



Gender Policy

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Organizational Profile

Bargad is a youth development organization actively working to promote peace, justice and cooperation amongst the youth¹ in Pakistan. The organization has focused on creating opportunities and amplifying the voices of the youth ever since its inception in 1997, leading to a vast network of around 3000 youth volunteers, known as the Bargad Volunteer Network (BVN) throughout the country.

Bargad's Vision:

Politically, socially and economically empowered youth and women, respect, protect and promote peace and harmony

Bargad's Mission:

- a. Engage vulnerable youth and women in all diversity to their full potential through education, mentorship and innovative interventions designed to enhance their overall well-being.
- b. To invest in youth-led and youth-centred ideas, to convene key stakeholders in the sector and advocate for systems and policy changes that meet youths' needs.
- c. Engage youth to end violence against women.

Bargad has implemented more than 100 projects on youth training², youth mobilization and policy advocacy, including the provision of technical assistance to all the provincial governments of Pakistan, regions of Gilgit-Baltistan and the State of Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) for the formulation of their respective youth policies. These policies have been approved by the provincial governments of Punjab (2012), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (2016) and Sindh (2018), and Balochistan (2024) resulting in governments' pledges to allocate 4% budget to sports and youth affairs, 15% on the women employment quota, implementation of the E-Rozgar programs, and on youth participation in the local governments, respectively. Bargad has also conducted Capacity Enhancement workshops on youth development with officials of the youth affairs departments of Punjab, Balochistan and Sindh.

Bargad has a youth network of 782 individuals, civil society organizations and government institutions, with Youth engagements with 64 Universities, 40 Colleges and 35 Higher Secondary Schools.

The organization has previously partnered with 26 membership based student organizations and 15 Youth Groups over Pakistan; producing the largest pool of researches and publications on

¹ Adolescents: 12-19; Youth age bracket in Pakistan: 15-29

² Since 2003, the organization has trained 7880 youth activists and young faculty only through training workshops and peer sessions in issues of social development.

various aspects of youth than any other civil society organization in Pakistan, while also pioneering a youth track of peace and diplomacy in the South Asian region.

The hallmark of the organization is that its core youth volunteers participate in all aspects of the projects - from action-planning to project execution, while also mapping in the course of its work; issues as well as challenges identified by the youth across the country³.

³ The Youth in the mapping is part of the Youth Cohorts in the districts where Bargad has actively worked or is presently working.

commitment towards gender equality.

Introduction

This policy lays out Bargad's commitments to strive for a work place free from discrimination based on gender, and where every employee can fulfil their potential unhindered by discriminating mindsets, economic and social structures. The policy sets out Bargad's commitments and principles for our gender equality work. The policy applies to all of Bargad's programmes, advocacy, communication and community outreach. We recognize that power relations between genders are unequal and that we must challenge patriarchy and promote gender equality to achieve social justice. Through this policy, Bargad commits to ensuring that gender equality is fully incorporated in all our work both as a universal human right and an end in itself, as well as a means to overcome poverty and social injustice more effectively.

The policy is largely an internal guidance document, outlining a joint vision, strategic priorities and processes for integrating gender perspectives throughout Bargad. This policy applies to all Bargad staff members at the office and in the field, and is led by the Executive Director.

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Define and communicate clear commitments and consistent messages within Bargad and with others.
- Create an inclusive, tolerant, and accepting environment welcoming the expression of individual gender identities and non-discrimination on a gendered basis.
- Establish commitments for our organization's development.
- Ensure competence and awareness on gender issues and violence against women within the organization.
- Make a special effort, to involve men in taking increased responsibility for strengthening the gender perspective

Core Principles

While Bargad is a youth development organization, one of its programme areas is, "Amplifying Women's voices". Bargad has and continues to strive for women's economic, social and political empowerment.

Gender equality is an explicit internationally recognized human right and Bargad seeks to promote equal realization of dignity and human rights for all genders. Our commitments are founded on the Human Rights Framework and globally agreed principles, such as equality and non-discrimination. They are based on international law and regional standards, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), as well as the global ambitions set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Bargad recognizes that issues of gender inequality intersect with other forms of oppression based on unequal power relations, such as caste and ethnic discrimination, ageism, religious discrimination, classism among others.

Commitments

In order to enact these principles, Bargad will fulfil the following commitments and ensure that they are monitored, evaluated and reported:

1. Incorporate participatory gender and data disaggregated by sex, age, and other relevant diversity factors to inform actions across the programme/project cycle
2. Engage men and boys in support of gender equality and women's empowerment when in line with programming and/or organizational objectives.
3. Ensure all human resources policies and practices are developed with a gender lens. Report on gender and diversity balance in staffing and governance structures along with average pay levels.
4. Recruit and retain staff with a commitment to gender equality; build staff and volunteers' capacity and skills in gender equality and diversity, and ensure all annual operating plans, job descriptions and performance plans reflect Bargad's commitment to gender equality.
5. Use experiences and examples of gender equality to advocate for change of laws, policies, and practices with the aim to create change that reaches beyond programme work.
6. Contribute to participation of women and girls, and use dignified and gender-sensitive language when advocating for change.
7. Consultative processes leading to Bargad's policies, programming and activities should be structured so as to ensure the participation of both women and men. This would be reflected in all areas of the office's work: from gender responsive policy and programming, ensuring gender balance with respect to sources for monitoring and fact finding, participants in training activities, seminars and workshops, to consultations informing strategic thinking of the office. It is not enough to programme for women; one has to programme with women.
8. In applying equality and nondiscrimination in its work, Bargad will ensure that women and men benefit equally from its policies, programmes and activities and that inequality is not perpetuated.
9. Developing and/or strengthening staff capacity and competency in gender analysis are essential to the successful mainstreaming of a gender perspective into policies and programmes. Staff members, who are responsible for programme design and implementation, as well as those responsible for technical advisory services, will be trained periodically (at least once a year) in order to ensure that a gender perspective is reflected in their work.

Monitoring and Compliance

- It is the responsibility of all Bargad employees and related personnel to uphold the Core Principles and Commitments of this policy.
- Senior Managers, Supervisors and the Executive Director must ensure that all Bargad Employees and related personnel understand and comply with this policy. Human Resource Managers are also responsible for robust recruitment, induction and training as per Commitments 4 and 9 above, whilst Senior Managers and Supervisors are responsible for performance management to ensure the implementation of the policy.

- This policy is complementary to the set of standards of behaviour that all Bargad employees are required to adhere to in the Bargad Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics and any further codes or related policies defined by Bargad.
- Bargad senior management will ensure this policy is implemented, monitored and reported against every two years to the Board of Directors.
- Monitoring and Evaluation Department/ Officers in collaboration with the Executive Director must develop specific gender equality indicators based on the principles of this policy for each project. The indicators must take into account qualitative and quantitative factors⁴.
- Bargad senior management is responsible for defining work plans and procedures to uphold and operationalize this policy.
- Bargad senior management will ensure they have in place the resources to implement this policy.
- The mechanism of complaint for this policy can be found in section 2.15 of the “Anti-Harassment, Ethics & Anti-Fraud Policy”.

⁴ For example, you may measure the number of women, men and transgender individuals on your board to understand the breakdown of gender representation of key decision makers. This kind of data is often easiest captured through surveys and provides straightforward and clear results that are easy to analyze and compare. This data can help you set appropriate targets in line with your goals to advance gender equality through your work. A qualitative indicator is a measure of the narrative of something rather than something countable. It helps to describe the ‘how’ and ‘why.’ For example, you may ask your board members how valued they feel their opinion and contributions are to the organization and why they feel this way to understand whether there are differences between genders. This can also be captured via surveys but often an interview, observation or focus group may be more helpful in giving you a greater depth of understanding of the data you are gathering.

Glossary

Gender⁵:

The term “sex” refers to biological differences between men and women. The term “gender” refers to socially constructed identities, attributes and roles for women and men, and society’s social and cultural meaning for these biological differences, which result in hierarchical relationships between women and men and in the distribution of power and rights favouring men and disadvantaging women. This social positioning of women and men is affected by political, economic, cultural, social, religious, ideological and environmental factors and can be changed by culture, society and community.

Gender balance and equal participation⁶:

Participation is a core element of gender equality. Eliminating discrimination against women in the political and public life means to ensure women, on equal terms with men, the right: (i) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies; (ii) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government; (iii) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

Gender-based discrimination⁷:

Any distinction, exclusion or restriction which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms is discrimination, even where discrimination was not intended. Direct discrimination against women constitutes different treatment explicitly based on grounds of sex and gender differences. Indirect discrimination against women occurs when a law, policy, programme or practice appears to be neutral in so far as it relates to men and women, but has a discriminatory effect in practice on women because pre-existing inequalities are not addressed by the apparently neutral measure.

Gender equality and gender equity⁸:

Inherent to the principle of equality between men and women, or gender equality, is the concept that all human beings, regardless of sex, are free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles and prejudices.

⁵ General recommendation No. 23 on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2010), paragraph 5.

⁶ General recommendation No. 28 on women in political and public life, under the article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1997)

⁷ General recommendation No. 28 on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2010), paragraph 5 and 16.

⁸ General recommendation No. 28 on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2010), paragraph 22.

States parties are called upon to use exclusively the concepts of equality of women and men or gender equality and not to use the concept of gender equity in implementing their obligations under the Convention. Gender equity is used in some jurisdictions to refer to fair treatment of women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment, or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

Gender integration/mainstreaming:

Gender integration (or mainstreaming) is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.⁹ In theory, gender integration, as a strategy and methodology, does not mean an emphasis on women's experiences. In practice the implementation of gender integration - given the socially constructed differences and relations between males and females in most of the world's societies - often results in a specific focus on women because they are mostly adversely affected by existing gender inequalities.

Multiple discrimination¹⁰:

The discrimination of women based on sex and gender is inextricably linked with other factors that affect women, such as race, ethnicity, religion or belief, health, status, age, class, caste and sexual orientation and gender identity. Discrimination on the basis of sex or gender may affect women belonging to such groups to a different degree or in different ways to men. Likewise, racial discrimination does not always affect women and men equally or in the same way. There are circumstances in which racial discrimination only or primarily affects women, or affects women in a different way, or to a different degree than men. Such racial discrimination will often escape detection if there is no explicit recognition or acknowledgement of the different life experiences of women and men, in areas of both public and private life.

Women's Empowerment¹¹:

Empowerment is the process of acquiring the ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability has previously been denied. Women's empowerment has five components, including both civil and political as well as cultural, economic and social dimensions: (i) women's sense of self-worth; (ii) their right to have and to determine choices; (iii) their right to have access to opportunities and resources; (iv) their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; (v) and their ability

⁹ ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions, as contained in resolution 1997/2

¹⁰ General Recommendation No. 25: Gender related dimensions of racial discrimination, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2000) and General recommendation No. 28 on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2010)

¹¹ Guidelines on Women's Empowerment, United Nations Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs

to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.