



GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

POLICY AND STRATEGY



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (SDI)

Executive Statement

This is the first gender and social inclusion policy for Sustainable Development Initiative (SDI). Initially the SDI had a gender policy only which was in place since 2007. The gender policy was reviewed to address some policy gaps in women participation and also to include other marginalized social groups such as youth and children, people with disabilities and other minority groups. The policy will help us to sincerely commit ourselves to bring about positive change through equitable development.

Our mission is to improve the quality of lives and livelihoods of people and promote sustainable development. We aim at transforming the lives of the most vulnerable and marginalized people especially, Children, Youth and Women. The key focal areas for SDI are; a) Youth Development b) Economic Empowerment c) Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) & Humanitarian Assistance d) Climate Change and e) HIV& AIDS . SDI focuses on the most vulnerable /the poor and tries to find sustainable/long lasting solutions to poverty and aim to addressing social injustices. Our success will depend on how gender inequality and social exclusion is addressed.

This policy demonstrates SDI's continued commitment to finding effective, efficient and equitable solutions to development. We acknowledge the fact that gender inequality and social exclusion affects the distribution of resources, work, decision making, the enjoyment of rights and entitlements at different levels of the community. We believe that different social groups have the capacity and experience in dealing with developmental problems that affect their lives.

It is very possible to bring visible results from our gender and social inclusion efforts if we become more creative and try new strategies and approaches complimented by an effective monitoring and evaluation system. It is important to know that as an organization, the work that we do fits into the global bigger picture. We therefore need to invest effort in domesticating and grounding international and national frameworks that promote gender equality and social inclusion, contextualizing them is our specific areas of focus. As we continue to give specific attention to women's needs and contributions to address the gender gaps, unequal opportunities and discrimination, we must also pay attention to issues that affect other social group's livelihoods

Achieving gender equality and social inclusion is not a once-off effort. As a software issue, gains made from our efforts can easily be lost. We therefore need to invest considerable effort to ensure that gender equality and social inclusion are constantly promoted and actively sustained.

Maynard Nyirenda
Executive Director

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Our vision is healthy and empowered communities, living in a sustainable, peaceful and enabling environment to fulfil their potential, raise their living standards and care for the environment. This will be done by reducing socio-economic vulnerabilities, inequalities such as gender inequality and social exclusion.

Study reports used as reference materials have shown differences in roles, responsibilities, needs, interest and capacities of women, boys, girls, men and other social groups. These are influenced by social and cultural factors, often deeply rooted in socio-cultural beliefs. These differences can play a significant role when addressing different sustainable development and livelihoods issues. SDI believes that gender and social inclusion concerns need to be addressed specifically.

Our organization has observed that although efforts have been invested to address gender gaps and ensuring inclusive development, Malawi is still grappling with gender inequalities and social exclusion that are geographical, political, and economic based. SDI believes that promoting gender equality and social inclusion is cornerstone to community development and is about ensuring that equitable and sustainable progress is achieved in its programming.

SDI also recognizes that the meaning of gender equality and social inclusion does and should not be limited to numbers of different social groups in all activities, nor treating them exactly the same. It means recognizing that different social groups often have different needs and priorities, face different constraints, have different aspirations and contribute to development in different ways. Understanding and dealing with these differences and their underlying causes is key in promoting gender equality and social inclusion.

Sustainable Development Initiative specifically acknowledges that the terms 'gender' and 'gender equality' imply concern for both men and women, and the relationships between them. The organization will promote perceptions and values that enhance male and female complementarity and the need for them to work together for the common good without benefiting one individual over another. Nevertheless, specific attention to women's needs and contributions is typically required in order to address the array of gender gaps, unequal policies and discrimination that historically have disadvantaged women and distorted development in all societies. Efforts will be made to address men's specific needs where doing so will contribute to gender equality.

Mainstreaming gender and social inclusion will be the main strategy used by SDI. However where necessary, and possible, SDI will implement stand-alone gender and social inclusion initiatives which contribute to the achievement of the organization's strategic objectives. This Gender and Social Inclusion Policy and Strategy demonstrate effort to integrate the gender and social inclusion working approach more systematically

into all programmes, procedures and staff practice, which shall serve as a framework and provide concrete guidelines on how to tackle gender and social inclusion matters within SDI. It is also essential to close the gap in gender equality and social inclusion between the institutional principles and practice (walking the talk), as well as to ensure a more gender sensitive and an inclusive approach at all levels of the organization. Gender equality and social inclusion will not be treated as separate issues.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE'S PHILOSOPHY

Sustainable Development Initiative (SDI), is a non-profit making, local non-governmental organization registered with the Government of Malawi. SDI is registered with the Council for Non -Governmental Organizations in Malawi (CONGOMA) with Registration number C762/2014 and Certificate Number 01/169. SDI is also registered with the No-Government Organizations (NGO) Board of Malawi, registration number NGO/R/13/52

Vision: healthy and empowered communities, living in a sustainable, peaceful and enabling environment to fulfil their potential, raise their living standards and care for the environment.

Mission: Seeks to improve the quality of lives and livelihoods of people and promote sustainable development

PRINCIPLES

SDI is guided and motivated by the following aspirations in its 2014-2019 Strategic Plan:

- a. To transform the lives of the most vulnerable and marginalized people especially, Children, Youth and Women
- b. To strengthen the resilience and wealth of communities through improved food security, economic enhancement, disaster preparedness and access to markets
- c. To strengthen and identify new partnerships and collaborations
- d. To increase SDI's financial and organizational capacity and strengthen accountability

Our core values:

SDI sees these values as critical and integral to the work we are doing;

Transformational – We believe that for positive sustainable transformation to occur it must be addressed at three levels: personal empowerment and responsibility, community revitalization, and societal transformation. Holistic transformation occurs within all aspects of personal and community life, including the psychological, physical, spiritual, economic, political, and socio-cultural dimensions of life.

Honesty and transparency- Being accountable at all levels for the effectiveness of our actions and open in our judgments and communications with others.

Equity and justice- Requiring us to work to ensure equal opportunity to everyone, irrespective of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, HIV status, colour, class, ethnicity, disability, location and religion.

Excellence– We believe that those we serve deserve the best. We shall be an organization that is continually learning and sharing; creating models of good practice that can be replicated worldwide.

Empowering – We seek to strengthen the capacities and address the vulnerabilities of those we serve. This also includes encouraging, development of skills and access to resources for self-sufficiency.

Passionate – We are passionate about those we work for and passionate in all that we do. We seek to be creative and imaginative in finding sustainable solutions to addressing issues of poverty and injustice.

Mutual respect- Requiring us to recognize the innate worth of all people and the value of diversity.

Solidarity with the poor- Powerless and excluded will be the only bias in our commitment to the fight against poverty.

POLICY SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on furthering gender equality and social inclusion in Sustainable Development Initiative. The Policy is important in facilitating the translation of institutional gender and social inclusion principles into practice as well as ensuring a more gender sensitive and inclusive approach at all levels of the organization. It demonstrates SDI's commitment to promoting gender equality and social inclusion as key elements in achieving sustainable and equitable development. The policy is accompanied by an implementation strategy which will spell out implementation guidelines, outlining mechanisms for all members of staff and volunteers. It ensures organizational accountability to promoting gender equality and social inclusion. The policy will help to understand broader gender and social inclusion dynamics and has been developed guided by several organizational, national, regional and international instruments that commit Malawi to achieving gender equality and social inclusion. These include but not limited to:

ORGANISATIONAL INSTRUMENTS

SDI has the following instruments that guides its operations and programming

- a. SDI strategic plan
- b. HR and Administration Policy
- c. Financial Policy
- d. Gender and Social Inclusion strategy
- e. Child Protection Policy
- f. Procurement Policy
- g. Financial Management Policy
- h. Conflict of Interest Policy
- i. Anti-Fraud Policy
- j. Anti-Corruption Policy
- k. Whistle Blower Policy
- l. Volunteer Policy

NATIONAL INSTRUMENTS

- The Malawi Constitution provides for the right to equality in Section 20 and specifically articulates the rights of women in Section 24.
- Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS both I & II) is the key document for national programming and resource allocation to various sectors
- National Gender Programme, and it is a commitment by the Government to promoting gender equality and achieving women empowerment by nationalizing and localizing international instruments, declarations, treaties and protocols
- The National Gender Policy revised (2008) that emphasizes gender mainstreaming as a key strategy in addressing gender related issues.
- National Youth Policy
- Malawi HIV Prevention Strategy: 2015-2020
- National Youth Friendly Health Service Strategy
- National Disaster Risk Management Policy
- National *Climate Change Management Policy*
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REGIONAL

- African Union (AU) Gender Policy
- The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development which Malawi signed in 2009.
- African Youth Charter

INTERNATIONAL

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

- Fourth World Conference on Women in Development that took place in Beijing (1995).
- Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - Goal 3 of the MDGs is to promote gender equality and empower women with a key target on elimination of gender disparity in the education sector.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- The United Nations (UN) Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which Malawi signed in 1987.

CROSS REFERENCING

To ensure that it is effective, this gender policy has been cross-referenced with policies and guidelines relating to SDI's functions including:

- All policies developed by SDI
- Studies/research work reports
- Theory of change
- Strategic Plan

POLICY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our Gender and Social Inclusion Policy and strategy will be guided by the following principles:

- The Policy and Strategy shall seek to conform to the requirements and provisions of all National policy and legal frameworks on gender and social inclusion such as the National Gender Policy Frameworks and other relevant policies and legislation to ensure that it promotes equal participation by women and men, and girls and boys in governance, management, and service delivery by promoting gender equality at the workplace and in programmes and projects.
- The Policy and Strategy shall be founded on principles of equality of all persons particularly women and men as a principle enshrined in the Malawi Constitution and other international instruments to which Malawi is a signatory. SDI recognizes that equality and equity in access to opportunities and benefits from development interventions are critical for the successful implementation of programmes and projects.
- The policy and strategy shall pay attention to addressing gender inequality and social exclusion, promoting equity at the levels of management and staff of SDI; and in programme design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

- Sustainable Development Initiative recognizes the need to understand the social dimensions of poverty and with it the context-specific gender and social relations.
- Sustainable Development Initiative will promote equal rights and equal opportunities and help communities challenge cultural practices which encourage or promote gender inequality and social exclusion. Existing gender specific disparities and all forms of exclusion have to be addressed and the various forms of gender and other discrimination overcome.

POLICY STATEMENT

We will advance gender equity within the institution through our management of human resources and the organizational culture, and within the communities we serve through our programming and advocacy.

POLICY COMMITMENTS

- As an organization, Sustainable Development Initiative will be committed to ensuring gender parity and will pursue the achievement of a 40% female: 60% male ratio (currently it is at 70% male staff). The organization will also ensure inclusion of other disadvantaged social groups such as people with disabilities. Tracking of the gender and social inclusion profile of SDI's workforce will be undertaken continuously. The organization will also work towards understanding and addressing underlying causes of the current gender disparities and social exclusion in its workforce and volunteer base.
- SDI will continue to invest resources in strengthening the institutional arrangements for gender equality and social inclusion including the development of accountability systems and capacity development.
- Realizing that gender mainstreaming is a complex process, Sustainable Development Initiative will make reference to the toolkit/manual containing guidelines and checklists to equip staff and partners with knowledge and skills to effectively mainstream gender and social inclusion. The toolkit which is aimed at providing practical guidance to all frontline programme staff on how to mainstream gender and social inclusion will be made available to staff both in electronic and print copies. The organization will also be open to use other innovative and effective gender and social inclusion programming tools.

POLICY GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Goal

Increased gender equality and social inclusion at the workplace and in programming as we work towards empowering the youth towards sustainable development in addressing issues of a) Youth Development b) Economic Empowerment c) Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) & Humanitarian Assistance d) Climate Change and e) HIV& AIDS

Objectives

- To provide a clear and strategic direction on gender equality and social inclusion, ensuring that all programmes and projects incorporate a gender perspective and use inclusive approaches in project assessment, design, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation
- Address systemic and structural practices (in programming and at the workplace) that create barriers to the realization of gender equality and social inclusion; including prevention and response to gender based violence, exploitation, abuse and all other forms of discrimination.
- To achieve the capacity among staff and partners to facilitate and effectively embed gender and social inclusion considerations in their day to day work
- Engage and coordinate with partners, governments, funders, communities and civil society organizations to promote and support effective, creative and impactful ways to promote gender equality and social inclusion including active involvement of men and boys as allies in promoting gender equality.
- Apply these commitments within SDI and across all programme areas ensuring that all staff and people who provide support i.e. consultants, volunteers are using integrated planning approaches and recognized gender sensitive and inclusive tools and techniques such as gender and social exclusion analysis frameworks, collection of age/sex/social identity disaggregated data.

POLICY REVIEW

Sustainable Development Initiative guided by the Gender and Social Inclusion Focal Person will report annually on the progress made on the implementation plans. An overall review and evaluation of the policy will be conducted 2.5 years after its adoption to assess the gains and impact made.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A gender and social inclusion will be mainstreamed in the monitoring and evaluation system (with SMART indicators) with appropriate and efficient feedback mechanisms. This will involve undertaking monitoring and evaluation functions at all levels including

gathering information at organizational and grass-root levels. Sustainable Development Initiative will continue enlisting cooperation with the district level and national level structures to contribute to its operationalization and further achieving to the success of the National Gender and Social Inclusion programmes.

IMPLEMENTATION

Sustainable Development Initiative will commit itself to the overall principles, goal and objectives of the gender and social inclusion policy. Appreciating the fact that implementation of a Gender and Social Inclusion Policy requires a well-defined framework that will facilitate efficient linkages to translate the goals and objectives into action at all levels, an accompanying implementation strategy has been developed. Every year a gender and social inclusion action plan (to implement what has been outlined in the implementation strategy) with indicators, will be developed and implemented. Project specific gender and social inclusion considerations will be made at all project development levels i.e. design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The Gender and Social inclusion Strategy provides guidelines to ensure that appropriate planning and implementation of the policy activities at organizational level are undertaken in an integrated, consistent and sustainable manner.

The implementation strategy includes monitoring and evaluation components with indicators to help capturing and recording gender and social inclusion programming progress, to promote the visibility of gender and social inclusion programming results including gender and inclusive perspectives of strategic objectives. This will also ensure the availability and utilization of baseline data and disaggregated evidence in reporting. The policy objectives will be achieved through the following outlined outcomes developed based on the SWOT analysis conducted.

Outcome 1 - Increased capacity and knowledge: Support and promotion of learning and sharing knowledge on gender equality and social inclusion will be prioritized to ensure that staff capacity in gender and social inclusion awareness and programming is actively developed to enhance the understanding of its intersection with sustainable livelihoods and increase staff's understanding of their own responsibility to mainstream gender and social inclusion. To create an enabling environment for gender and social inclusion programming SDI will build internal capacity through appropriate and tailored trainings, workshops, mentorship, forums both inside and outside SDI. The capacity building efforts will also include provision of IEC on gender and social inclusion. SDI will also promote e-learning on gender, linking staff and partners to relevant e-learning and sharing opportunities. Relevant and supporting structures i.e. gender and social inclusion focal person will be established. Through forums on common donor funding, the organization will lobby for creation of a community of practice, where a gender coordination team, comprising of gender focal persons will promote learning and sharing on GESI responsive policies and priorities.

Outcome 2 - Increased Political Commitment: Conducive workplace environment for all social groups: Sustainable Development Initiative will strive for a zero tolerance for sexual harassment and maintain a workplace free from sexual harassment. The staff rules and regulations must include effective and transparent processes in cases of physical or verbal assault or abuse of or by staff members. SDI will also define sexual abuse in its context and create awareness on that (Refer to the HR policy). The organisation will also invest in efforts to create and sustain a workplace environment that promotes gender equality and social inclusion. All organizational policies and strategies will include gender and social inclusion. SDI management will ensure implementation of the GESI policy.

Outcome 3 - Engendered and Inclusive Communication. Gender sensitive and inclusive language and images will be used in all internal and external communications and staff must have the capacity to communicate in a gender sensitive and inclusive language and way i.e. using the word chairperson instead of chairman, spokesperson instead of spokesman, ancestors instead of forefathers, humankind instead of mankind, native language instead of mother tongue, emcee instead of Master of Ceremonies. It is therefore essential that the communications policy/strategy ensures that gender and social inclusion relevant content is adequately and consistently addressed in all SDI's publications.

Outcome 4 - Improved Coordination: SDI's gender and social inclusion programming efforts will be coordinated and harmonized across the organisation by the gender and social inclusion focal person. The Focal person will have a clear set of Terms of Reference and will provide technical guidance and backstopping support to projects/programmes/ organisation including trainings, analysis, reporting and planning skills to build capacity for gender responsive and inclusive interventions. Beyond the organisation effective coordination on gender and social programming will also be enhanced through networking and collaborating with other stakeholders.

Outcome 5 - Increased Accountability: The organisation will ensure that gender equality and inclusive perspectives results are incorporated into all aspects of its work, including all new projects, organizational documents, assessments, plans, analyses, researches. The organisation's performance appraisal system, will help to ensure accountability to promoting gender equality and social inclusion at all levels. Management team will be held accountable for failings in embedding gender and social inclusion within the organization.

Outcome 6 - Improved attitudes on gender and social inclusion: Gender equality and social inclusion programming, since it explicitly seeks to change cultural values and power relationships, often encounters more resistance among staff and community members than economic development programming. More attention and support for practice based knowledge, gender and social inclusion dialogue and inspiring staff will be provided where some of the deeper foundations of our perceptions and behaviour, which lead to gender inequality and social exclusion, are brought into question. This will

facilitate transformative change. The organization will instill values that enhance gender equality and social inclusion such as respect, integrity, dignity

Output 7 - Improved design, planning and implementation: Recognizing that development interventions operate within existing social, cultural, economic, environmental, institutional and political structures in any community, SDI will ensure that a gender and social exclusion analysis is incorporated in the design, planning and implementation processes of all future project. It will help to identify and address the root causes of gender inequality and social exclusion; and ensure the development of effective strategies for addressing the identified issues.