



**BAREFOOT
INITIATIVE**

GENDER AND DIVERSITY POLICY

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Drafted by: Kyra	Board approval date:
Responsible person: Co-Managing Director	Scheduled review date: June 2022
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OUTLINE

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1. PURPOSE

This policy outlines Barefoot Initiative's commitments and guiding principles for gender and inclusion across its operations and the inner functioning of the organization. It provides a clear framework for the organization to bring about a more inclusive working environment, and to systematically mainstream and monitor gender and inclusion in Barefoot Initiative operations. For its programs, Barefoot Initiative is committed to apply a Gender & Inclusion responsive approach.

This policy provides a reference and orientation for specific strategies and concrete measures to be put in place at all levels of the organization and promotes the strengthening of Barefoot Initiative and its Partners capacities to apply a Gender & Inclusion responsive approach as a core transversal theme within all areas of operations.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all levels Barefoot Initiative personnel, volunteers and Partners. All Barefoot Initiative personnel and Partner personnel, 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 within our operations in Australia and in Ethiopia.

3. DEFINITIONS

- ⇒ **Gender** refers to the socially constructed and learned roles, behaviors, responsibilities and opportunities associated with being a boy, girl, man or a woman. These vary across cultures and through time and can change. In addition to the categories of men and women, there are many different gender identities and expressions of those identities. Sex refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men, women, or intersex individuals. **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity or Expression (SOGIE)** stems from one's personal preference and experience, which may or may not correlate with the sex assigned at birth.
- ⇒ **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. Barefoot Initiative 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 SOGIE minorities.
- ⇒ **Equality & Equity**: Barefoot Initiative 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 Barefoot Initiative 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 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.

Barefoot Initiative recognizes the intersectionality of gender and diversity. The way in which a person's sex or gender identity is linked to and combines with another part of his or her identity, can lead to and create multiple forms of discrimination. For example, a child with a disability and from an ethnic minority could be highly marginalized. Intersectionality is a complex and powerful exclusion phenomenon that differs according to the context. A person's experiences are influenced by a multitude of identities that interact or overlap, and this Policy seeks to ensure these concepts are addressed together.

1. POLICY IN PRACTICE

Guiding principles

Barefoot Initiative seeks to advance gender and diversity across the organization guided by the following principles:

- ⇒ **INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT:** Barefoot Initiative works with a wide range of stakeholders including children, families, communities and local/national authorities. As Barefoot Initiative stakeholders and beneficiaries are of a diverse group, it is vital that this diversity is reflected within the personnel of the organisation. Barefoot Initiative believes that a diverse organization 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 Barefoot Initiative's work. Human rights determine the relationship between duty bearers and individuals or groups according to international human rights law. For Barefoot Initiative, 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 community members at the center of their own development is an essential part of a safe, dignified, appropriate, and sustainable response. In this context, it means ensuring all community members regardless of Gender or Diversity are enabled to meaningfully engage and participate throughout the program and project cycles. By enabling all community members and relevant stakeholders to analyze their situation, enhance their knowledge and resources, and strengthen their capacities, Barefoot Initiative and its partners contribute to their empowerment to act and claim their rights.
- ⇒ **COLLABORATION and LEARNING:** Collaboration and continuous learning are key conditions to achieving more impact within Barefoot Initiative's interventions. Barefoot Initiative will seek out strategic partnerships at all levels to continuously improve its understanding and competencies in gender and diversity and share lessons learned with its partners.
- ⇒ **DO NO HARM & SAFEGUARDING:** The protection of target populations, in particular those most vulnerable to abuses of power, is at the core of Barefoot Initiatives work. By integrating a gender and diversity approach Barefoot Initiative will contribute to mitigating the risk of harm arising from Barefoot Initiative and its partners 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.

Barefoot Initiatives Commitments

In order to implement a gender and diversity responsive approach throughout the organization, Barefoot Initiative makes the following commitments:

Organisational commitments:

- ⇒ Apply inclusive gender & diversity considerations in the development of Barefoot Initiative internal organizational culture. Ensure equitable treatment and meaningful participation of all personnel 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 Barefoot Initiative teams and promote equal opportunities and inclusiveness in recruitment and orientation.
- ⇒ Value and leverage the knowledge, competence and experiences of Barefoot Initiative personnel 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 Barefoot Initiative personnel and partners in gender and diversity at all levels to strengthen a gender and diversity responsive approach.

- ⇒ Seek collaborations with partners and stakeholders who share Barefoot Initiative's desire to work for advancing gender equity and diversity.
- ⇒ Incorporate G&D considerations from this policy in the development of Partners selection criteria and Partnership due diligence checklist.
- ⇒ Promote and implement the Complaints and Response mechanism policy of Barefoot Initiative in order to report any type of action in violation of this policy or the Barefoot Initiative Code of Conduct amongst Barefoot Initiative personnel, volunteers and partners.
- ⇒ Develop M&E Approaches that are G&D responsive, including the systematic use of qualitative and participatory methods and Sex & Age Disaggregated Data (SADD).
- ⇒ 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 Barefoot Initiative programs.

2. MONITORING & REVIEW OF POLICY

The Co-Managing Directors are responsible to ensure this policy is shared with partners and is implemented within all levels of operations. The policy is required to be updated every two years. All updated versions of this policy will be validated by the Board of Directors.

Individual Responsibility

All Barefoot Initiative personnel, volunteers and partners are expected to promote and safeguard the principles of gender and diversity as outlined in this policy in their respective work with partners and stakeholders. Each person is responsible for reporting any incidents or inconsistencies according to organizational procedures.

3. RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- Child Protection Policy (Annex 3. Child Incident Reporting Sheet)
- Complaints and Response mechanism policy
- Barefoot Initiative Code of Conduct



ANNEX 1. BAREFOOT INITIATIVE CODE OF CONDUCT

Barefoot Initiative Core Values

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|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| ⇒ Ethical | ⇒ Innovation | ⇒ Courage |
| ⇒ Cultural safety | ⇒ “Identify” | ⇒ Equality |
| ⇒ Relationships | ⇒ Community | ⇒ Caring |
| ⇒ Partnerships | ownership | ⇒ Transparency |
| ⇒ Community Unity | ⇒ Inclusiveness | ⇒ Accessibility |
| ⇒ Sustainability | ⇒ Sensitive | |
| ⇒ Empowerment | ⇒ Respectful | |

In particular

- ⇒ Any discrimination based on ethnicity, skin color, cast, religion or belief, status, origin or nationality, political views, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or age, direct or indirect, of any of Barefoot Initiatives stakeholders is prohibited;
- ⇒ It is expected from all Barefoot Initiative personnel, volunteers, and partners that he/she respects the set of internal rules, commitments and policies of Barefoot Initiative Limited;
- ⇒ The collection and process of personal and/or sensitive data belonging to the beneficiaries as well as members of the communities, donors, partners, or any other stakeholder must be done with great care, respecting the legal framework, internal rules and the principles of proportionality and confidentiality;
- ⇒ Activities must be run using natural resources with due diligence, contributing to the reduction of negative environmental impacts and minimizing the use of substances harmful

Complaints Procedure

The successful implementation of this Code of Conduct depends on all Barefoot Initiative personnel and partner personnel taking individual and collective responsibility. Any suspected or confirmed breach of this Code of Conduct must be reported as quickly as possible to a focal point, supervisor or through the email address for reporting concerns: kyra@barefootinitiative.org

Whistleblowers will be protected: under no circumstances will they be discriminated against for reporting, in good faith, a breach of one of the principles in this Code of Conduct. The confidentiality of all stakeholders shall be respected for the entire duration of the procedure.

My responsibilities as an employee, representative or volunteer of Barefoot Initiative Limited

- ⇒ I agree to comply with and promote human rights without discrimination, and to treat the communities Barefoot Initiative works in with respect and dignity, in accordance with international norms and the organization's ethical values and principles.
- ⇒ I am aware that my behavior when performing duties for Barefoot Initiative must be exemplary at all times and comply fully with the rules stated in this Code of Conduct.
- ⇒ I understand that any form of abuse, whether psychological, physical, sexual or economic, will result in disciplinary measures.
- ⇒ I will prove myself worthy of the trust placed in me by acting with transparency and accountability. I will act in a professional manner by applying the principles of quality, efficiency and good management when carrying out activities. I will respect my mandate and the goods entrusted to me. I will not derive any personal advantage, whether direct or indirect, from my work. For this reason, I will declare any interest that could be problematic.
- ⇒ I agree to report any concern or suspicion regarding the potential breach of this Code by a person working for Barefoot Initiative or a partner organization.
- ⇒ I understand that confidentiality shall be strictly respected and that I will not face reprisals for reporting this concern.

Declaration of commitment

I, the undersigned.....

declare that I have received, read and understood the Code of Conduct of Barefoot Initiative Limited. I declare that I am familiar with and accept to work in accordance with this document and, therefore, in accordance with all of Barefoot Initiative policies and rules.

I understand that any failure to comply with the Code of Conduct may result in my actions being reported to the relevant authorities and the immediate termination of my engagement with Barefoot Initiative Limited.

Date.....at.....

Signature.....