender Equality Policy and its operationalization guideline;
- h. The Director Human Resource shall ensure the recruitment, promotion and staff development is carried out properly in order to achieve the goal and objectives of the Gender Equality Policy and its guidelines;

- i. The middle management team/ line managers shall be responsible for ensuring consistency in the application of gender equality policies, communicating these standards and responsibilities to their teams as well as fostering an inclusive, respectful team environment.
- j. The Gender focal persons shall be responsible for advocating for gender equality, raising awareness through training and orientations, and ensuring compliance with the gender standards at the operational level.
- k. The Community Development Project Officers/Project Officer shall be responsible to apply the Gender Equality Policy and its mainstreaming guideline and are responsible to report the existing progress to project managers;
- l. The technical teams (Project officers) will seek to ensure that women and girls, along with men and boys, are equally included and consulted as an integral methodology of the project/programme design, and strive to support the emergence of gender equity and equality.
- m. Baylor technical staff will strive to develop measurable, gender sensitive indicators to measure baseline statuses and the achievement of end line gender equality results.
- n. All BFU Employees shall be accountable for familiarizing themselves with the gender equality policy, uphold its principles in daily activities, and actively participate in related training and initiatives

11. Project, Programme and Policy Design and Planning

The following are cross cutting gender equality mandates which should be considered in all project cycles that BFU endeavors to undertake:

- a. Sex-disaggregated data should be used in program design, implementation, monitoring and reporting;
- b. Priority given for gender analysis conducted for all programs/projects to measure the differential access to and control over resources of women/girls and men/boys.
- c. Existing gender disparities should be regularly identified and addressed as an integral part of project/programme interventions and scope of work should be adjusted, as needed;
- d. Priority shall be given for program beneficiaries, including women/girls and men/boys, to participate in the full project cycle, i.e., design and planning; implementation; monitoring; review and evaluation;
- e. All programs/projects will be designed with a gender transformation goal in line with a Gender Equality Continuum tool;
- f. Risk factors (institutional, cultural, policy etc) that could constrain gender equality shall be recognized for all policies and projects/programmes, with strategies to mitigate them.

12. Project/Programme Activity Implementation

- a. Baylor shall assure flexibility and openness to respond to new and innovative challenges and opportunities for achieving gender equality as they arise;

- b. Regularly carry out Gender Analysis to ensure equal representation and benefit of men, women, boys and girls in activities, from planning to implementation;
- c. Ensure both women/girls and men/ boys are equitably targeted for participatory and inclusive engagement that reflects Gender Equality and Social Inclusion;
- d. Women and girls, men and boys shall be able to access the same benefits that Baylor-led activities deliver, measured by regular Gender Analysis.

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

- a. M&E shall be informed by a gender sensitive baseline and indicators are to include gender equality results;
- b. Baylor shall strive to incorporate gender concerns into the evaluation criteria;
- c. All qualitative and quantitative indicators shall be designed in a gender sensitive manner to measure the effects of the policy on women, men, boys and girls to understand any discrepancy in equity, equality or access.

14. Expected outcomes from the organization Gender policy

- a. Improved program outcomes
- b. Effective gender mainstreaming in policies and programs
- c. Enhanced organization culture and inclusivity
- d. Improved gender balance in leadership and staffing

15. Reporting

Management will report annually to the Board of Trustees on implementation of this policy.

Appendices: Gender Equality SOPs

16.1 Appendix 1: SOP for Recruitment and Workforce Diversity

16.1.1 Job Descriptions and Advertisements:

- a. All job descriptions shall be reviewed by the Director Human Resources to ensure that they are free of gender bias.
- b. A statement shall be included in job adverts encouraging applications from all genders.
- c. A statement shall be included in a specific advert to encourage applicants from under represented classes and this shall be supported by data.

16.1.2 Shortlisting and Interviewing:

- a. Interview panels shall be constituted with due regard to gender ensuring a balanced representation.
- b. A standard scoring criterion shall be used across all applicants to minimize unconscious bias. This criterion will be based on the job requirements as per the advert.
- c. Interview tools shall be user friendly and practical to all applicants.

16.1.3 Onboarding:

- a. All new hires shall be oriented on the Gender Equality Policy.

16.2 Appendix 2: SOPs for Workplace Culture

16.2.1 Code of Conduct

- a. The code of conduct that establishes clear examples of acceptable and unacceptable behavior shall be circulated to all staff.
- b. The Gender Equality Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy, PSEA policy shall be circulated to all staff
- c. Staff to acknowledge receipt of all the policies above and this receipt to be filed with HR.

16.2.2 Reporting and Handling Complaints:

- a. BFU has established confidential reporting channels eg suggestion boxes, whistle-blower hotlines and gender focal persons for complaints and all staff shall be made aware of these reporting channels.
- b. Reporting channels shall be reviewed annually to assess any barriers to reporting
- c. All complaints received shall be investigated within 14 working days.
- d. Disciplinary shall be applied where necessary following the Disciplinary code.

16.2.3 Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination

- a. Training sessions shall be conducted quarterly. All staff will be trained on the policy, on their rights and responsibilities under the policy, and on how the policy will affect the way they carry out their duties

- b. Awareness raising materials to be displayed in common areas of all offices

16.3. Appendix 3 : SOPs for Compensation and Benefits

16.3.1 Equitable Pay:

- a. Conduct annual pay audits to identify and address gender-based wage disparities.

16.3.2 Work-Life Balance:

- a. Parental leave and flexible work arrangements shall be provided to all staff irrespective of gender.

16.4 Appendix 4: SOPs for Capacity Building

16.4.1 Training and Development:

- a. Opportunities for training shall be shared widely and all shall be encouraged to participate
- b. Develop mentorship and leadership programs targeting under represented genders to ensure at least 50% participation of women and marginalized groups in leadership training.

16.4.2 Knowledge Sharing:

- a. Organize forums for employees to discuss gender-related challenges and solutions.

16.5. Appendix 5 SOPs for Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

16.5.1 Data Collection, analysis and reporting:

- b. Data disaggregated by sex and age.
- c. Look for differences by sex and age group during analysis.
- d. Report sex- and age-disaggregated data

16.5.2 Gender Audits:

- a. Conduct biannual audits to evaluate the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming initiatives.

16.5.3 Indicators:

- a. Develop gender-sensitive indicators to measure outcomes, such as representation in leadership roles.

16.5.4 Programme Evaluation

- b. Consider how gender might play a role in your theory of change and include it as applicable.
- c. Ensure that your design allows you to determine whether men and women are impacted differently by the program (e.g., is the sample size adequate to look at sex subgroups?).
- d. If quantitative-focused, include some qualitative data, as well, to allow for better measurement of gender dynamics, which can be difficult to quantify.

16.6 Appendix 6: SOPs for Community Engagement

16.6.1 Program Design:

- a. Incorporate gender analysis in the planning phase of all community projects.

16.6.2 Program Outreaches:

- a. Ensure program outreaches are inclusive of all genders and addresses gender-specific needs.

16.7. Appendix 7: Continuous Improvement

16.7.1 Policy Reviews:

- a. Review the Gender Policy and these SOPs every three years or as needed.

16.7.2 Feedback Mechanisms:

- a. Establish feedback channels to capture insights from employees and stakeholders for policy enhancement.

16.8. Appendix 8. Accountability and Reporting

- a. Assign a Gender Equality Focal Point to oversee implementation and reporting.
- b. Include gender equality metrics in annual organizational performance reports.

17. Appendix 9: Implementation guideline

Priority area	Action	KPI	Responsible Parties
1. Policy Dissemination	1.1 Disseminate the Gender Policy and SOPs organization-wide through emails, meetings, and workshops within a month of approval	1.1.1 % of staff acknowledge receipt of the policy.	HRD
		1.1.2 # of dissemination events conducted.	
2. Training and Awareness	2.1 Conduct quarterly mandatory training for all employees on gender equality principles and the contents of the SOPs	2.1.1. % of staff complete the training.	HRD, GFPs
		2.1.2. Participant satisfaction scores from post-training surveys.	
3. Recruitment and Diversity	3.1 Implement inclusive recruitment practices as outlined in the SOPs	3.1.1 Recruitment diversity dashboard developed and institutionalised	HRD
		3.1.2 % of recruitment metrics tracked and analysed using a diversity dashboard	

4. Creating Inclusive Workplace and Cultures	4.1 Roll out workplace conduct initiatives, including anti-harassment campaigns and anonymous reporting systems	4.1.1 # of workplace conduct initiatives launched.	HRD, GFPs
	4.2 Make reasonable changes to overcome physical and non-physical barriers that make it difficult for disabled employees to carry out their work, and for disabled beneficiaries to access BFU services	4.2.1. % of identified physical and non-physical barriers resolved annually. 4.2.2. # of accessibility enhancements (e.g., ramps, software tools, or modified processes) implemented across all BFU offices 4.2.3. % of disabled employees and beneficiaries reporting satisfaction with accessibility improvements via surveys or interviews. 4.2.4. % of BFU offices meeting accessibility standards as determined by regular audits.	
5. Communication	5.1 Ensure both internal and external communication within the organisation including annual reports, promotional materials, IEC materials, print and broadcast media that are gender inclusive.	5.1.1 Proportion of different genders attending BFU organized events 5.1.2 Proportion of BFU communication materials, messages that are gender inclusive. 5.1.3 Number of partnerships with gender-equality organizations.	PR, Advocacy and Communication Manager
6. Equitable Compensation Audits	6.1 Conduct gender pay audits annually and address disparities.	6.1.1 % reduction in gender pay gaps.	HRD, ED
		6.1.2. Frequency of compensation audits conducted	
7. Program Design and Implementation	7.1 Integrate gender equality in all project planning and Implementation phases.	6.1.1. % of projects incorporating gender equality.	Director Programs, Director Research, Director HSS,
		6.1.2 # of staff trained in gender integration techniques	
8. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	7.1 Develop and apply gender-sensitive indicators in M&E frameworks.	7.1.1 # of gender-sensitive indicators included in M&E frameworks or plans.	Director SMEL
		7.1.2. % of biannual gender audits.	

9. Capacity Building	8.1 Develop mentorship and leadership development tracks for underrepresented groups	8.1.1 # of mentorship and leadership programs conducted annually.	HRD
		8.1.2. % of women and under represented groups enrolled in the mentorship and leadership program annually	
		8.1.3. % of participants reporting skill improvement	
10. Stakeholder Engagement	9.1. Facilitate inclusive dialogues with community stakeholders to align programs with gender priorities.	9.1.1 # of stakeholder engagement sessions held.	Director Programs, Director Research, Director HSS, Director GHS
		9.1.2. Feedback quality and actionable outcomes from stakeholders	
11. Reporting and Accountability	10.1. Include gender equality progress in all reports (board, monthly, quarterly and annual reports).	10.1.1. Percentage of reports including gender equality metrics.	SMT
		10.1.2. Frequency of accountability reviews conducted	
12. Review Mechanisms	11.1. Regular reviews of implementation progress will ensure alignment with organizational goals	11.1.1 # of feedback submissions received.	ED
		11.1.2 % of feedback integrated into revisions	