GENDER EQUALITY, DISABILITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION POLICY
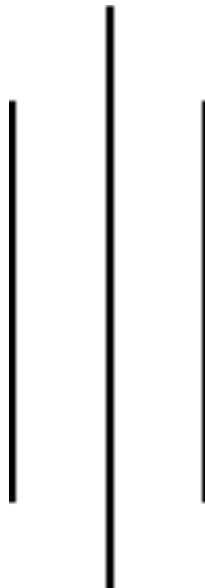
WOMEN LEADERS IN TECHNOLOGY

Lalitpur, Nepal

2021

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INTRODUCTION

Women Leaders in Technology (WLiT) is a non-profit organization initiated with a vision to **empower young women** to become innovators and leaders in the field of computer science, and provide them exposure to technical, professional and leadership skills to do so. Women Leaders in Technology was established with the firm belief that women can and should hold key leadership and decision making positions in the field of computer technology. We have a two folded mission:

- To reduce the **gender gap** in the technology field by encouraging young women to pursue careers in the field.
- To enable them in becoming innovators and leaders, creating a new cycle of mentors and role models for all coming generations to follow.

WLiT strongly believes in practicing equity to bridge the gaps between the socially excluded groups and the privileged ones. WLiT is dedicated and has a strong commitment to advancing gender equality and social inclusion in our organization and programs. Hence, the Board has passed this policy on ……………..2021.

PRELIMINARY

1. Short name and commencement:

   The name of this policy shall be understood as "**WLiT Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Policy 2021**". In short the policy shall be referred to as **GEDSI** Policy 2021. This policy will be implemented from the date ……………… as approved by the WLiT Board of 2021.

2. For the purpose of this document, if subject and the situation do not create other meaning, here;

a. "Socially Excluded/ economically less privileged/ minority groups" means,

- Someone who is a **dalit**, **madhesi***, or belongs to an [**indigenous ethnic group**](#)*****.

- Someone who resided and did their schooling in **rural districts of Nepal**.

- Someone who attended **public/community** school or high school.

- Someone who is attending public/community college in Nepal. Please note that this doesn't apply to competitive public colleges such as central and regional campuses of Tribhuvan University.

- Someone who has a **low family income**, depending on the number of family members, source of income and number of earning members.

- Someone with **physical or mental disabilities.**

- Someone with a **diverse gender**.

- Someone from **religious minorities.**

*The ethnic groups will be viewed with an intersectional lens. Priority will be given to individuals excluded based on caste, class, and geography within the group.

b. "Policy" means the **GEDSI Policy 2021 of WLiT**.

c. "Constitution" means **Constitution of Nepal 2015**.

d. "Organization" means **WLiT**.

e. "Board" means **WLiT board members** and "leadership team" means **leadership team members of WLiT.**

f. "M&E" means **Monitoring and Evaluation.**

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide a standard gender equality, disability and social inclusion policy for WLiT.
2. Provide base for decision making both at **policy level, programme implementation level** and **GEDSI sensitive culture** in the organization.

APPROACH

The following approaches require taking into account for the policy-decisions making;

1. Assess annually, gender equality, disability and social inclusion situation in the organization.
2. Develop and update the existing policy as per the need of the organization.
3. Follow up regularly on the developed/updated gender equality and social inclusion policy.

IMPLEMENTATION

GEDSI policy is implemented on administrative, managerial and program levels of the organization.

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

1. **Participation:**

   Encourage representation and participation of social minorities, economically less privileged and socially excluded communities in the board as well as the leadership team (at least 50%).

2. **Decision making:**
   a. Align any decision taken by the board with WLiT's GEDSI policy 2021.
   b. Motivate and encourage members from minorities and economically and socially excluded communities to apply for decision making positions.

3. **Knowledge of GEDSI policies:**

   During inception of new board members and staff/volunteers, compulsorily train them about the concept of GEDSI tools and policy.

4. **GEDSI Safeguarding Officer or GEDSI Responsible Contact Person**

   Designate a member from board or leadership team as GEDSI Safeguarding officer, who is primarily responsible for **record keeping** and **reporting provision** for GEDSI related incidents. The tenure of this GEDSI Safeguarding Officer is a year. More details on the responsibilities of the Safeguarding Officer are also

discussed in the **Provision of Assessment Register under Monitoring and Evaluation section.**

5. **Accountability:**

    The organization follows a **zero tolerance strategy**. If any kind of biasness or unfortunate incident occurs within the organization that is against the policy, GEDSI Safeguarding Officer, along with other board members and leadership team are responsible to hear the minority's concerns and take immediate actions to resolve them.

6. **Policy review:**
    a. Include at least one **GEDSI expert** and at least **one member from the socially excluded group** in the policy reviewing team.
    b. Revisit the policy **every year or sooner** and update as per need.

ORGANIZATION PROGRAMS AND MANAGEMENT

1. **Inclusive Environment:**
    a. Create an inclusive environment within WLiT to increase minority groups and economically and socially excluded member's participation.
    b. Ensure equal access to human, material and financial resources.

2. **Budget Allocation:**
    a. Define GEDSI budget allocation as an integral part of program budgeting, where a specific budget is allocated to socially excluded groups, minorities and economically less privileged groups.

b. Promote equity by keeping **scholarship options** for economically less privileged groups. Note that the scholarship option will be valid for anyone who is economically less privileged regardless of their social background.

3. **Recruitment:**

   a. In organization staff/fellows recruitment, set targets to ensure applications are received from minorities and socially excluded communities.

   b. Add mandatory questions for the thorough background check of how privileged the interviewee is.

   c. Add a category in the marking scheme to give positive points to socially excluded groups while recruiting fellows.

   d. Set **positive discrimination policy** in staff/fellows recruitment to prioritize socially excluded/economically less privileged/minorities groups and plan capacity development training in case of a potential skill gap.

   e. Among socially included groups, preference will be given to those who are economically less privileged.

4. **Fellowship Selection and Programs:**

   a. Reach out to public/community schools, socially excluded groups.

   b. Encourage a certain number of participants (at least 50%) from minority, economically and socially excluded groups and participants from outside Kathmandu valley or from rural areas, in all the programs conducted by the organization.

5. **GEDSI sensitive language:**

   a. Set up organizational communication guidelines that are GEDSI friendly and do not discriminate against people based on gender, disability or social groups.

   b. Include in curriculum and dedicate a session on gender inclusivity and accessibility in the fellowship program.

6. **Promotion of GEDSI:**

   While working with partner organizations, promote concepts of GEDSI in the collaborative programs to be carried out.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

1. **Indicators (qualitative and quantitative)**

   a. **Qualitative**

      Qualitative analysis includes **non-numerical data**, which will be based on observations and experience of fellows and team members. It will be collected via a **10 point rating scale**, where the following indicators will be considered.

      - How accessible is our fellowship recruitment call to socially excluded groups?
      - How inclusive is our work environment (in terms of language, behaviour, culture, caste, religion) within the organization?
      - How accessible are the resources to the fellows, alumni and board members?

- How interactive were the socially excluded participants in the programs?

b. **Quantitative**

Quantitative analysis is done with the help of **numeral records** that the organization keeps. Following are the indicators to be considered.

- Number of public/community institutions approached during fellowship recruitment call.
- Number of applications we received from socially excluded groups.
- Number of fellows who belong to marginalized communities.
- Number of people from socially excluded groups as board members, staff and facilitators.
- Number of participants from socially excluded groups in any external program conducted or supported by the organization.
- Percentage of budget allocated to the socially excluded/ less privileged groups.
- Number of members from the socially excluded/ less privileged groups in the policy review team.

2. **Provision of Assessment Register**

GEDSI Safeguarding Contact is responsible to manage following activities

a. **Record keeping of GEDSI related incidents**

- Create forms to record positive incidents as well as to report violations of policies. *[Record of positive incidents and practices will have columns like What, When, Who initiated, How it contributed to implementing GEDSI policy. Similarly, record of*

violation will have columns like What, When, By whom, Action taken.]

- Make sure the forms are available to everyone in the organization and the responses are monitored at least bi-annually.

b. Report GEDSI related incidents

- Present and discuss the reporting of the record in the board meeting annually. Use this report as a guidance to modify the current policy if needed.

3. Including GEDSI in M&E of programs

Conduct M&E after completion of every program. Program evaluation includes the following **GEDSI specific questions** in the reporting form:

a. Did the program include participants from vulnerable groups? Were they **interactive**?

b. Did the program use the **right activities** for the vulnerable groups? Were the activities done right?

c. Address any GEDSI specific feedback from the participants and make efforts to resolve them. Also use these feedbacks to revise the current GEDSI policy annually.