



Uttaran

Gender Diversity and Inclusion-Policy

Community Mobilization

Poverty Eradication

Environmental Justice

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| | Chairman |
| Update – 1 | |
| Date: January 2007 | Shahidul Islam |
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| Update - 2 | |
| Date: November, 2015 | Shahidul Islam |
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| Update – 3 | |
| Date: August, 2017 | Shahidul Islam |
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| <p>Board</p> <p>Update- 5</p> <p>Date: November, 2023</p> <p>Approved by on behalf of executive</p> <p>Board</p> <p>Update -6</p> <p>Date: January, 2026</p> <p>Approved by on behalf of executive</p> <p>Board</p> | <p>Sarder MD Rezaul</p> <p>Chairman</p> <p>Shahidul Islam</p> <p>Director</p> <p>Sarder MD Rezaul</p> <p>Chairman</p> <p>Shahidul Islam</p> <p>Director</p> <p>Sarder MD Rezaul</p> <p>Chairman</p> |
| <p>Recommended by</p> | <p>Zahid Amin (Head of Program- CCWG)</p> <p>Hasina Parvin Project Coordinator</p> <p>Mahmuda Yasmin Kona (Senior officer- Development and Communication)</p> |


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1. Background

Uttaran dreams of establishing a discrimination-free society regardless of male-female, poor-rich or caste and creed. Basically, Uttaran emerged to form a balanced social background among the males and females. Uttaran has been working since 1985 to establish a human and fair society free of discrimination and exploitation. Almost all the activities of Uttaran are aimed to improve the conditions of females who are leading meager lives filled with extreme exploitation and oppression in consideration of socio- economic and political, educational and cultural perspective.

Uttaran has been working, since its inception, on preserving the legal rights of women, capacity building, changing male-dominated attitudes, gaining their financial freedom and removing gender disparity, and to engage them into the mainstream development. The Policy has been adopted to strengthen the undertaken and potential activities for women's development and it will help to establish a balance among the men and women in the working regions of Uttaran. The Policy will provide directive to develop relations among the men and women and the advancement of the females.

Uttaran, firmly believes that the main obstacle to an equal society is the current condition of the women and their status as majority of the women lead a neglected, assaulted and a miserable life. They live in the poorest section of the poverty as they are lagging behind in their social and civil life. This exploitation and oppression is not only against the women, rather it is about the entire society which impacts the family, workplace, educational institution and even social, political and cultural aspects.

Uttaran also considers that a real and sustainable development is impossible unless the women are integrated with the development activities in line with the men. In a word, the Gender Policy has been formulated for the overall development of the population (men and women) of this organization to its working areas and regions. It is also expected that the Gender Policy would be helpful and play important roles as well for the development of a women friendly institutional culture and attitudes. With the advancement of time and considering the needs, the Policy would be changed, edited, extended and revised regularly in future.

2. Objective

This policy outlines Uttaran's commitments and guiding principles for gender and diversity across its operations and the inner functioning of the organization. It provides a clear framework for the organization to bring about a more inclusive environment, and to systematically mainstream and monitor gender equality, ensuring inclusion of person with disability, socially marginalized groups and diversity in Uttaran's operations. For its programs, Uttaran is committed to apply a Gender, Diversity and inclusion responsive approach and, where possible within specific projects, aim for a transformative approach.



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Our commitment is inspired by the Human Rights Framework and the globally agreed principles, such as non-discrimination. It is based on international and regional standards, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), global ambitions set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

3. Rationale of this Policy

Uttaran is committed to promoting diversity and ensuring inclusion. To effectively realize its vision and mission, Uttaran recognizes the need to advance gender equality and ensure the meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities, socially marginalized groups, and people with intersectional vulnerabilities. Although the policy's rationale and objectives were already embedded in Uttaran's vision, they have been further articulated to provide staff with clear guidance and practical direction for translating these commitments into action.

Accordingly, Uttaran strives to be gender-, disability-, and inclusion-sensitive in both policy and practice. To institutionalize these principles, this policy has been formulated as a guiding framework. Uttaran will utilize all its resources, capacities, and strengths to improve the conditions of women, PWD, people with intersectional vulnerabilities and promote equitable participation. The policy will serve as a guiding tool to support the organization's aspirations and ensure the effective and consistent implementation of its programs and activities.


The policy has also been developed drawing on the experiences and insights of Uttaran's employees, communities, partners, civil society, and lessons learned from its programmatic interventions, alongside an assessment of evolving development needs and priorities. It serves as a strategic framework to promote women's meaningful participation, challenge gender-based discrimination, and ensure the inclusion and mainstreaming of persons with disabilities (PWD), socially excluded groups, and people with intersectional vulnerabilities, while addressing entrenched male-dominated social systems. At the same time, the policy aims to strengthen capacity building for employees at all levels, as well as for partner and beneficiary organizations.

All activities, projects, and initiatives will be designed and implemented in ways that respond to the needs, rights, and priorities of women and men, while ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities, socially excluded groups, and people with intersectional vulnerabilities. Collectively, these efforts will contribute to reducing and ultimately eliminating gender-based and structural inequalities.

4. Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all levels of the organization, whether at headquarters or in field delegations. All staff (directors, managers, employees, interns, volunteers) and third party contractors, consultants regardless of their status, type of contract, or percentage of work are responsible for knowing its content and applying the commitments as they relate to their work. It is valid for both development and humanitarian contexts.


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5. Principles


In alignment with its core values Uttaran seeks to advance gender and diversity across the organization guided by the following principles:

- **INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT:** Uttaran works with a wide range of actors including vulnerable communities, children, families, communities and local/national authorities. As Uttaran's stakeholders and beneficiaries represent a highly diverse group, and faces intersectional vulnerability, it is vital that this diversity is reflected within the employees of the foundation. Uttaran believes that a diverse workplace represents a deeper pool of knowledge, skills, life experience, perspectives and expertise.
- **A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH:** A human rights-based approach is at the core of all Uttaran's work. Human rights determine the relationship between duty bearers and individuals or groups according to international human rights law. For Uttaran, this means understanding and transforming power relations and inequalities that lead to discrimination and impede individuals and groups from enjoying their rights

Inclusion & Participation

Placing women, children, and other intersectionally vulnerable communities at the center of their own recovery and development is essential to ensuring safe, dignified, appropriate, and sustainable responses. In this context, inclusion means ensuring that all individuals, regardless of gender, age, disability, or other forms of diversity that are meaningfully enabled to engage and participate throughout programme and project cycles.

- . By enabling participants (especially women and children) , and relevant stakeholders to analyze their situation, enhance their knowledge and resources, and strengthen their capacities, Uttaran contributes to their empowerment to act and claim their rights.
- **COLLABORATION and LEARNING:** Collaboration and continuous learning are key conditions to achieving more impact within Uttaran interventions. Uttaran will seek out strategic partnerships at global and local levels to continuously improve its understanding and competencies in gender, diversity and inclusion and share lessons learned widely both internally and externally
- **DO NO HARM & SAFEGUARDING:** The protection of target populations, in particular those most vulnerable to abuses of power, is at the core of Uttaran's mission. By integrating a gender, diversity and inclusion approach Uttaran will contribute to mitigating the risk of harm arising from Uttaran actions, including abuse and exploitation. Harm includes physical or psychological harm to individuals or groups, as well as harm to the environment (economic, social, political, climate, etc.) that might otherwise affect individuals or groups.


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6. Strategies

The strategy aims to engage them with the mainstream . Policy implementation strategy:

- A Gender focal will work in the organization to ensure the Gender, Diversity and Inclusion policy and the remaining staffs will work as members. The gender focal will have some specific written responsibilities and annual plans while the other members will be bound to assist in implementing the plans. In that case, the Gender Focal Point will be responsible for informing the Head of Program and the Director annually about gender-related issues and activities. In this case, the organization will considerably pay attention to solve the complaints related to gender issues.
- The gender focal point will observe the gender issues in the project areas and . monitor the advancement based on the gender mainstreaming plans
- In case of any discrepancies, the project coordinator or any specific member will inform the focal point in written form.
- All the project areas will have gender policies and the policy implementation situations will be discussed in half yearly/ annually and at the beginning of the project period.
- The issues will be noted in the working areas and proper measures will be taken
- Financial supports will be there for implementing the gender policy, if not Uttaran will commit to mobilize resources to address the gender issues
- All the other organizational policies will be analyzed based on the gender, diversity and inclusion policy and the policies mentioned on the gender, diversity and inclusion policy will be adjusted. Gender, diversity and inclusion policy will also be considered if any new policy is adopted.
- New employees will be familiarized with gender, diversity and inclusion policy so that they could follow the organizational values.
- An orientation will be provided to all the staffs after joining Uttaran.
- The policy will be reviewed in every three years or as per the need basis.

7. Mainstream issues to be linked with Gender

- Deciding the difference and imbalance of gender roles, demands, responsibilities, opportunities and resource consumption
- The process involves first engaging with the community to understand their needs and perspectives, and then designing the policy. This includes reviewing the policy type, particularly its legal and organizational context, and prioritizing the interests of women and adolescent girls after consultations with men, women, and teenagers. Creation and use of gender-disaggregated information
- Projects are developed in a way that data collection is integrated, in consultation and negotiation with partners.
- Support for gender-sensitive audits and evaluations
- Documentation, dissemination, and discussion of best practices and lessons learned
- Networking and coordination with like-minded individuals and organizations
- Use of gender-sensitive language across all forms of communication


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8. Organizational commitments and steps

In order to implement a gender, diversity and inclusive approach throughout the organization, Uttaran makes the following commitments.


Institutional commitments:

- Apply inclusive gender & diversity considerations in the development of Uttaran's internal organizational culture. Ensure equitable treatment and meaningful participation of all employees through the strengthening of collaborative and inclusive working methods and practices
- Apply best practices of inclusive communication by using language and images that do not reinforce existing stereotypes but instead promote diversity and ' inclusiveness and show respect for all.
- Put in place measures to enhance gender equity and diversity in Uttaran teams and promote equal opportunities and inclusiveness in recruitment, orientation, promotion, retention, and duty of care. Special attention will be given to balance leadership and management positions.
- Value and leverage the knowledge, competence and experiences of Uttaran staff from all different backgrounds and origins. Enable horizontal cross learning, respecting the capacity of everyone to engage using different methods and approaches. Collect and share best practices.
- Provide capacity building and awareness for all staff in gender and diversity at all levels to strengthen a gender and diversity responsive approach.
- Seek collaborations with partners and stakeholders who share Uttaran's desire to work for advancing gender equity and diversity.
- Incorporate GD&I considerations from this policy in the development of Partners selection criteria and the upcoming Uttaran partnership policy.
- Promote and implement the whistle-blowing procedure of Uttaran in order to report any type of action in violation of this policy or the Uttaran Global Code of Conduct amongst Uttaran employees.
- Allocate dedicated financial, human, and organizational resources to implement the commitments under this policy,

Operational commitments:

- Integrates gender and diversity objectives in line with this policy in its future strategic plan, Programs Theory of Change and plans of Action which implement Uttaran Strategies.
- Integrate GD&I Analysis into situation analysis (program/project level).
- GD&I Responsive, with a desire where possible to move towards a GD&I transformative approach.


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- Use appropriate approaches and tools to ensure that girls and boys and other target groups have equal opportunities to participate in, influence and benefit from uttaran programs.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

All of our staff members, regardless of function or location, are responsible for the implementation of the requirements outlined in this policy. These requirements are reflected in recruitment processes, job descriptions and performance reviews of staff at all levels and in the way we hold each other to account.

All senior managers are accountable for implementing this policy; the Board members and director will monitor what senior managers are doing and the other staffs is ultimately responsible for our commitment to and implementation of this policy.

To support accountability for this policy, there will be an effective review and monitoring process, led by Uttaran . At Uttaran, this will include an annual review and audit of policy implementation and compliance. The findings will be shared across all Uttaran entities, and the implementation team will report annually to the Director of Uttaran.

The use of policy In offered situations: the existing poticy will be considered as a reference to take any decisions in the changed situations as Reference

10. Associated Policy

This policy is complementary to the set of standards of behaviour that all Uttaran employees and related personnel are required to adhere to in the Uttaran's Code of Conduct and any further codes or related policies defined by Uttaran Members, Affiliates, Candidates, and the Board Members. This Policy is also a response to Uttaran's accountability to the communities it works with and is therefore to be operationalized as part of the broader Uttaran's Accountability Framework.


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Annexures

Annex - 1 Explanations of terms used in the Policy

Diversity

Diversity refers to the variety of differences among the members of a group. It includes different social backgrounds and identities that make up a population. Comprehensive analysis is required to identify in any context what forms of diversity could constitute a vulnerability and lead to marginalization and violation of rights. Uttaran recognizes that some diversifying factors are present and need to be addressed in all contexts, including but not limited to age, gender, (dis)ability, and minorities

Equality & Equity:


Uttaran recognizes the existence of biases, prejudices and inequalities inherent across all societies, and will seek to address those through responsive and transformative programming. Equality refers to the goal we want to achieve, so that everyone can benefit from equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities in their lives. It means that individuals are empowered to develop their interests, needs and priorities without the limitations set by stereotypes associated with their Gender or Diversity. Equity refers to how Uttaran approaches and implements interventions, ensuring strategic planning and service delivery recognizes and takes into account individual conditions and specific circumstances and accommodating these through positive action. Focusing on equity means that we recognize that a given system in place is leaving some behind and we actively provide means and dedicate resources so that rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities for everyone involved are considered in equivalent terms

Gender and Sex

Learning begins since birth. It is specific socializing process of what people do, think and lead their lives. Sex refers to the physical features since birth which is naturally preselected but different attitudes and ideas towards different sex throughout a socializing process is known as 'gender'. Renowned social scientist Ann Oakley used the term - gender in development discourse in 1970. He used the term 'gender' to identify the socially imposed features on men and women. Usually gender refers to the definition of men and women in social and cultural array, In fact the difference of men and women done by the society and how their social roles are that is known as gender.

Sex refers to the differences created by natural or biological reasons and based on the physical features, the identity of men and women is set. Gender is the relationship among men and women based on social efforts, adaptable roles for men and women decided by society which varies from society-culture.


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Gender analysis

Gender analysis focuses on gender labor distribution, necessary opportunities and control on required materials for labor and the issues of consuming the labor outcomes. Gender analysis also clearly indicates that the benefits of development is different on men and women. Besides, gender analysis also analyses how gender discrimination is related with class, creed, color, religion, nationality and other issues

Gender sensitivity

Gender sensitivity refers to realize and consider the gender disparity creating eco-social and cultural issues (for both male and female)

Gender awareness

Gender awareness is a sensitive attitude and a promise to place and prioritize women's demand in the core of development planning and activities. So, when gender awareness is reflected, it distributes the outcomes and participation of women at any activity or project from the targeted population.

Gender biased

Gender biased refers to favor the existing cultural beliefs, rituals and existing discriminatory social structure and attitudes to dominate women

Gender blindness

Gender blindness points that the outcomes of development will automatically be distributed among the males and females and both of them will be beneficiary or bear the same responsibilities

Gender devotee

Following the gender devotee point of view, it is likely that gender-based labor distribution and the natural subordination of women is permanent and it is admitted all, logical and legal

Gender disaggregated data

Usually we prioritize the general or macro aspects while data collection on any issue and ignore some other sides. For instance, when it is about poverty-related information, we measure the gross poverty population. How many of the gross population is female is not considered on the data collection. Accordingly, the gender disaggregated data reflects different scenarios of men and women instead of a general average counting and for that, it becomes possible to identify the gender disparities, such as, based on disaggregated data, it should be mentioned that them number of women in man power when the 'participation ratio of people as man power. Around 70% people other country is poor. and how many often are women will be published by the disaggregated data.



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Gender inequality

Gender inequality is the most pervasive form of inequality around the world and a pressing human rights concern. It affects everyone, but women and girls first, constituting the majority of those affected by poverty and crisis. Harmful socially constructed gender norms often present a dominant view of what it means to be female or male and perpetuate a binary and exclusionary view of gender. These lead to discrimination and marginalization, which results in less access to resources, less power, less influence in decision making, and increased Gender-Based Violence.

Gender planning

Gender planning aims to involve women equally or with the same conditions to men as the key to development and beneficiary. Due to gender labor distribution, scopes of wealth gathering, empowering and controlling their lives for women is limited. Therefore, to change this reality, gender planning is a must

Gender disparity and differences

Gender disparity indicates that males are prioritized in the cases of rights which deprives women from the equal chances and damages them as well. Gender disparity is of two types - (1) direct and (2) indirect.

(1) Direct gender disparities are -

- Succession of wealth
- Rights of married women .
- Rights on employment .
- Retirement schedules

(2) Indirect gender disparities are -

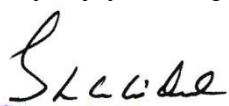
- Neutral environment
- Not recruitment of women of potential pregnancy
- Prioritizing men on supervising or not appointing women on such posts

Difference is known as qualities which make people distinctive, their individuality or pointing on the differences. There are differences with men and women on physical perspective but discriminations have been created on their rights and responsibilities

Inclusion

Inclusion is about bringing people into a process in a meaningful manner. It is the process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society and to fully enjoy their rights.


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It requires addressing the root causes of exclusion and understanding how intertwined the roots of different forms of exclusion are. Inclusion involves improving the opportunities available to girls, boys, youth, in particular those who are vulnerable and excluded, including children with disabilities, who are excluded on the basis of the social groups they identify with or are associated with, as well as respecting their dignity

Annex -2: Background of Uttaran's advancement on Gender Equality

The changes are not enough to prevent the challenges on women equality and women empowerment. Though the government of Bangladesh has signed and ratified different national and international rules and regulations to ensure constitutional bonds and ensuring women rights, the women are prevented from social, cultural, financial and political aspects. The government statistics show a huge disparity on health, nutrition, mortality rate, education, recruitment and wage issues. In personal life, women are the victim biased law. In this case, extensive and direct issue of women development is pointed here: ensuring the choice of women on her life and advancing the society to a social justice and equality in a broader facet because the condition of women is still dominated and repressive and they are deprived of their basic right. Thereby, Uttaran has formulated the Gender Policy to play its role on improving the conditions of women and make all the activities disciplined and more successful. The policy has pointed out the activities like rules, beliefs and ideals to be followed for decreasing gender disparity between man and woman. The current position of equality between man and woman is as followed -

1. For the participation of men and women in gender and development, an alternative organization has been formed. The current ration of woman and man is 60:40
2. Trainings, workshops, seminars, discussion sessions, gatherings, rallies etc. have been introduced and going on to change the male dominated attitudes and exercise man woman equality
3. Awareness raising activities are introduced on the participation in domestic help by men and ensuring participation of women in social, political and financial activities.
4. Women have been inspired on productive works for their empowerment. Women are provided with loans in line with providing training and consultancies to increase their skills. There are projects in the working areas for helping in female entrepreneurship. Some of the business are being run by women like two rice mills, one tally factory, fisheries, dairy farm, plant nursery etc. Around 80% of the women in the working areas are working out of home
5. Organization is helping to inspire women in direct participation in productive activities and simultaneously building ownership and control on production materials
6. Specific projects have been taken to expand female education and creating newer scopes. On the educative programs of the organization, participation of women and girls have been made mandatory


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7. Importance had been placed on the political empowerment of women. Around 50% participation of women had been ensured in different organizational committees like central committee, union committee, area committee etc.
8. To raise awareness on women repression, dowry, oral divorce, polygamy, rape, women and children kidnapping early marriage, guardianship, inheritance, low wage, trainings, workshops, seminar, meetings, rallies will be going on in built with every project.
9. The chances of participation and communication has been ensured with different organizations on using local resources have been ensured. The female members of the organization are maintaining liaison with the local autonomous government and service providers.
10. Initiatives have been taken to protect the physical and mental health of women. The female health quality like health, nutrition, safe drinking water and sanitation etc. has been improved for awareness raising. For safe drinking water, tube well ownership has been ensured.
11. Women are being made aware of environment, climate change and locally led adaptation and the activities to ensure participation of women has been being successfully implemented.
12. Opportunities have been created for women to participate in cultural activities .
13. Women voices had been ensured in the policy level and project design.
14. Committees formed with male and females to prevent women repression issues have taken joint efforts
15. Regular trainings, workshops and discussion meetings are held to raise awareness among the organization staffs. As a result, both the male and female staffs are aware of gender issues
16. organization has decided to ernploy female staffs in all level.
17. Different measures have been adopted for creating congenial environment for women like security of women in the organization, dropping at home, residential facility for employees from remote place, capacity building and special training, flexible working hours during pregnancy, leave during pregnancy, day care facilities, flexible vehicle use, flexibility on educational qualifications etc.
18. . on staff and team level, environment has been created for women in decision making, planning and implementation
19. Importance has been provided on skill development for women. women are selected for participating in different trainings based on their working importance
20. For employing women in higher level, initiatives have been taken to provide on the job special training and other assistances
21. Men and women equality on the executive body and management have been achieved.

Review of the Policy;

This policy has been published as part of the last governing board meeting and it will be reviewed after next 3 years. The effective date of this policy is 1st January 2026



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