



VicenteFerrer

Rural Development Trust

Rural Development Trust (RDT)

Gender Policy

2019

Background:

Rural Development Trust (RDT) recognises that gender relations and inequalities are fundamental causes of poverty. RDT has worked for gender equality and gender equity both in the organization and in all its programs since its inception in 1969. The organisation believes that a dignified life, equal rights and opportunities for men, women and transgenders belonging to all communities and all religions is essential for progress and a safe and secure environment for all in any society in the world.

RDT's vision of a desirable world is where relations across individuals and families, communities and nations are characterised by equity and justice. Besides socio-economic equity, RDT believes in gender justice as a cornerstone of such relations in the family, community and society.

Gender mainstreaming in the institutional development of RDT has become an explicit Governing Board Policy, which is driven by RDT's long-standing commitment to gender-justice.

Since we are living in a patriarchal society and since the majority of RDT's staff are from local areas and belonging to the same patriarchal society it is obvious that both men and women will bring into the organization the same gender values and biases they have inherited over hundreds of years. Values that have been held through generations do not change easily. Therefore, RDT has made consistent efforts to promote gender equality, gender equity and to sensitize all staff on gender with the belief that it is not possible to promote gender values and behaviour in its programs unless they are understood and practiced by all staff in the organization.

Taking recognition of this, RDT in its early years adopted a policy to recruit and promote women in all types of jobs while providing opportunities for leadership training for women in RDT. Today, more than 35% persons at the leadership level are women at both the middle and senior levels. RDT in 1993, also formed a Women's Core Team whose objective was/is to provide space for women in the organization, cutting across all sectors and cadres, to discuss their issues and problems and look for solutions. The Women's core team is also responsible to bring to the notice of RDT's management team any suggestions or policy or any issue or problem concerning gender in the organization.

RDT's core values that inform its interventions, therefore include, mainstreaming gender-justice and equity through analysis of social reality, organisational policies, systems and structures, and programme priorities and plans as integral to its vision.

Adhering to the passing of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act in 2013, RDT formed an 11 member Internal Committee for the same in 2014.

RDT's commitment to gender-justice and equity may be defined at two levels - institutional and programmatic levels. This would also include initiating gender mainstreaming within partners.

Programmatic Level:

Even though RDT has a separate sector for Women Empowerment that works for the social and economic empowerment of women in RDT project villages, RDT considers that working towards gender equality has to be a fundamental approach in all sectors, therefore, gender equality and gender equity are an essential focus area for each sector of RDT's programmes - Ecology and Sustainable Livelihoods, Habitat, Education for Transformation, Community Health and Rural hospitals, Disability Inclusive Development, Culture and Arts and Sports for Development.

RDT commits to:

- Promote gender equality and equity in all its programmes
- Set up systems to ensure that gender equity forms an essential element of all project planning, implementation and monitoring with specific indicators to measure the progress that has taken place with respect to the same
- Make rigorous use of gender sensitive tools and techniques such as gender analysis frameworks, collection of age/sex disaggregated data, and results-focused design and evaluation in all facets of programme planning and implementation

- Address systemic and structural practices that create barriers to the realization of women's rights and gender equality through its programs including prevention and response to gender based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse
- Actively involve men and boys as allies in promoting gender equality
- Ensure a detailed documentation of all events and activities through a gender lens. All such reporting will make use of gender inclusive and sensitive language and include gender disaggregated data.

Institutional Level:

All staff policies, service rules and regulations of the organization shall be gender sensitive. Periodic reviews of the same would be done through a gender lens to ensure that gender sensitivity is maintained. These policies would be in line with the government provisions.

RDT commits to:

- Ensure that key organizational policies, systems and practices including budgeting, recruitment, training, and decision making will address and support women's rights and gender equality and that they are implemented in a manner that will not cause any potential risks and harms to employees irrespective of gender
- That gender audits and gender analysis will form a part of RDT's gender mainstreaming efforts
- Data on gender balance in staffing and governance structures and implementation strategies followed to balance male/female representation will be tracked and reported annually. This information will be shared widely in annual reports and other public domains of the organization.

Recruitment and Induction:

All interviews for staff recruitment in the organization will have women equally represented on the interview panel. RDT will have a gender sensitive recruitment where preference will be made on the basis of skill and capabilities of the individual. All new staff members joining the organization shall be oriented on RDT's gender policy including the role and functions of the Women's Core Team and the Internal Committee within the organization.

RDT is committed to creating and promoting a gender sensitive work environment within the organization and its various branch field offices. Towards achieving this goal, it would organize regular workshops/seminars and exposure to a variety of other inputs regularly. All RDT organized events/programmes, both internal and external, will have a gender component and address gender specific needs of the participants.

Sexual Harassment:

The organization shall be responsible to set up structures where staff members may feel free to seek redressal of their complaints. Through its Internal Committee, RDT will address complaints relating to sexual harassment made by staff members, guests, and participants to the organisations, organisation events, workshops etc.

The basic principles to be followed in mainstreaming gender will be:

- Establishing adequate accountability mechanisms for monitoring of progress within the institution as well as programmatically
- The identification of issues and problems within the organization should focus on the gender differences and disparities wherever they exist
- Actively hold ourselves and others accountable to gender equality standards

Mechanisms for implementation of policy

RDT will implement, monitor and evaluate this policy. It is the responsibility of the leadership in RDT and each and every staff member to faithfully adhere to the organisation's gender policy. It is expected that all staff be aware of their own gender values and behaviour and that of their

colleagues and promote equality between men and women both in their homes and in the organisation.

The Women's Core Team and the Internal Committee will play a key role in integrating issues of gender equity and mainstreaming of gender within the organization.

Conclusion

RDT is committed to make all efforts in promoting gender equity and equality both at organisation and programmatic level.