

WHY ORGANIZATIONS NEED A GENDER POLICY

DEFINE THE COMMITMENTS THAT SHOULD GOVERN EVERYDAY DECISIONS

FOR EXECUTIVE TEAMS, BOARDS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEADS

A gender policy gives an organization an agreed basis for decisions that affect equality, including who is hired and promoted, how resources are allocated, whose knowledge peels from programs, and how content is received at a response. It value depends on the authority, procedures, and resources attached to it. Use this tool to decide what your organization needs and how a policy should guide practice.

1 MAKE EQUALITY AN INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

A clear policy sets expectations that staff and partners can use consistently across teams and leadership transitions. It identifies the decisions subject to review and the managers amenable for implementation. ThrivBold recommends treating policy development as a governance process, with staff and affected groups helping to define the issues and assess proposed commitments.

The policy should connect internal employment practices with external programs and partnerships. A useful discussion examines whether the organization's working conditions, funding practices, and decision processes support the equality it seeks through its public work.

2 GIVE THE POLICY A DEFINED SCOPE

Specify the people, entities, and activities covered, including staff, consultants, partners, and governing bodies where relevant. State the intended equality outcomes, assign responsibilities, and establish a resource commitment, and define how implementation and complaints will be reviewed. Connect the policy to applicable employment requirements and existing organizational procedures.

Practical implementation requires staff capacity and adequate financing. CARE's operational guidance, for example, connects gender commitments to budgets, specialist support, staff responsibilities, and partner practice. [1] A policy should make these relationships explicit in the organization's own context.

3 UNDERSTAND HOW THE INSTRUMENTS WORK TOGETHER

States commitments, scope, decision responsibilities, and accountability.
Sets time-bound priorities, activities, costs, owners, and indicators.
Explain how staff apply commitments in routine decisions.
Provide dedicated prevention, reporting, response, and remedy processes.

Align these instruments and clarify their boundaries. Specialized safeguarding procedures require their own competent oversight and accessible reporting routes.

DECIDE WHAT YOUR ORGANIZATION NEEDS

Discuss the following questions with leadership, staff, and representatives of people affected by your work. Record evidence and the decision needed for each answer.

- 1 **Institutional commitment.** Where are gender equality commitments formally agreed, and who has authority to apply them?
- 2 **Everyday decisions.** How do hiring, promotion, pay, procurement, and program approval reflect those commitments?
- 3 **Capacity and resources.** Which managers own delivery, what support do they have, and where is funding secured?
- 4 **Voice and accountability.** How can staff and affected groups influence priorities, raise concerns safely, and obtain a response?
- 5 **Evidence and review.** What shows whether practices and outcomes are changing, and who can require corrective action?

CHOOSE THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

Where commitments and responsibilities are unclear, develop a policy through an organizational assessment and consultation. Where an existing policy has gaps in scope or authority, revise it. Where commitments are clear but delivery is weak, prioritize a funded action stronger, procedures, and management follow-through. Several responses may be needed together.

APPLY THE TEST TO A PROMOTION DECISION

In an illustrative organization, promotion criteria reward continuous availability for travel and evening meetings. A policy review ask whether these requirements reflect essential duties and how they affect people with care responsibilities. The response may combine revised criteria, more predictable scheduling, and documented review of selection decisions.

The result to examine is equitable access to progression and fair treatment in decisions. Track relevant differences and discuss the reasons behind them. A change in policy wording is evidence of a commitment; subsequent decisions show how it is being applied.

AGREE THE NEXT INSTITUTIONAL DECISION

Priority issue:

Policy development, revision, or implementation action:

Executive sponsor, resources, and decision date:

SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

[1] CARE. Gender and finance and human resources. CARE Emergency Toolkit.
<https://www.vandemergencymtoolkit.org/gender/gender-in-emergencies/6-gender-and-finance-human-resources/>

[2] UN Women (2022). Handbook on gender mainstreaming for gender equality results.
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/02/handbook-on-gender-mainstreaming-for-gender-equalityResults>