



AfricaRice

AfricaRice Gender Equality Policy

September 2014

CONTENTS

I.	Background.....	2
II.	Purpose and scope	2
III.	Policy Statement.....	2
IV.	Policy implementation	2
1.	Leadership.....	3
2.	Accountability.....	3
3.	Culture	3
4.	Capacity.....	3
5.	Programs	3
V.	Monitoring and Review.....	4

I. Background

Africa Rice Center (AfricaRice) is an intergovernmental and international research-for-development institution, with the mission of contributing to poverty alleviation and food security in Africa, through research, development and partnership activities. The aim of the institution is to increase the productivity and profitability of the rice sector in ways that ensure the sustainability of the farming environment. Given the important roles that African women play in the rice value chain from production, processing and marketing, household preparation of food, and seed conservation, it is critical that AfricaRice's programs involve and engage both women and men in its research, innovation, and capacity-strengthening efforts. Also, given the international character of AfricaRice, it is important that AfricaRice reflect global commitments to gender and cultural diversity. Such diversity will contribute to the depth of AfricaRice's Research for Development activities and greatly increase the relevance and impact of its work.

II. Purpose and scope

Gender mainstreaming is a process of ensuring that the different needs of women and men and the goal of gender equality is included in all areas of work, including policies, programs, budgets and monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Gender mainstreaming involves more than just delivering programs to empower women and girls, it is about ensuring that the unique needs, perspectives and life experiences of women and men are considered across all areas of work, and the goal of gender equality is central to all activities across an organisation. This policy aims to achieve fair and equitable involvement of both women and men in all of AfricaRice's activities by mainstreaming gender (i) in its research-for-development programs and (ii) at the workplace, i.e. at headquarters, outstations and in working with partners. AfricaRice will follow a dual strategy by pursuing certain stand-alone initiatives that promote gender equality and by integrating gender across all areas of work. This policy applies to AfricaRice staff and collaborators visiting AfricaRice facilities.

III. Policy Statement

AfricaRice acknowledges that gender equity and equality and gender awareness is essential to fostering sustainable change and achieving equitable outcomes for women and men across the rice value chain in Africa. AfricaRice considers gender as central to all areas of work, from planning to implementation and monitoring and evaluation both at the workplace and in all of its research for development activities. This policy is based on the following principles:

- ensuring that all staff and Board members have an understanding of gender issues and the principles outlined in this policy;
- respecting the values and cultures of the people AfricaRice works with;
- recognising the close connection between gender and poverty;
- promoting gender equality to key stakeholders;
- recognising that women with disability often face multiple stigmatisation and challenges in gaining access to quality health services; and
- recognising that gender intersects with other aspects of identity such as religion, caste, disability and ethnicity.

IV. Policy implementation

This policy will be embedded in AfricaRice's organizational culture and practice in particular as related to five organizational dimensions (leadership, accountability, culture, capacity and programs) as outlined below¹:

¹ Following Barclay, A. and Dicker, K. (2014): Think Out Loud. A practical guide to gender mainstreaming in community organizations.

1. Leadership

Effective gender mainstreaming requires an active commitment from leaders in AfricaRice. This includes board/committee members and senior staff members. Leadership is at the centre because without it, efforts to achieve gender equality will not be sustainable. AfricaRice's leadership will support gender mainstreaming and ensure that:

- there is a clear strategy for advancing gender equality
- women are represented equally and have influence as decision makers within the organisation
- there is demonstrated capacity and commitment to gender equality among the organisation's leaders.

2. Accountability

Efforts to mainstream gender into organisations are wasted if organisations are not accountable for their actions and commitments. Too often, organisations make genuine attempts at gender mainstreaming, but fail to implement the systems and processes required to ensure that these efforts are effective and sustainable over time. AfricaRice will demonstrate accountability for gender mainstreaming and therefore:

- actively seek to understand gender equality issues within the organisation
- allocate the financial resources required to implement the gender policy and mainstreaming strategy
- publically report on progress towards gender equality commitments.

3. Culture

Gender mainstreaming will be more sustainable when support for gender equality is embedded in the organisation's values, systems, policies, and procedures at every level. An organisation's culture is not always easy to quantify in exact terms. AfricaRice will establish a culture supportive of gender equality and:

- provide a fair and equitable workplace for both women and men
- encourage staff, volunteers and members to engage in open dialogue on gender and power.

4. Capacity

An organisation must have the technical capacity necessary to undertake gender mainstreaming. This requires a consistent investment in the capacity development of staff and board/committee members, but also a contribution to broader efforts to achieve gender equality. AfricaRice will establish technical capacity for gender mainstreaming by:

- having a specialist gender expertise within the organisation
- ensuring that gender is the responsibility of all staff
- contributing to the gender capacity/expertise of the broader community.

5. Programs

Programs refer to the main activities of the organisation. This may be projects or programs, advocacy initiatives, training or anything else that is the core business of the organisation. AfricaRice will mainstream gender into its programs by:

- designing its programs and activities using a gender analysis and robust evidence, including gender disaggregated data
- actively involving both women and men in the design and implementation of programs and activities
- using a gender-sensitive framework to monitor and evaluate programs and activities.

The policy will be implemented as follows:

- Specific activities and measureable objectives as related to organizational dimensions 1-4 are defined in the 'AfricaRice Action Plan for Gender Equality in the Workplace', and these will be monitored and updated where needed
- Specific activities and measureable objectives as related to organizational dimension 5 are defined in the 'GRiSP Gender Strategy – Mainstreaming Gender in Rice Research and

Technology Development' (currently version 2.0, dated October 2013) and these will be further fine-tuned to AfricaRice settings and monitored and updated where needed

V. Monitoring and Review

Achievement of objectives set for promoting gender equality as indicated above will be monitored twice a year. Progress made will be reported in AfricaRice board meetings.

In addition, a 'Gender mainstreaming report card' will be established to review progress made with *mainstreaming gender across all areas of work in the organization*, along the five organizational dimensions: leadership, culture, capacity, accountability and programs. An 'AfricaRice Gender mainstreaming report card' will be established and monitored once a year along with the institute's staff satisfaction survey to review progress and identify gaps in integrating gender across all areas of work in the organization. Where compliance issues are identified, AfricaRice management and the AfricaRice Gender Focal Point will work with staff and other relevant stakeholders to address these issues promptly.

Any updates and revisions to this policy must be endorsed by the Director General of the Center before being submitted to the AfricaRice Board for its approval. Policy changes will be reflected, as necessary in updated operational manuals.