
GENDER POLICY OF WITNESS CENTRE

Witness Centre for Citizen Rights and Social Development



APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF WITNESS CENTRE
FOR CITIZEN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

We are committed to providing a secure and enabling work environment to our employees, a place of work that is gender-sensitive and recognizes the role of men and women as equal players, agents, and leaders of change in their families, communities, and Palestinian society as a whole.

WITNESS is a social transformation association that strives to challenge asymmetry of power between social components on different bases, mainly gender, age, and geography; thus, WITNESS's internal environment should reflect all of its values in a transparent manner.

The objectives of this gender policy are:

- a) To guarantee that WITNESS's working environment is inclusive, pluralistic, and gender-responsive.
- b) To foster a social, physical, and psychological environment that will allow employees to feel safe and enable them to work productively.
- c) To strive for gender justice at both institutional and programmatic levels.

WITNESS defines gender policy guidelines at two levels: Institutional and programmatic.

1. Institutional Level

- a) ****General Assembly Membership:**** WITNESS shall open its General Assembly membership to the public. The GA and BoD members are responsible for actively encouraging and facilitating women and girls' membership. Currently, women constitute 25 out of 59 members of the General Assembly.



b) Board of Directors: WITNESS's Board, as a leading structural body, will maintain equal gender representation. The Board's four leadership positions shall be equally assumed and represented by men and women from different generations, ensuring diversity and inclusion. Currently, women hold 4 out of 7 positions on the Board of Directors.

c) Decision-making: WITNESS's Board shall make decisions based on consensus. Discussions are encouraged to avoid polarization between the Board members, allowing room for all voices to be heard and considered.

d) Budgeting: Gender-sensitive/gender-responsive budgeting shall be applied in all planning and implementation processes, at both institutional and programmatic levels. This approach will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of WITNESS's work and ensure spending adequately addresses the needs of both women and men.

e) Board and Staff Policies: All Board and staff policies, rules, and regulations shall be gender-sensitive and reviewed periodically to ensure they remain relevant and effective.

f) Recruitment: WITNESS seeks gender balance in all its recruitment processes. Women candidates will be actively encouraged to apply for all vacancies, including management and leadership positions, as well as contractor roles (trainers, facilitators, consultants, etc.). Recruitment and interview committees shall have adequate representation of women.

g) Performance Reviews: Gender sensitivity will be a key performance indicator for assessing all employees. This includes:



1. The use of gender-inclusive language in speech and writing, avoiding discrimination against any sex or social gender and not perpetuating gender stereotypes.

2. Adherence to gender-equality policies.

h) Capacity Building for Gender Sensitization: WITNESS shall organize annual workshops, training programs, and discussions to promote and enable a gender-sensitive work culture. This includes capacity-building workshops on gender mainstreaming, gender-sensitive budgeting, and the monitoring and evaluation of gender equality to ensure accountability (conducting and assessing quantitative and qualitative sex-disaggregated data). All staff members shall complete these trainings.

i) Employees Affairs:

- Maternity and Paternity Leave: In addition to providing women with 10-weeks paid maternity leave, in accordance with the Palestinian Labor Law, we provide male employees with 2 weeks paid paternity leave.

- Personal Wellness Days: WITNESS grants one day a month leave, as uncertified sick leave, or general fatigue leave.

- Flexible Work Arrangements: WITNESS allows flexible work arrangements, including remote work options, to accommodate the diverse needs of its employees.

j) Harassment: Harassment is any improper and unwelcome conduct, either through words, gestures, or actions which tend to annoy, alarm, abuse, demean, intimidate, or embarrass another, creating a hostile work environment. We have a robust platform for reporting and support mechanisms in place to encourage victims of discrimination or harassment, including sexual harassment, to come forward to report incidents. We respond and act decisively to address such incidents, ensuring confidentiality and protection for the victims.

2. Programmatic Level

a) Building Skills and Capacities on Gender Perspectives: To enable greater participation of all community components in our programs. This includes ensuring that Facilitating Reform training workshops are held at least twice a year for our target groups.

b) Cross-Cutting Issues: All WITNESS's programs shall focus on cross-cutting issues to promote equal participation of all stakeholders. Project coordinators and managers will prepare and use a gender equality checklist to promote and assess the inclusion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in each project.

c) Awareness Campaigns: At least once a year, a physical and/or media campaign is conducted to raise awareness of discrimination in all its forms, promoting gender equality and inclusivity.

Applicability

This policy applies to all regular and contractual staff of WITNESS, Board Members, General Assembly members as well as service providers. In case of a complaint as a result of an act by a third party, management will take the necessary preventive and reasonable action to support and assist the affected party.

Reporting

The General Director will report annually to the Board of Directors on the implementation of this policy, including successes, challenges, and areas for improvement to ensure continuous progress towards gender equality and inclusivity.



Development

This policy has been developed in cooperation with The Palestinian Association for Empowerment and Local Development - REFORM and the Palestinian Working Women Society for Development (PWWSO).

