

RWANDA NETWORK OF PEOPLE LIVING
WITH HIV/AIDS - RRP+



GENDER
POLICY

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LIST OF ACCRONYMS

RRP+	Rwanda Network of people Living with HIV/AIDS
RBC	Rwanda Biomedical Center
GIPA	Great Involvement of People Living with HIV
NGO	Non-Government Organization
AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
RGB	Rwanda Governance Board
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus,
PLHIV	People Living with HIV



FORWARD BY THE CHAIRPERSON



On behalf of the Rwanda Network of People Living with HIV (RRP+), I am pleased to share our warm greetings and deep appreciation to all readers of this Gender Policy. As a network committed to advancing the rights, wellbeing, and meaningful involvement of people living with HIV, it is an honor to present this important guide that promotes awareness on Gender Mainstreaming, HIV prevention, care, treatment, and the mitigation of social and economic impacts.

In our continued fight against the HIV epidemic, information and integrity remain among our strongest tools. This policy document stands as a valuable resource offering insights into gender integration, HIV awareness and prevention strategies, and the importance of creating supportive and inclusive workplaces.

Through this policy, RRP+ seeks to empower individuals and institutions with the knowledge and attitudes necessary to prevent HIV, challenge gender-based violence, harassment, and discrimination, and ensure that every person can work and live free from stigma or threat.

We take this opportunity to acknowledge and commend the dedicated team and partners who worked tirelessly to develop this document. Their contribution embodies the shared vision of RRP+ where people living with and affected by HIV are healthy, respected, and fully engaged in the national HIV response.

We encourage all stakeholders to read, share, and apply the principles outlined in this Gender Policy within their organizations and communities. Together, we can build a more equitable and supportive environment where no one faces harassment, discrimination, or exclusion due to their HIV status or gender.

Sylvie MUNEZA

Chairperson,

Rwanda Network of People Living with HIV /RRP+



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FORWARD BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

It is with great pleasure and a deep sense of commitment that I extend my heartfelt greetings to all the readers of this gender policy. As the Executive Secretary of the Rwanda Network of People Living with HIV (RRP+)], dedicated to raising awareness about HIV/AIDS, it is an honor to introduce this comprehensive guide on promoting awareness about Gender Mainstreaming, HIV prevention, care treatment, economic and social impact mitigation.

In our collective pursuit to combat the HIV epidemic, knowledge and integrity becomes a powerful tool. This publication serves as a beacon of information, offering insights into the developments in Gender mainstreaming, HIV awareness, prevention strategies, and the importance of fostering a supportive working environment.

Through the pages of this policy, we hope to empower individuals with the knowledge needed to protect themselves and others, challenge GBV, Harassment, discrimination, and create a working place where everyone can work free from any threat.

I commend the dedicated team and contributors who have worked tirelessly to compile this valuable resource. Their commitment reflects the shared vision of RRP+: to see that Rwandans living with and affected by HIV are healthy, and free from stigma and discrimination, as they are also fully engaged in the HIV response.

I encourage you to delve into the contents of this gender policy document, share the information within your co-workers, and actively contribute to the ongoing conversation surrounding HIV response. By working together, we can make strides towards a future where HIV is no employee is harassed or threatened.

Thank you for your support, engagement, and commitment to the cause.

Sincerely,


Dr. MUTAMBUKA Deo (PhD)

Executive Secretary

Rwanda Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS - RRP+





I. RRP+ BACKGROUND

Rwanda Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS - RRP+ is a Rwandan civil society organization whose members and beneficiaries are People infected and affected by HIV. It was founded in March 2003 when representatives of 175 associations of People Living with HIV (PLHIV) from across the country came together and formed the RRP+ to serve as coordinating organ for activities supporting people infected and affected by HIV as well as to promote Greater Involvement of PLHIV(GIPA) in the national HIV response.

RRP+ continued to grow by becoming an umbrella of NGOs, Cooperatives and Associations which are active across the country. RRP+ activities have been targeted towards several concepts like Gender, HIV prevention, impact mitigation and mobilizing PLHIV to form NGOs, Cooperatives and associations to support their livelihoods and thereby actively participate in HIV response and welfare of PLHIV. RRP+ was officially recognized in Rwanda as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) under Registration N^o 54/RGB/NGO/2016.

Implementing a gender policy in RRP+ is a proactive step towards Gender mainstreaming and creating a more just and equitable environment, which benefits not just individuals but the institution as a whole.

- Equity and Fairness:** Gender policy helps ensure that all individuals, regardless of gender, have equal opportunities and are treated fairly. This helps address and mitigate systemic biases and discrimination that might otherwise disadvantage certain genders.
- Diversity and Inclusion:** By promoting gender equity, institutions foster a more inclusive environment. Diverse perspectives contribute to better decision-making and problem-solving, which can enhance overall performance and innovation.
- Legal Compliance:** Many countries have legal requirements for gender equality. Institutions must implement gender policies to comply with these laws and avoid legal repercussions.
- Workplace Culture:** Effective gender policy contributes to a positive and respectful workplace culture. This can lead to higher job satisfaction, reduced turnover, and a more supportive environment for all employees.
- Talent Attraction and Retention:** Institution with strong gender policy is often more attractive to top talent. Employees are increasingly seeking workplaces that demonstrate a commitment to gender equity.





Addressing Harassment and Discrimination: Gender policy often includes provisions for addressing and preventing sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination. This helps create a safer and more supportive environment.

Reputation and Branding: Organization known for their commitment to gender equity can enhance their reputation and brand image, attracting both clients and employees who value these principles.

Vision:

Rwandans infected and affected by HIV are healthy, live in a socio economic environment free from stigma and discrimination and are fully engaged in the HIV response.

Mission:

The RRP+ exists to contribute to the process of preventing HIV, Improve adherence to continuity care and treatment for HIV infected patients and restores hope and improves the quality of life of persons, families and communities affected by HIV.

II. ABOUT THIS POLICY

RRP+ Organization considers that Rwandan Constitution recognize that gender is the one of its core principles. For this purpose, RRP+ knows that social norms and biased stereotypes prevent women and men from exercising their free choice & rights in the society and from taking full and equal advantage of opportunities for individual development and contribution to the national development. It is increasingly clear that gender disparities, mindset and biases undermine the effectiveness of achieving RRP+'s mission and objectives.

In order to fulfill our mission and vision, RRP+ is committed to promote gender equality and gender equity in our organization and in our programs.

RRP+ will improve the ability of women and men, girls and boys to work closely, creatively and effectively in the organization and in communities by increasing awareness on gender inequalities and by working with women and men, girls and boys to change the situation.

RRP+ envisages to promote gender equality and gender equity within the institution through our human resources management, organizational culture, and within its target audience, women and children especially, and the communities we serve through our programs. Finally, gender mainstreaming will improve RRP+ organizational effectiveness, quality and impact of its programs. The aim of Gender Policy is developed

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in the framework of the National Gender Policy where its members and staffs are required to adhere to it in promoting gender equality¹ and gender equity².

III. POLICY GOAL AND OBJECTIVE

The goal of this policy is to contribute to improved access equal rights to women and men, girls and boys, and children's rights vis a vis to resources, opportunities and services for both women, men and children (both sex: boy and girls).

The objectives are as follows:

- Ensure gender balance in the decision-making bodies and operationally;
- Enhance our organizational/institutional capacity in addressing gender issues.
- Promote equity and equality between women & men and between children, both sex in all spheres of organizational programs.

Strategies

- Build institutional capacity in gender issues (gender equality and gender equity).
- Mainstream gender in planning, implementation, monitoring & evaluation and reporting process.
- The staff will be trained in gender mainstreaming in all programs management cycle and will be exposed to relevant gender analysis tools.

This will be achieved by:

- Open and transparent recruitment with the optic of gender equality in mindset. RRP+ will encourage both women and men to compete for organizational positions.
- Putting in place an inclusive, clear and fair staff performance appraisal system taking into consideration gender equity and gender equality principles.
- Set clear gender targets in organizational departments against which performance will be measured.
- All research and documentation processes will consider gender equality as one of the key pillars of our programs.
- Before developing a long-term action plan, project proposals, and a gender needs assessment will be conducted in the community where the project will be implemented or to beneficiaries and members. This baseline assessment will allow the organization to know gender related reference indicators and plan accordingly.

¹ **Gender equality** means that the different behaviors, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favored equally.

² **Gender equity** means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs.





IV. GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

Gender mainstreaming in strategic planning involves integrating gender considerations into all stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation of strategies and policies. The goal is to ensure that gender equality and the diverse needs of different genders are effectively addressed and promoted. Here's how it can be done:

1. Assessment and Analysis:

- **Data Collection:** Gather gender-disaggregated data to understand how men and women are affected by current policies and practices. This includes assessing disparities and specific needs of various gender groups.
- **Needs Assessment:** Evaluate the needs and challenges faced by men and women within the context of the strategic plan. Identify areas where gender inequality exists or could be exacerbated.

2. Integration into Objectives:

- **Set Clear Goals:** Incorporate gender equality goals into the strategic objectives. This might include targets for improving representation, reducing disparities, or addressing specific gender-based issues.
- **Develop Gender-Sensitive Indicators:** Create indicators that measure progress towards gender equality. This helps in tracking and evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies in addressing gender issues.

3. Policy and Program Design:

- **Inclusive Strategies:** Design policies and programs that explicitly address gender inequalities and promote gender equity. Ensure that strategies are flexible enough to cater to the diverse needs of different genders.
- **Consultation:** Engage with gender experts, advocates, and representatives from different gender groups to ensure that their perspectives and needs are reflected in the planning process.





4. Implementation:

- **Allocate Resources:** Ensure that adequate resources (financial, human, and technical) are allocated to gender-related initiatives and support structures.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** Provide training for staff and stakeholders on gender issues and how to mainstream gender into their work.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- **Track Progress:** Regularly monitor and evaluate the impact of the strategies on different gender groups. Use gender-disaggregated data to assess progress and identify any unintended consequences.
- **Adjust Strategies:** Based on evaluation findings, make necessary adjustments to strategies and actions to better address gender disparities and improve outcomes.

6. Accountability and Reporting:

- **Transparent Reporting:** Report on gender-related outcomes and progress. This promotes accountability and provides insights into the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming efforts.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement mechanisms for feedback from stakeholders on gender issues, ensuring continuous improvement and responsiveness to gender needs.

Incorporating gender mainstreaming into strategic planning helps organization and institution to create more equitable and effective strategies that recognize and address the diverse needs and experiences of men and women.

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY AT ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

RRP+ will be responsible for implementing this policy and provide conducive environment that promote full productivity of both women and men, girls and boys working in the organization.

Proposed activities may include:





- Conducting gender analysis to identify and address barriers to equal representation in staffing patterns. Once data are analyzed, specific goals will be set for addressing staffing imbalances and actualize personnel benefits policy where necessary.
- Ensuring that career development opportunities are accorded to both men and women, girls and boys. This may include activities such as mentoring and coaching systems.
- Providing equal opportunities for both men and women, girls and boys in job application.
- Developing and/or reviewing existing policies, procedures, and systems to ensure that they support a gender-sensitive and conducive environment.
- Incorporating gender equity in our values and core competencies. These competencies should be integrated within performance management systems and into any management development model. Strategies about implementation at program and beneficiaries 'levels
- Carrying out a regularly assessment for verifying if RRP+ program have been supportive to the positive relationship between women and men, girls and boys. (Sustainability) and adjust accordingly.

VI. GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Physical, economical, sexual, psychological, emotional violence are not accepted and not tolerated within the organization even in staff behaviors. The code of conduct provides more details on this issue. The organization prohibits brutal, discriminatory behavior, Sex based harassment, human exploitation and trafficking in the organization and programs.

VII. GENDER FOCAL POINT

The appointed Gender focal point will be supervised by the Executive Secretary of RRP+, and one of the Board members assigned by her/his colleagues to follow this policy and to ensure continuous implementation of this policy and mainstreaming it in all programs. By extension, networking with other Institutions specialized in gender. The organizational budget will corporate gender activities set in this policy upon approval of this policy.

VIII. REVIEW OF THE POLICY

If necessary and in any time, the board members of RRP+ can suggest the revision of this policy if there is laws and public policies that came into force and having brought some changes and important adjustment i.e. if gender policy is changed.





ANNEX: General definitions

The definitions of gender related concepts used in this policy are drawn from range of literature, but mainly from United Nations Children's Fund "Gender Equality Glossary Terms and Concepts" 1 as detailed in the following paragraphs:

1. **Gender:** Gender is a social and cultural construction, which distinguishes differences in the attributes of men and women, girls and boys, and accordingly refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women. It also refers to the state of being male or female in relation to the social and cultural roles that are considered appropriate for men and women.
2. **Gender Equality:** implies that women and men, girls and boys have equal conditions, treatment and opportunities for realizing their full potential, human rights and dignity, and for contributing to (and benefitting from) economic, social, cultural and political development. Gender equality is, therefore, the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play. It is based on women and men being full partners in the home, community and society. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.
3. **Gender Equity:** is the process of being fair to men and women, boys and girls. It refers to differential treatment that is fair and positively addresses a bias or disadvantage that is due to gender roles or norms or differences between the sexes. Equity ensures that women and men and girls and boys have an equal chance, not only at the starting point, but also when reaching the finishing line.
4. **Empowerment:** Refers to increasing the personal, political, social or economic strength of individuals and communities. Empowerment of women and girls concerns women and girls gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality.
5. **Financial inclusion:** In this context, financial inclusion is referred to as of physical access to financial institutions, eligibility, update and usage of financial products and services including informal needed to accelerate and meet women and men consumers' aspirations.
6. **Gender mainstreaming:** It is a strategy for making girls' and women's, as well as boys' and men's, concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs so that girls and boys and women and men benefit equality, and inequality is not perpetuated.



7. **Gender Sensitive:** Programs and policies that are aware of and address gender differences. It also refers to as the state of knowledge of the socially constructive differences between women and men, including differences in their needs as well as the use of such knowledge to identify and understand the problems arising from such differences and to act purposively to address them. It also refers to a mindset where people recognize or are aware of gender-based discrimination which hinders enjoyment of human rights. It is an understanding and routine consideration of the social economic and cultural factors underlining discrimination based on sex whether against women and men.
8. **Gender responsiveness:** It refers to the planning process in which programs, policy and actions are developed to deal with and counteract problems which arise out of socially constructive differences between men and women.

