



CHITUKUKO FOUNDATION GENDER POLICY

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Ken Matekenya

Executive Director

FOREWORD

Chitukuko Foundation is committed to promoting a community in which people are valued, respected, and treated equitably. **Chitukuko Foundation** is mandated to achieve excellence in the delivery of its interventions that requires an environment in which staff as well as the community at large with whom it serves can flourish irrespective of class, race or gender. The development of this Gender Policy has been inspired by the overwhelming demand to correct the imbalances that are there with regards to issues of equality amongst the sexes.

Chitukuko Foundation opposes discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnic or national origins, employment status, disability, family status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religious or ethical belief. This policy strategy requires that all selection, appointment, promotion and evaluation processes should be based on impartial assessment of merit and the definition of merit is inclusive of diverse skills and contributions. Where necessary, procedures will be reviewed, training provided and assistance given in achieving the successful delivery of equal opportunities.

This policy therefore should serve as a reference document when carrying all interventions within **Chitukuko Foundation** and its partners. The Gender Policy becomes a policy document upon its approval by the Board of Trustees. From that point on it is binding on all of **Chitukuko Foundation** staff unless otherwise stated in contracts.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. About Chitukuko Foundation

Chitukuko Foundation is a local organization established in 2013. The organization was registered under the trustee incorporation act and the registration number is: TR/INC 5065. **Chitukuko Foundation** is also registered with the NGO Regulatory Authority (NGORA) under the Registration Number: NGO/L/23/024, and registered with the Council for Non-Governmental Organisations in Malawi (CONGOMA) under Registration Number: C1715/2023. The organization believes that education is a catalyst for all development activities and that education enhances human development in all areas of people's social, economic, political and cultural rights. Our organization apart from focusing of education as the main thematic area, these subsectors of climate change resilience, (disaster risk management, food and livelihoods security, natural resources management), HIV and AIDS, youth empowerment, governance, gender and women rights, water and sanitation, Sexual Reproductive Health Rights, are the areas that reinforce our programming. Gender is mainstreamed in all our programs.

Vision:

A community without poverty and in which every individual attain the highest level of education that will enable them exercise their right to a life of dignity by realising their social, cultural, political and economic rights that transforms the mind-set.

Mission:

Chitukuko Foundation exists to contribute towards the progressive realization of right to attainment of the highest possible education and the people's ability to apply knowledge and skills gained in education in their development and daily life. This is achieved through working with volunteers and in partnership with likeminded civil society organizations, donors and other partners working for the same cause at all levels.

Chitukuko Foundation Objectives:

- To promote provision of quality education (primary and secondary) early childhood development for children, informal education and skills development in line with Malawi 2063 Enabler 5, and the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4).
- To conduct advocacy and community awareness raising on education policies, legislation and practices that promote or hinder community participation in education.
- To support implementation of education enhancing interventions such as climate change resilience, (disaster risk management, food and livelihoods security, natural resources management), HIV and AIDS, youth empowerment, governance, gender and women rights,

water and sanitation, Sexual Reproductive Health Rights, to ensure that barriers to access to education for children are minimized.

Identity:

Our vision, mission and the objectives enhance our aspiration to be recognised as: -

- A leading local development organization in the country championing collective action against illiteracy and oppression of marginalized people.
- A grassroots and policy-oriented local organization focusing on addressing inequalities and injustices in the country through our engagement with the rights holders.
- In the long term, we want to affiliate ourselves to national and international outlook in our profile and in our actions.

Values:

Respect for Human Rights: Increasing understanding and appropriate exercise of human rights and God-given freedoms especially among women, girls as well as the most vulnerable and marginalized groups of the community, believe and act with the understanding that people are of equal value irrespective of their individual circumstances, backgrounds or characteristics.

Mutual Respect: Fully value and affirm the dignity of each person in the community we serve. This respect is also the foundation of our relationships with those involved with our work including donors and other stakeholders and believing that the rights holders have the potential to overcome their vulnerabilities at all cost while on the other hand, respecting the laws, social, cultural and traditional values of our country and place of work.

Stewardship: Proper and prudent utilization of resources entrusted to the organization for the ultimate benefit of the community at large and promoting that culture that ensures that we remain accountable for our actions, open in our communications and relations, and credible in the decisions that we take.

Solidarity: Cultivating genuine relationships with all community members based on love and trust in order to strengthen ties that bind the right holders end their vulnerabilities and injustices being faced in non-discriminatory manner.

Empowerment: Equipping the community to confidently exercise initiatives and engage in decisions with a sense of informed choice on community matters and maintaining attitudes and behaviours that encourage true and genuine partnerships and alliances with others fighting for the common good.

Independence: Remaining independent in the decisions we take based on our mission, values and convictions, non-partisan in party-politics and religious affiliation and not being influenced by powerful forces based on their social, economic and political status and affiliation.

Courage of conviction: Believing that we must be bold and resolute in our beliefs, not fearing to take risks, acting without fear of failure, and embracing error as part of learning, gaining and applying knowledge.

1.2. About this Gender Policy

This Gender Policy provides guidelines for mainstreaming gender in various sectors of the economy with the overall goal of reducing gender inequalities and enhancing participation of women, men, girls and boys in socio economic and political development. Being an internal document, it provides internal guidance on how the Office aims to integrate a gender perspective and women's human rights throughout policy formulation, program development and activity implementation, including project monitoring and evaluation. The policy is informed by the human rights-based approach to programming. **Chitukuko Foundation** is mandated to contribute to the realization of all human rights for all people. Accordingly, nondiscrimination on the basis of sex is a fundamental principle of human rights law.

Chitukuko Foundation recognizes that sustainable economic and social development of the country requires full and equal participation of women, men, girls and boys. This Gender Policy, therefore, is to guide and direct staff of **Chitukuko Foundation** and its partner organizations at all levels to ensure that their planning and implementation of development programs are gender sensitive including resource allocation that contributes towards equitable national development objectives.

Tackling all forms of inequity, including gender inequality, is crucial for sustainable and peaceful development. Gender inequality is about unequal power relations leading to unequal opportunities to satisfy basic needs and develop oneself to one's full potential and to a decent living. For **Chitukuko Foundation**, gender means working with women, men, girls, and boys from all different background and from an intersectional approach. This means we will treat people equally no matter what their gender, age, class, ethnic background, sexual preference and physical ability (disabled people) is.

If the causes of unequal access of women to services and assets and their lack of voice are not addressed, and if we do not understand and work on the underlying factors that cause inequality, **Chitukuko Foundation** goals cannot be fully achieved. Gender equality means that the opportunities and life chances of men and women, boys and girls, are equal. The emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment reflects a concern that women and men have equal opportunities to make choices about what gender equality means and work in partnership to achieve it. Because of current disparities, equal treatment of women and men is insufficient as a strategy for gender equality. Equal treatment in the context of inequalities can mean the perpetuation of disparities. Commitment to achieving gender equality will require changes in institutional mindsets, practices and social relations through which disparities are reinforced and sustained. It also requires a strong voice for women in shaping their societies. However,

mainstreaming gender alone is not sufficient. To really work on gender equality, stand-alone programs and projects are necessary.

Chitukuko Foundation will promote gender equality and hence contributing to international agreements on gender equality such as CEDAW conventions. By addressing the inequality, more balanced power distribution between men and women will be reached and the rights of women and girls, as well as men and boys, enhanced.

2. POLICY GOAL

The overall goal of this policy is to mainstream gender in all development processes to enhance participation of men and women, boys and girls for sustainable and equitable development.

3. POLICY OBJECTIVES

- To promote and facilitate equal access to and control over productive resources, services and opportunities.
- To redress imbalances that arise from existing gender inequalities including traditional, cultural and social attitudes that hinder equal participation of women and men in development and put women in subordinate positions.
- To promote the recognition and value of women's multiple roles and responsibilities, their contribution towards national development and as beneficiaries of the development process.
- To ensure that women and girls, men and boys' are free, capable and enabled to exercise economic rights and ensure that equality between women, girls men and boys is enhanced through a gender perspective in all programs,
- To create an enabling environment as well as specific programs contributing to women's empowerment and gender equality.

4. POLICY APPLICATION

This policy applies to all staff members of **Chitukuko Foundation** regardless of gender, age, class, ethnic background, sexual preference and physical ability and is applicable at all levels and all the time. This is a policy that applies to all operations, at respective offices. It applies to the programs we develop and implement in the catchment areas and to the environment we create to effectively reach our goals. This environment includes our organizational structure and culture and the partnerships we engage in. For this policy to be effectively implemented and monitored, each unit will have a gender focal person. Periodically the gender policy will be reviewed by all gender focal points to update and adjust wherever necessary.

5. POLICY COMMITMENTS

- **Chitukuko Foundation** is sensitive to gender issues and committed to addressing gender imbalances in all areas of work including staff employment;
- Women and men are to be valued equally in all dimensions of **Chitukuko Foundation's** work and are provided equitable opportunities for development;
- All staff of the **Chitukuko Foundation** will be taken through a process where they will go through a session for them to gain experiences and knowledge which will assist all to gain an understanding of what it means to be female or male, and the inequitable relationships between women and men in most societies, and of the meaning of the universal right to equality;
- **Chitukuko Foundation** is committed to building an all-inclusive staff and community which provides the opportunity for all persons to develop their full potentials irrespective of disability, socio-cultural background and sex;
- Affirmative action strategies will be put in place to improve the quality of program delivery for women based on a recognition that action is required at all levels of **Chitukuko Foundation** to advance women's development and achieve gender equality and equity.
- **Chitukuko Foundation** will work towards achieving a gender equality and achieve empowerment of all women and girls.
- **Chitukuko Foundation** will incorporate gender and power analysis in the preparation and in the design of her programs and projects.
- **Chitukuko Foundation** will include gender in the entire project cycle and will include gender sensitive indicators for all stages: programming, implementing, monitoring and evaluating.
- **Chitukuko Foundation** will account for the contribution the organization makes to gender equality and will make the results (gender disaggregated data) available
- **Chitukuko Foundation** will train and sensitize staff to be gender sensitive and promote the commitment of the organization in this regard.
- **Chitukuko Foundation** will share the gender policy actively with partner organizations as part of the contracting and ask partners to share their gender policies with **Chitukuko Foundation**
- **Chitukuko Foundation** will regularly report to donors and the public on progress on gender equality in its work.
- **Chitukuko Foundation** will respect and uphold our commitment to gender quality including being respectful, using inclusive and positive language and images and avoiding stereotypes with particular attention to those based on gender.
- **Chitukuko Foundation** management will ensure that all employees understand and comply with this policy.

6. OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

- Through all stages of the program and project design attention will be paid to the different needs, interests, rights, and opportunities of women, men, boys, girls:
- Gender and power analysis: We will examine the differences between the roles that women and men play in communities and in society, the different levels of power they hold, their differing needs, constraints and opportunities and the impact of these differences on their lives.

- The program strategy reflects the result of the analysis and ensures that the root causes of the inequalities between women and men, boys and girls are addressed in the program design and implementation.
- The results framework will include gender disaggregated indicators to monitor against and measure the results achieved in women empowerment and gender equality.
- Monitoring and evaluation is an essential component of the project cycle and gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation is important to know if projects have created gender disparities or inequalities and to learn from our experience and get to know our best practices.
- Understand the size and nature of disadvantages experienced by women and girls, both in absolute terms and in comparison, with men and boys, identify and analyze the underlying causes of gender inequality, measure the consequences of gender inequality and design effective policy.
- The gender dimension will be integrated into thematic programs. This means that each program unit will ensure gender mainstreaming and aim for a gender transformative approach in their work and if possible, facilitate gender stand-alone programming. To support this, gender focal points will be appointed.

7. POLICY STRATEGIES

The following strategies shall be applied for smooth running of the **Chitukuko Foundation** gender policy

- Application or use of Gender neutral/sensitive terms by all staff.
- **Chitukuko Foundation** will encourage the review of policy documents from a gender perspective lens.
- Project proposals in all fields shall consider the needs of all sexes, with greater emphasis on women's training and capacity-building.
- Monitoring and evaluation of projects should identify the impact on women.
- Appoint gender focal points responsible for follow-up and monitoring of gender responsive policies.
- Encourage the dissemination of gender policies to the community at all levels.
- To advocate for positive attitudes and behaviors among females and males in the society
- Advocate for provision of counseling services including family planning to female and male counterparts
- Sensitize entire community to report cases of verbal abuse and sexual harassment.
- Lobby for creation of an enabling environment in learning institutions for students to report, verbal abuse and sexual harassment.
- To lobby for the elimination of all forms of harmful ritual and cultural practices that hinder girls' and boys', men's and women's participation in development.
- Advocate for the review of all oppressive statutory practices and customary laws that perpetuate gender discrimination.
- Translation and dissemination of the progressive constitutional provisions and laws into vernacular to create legal awareness so that people can understand and defend their rights.

- Identify gender imbalances, the level and nature of gender-based violence, traditional and bureaucratic barriers to men's and women's participation.
- To hold dialogue meetings with custodians of culture to raise awareness on the negative impact of traditional and bureaucratic barriers, all forms of gender-based violence and imbalances that undermine active participation and contribution of women and men to development.

8. HUMANITARIAN WORKERS' SIX CORE PRINCIPLES RELATING TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

The following principles of sexual behaviour outline international standards for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, and are considered an integral part of humanitarian worker's code of conduct.

- Sexual exploitation and abuse by any **Chitukuko Foundation** or humanitarian worker of any beneficiaries (adult or child) constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment
- Sexual activity between any **Chitukuko Foundation** or humanitarian workers and a child (person under the age 18) is strictly prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. In this case mistaken belief by any **Chitukuko Foundation** or humanitarian workers regarding the age of a child is not a defence against corrective action or termination of employment
- Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex (including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading, or exploitative behaviour) is strictly prohibited and is grounds for termination of employment. This includes exchange of assistance that is already due to beneficiaries.
- Any sexual relationships between **Chitukuko Foundation** or humanitarian workers and beneficiaries are not accepted and will not be tolerated since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationship undermines the credibility and integrity of **Chitukuko Foundation's** humanitarian aid work
- Where a **Chitukuko Foundation** or humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, she/he must report such concerns via **Chitukuko Foundation's** established reporting mechanisms
- All **Chitukuko Foundation** humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of CF's behaviour protocols/code of conduct. CF managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems, which maintain this environment

9. POLICY MONITORING

It is the responsibility of all **Chitukuko Foundation** staff and its partners to make sure that this gender policy is being put into practice.

10. CONCLUSION

Gender equality and women empowerment can only be achieved if we create an enabling environment where the staff is prepared to work in a gender-sensitive and even transformative way, the offices are equipped to allow women and men to develop equally, where discrimination on whatever basis is not tolerated and where the support to achieving the goals is well organized. This can be realized if we have:

- A human resources policy that is supportive of gender equality
- The right structure and mechanisms in place to define targets, to monitor performance and to account for our results.

Gender mainstreaming requires in-depth analysis, the development of tools for gender integration, capacity building of technical teams, the training and sensitization of institutions and beneficiary sectors and skills for monitoring and evaluation, as well as the drafting of reports.

11. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Term	Definition
CEDAW	The Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) provides the basis for realising equality between men and women through ensuring women's access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life; and state parties have agreed to take appropriate measures including legislation and temporary special measures so that women can enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms.
Empowerment	The process of "conscientisation" which builds critical analytical skills for an individual to gain self-confidence in order to take control of her or his life. Empowerment of women is an essential process in the transformation of gender relations because it addresses the structural and underlying causes of subordination and discrimination.
Engendering	In Gender studies, engendering refers to the process of integrating gender considerations and concerns into words, action and assessment.
Gender	In this policy framework document, gender refers to the social roles allocated respectively to women and to men in particular societies and at particular times. Such roles, and the differences between them, are conditioned by a variety of political, economic, ideological and cultural factors and are characterised in most societies by unequal power relations. Gender is distinguished from sex which is biologically determined. It is also defined as the socially and culturally constructed differences between men and women, boys and girls, which give them unequal value, opportunities and life chances. It also refers to typically masculine and feminine

	characteristics, abilities and expectations about how women and men should behave in society. These characters are time bound and changeable.
Gender awareness	A state of knowledge of the differences in roles and relations of women and men and how this results in differences in power relations, status, privileges and needs. It is also the recognition of the differences in the interests, needs and roles of women and men in society and how they result in differences in power, status and privilege. It also means the ability to identify problems arising from gender inequity and discrimination.
Gender blind	The situation where potentially differential policy impacts on men and women are ignored
Gender budget	A budgeting method that analyses the incidence of budgets on men and women and girls and boys. Gender budgeting entails analyses of revenue and expenditure impacts so as to avoid or correct gender imbalances.
Gender discrimination	Differential treatment to individuals on the grounds of gender.
Gender equality	A situation where women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential; are able to contribute equally to national political, economic, social and cultural development; and benefit equally from the results. Gender Equality entails that the underlying causes of discrimination are systematically identified and removed in order to give women and men equal opportunities. The concept of Gender Equality, as used in this policy framework, takes into account women's existing subordinate positions within social relations and aims at the restructuring of society so as to eradicate male domination. Therefore, equality is understood to include both formal equality and substantive equality; not merely simple equality to men.
Gender equity	The fair and just distribution of all means of opportunities and resources between women and men.
Gender gap	A difference in any aspect of the socio economic status of women and men, arising from the different social roles ascribed by society for women and men.
Gender indicator	An indicator that captures gender related changes in society over time and in relation to a norm (Beck, 1999).
Gender issues	These are issues that arise when the relationships between women and men, their roles, privileges, status and positions are identified and analysed. Gender issues arise where inequalities and inequities are shown to exist

between people purely on the basis of their being female or male. The fact that gender and gender differences are socially constructed is itself a primary issue to deal with.

Gender mainstreaming

Refers to a process that is goal oriented. It recognises that most institutions consciously or unconsciously serve the interests of men and encourages institutions to adopt a gender perspective in transforming themselves. It promotes the full participation of women in decision-making so that women's needs move from the margins to the centre of development planning and resource allocation.

Gender neutral

The assumption that policies, programmes and project interventions do not have a gender dimension and therefore affect men and women in the same way. In practice, policies intended to be gender neutral can be gender blind.

Gender perspective

An approach in which the ultimate goal is to create equity and equality between women and men. Such an approach has a set of tools for and guidelines on how to identify the impact on development of the relations and roles of women and men.

Gender policy

An organisation's policy that integrates gender in the mainstream of its programme activities, where the policy also designates institutional arrangements, responsibilities, management functions and tools/guidelines for mainstreaming.

Gender responsive

Refers to a planning process in which programmes and policy actions are developed to deal with and counteract problems which arise out of socially constructed differences between women and men.

Gender sensitive

The state of knowledge of the socially constructed differences between women and men, including differences in their needs, as well as to the use of such knowledge to identify and understand the problems arising from such differences and to act purposefully to address them.

Gender stereotyping

Constant portrayal in the media, the press or in the education system, of women and men occupying certain roles according to the socially constructed gender division of labor and expectations in behavior.

Gender training

The provision of formal learning experiences and skills in order to increase gender analysis and awareness skills, which serve to recognise and address gender issues in the programming process. Training can include the three dimensions of political: introducing gender concepts and analysis, the professional: providing staff with "how-to" skills and the personal:

challenging an individual's gender attitudes and stereotypes.

Policy

Guiding principles to a course of action arrived at by decision-makers to address a particular issue or issues.

Sex

The biological state of being a male or female. Sex is not equal to gender.