

Draft Policy on Gender and Child Abuse

A policy document for the Kenya Association of Water Resources Association

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KeNAWRUA policy on Gender and Child Abuse

1. Preamble

The Kenya National Association of Water Resources Users Association (KeNAWRUA) aims to be the leading organization advocating for the management and use of water resources in Kenya. KeNAWRUA is dedicated to promoting gender equality, equity, and social inclusion in all its programs and activities. We recognize that effective water resource management is crucial for sustainable development. Therefore, we believe that empowering all individuals—regardless of gender, age, disability, or cultural background—is essential for ensuring equitable access to water and the sustainable use of this vital resource.

KeNAWRUA is dedicated to supporting equal rights for everyone, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or social status. Our principles demonstrate a commitment to promoting human rights, equality, and a fair distribution of power and resources among all individuals.

We believe that active public engagement and organization are crucial for changing power dynamics. It is vital for women's influence and organization to grow so they can engage on an equal footing with men. Similarly, men must also increase their participation in efforts for gender equality to help achieve these goals. KeNAWRUA collaborates with organizations that share our values and objectives related to gender equality.

This policy outlines KeNAWRUA's commitment to creating a world free from gender-based discrimination, enabling every individual to reach their full potential without being hindered by prejudicial laws or societal and economic structures. It articulates KeNAWRUA's guiding principles and commitments in promoting gender equality. This policy applies to all of KeNAWRUA's initiatives across the country and beyond, including our programs, advocacy, communication efforts, and internal operations.

Regarding child abuse, KeNAWRUA is dedicated to ensuring the well-being and rights of children by providing measures for their survival, development, protection, and participation within its jurisdiction.

Additionally, this policy highlights KeNAWRUA's commitment to promoting holistic health, education, safety, and positive development in a supportive environment. KeNAWRUA also

pledges to adopt a multi-sectoral approach that encourages collaboration among various stakeholders while focusing on the best interests of children.

This policy provides a framework for advancing gender equality, equity, and social inclusion, while also promoting the empowerment of women, girls, boys, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, the elderly, and children within the context of water resource management in Kenya.

Policy statement: “Gender equality in the workplace is a prerequisite for effective organizational performance and development, anchors professionalism and promotes results that contribute to positive societal change. Fundamentally, gender equality shall constitute a key value and objective of all the work of KeNAWRUA.”

DEFINITION OF TERMS

“Affirmative action” means a policy, program or measure that seeks to redress past discrimination through active measures to ensure equal opportunity and positive outcomes in all spheres of life.

“Discrimination” means any distinction, exclusion or restriction which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, by any person, of human rights, and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

“Empowerment” is the process of gaining access and developing one’s capacities with a view to participating actively in shaping one’s own life and that of one’s community in economic, social and political terms.

“Human development” focuses on expanding the choices men and women have to lead lives that they value. It is thus about much more than economic growth, which is a means of enlarging people’s choices.

“Human rights” refer to the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled. Examples of these rights include civil and political rights, such as the right to life and liberty, freedom of expression, and equality before the law; and social, cultural and economic rights, including the right to participate in culture, the right to food, the right to work, and the right to education.

“Gender” means the roles, duties and responsibilities which are culturally or socially ascribed to women, men, girls and boys.

“Gender disaggregated statistics” is the collection and separation of data and statistical information by sex to enable comparative analysis.

“Gender equality” means women and men enjoy the same status, and that they have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development, and to benefit from the results. Gender equality is therefore the equal valuing by the society of both the similarities and differences between women and men, and the varying roles that they play.

“Gender equity” means the just distribution of benefits, rewards and opportunities in which relations between women, men, girls and boys are based on respect for differences.

“Gender mainstreaming” means the process of identifying gender gaps and making women’s, men’s, girls’ and boys’ concerns and experiences integral to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all spheres so that they benefit equally.

“Gender sensitive” means acknowledging and taking into account the specific gender needs of both men and women at all levels of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

“Sex” means the biological differences between females and males.

“Sexual harassment” Sexual harassment means any persistent and unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, including unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature in the work place.

PART I GENDER

1. Gender equality at the core of KeNAWRUA’s work

KENAWRUA is dedicated to ensuring that gender equality is at the forefront of our initiatives aimed at fostering a democratic society where resources are allocated equitably, addressing disparities, and safeguarding vulnerable populations. We recognize that, in many societies, women and men are treated unequally and assigned different tasks, roles, opportunities, and privileges. Typically, men are positioned in systematically superior roles compared to women. Discrimination against women exists to varying extents in most cultures across economic, political, sexual, and cultural spheres. Such discrimination adversely affects individuals, and communities, hindering development and economic progress. Attaining gender equality is crucial for constructing a better world for everyone. KENAWRUA acknowledges that women, men, girls, and boys experience, influence, and are affected by development processes, conflicts, and crises in unique ways. Likewise, humanitarian emergencies impact women and men differently, and women encounter specific challenges compared to men in their ability to influence and engage in democratization efforts. Generally, women possess fewer economic resources than men. KENAWRUA will consider these differences in our programs.

2. KENAWRUA'S work for gender equality

KENAWRUA is committed to ensuring that everyone can fully access and enjoy their rights without discrimination based on gender identity. This includes ensuring that women have equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of society—socially, economically, politically, and culturally—alongside men. To achieve this aim in our work, KENAWRUA will implement the measures outlined below.

2.1 In the KENAWRUA organisation

KENAWRUA aims to cultivate a committed and skilled workforce that embraces and implements a gender perspective in their work, reflecting KENAWRUA's gender-sensitive values both on and off duty. To ensure a gender-sensitive workforce, KENAWRUA has established personnel policies and various tools, including ethical guidelines that strictly prohibit sexual harassment, abuse, and exploitation.

KENAWRUA is dedicated to the following actions:

- Monitoring the male-to-female ratio across all levels of the organization.
- Supporting the advancement of women into leadership roles and promoting gender equality.
- Ensuring that working conditions meet the needs of both women and men.
- Fostering a workplace culture of respect that is free from sexual harassment and preventing power dynamics that perpetuate entitlement and culture of abuse.
- Foster a welcoming, inclusive, and accepting environment that supports the expression of diverse gender identities and prohibits discrimination based on gender for individuals who do not adhere to the gender binary.
- Implement strategies to recognize sexual harassment and establish clear protocols for addressing reports from whistleblowers.
- Avoid passive complicity and promote an environment that encourages open discussion and internal dialogue regarding gender-based discrimination, including acts of violence.
- Ensure that there is knowledge and sensitivity regarding gender issues and violence against women within the organization.
- Make a concerted effort to engage men in taking a greater role in enhancing the gender perspective of KENAWRUA.

2.2 In programme work

A solid understanding of gender dynamics enables us to better assist in reducing the gender disparity in authority and resources. Achieving gender equality is crucial for our aim to foster resilient societies within our water catchments. In the water sector, gender equality enhances fairness, inclusivity and equitable access within the communities in all the seven catchments in Kenya

2.2.1 Gender Analysis, Mainstreaming and Practice

- Programs should be founded on comprehensive gender-sensitive contextual assessments, which must include an analysis of power dynamics. The assessments should aim to comprehend gender roles and relationships specific to each context pertinent to the program.
- Gender analyses will impact every phase of program activities: from establishing baselines and conducting surveys to program planning, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation.
- All programs will ensure the collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data, with performance indicators specified in both qualitative and quantitative formats.
- We will work to reveal power dynamics and advocate for reforms in unjust power structures that intentionally or unintentionally affect women, men, boys, girls, or any individuals based on their gender identity.
- KENAWRUA will guarantee that all their programs are gender-sensitive and contribute to gender equality throughout all stages of programs implementation.

2.2.2) Gender Participation:

- All KeNAWRUA programs must recognize and address barriers related to gender that affect participation, decision-making, and access to resources.
- All programs must guarantee that women and those encountering gender-based discrimination have genuine influence and meaningful involvement. To achieve this, we will establish channels for dialogue with women and those affected, as well as with men.
- All programs must consider and factor in the time limitations that are often placed on women due to their traditional domestic and caregiving responsibilities.
- KENAWRUA will seek to involve both men and women in the pursuit of gender equality, starting from their own understanding of the issues and their analyses and strategies.
- KENAWRUA will aim to ensure gender balance in the organization and within its area of operation. teams.

- KENAWRUA will promote women’s organizing, as it is frequently crucial for transforming gender relations.

2.2. 3) Dialogue and Organizational Development:

- KENAWRUA will initiate conversations with all partners regarding gender equality policy and implementation, honoring each partner’s capabilities, pace, and approach to change.
- Gender equality will be integrated into the organizational development support offered to partners, based on their specific priorities and needs.

2.2.4) Learning:

- KENAWRUA will strive to gain insights from partners’ experiences, knowledge, and perspectives concerning the political context, organisations, political influence, and gender. Many of KENAWRUA’s partners possess significant expertise in gender equality initiatives. KENAWRUA will aim to leverage this expertise to enhance our efforts and encourage effective collaboration among partners, where possible.
- During program evaluations, KENAWRUA will incorporate inquiries concerning gender disparities in participation and in the effects of our program initiatives.

3.3. In policy, advocacy and communication work

KENAWRUA is committed to continually improving its efforts for gender equality in our policy-making, advocacy, and communication activities.

- KENAWRUA will leverage experiences and examples related to gender equality to push for changes in laws, policies, and practices aimed at fostering change that extends beyond our program initiatives.
- KENAWRUA will promote the involvement of women and girls and employ respectful and gender-sensitive language in our advocacy efforts for change.
- Whenever feasible, KENAWRUA will use data that is disaggregated by sex to illustrate: e.g.
 - how the impacts of different interventions among communities vary for women, men, girls, and boys
 - how water and resources access crises affect and engage women and men, girls and boys in distinct ways
 - the differences in participation and influence between women and men in democratic processes in the water sector
 - the discrepancies in access to resources between women and men.

PART II: POLICY ON CHILD ABUSE

KeNAWRUA's Policy on child abuse shall be guided by existing legal instruments, guidelines and policy framework to protect child abuse, neglect and exploitation. This include;

- The Constitution of Kenya 2010, article 53; which outlines the children's rights including rights to protection from abuse, neglect, harmful cultural practices, all forms of violence, inhuman treatment and punishment, and hazardous or exploitative labour.
- The Children Act 2022, which provides legal framework for child protection, and covers issues that include child abuse, neglect, exploitation, and access to essential services It also addresses parental responsibility, fostering, adoption, custody, maintenance, guardianship, and care and protection of children. The Act also provides for the administration of children's institutions and gives effect to the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.
- National framework for child protection in Kenya system for Kenya meant to ensure safety and well-being of children, guided by the Constitution and international multilateral commitments. The framework aims to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children through a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach. Key Components of the National Child Protection System in Kenya are:
 - The 2010 Constitution (Article 53),
 - the Children Act (2001, revised 2016)
 - The Kenya Children Policy (2025)
 - National Council for Children's Services (NCCS), established under the Children Act to regulate, coordinate, and oversees children's services and advises the government on child relate matters
- Guidelines for child protection case management and Referral in Kenya which provide standardized and harmonized approach to ensure the wellbeing of all children in Kenya
- The Kenya Children Policy (2025) which provides a comprehensive framework for safeguarding and promoting the rights, welfare, and holistic development of children in Kenya.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which in its 54 articles covers all aspects of a child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural right.

As a policy, KeNAWRUA shall follow the following procedures in reporting, follow up and responding to child abuse in all its operating jurisdiction.

1. Report procedures on child abuse

Reporting child abuse shall entail,

- immediately contacting child protective services and law enforcement,
- Providing specific details about the situation, including the child's name, age, and location;
- Providing the nature of the suspected abuse or neglect;
- Identifying any injuries inflicted of the child
- Identifying behaviour concerns: Listen attentively to the child's account without interrupting or questioning, and observe their demeanour and body language for non-verbal cues
- Provide any other relevant background information

2. Follow up to reporting

- Follow up the initial report with a written statement to KeNAWRUA and to the child protective service where the case has been reported to and the law enforcement.
- Prioritize the safety and well-being of the child who has disclosed abuse,
- Offer reassurance and support to the child. reassure the child that they are safe, and help them find a safe and quiet space to talk.
- Listen to the child without judgment
- Maintain Confidentiality to protect the child's privacy and confidentiality throughout the reporting process.

3. Responding to a Child's Disclosure:

- When a child discloses abuse, believe them and take their report seriously.
- Reassure the child that they did the right thing by telling you and that they are not to blame.
- Listen attentively to the child's account without interrupting or questioning, and observe their demeanour and body language for non-verbal cues.
- Maintain calm and reassure the child that they are safe, and help them find a safe and quiet space to talk.
- Document **the Disclosure** of the child's account, including their exact words, and document the date, time, and location of the disclosure.
- If appropriate, seek support from child protection professionals or counsellors to ensure the child's well-being.

After Initial Response

- KeNAWRUA shall Collaborate and Work with child protective services, social workers, therapists, and other professionals to create a plan to ensure the child's safety and well-being.
- KeNAWRUA shall commit and be a consistent and reliable source of support for the child throughout the process.
- KeNAWRUA shall endeavour to address the Child's Needs (e.g. medical care, mental health support, and other interventions) to address the trauma they have experienced.
- Where appropriate, KeNAWRUA, shall provide support and resources to the child's family to help them create a safer environment.
- KeNAWRUA shall be mindful of the child's need for privacy and confidentiality and endeavour to provide the same.

Long-term Considerations

KeNAWRUA shall make the following long-term consideration

- Trauma-Informed Care Ensure that all interventions are trauma-informed, meaning they recognize and address the impact of trauma on the child's development and well-being.
- Where necessary, ensure the child benefit from ongoing therapy to process the trauma and develop healthy coping mechanisms.
- Organise joining Support groups that can provide a safe space for child to connect with others who have had similar experiences.
- Advocate for the child's needs and rights throughout the process.

4.0. Implementation of policy

This policy outlines KeNAWRUA's commitment to promoting gender equality and the welfare of children within its jurisdiction. The vision, commitments, and guiding principles are intended for all KeNAWRUA staff. KeNAWRUA aims to implement this policy through the following actions:

- Allocate dedicated resources to enhance our efforts toward gender equality and achieve the goals outlined in this policy.
- Integrate gender equality initiatives into the annual plans of both the Head Office (HO) and each country office.

- Identify needs, develop supportive tools, and provide training for staff.
- Set aside dedicated time in the Head Office to monitor commitments and ensure adequate support for implementation.

This is a living document that will be updated and revised based on experiences as well as any internal or external changes.

Policy Monitoring

The significance of policy monitoring is;

- to improve implementation by identifying implementation gaps and challenges, allowing for timely adjustments and improvements.
- to provide a mechanism for tracking progress and holding stakeholders accountable for results.
- to provides valuable insights that can inform policy adjustments, resource allocation, and future planning.
- to allow organizations to learn from their experiences and identify best practices for future initiatives.

Policy Monitoring Template

<p>Purpose of Policy Monitoring</p> <p><i>(Clearly states the objectives of monitoring, such as ensuring compliance, evaluating effectiveness, or identifying areas for improvement.)</i></p>						
<p>Scope</p> <p><i>(Defines the specific policies, programs, or projects that are subject to monitoring)</i></p>	<p>Roles and responsibility</p> <p><i>(Assigns clear roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis, reporting, and decision-making).</i></p>	<p>Data Collection Methods</p> <p><i>(Specifies the methods and tools used for data collection, such as surveys, interviews, or data analysis from existing systems.)</i></p>	<p>Key Performance Indicators</p> <p><i>(Defines the key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics used to track progress and assess performance)</i></p>	<p>Reporting Mechanisms</p> <p><i>(Establishes the frequency and format of monitoring reports, including who receives the reports and how they are used)</i></p>	<p>Quality Assurance</p> <p><i>(Outlines measures to ensure the quality and reliability of monitoring data)</i></p>	<p>Methods of Information dissemination</p> <p><i>(Specifies how monitoring information will be shared with relevant stakeholders and used to inform decision-making)</i></p>