



NAMIBIA NATIONAL TEACHERS UNION

GENDER POLICY



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NAMIBIA NATIONAL TEACHERS UNION GENDER POLICY

Foreword

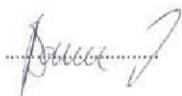
It serves me profound pride and deeply engraved happiness to present the foreword for this very important document, representing the official position of NANTU on gender issues.

The high regard for this document lies in its manifestation of unquestionable political will and technocratic commitment towards gender issues by the Union. This document should serve as testimony, that the Union is geared towards narrowing the gender gap in the society.

The policy is masterly designed to address every possible domain through which the Union can launch its response from its individual angle of strength, knowing that the offensive against the gender inequity needs to be operated from an external and interior frontier. The Union is a social movement and as such a transformation agent, which should be guided by a clear gender policy, serving as core catalyst of direction.

We intend not to take any chances with the threats hidden within the dynamics of gender as it affect both the dignity and the bargaining power of some section of our communities, which comprises the very existence of our establishment and our equally valued workforce. This policy demonstrates our intention to maintain a workforce of sameness and equality.

We, the Namibia National Teachers Union, invest a paramount value in this document and commit ourselves in honoring its noble guidelines forming the basis of our respect to human dignity and the fabric of our gender response. It is proposed as an integral part of the Union commitment to address the gender inequality and discrimination



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1. Background

Gender is a socially constructed definition of women and men. It is critically important to understand that gender is not the same as sex and it is not the same as women. Gender is determined by the conception of tasks, functions and roles attributed to women and men in society and in public and private life.

In all countries of the world, women continue to exist in roles and relationship that often make them subordinate to men, because they are paid less than men for the same work, because their movements are restricted, or because they are not permitted to take on higher status work. Namibia is not an exception to this unfortunate reality as women make up over half (51.4%) of Namibia's population¹. According to the latest statistics, NANTU has a membership of more women than males. There are more women (60.6%) teaching in Namibia than men, and women constitutes the majority of NANTU's membership. Despite their numerical strength, women are not proportionally represented in NANTU's decision-making structures and their contribution to the overall social and economic development process is not being fully recognized and is being hampered by some legal and customary discriminatory practices. According to a research that was conducted by LaRRI, trade Union leadership have remained male-dominated, and that there is very low levels of participation and representation of women in trade union activities.

At a national level, there is still a large gaps and gender disparities in basic human rights, resources, economic opportunity and in decision making. In Namibia, gender gaps are widespread in access to basic rights, access to and control of resources, in economic opportunities and also in power and political voice.

It is on this basis that the Namibia National Teacher's Union as a professional and social movements has taken the first step in taking advantage of its strategic positioning to deal with or address gender issues. The Union is of course well positioned as it carries a torch of enlightenment which is education. Since education is a tool of social transformation, NANTU has a role to play in empowering the members, employees and influencing the nation at large to better deal with gender gaps and disparities. This policy reflects and manifests the Union commitment towards gender equality, equity and mainstreaming for social and economic progress of the country. It further outlines the Union's vision about gender equality and what it intends to do to realize gender equality. Furthermore, the Union wishes to take this opportunity to give full meaning to the Namibian Constitutional provision which denounces discrimination by sex, and points out that discrimination on the basis of sex, like any other discrimination criterion, is unacceptable.

¹ Country Report. 2002. Fourth Meeting of the Follow –Up Committee on Implementation of the DND & ICPD-PA. Cameroon.

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1. Goal of the Policy

The main goal of this policy is to integrate and mainstream gender perspectives into educational related legislation, policies, programs and projects through the application of gender sensitive analysis.

2. Policy Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- 2.1. To give practical effect to equality clause as enshrined in the Constitution, Affirmative Action and Labor Act.
- 2.2. To ensure equal opportunities and equal outcomes for women and men on issues such as access to education, professional development, employment, political power and decision making.
- 2.3. To make necessary provisions through policies, programs and strategies to redress existing gaps between men and women within the Union and the country as a whole.
- 2.4. To guide the development of institutional framework to ensure gender equality, equity and mainstreaming at the organisation national, regional, branch and school level.
- 2.5. To advocate for a culture of women's rights being recognized as human rights too, with a process that would instill good values, a change of attitudes and a culture that promotes and protects the rights of women and respect for all human beings.

3. Scope of the Policy

Subject to the provisions of Labor Act, (Act No. 11 of 2007) and Affirmative Action Act of 1998, this policy shall apply to all:

- 3.1. Employees and prospective employees of the Namibia National Teachers Union,
- 3.2. All categories of NANTU membership.

4. Policy Principles

- 4.1. Recognition that cultural, customary and religious practices are subject and compatible to equality.
- 4.2. Recognition that non-discrimination is the underlying and fundamental value of this policy,
- 4.3. Recognition that equality and equity is the underlying and fundamental value of this policy.

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5. Promoting gender sensitive workplace

- 5.1. While equality and non-sexism is enshrined in our constitution, it calls for equality between men and women in all spheres of life; our role in the Union is to put this into practice.
- 5.2. The Union takes cognizance of the fact discrimination leveled against women is one of the most significant barriers to social and economic progress of the country.
- 5.3. The Union further recognizes the fact that the empowerment of women and equality between women and men are prerequisites for achieving conducive working environment.
- 5.4. The Union shall as a result, implement and support the integration of women and gender perspective into the mainstream of the Union programs and policies at national, regional and local level.
- 5.5. The Union shall be accordingly committed to ensuring that there will be no direct or indirect unfair discrimination against any of its members, employees, or job applicants for employment on the basis of their gender roles.
- 5.6. Members or employees with stereotyped gender roles will not be victimized or unfairly discriminated against in respect of Pension/ Retirement/Provident funds; medical benefits funds; stated benefits or sick leave; continued employment, training and promotion.
- 5.7. The Union shall have equity or human resource development plans, which include policies and action steps to eradicate discrimination and promote the advancement of women within the Union and at a national, regional and local level.
- 5.8. The Union shall provide gender sensitive training for women and men to promote non-discriminatory working relationships and respect for diversity in work and management styles.

6. Gender roles, attitudes and perception

- 6.1. The Union shall ensure the elimination of stereotyped roles for men and women.
- 6.2. The Union shall adopt appropriate measures to modify social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women.
- 6.3. The Union as a social home to educators shall strengthen and extend programs which promote gender sensitivity, change stereotypical attitudes and behaviors concerning gender roles, positive attitudes and respect of the opposite sex.

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7. Gender Mainstreaming and HIV/AIDS

- 7.1. NANTU shall commit itself to integrating and mainstreaming gender issues in all its planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes.
- 7.2. NANTU recognizes that HIV and AIDS impact on men and women differently with the latter group being adversely affected by the epidemic due to biological, socio-cultural and economic reasons.
- 7.3. As a result, the application of this policy is designed to take account of these unequal gender relations and enable all members and employees to successfully avoid risk related to the spread of HIV infection and to cope with the impact of HIV and AIDS.

8. Prohibition of sexual harassment in the workplace

- 8.1. The Union shall adopt broad definition of sexual harassment as unwanted conduct of sexual nature.
- 8.2. The Union shall adopt educational programs which will enable members and employees to recognize actions and conducts which constitute or amount to sexual harassment.
- 8.3. The Union shall require the employees or members to refrain from committing acts of sexual harassment in the workplace.
- 8.4. All employees or members have a role to play in contributing towards creating and maintaining a safe working environment in which sexual harassment is unacceptable.
- 8.5. The members or employees shall ensure that their standards of conduct do not cause offence and they should discourage unacceptable behavior on the part of others.
- 8.6. Every member or employee who witnesses or experiences an act of sexual harassment shall have moral and ethical obligation to report to the relevant authorities.
- 8.7. The Union shall ensure that persons such as customers, suppliers, job applicants and others who have dealings with the Union are not subjected to sexual harassment by the members or employees.
- 8.8. The Union shall take appropriate actions in accordance with organizational policy when instances of sexual harassment which occur within the workplace are brought to their attention.

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9. Recruitment, selection and training

- 9.1. The Union recognizes that the criterion for employment is the abilities, skills and qualifications to perform the duties for which the person is to be employed but not gender status.
- 9.2. The Union shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment.
- 9.3. The Union shall ensure that women have the right to work, to the same employment opportunities and to freedom of choice of profession as men.
- 9.4. The Union shall ensure that women have the right to equal remuneration including benefits, to social security and to protection of health and safety in working conditions.
- 9.5. The Union shall ensure that female educators, teachers and professors take up management roles at various levels in the education continuum in accordance with the provision of Affirmative Action.

10. Gender Balance in Power and Decision Making

- 10.1. The Union takes cognizance of the fact that women in Namibia have traditionally suffered special discrimination and that they need to be encouraged and enabled to play a full, equal and effective role in the political spheres of the Union.
- 10.2. The Union shall take appropriate measures and establish mechanism for attaining the goal of gender balance in the Union structures, committees and any other decision making organs.
- 10.3. The Union shall ensure that women are on equal terms with men on issues such as the right to vote, to be voted into leadership and decision making structures.
- 10.4. The Union shall create mechanisms to enable its electoral methods or systems to integrate women in both elective and non-elective positions for the purpose of attaining gender balance.
- 10.5. The Union shall take appropriate measures to ensure that women actively participate in the formulation of the organizational policy, plans and programs.
- 10.6. The Union shall develop mechanism to monitor and evaluate women's access to senior levels of decision making.

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- 10.7. The Union shall adopt gender sensitization programs and forums which can support women in policy making and decision making structures.

11. Education and Gender Empowerment

- 11.1. The Union strongly believes that education is a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equity, equality and development.
- 11.2. The Union takes cognizance of the fact that non-discriminatory education benefits both men and women and thus contributes to more equal relationship.
- 11.3. The Union takes cognizance of the fact that equality of access to and attainment of qualifications is necessary if more women are to become agents of change.
- 11.4. The Union shall ensure that all people's right to education at a national level is promoted, protected and fulfilled regardless of their gender status.
- 11.5. The Union shall ensure that there is no discrimination against women at a national and organizational level in access to education and other related opportunities.
- 11.6. The Union shall ensure that schools and tertiary institutions mainstream gender into its curriculum which will be free of gender-bias.
- 11.7. The Union shall also ensure that curricular, textbook and all teaching/learning materials are free from gender-biased stereotype references and illustrations.
- 11.8. The Union shall whenever resources permit, sensitize the communities at grassroots and schools through seminar, workshops and media for the purpose of stressing the need for support from community at large, to understand the importance of women's access to education.
- 11.9. The Union shall emphasize access and retention of women at all levels of education, and in all academic areas.

12. Participation in International Conferences, Meetings, and Symposiums

- 12.1. The Union shall ensure the participation of women on equal terms with men to represent the organisation at the international level.

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- 12.2. The Union shall ensure the participation of women on equal terms with men to participate in the work of international organizations.
- 12.3. The Union shall take appropriate measures to ensure that women access training and other empowerment opportunities on equal terms as men.
- 12.4. The Union shall tap from international relations to strengthen the empowerment of women processes.

13. Grievance Handling

- 13.1. Any employee or member, who feels that he/she has been discriminated against on the basis of his/her gender status, shall be entitled to raise their grievance by way of standard grievance procedures.
- 13.2. The Union shall ensure that available grievance procedures are designed in such a way as to adequately protect members/employee lodging the grievances.

14. Implementation of the Policy

- 14.1. The Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General and National Teachers Council shall be responsible for the implementation of this policy, ensuring compliance with and knowledge about its provisions and for taking immediate and appropriate corrective action whenever a provision of the policy is not complied with.
- 14.2. The Gender Focal Persons within NANTU shall coordinate gender programs and activities within the whole organisation.
- 14.3. All members and employees shall be held responsible and accountable for complying with this policy of which the failure shall constitute a disciplinary offence.
- 14.4. Gender awareness raising and training programs shall take place during working hours and all employees and respective members will be obliged to attend and participate in such programs whenever possible.

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15. Collaboration between NANTU, Government, and Civil Society

- 15.1. The Union shall promote the establishment of effective partnership with relevant stakeholders such as Ministry of Gender, Ministry of Education, non-governmental organizations and grassroots communities to share experiences and knowledge in effectively and appropriately responding to gender issues.
- 15.2. The Union shall further solicit the assistance of such other organizations in developing and implementing appropriate programs.

16. Policy Review

- 16.1. This policy will be reviewed every three (3) years unless otherwise indicated, to take account of new approaches and theories to ensure its responsiveness to new emerging gender dynamics.

17. Monitoring and Evaluation of Gender Policy

- 17.1. The implementation as well as the effectiveness of the policy will be regularly monitored and evaluated.
- 17.2. Quantitative and qualitative indicators, based on international and national indicators will be measured, and appropriate remedial action will be implemented where necessary.
- 17.3. Indicators in respect of impact of gender gaps and discrimination in the workplace include:
 - Number of cases reported on gender-based discrimination.
 - Number of cases reported on sexual harassment within the workplace.
 - Number of incidents of gender-based stereotypes and prejudices reported within the workplace.
 - Number of women serving in position of power and decision making structures.
 - Number of women attending international conferences, meetings and other professional developmental opportunities.
- 17.4. Indicators in respect of effectiveness and impact of gender programs include:
 - Knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) survey.
 - Number of members and employees attending gender forums meeting.

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- Number of members and employees benefiting from capacity building and training programs on gender mainstreaming and related issues.

Glossary

<i>Concept (s)</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Discrimination	A difference in treatment of people based entirely on their traits such as sex, color or race. This difference contributes to structural inequality in society.
Employee	
Gender	It refers to culturally and socially constructed roles, responsibilities, privileges, relations and expectations of women, men, girls and boys.
Gender Balance	It refers to an ideal situation where women, men, boys and girls live harmoniously enjoying equal opportunities and have mutual respect for each other.
Gender Empowerment	A process through which men, women, boys and girls acquire knowledge, skills and willingness to critically analyze their situation and take appropriate action to change the status quo of women.
Gender Equality	It refers to equal rights and opportunities for women, men, girls and boys in all sectors such as political, social, legal and economic.
Gender Equity	It refers to just treatment, balanced recognition and appreciation of both women's and men's potential.
Gender Mainstreaming	It refers to addressing gender issues in all development policies and projected programs irrespective of sector or type of project.
Gender Roles	It refers to different tasks and responsibilities and expectations the society has defined and allocated to men, women, girls and boys.

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Gender Sensitivity	It refers to being aware that women and men perform different roles and have different needs which must be planned for accordingly.
Sexual Harassment	It refers to intimidation, bullying or coercion of a sexual nature, or the unwelcome or inappropriate promise of rewards in exchange for sexual favors.
Unfair Discrimination	It refers to the systematic, unfavorable treatment of individuals on the basis of their traits such as gender which denies them rights, opportunities or resources.