

# HRDF Gender Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Policy

## Humanitarian Response & Development Foundation (HRDF)

*Advancing Dignity. Expanding Opportunities. Leaving No One Behind.*

### 1. Introduction

In our society, fairness is more than a principle it is a value deeply rooted in our faith, culture, and traditions. We believe that every human being, regardless of whether they are a woman or a man, young or old, able-bodied or living with a disability, rich or poor, deserves respect, opportunity, and the right to live with dignity.

At HRDF, we work in communities where traditions, family values, and social norms play a central role in shaping lives. While these values are precious, we also recognize that some individuals especially women, girls, persons with disabilities, minorities, the elderly, transgender persons, and economically vulnerable families face barriers that prevent them from fully participating in social and economic life.

This Gender Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Policy reflects HRDF's heartfelt commitment to creating safe, respectful, and inclusive spaces where everyone feels valued and heard. For us, GEDSI is not just a donor requirement — it is a responsibility towards our people and our communities.

**HRDF believes that development is only meaningful when everyone is included.**

### 2. Why GEDSI Matters in Our Communities

Pakistan is a land of strong family bonds, cultural richness, and community spirit. Yet, realities such as poverty, limited education, early marriages, restricted mobility, societal pressure, and lack of awareness sometimes prevent certain groups from reaching their full potential.

**Inequality and exclusion can affect:**

- A girl's access to education
- A woman's ability to earn and make decisions
- A person with disability's mobility and independence
- Youth participation in leadership
- Minority communities' access to basic services
- Elderly individuals' voice in family and community decisions

During emergencies, floods, droughts, and displacement, these challenges become even more severe. HRDF understands that when women are respected, youth are empowered, and marginalized voices are heard, communities become more stable, self-reliant, and hopeful.

**Inclusion builds strength. Respect builds harmony. Equality builds a better future.**

### 3. Who This Policy Applies To

This policy applies to everyone connected with HRDF, including:

- All HRDF staff and management
- Board members
- Volunteers and interns
- Community mobilisers and facilitators
- Partner organizations and project teams
- Vendors, suppliers, and contractors
- Community groups such as CAGs, CDCs, MSFs and youth committees

Anyone representing HRDF in the field or office is expected to follow this policy with sincerity and responsibility.

### 4. HRDF's Core GEDSI Values

#### **1. Respect and Dignity for All**

Every individual deserves to be treated with kindness, fairness, and courtesy.

#### **2. Fair Support Where Needed**

We understand that some people need extra support to participate equally. HRDF commits to removing these barriers.

#### **3. Cultural Sensitivity**

We promote inclusion while respecting Pakistani traditions, religious values, and community structures.

#### **4. Empowering Women**

HRDF supports women to speak, lead, decide, and participate in community life without fear.

#### **5. Youth as Agents of Change**

Young people are the future of our nation. We encourage their participation and leadership.

#### **6. Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities**

Our programs consider mobility, access, and special needs so no one feels left out.

#### **7. Community Ownership**

Local committees must reflect the diversity of the community, including women and marginalized groups.

## 8. Accountability and Transparency

Communities have the right to ask questions, give feedback, and raise concerns safely.

## 9. Zero Tolerance for Discrimination

Disrespectful behavior based on gender, identity, caste, disability, or background will not be tolerated.

## 5. Understanding Key Concepts

- **Gender Equality:** Fair treatment and equal opportunities for all genders
- **Diversity:** Accepting and valuing our differences
- **Social Inclusion:** Removing obstacles that stop people from participating
- **Marginalized Groups:** Individuals facing social or economic disadvantage
- **Women's Empowerment:** Enabling women to make their own choices
- **Youth:** Persons aged 15–29 who play a vital role in societal progress

## 6. Our Shared Responsibilities

### All HRDF Team Members Will:

- Treat everyone with respect
- Encourage participation of women and vulnerable groups
- Use polite and inclusive language
- Report any unfair treatment
- Maintain professional boundaries

### Managers and Supervisors Will:

- Lead by example
- Ensure equal opportunities in recruitment and training
- Address barriers to participation
- Promote women and youth leadership

### Community Committees Will:

- Ensure fair representation
- Hold inclusive and accessible meetings
- Record participation fairly

## 7. Creating Safe and Inclusive Spaces

HRDF ensures inclusion through:

### At Organizational Level:

- Fair recruitment practices

- Safe workplace policies
- Equal growth opportunities

#### **At Program Level:**

- Women-friendly spaces and timings
- Accessible facilities for persons with disabilities
- Female staff for women-focused sessions
- Safe transportation support where possible

#### **At Community Level:**

- Awareness sessions with elders and religious leaders
- Encouraging family support for women's participation
- Promoting safe spaces for women and youth

### **8. Inclusive Programming Approach**

HRDF programmes aim to:

- Identify barriers through community consultation
- Provide equal access to services
- Protect privacy and dignity
- Promote leadership of women and youth
- Ensure disability-friendly environments
- Give priority to the most vulnerable in emergencies

### **9. How to Report Concerns**

Anyone can report discrimination through:

- GEDSI Focal Person
- HR Department
- Community feedback mechanisms
- Complaint boxes
- Anonymous reporting

Email: [aap@hrdf.org.pk](mailto:aap@hrdf.org.pk)

HRDF commits to confidentiality, fairness, and protection from retaliation.