

WOMEN INITIATIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT (WISE) GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

Introduction

Women Initiative for Sustainable Environment (WISE) is a grassroots non-profit organization that envisions a safe, healthy and just environment for everyone. WISE has a mission of advancing constructive environmental ideals and practices by empowering people, especially women and youth to take advantage of opportunities in natural resource stewardship. Our goal is to promote women's representation, active participation and leadership in natural resource governance. WISE recognizes that until gender equality is at the center of it all we cannot overcome poverty and social injustice and all people will not have equal rights and opportunities. WISE also recognizes there are inequalities existing in the power relations between genders and ages and for social justice to be achieved, it is important it is to challenge the patriarchal system and advance gender equality and equity. This policy will further engrave the commitment of WISE to ensuring that gender equality and equity is fully incorporated in all our work as a means to overcome poverty and social injustice more effectively. Working with others, WISE seeks to promote equal realization of dignity and human rights for all genders and ages, and the elimination of poverty and injustice.

GOAL

The goal of the gender equality policy is to promote gender equality and empower all women and girls through its programs.

PURPOSE

In the context of sustainable development, WISE will consistently mainstream gender issues in its implementation arrangements and frameworks for its projects. WISE's gender policy recognizes that gender relations, roles and responsibilities exercise important influences on women's and men's access to and control over decisions, assets and resources, information, and knowledge. This gender policy also recognizes that the impacts of climate change can exacerbate existing gender inequalities. This gender policy further acknowledges that climate change initiatives are more sustainable, equitable and more likely to achieve their objectives when gender equality and women's empowerment considerations are integrated into the design and implementation of projects. Further, this gender policy recognizes that women and

vulnerable communities are also part of the solution to environmental, behavioural and social change and should, therefore, be effectively engaged in discussions and decisions that affect them.

The purpose of the Policy is to:

- Promote natural resource stewardship and climate change interventions through a comprehensive gender approach
- Enhance gender equality within its governing structure and day-to-day operations
- Promote the goals of gender equality and women's empowerment through its decisions on the allocation of funds, operations and overall impact; and
- Contribute to reducing the gender gap of climate change-exacerbated social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities and exclusions

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Gender equality means recognizing that men and women often have different needs and priorities, face different constraints, have different aspirations, and contribute to development in different ways. To enable the exploration and understanding of gender differences

- We will systematically deploy and continuously assess the needs of both males and females in our project planning and implementation. We will also strive to ensure that all staff understand the different roles, responsibilities and experiences of women and men in relation to the issues being addressed by the project.
- Draw upon research, analysis and experiences to design projects that are gender sensitive
- Ensure our project implementation strives to achieve equitable economic and social benefits for women and men.
- Engage in systematic collection and analysis of data to understand if and how issues affect females and males differently.
- Engage in systematic capturing and sharing of lessons learned in relation to intended and unintended impacts on the lives of women and men, including impact on gender equality.
- Engage men and boys in support of gender equality and women's empowerment when in line with

- Form partnerships with women's rights organizations and movements to collaborate in the achievement of shared goals and elevate the voice of marginalized people; and engage key stakeholders in the struggle for gender equality including other civil society, government, private sector, public and private donors.
- Recruit and retain staff with a commitment to gender equality; build staff and partner capacity and skills in gender equality and diversity, and ensure all annual operating plans, job descriptions and performance plans reflect our commitment to gender equality.
- Regularly report to programme participants, donors and the public on progress on gender equality

STRATEGIC AREAS OF INTERVENTION

Our programs deliver awareness and education on women's rights in the community, personal development through agency empowerment, leadership education, financial literacy, entrepreneurship and enterprise development. We also teach peace and conflict resolution; we have been represented in various peace committees that are mediating in crisis situations, and stirring and leading a number of peace negotiations. Our peace work has seen us get involved in one way or the other in efforts targeted at addressing the various forms of tragic but preventable conflicts and insurgencies that has caused so much devastation across Nigeria. We provide leadership development, coaching, and mentoring programs that unleash women's potentials to take on the role of leaders for sustainability, rather than acting as spectators or merely as participants. We also provide revolving small loans and financial assistance that help women start up or boost their existing businesses.

CONCLUSION

This policy is complementary to the other policies and set of standards and the WISE board will coordinate oversight of this policy and review and update as required. All WISE employees are required to adhere to this policy and other related policies.