

Gender Policy of Community Homestay Network

1. Introduction

Community Homestay Network (CHN) is committed to fostering an equitable and inclusive work environment while promoting gender equality in the communities we serve. As an organization working with over 900 women entrepreneurs across Nepal, we recognize that gender roles and stereotypes are deeply rooted in patriarchal structures. This policy aims to challenge and transform these norms by ensuring equal opportunities, dismantling biases, and holding all stakeholders accountable for upholding gender inclusivity.

2. Objectives

- To create a just, inclusive, and equitable workplace where all individuals, regardless of gender, feel valued, respected, and empowered.
- To ensure all employees and community partners are aware of and actively challenge gender stereotypes and systemic discrimination.
- To provide an enabling environment that allows women, marginalized groups, and individuals from all backgrounds to thrive professionally and personally.
- To integrate gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) principles into CHN's policies, programs, and decision-making.
- To hold leadership and team members accountable in fostering a workplace culture that prioritizes gender justice and equality.

3. Guiding Principles

- **Zero Discrimination:** CHN prohibits discrimination based on gender, caste, ethnicity, religion, disability, or socio-economic background.
- **Gender-Responsive Leadership:** Leaders at CHN must actively challenge gender biases and set an example of gender-equitable behavior.
- **Equal Opportunities for Career Growth:** CHN provides equitable opportunities for career advancement, training, and leadership roles. Women and marginalized groups are encouraged to pursue careers at CHN.
- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Recognizing diverse personal responsibilities, CHN supports flexible work options, parental leave, and family-friendly policies.

- Pay Equity: Equal pay for equal work is a fundamental right and shall be maintained at all levels.

4. Workplace Practices

4.1 Recruitment, Promotion, and Career Development

- CHN ensures a transparent, merit-based recruitment process free from gender bias.
- Women and individuals from disadvantaged groups are actively encouraged to apply for leadership roles.
- CHN will encourage mentorship programs, skill-building training, and leadership opportunities for women team members and community entrepreneurs.

4.2 Safe and Inclusive Work Environment

- CHN is committed to a workplace free from discrimination, harassment, and violence.
- All employees and community members must adhere to a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment, as outlined in the *Sexual Harassment at Workplace Prevention Act, 2015*.
- A confidential grievance mechanism is in place to ensure that all complaints are heard, investigated, and resolved without fear of retaliation.
- CHN will establish an external Grievance Committee to handle cases impartially when needed.

4.3 Work-Life Balance and Family-Friendly Policies

- Maternity Leave: Female employees are entitled to up to four months of maternity leave (three months paid, one month unpaid), with an option to extend up to six months unpaid. Temporary staff may be hired as needed to ensure smooth operations.
- Paternity Leave: Male employees receive 15 days of paid paternity leave, with additional flexible work arrangements to support their families.
- Kriya Leave: Employees are granted 15 days of paid leave for bereavement rituals.
- Flexible Working Hours & Remote Work: Employees can request flexible schedules and remote work arrangements as needed.

4.4 Gender Accountability and Awareness

- All CHN employees will be encouraged to take on gender sensitivity and unconscious bias training, if available.

- Every training provided to communities will incorporate a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) component.
- CHN will regularly review power dynamics in the workplace to address potential gender-based disparities.
- An annual strategic meeting will include discussions on gender-related challenges and opportunities, with periodic policy reviews to ensure continued progress.

4.5 Communication and Engagement

CHN will promote gender equality through open dialogue and collaboration by:

- Discussion on gender and inclusion concerns will be discussed at every strategic meeting.
- Organizing regular team check-ins and one-on-one conversations to support team members.
- Conducting annual retreats and strategy sessions to review progress on gender goals.
- Encouraging informal gatherings, networking, and mentorship opportunities for women entrepreneurs.
- Providing multiple grievance reporting mechanisms such as suggestion boxes, email, and confidential reporting channels.

5. Accountability and Enforcement

- CHN leadership is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.
- Employees and stakeholders are encouraged to report violations, and strict action will be taken against any form of discrimination or harassment.
- The policy will be reviewed annually to incorporate evolving gender dynamics and best practices.

6. Commitment to Gender Equality Beyond the Workplace

- CHN will continue advocating for women-led entrepreneurship and breaking barriers that hinder women's economic participation.
- As part of our responsible tourism initiatives, CHN will actively challenge gender stereotypes in the communities we work with.
- We will collaborate with organizations, policymakers, and stakeholders to influence systemic change in gender norms across Nepal.

Conclusion

This policy is a living document that reflects CHN's deep commitment to gender equality, inclusion, and social justice. It is not just a workplace mandate but a call to action; ensuring that everyone within CHN, from the internal team members to community entrepreneurs, actively challenges and transforms gender norms in Nepal. We believe that gender equality is not just about empowering women but about reshaping our collective future for a more just and inclusive society.