

GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

IMPACTX FOUNDATION

"Be the Reason Someone Smiles Today"



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1. Introduction:

ImpactX Foundation is a non-profit organization established in 2025 to develop the lives of underprivileged street children as well as a more inclusive society for persons as well as for children for bringing hope, dignity and meaning to the life of a person. It is estimated that around 16 million people in Bangladesh are living with a inequality, receiving little or no assistance and excluded from mainstream life. ImpactX Foundation's mission is to address this by simultaneously educating the community in how to be more inclusive whilst also enabling persons or underprivileged those who are not able to participate in society by providing them with essential support. In this way persons every children who are can be given the same rights, freedoms, dignity and quality of life as everyone else. Our innovative approach to inclusion is now being used as a model in other countries.

Women and children who are more vulnerable compare to men and young boys of a family in terms of accessing life opportunities, such as – access in education, employment, forming family etc. ImpactX Foundation as an organization believes that promoting gender based equality is an integral part of achieving equality.

ImpactX Foundation is fully committed to create a gender friendly inclusive society for people of all gender (male, female and third gender). To ensure a high standard of conducive and professional working environment at organizational level, safe educational institution for teenage girls. ImpactX Foundation strongly supports practice of a process, which promotes gender mainstreaming in the organizational practices, for which an effective Gender Policy should be in place.

This gender policy will be considered as an integral part of other policies of ImpactX Foundation e.g. HR Management Manual, Children and Adults-at Risk Policy, Anti- Harassment and Bullying Policy, Whistle Blowing Policy etc... which may seem to addresses issues relevant to the promotion of gender equality.

2. Rationale of the Gender Policy

Gender inequalities are apparent from macro to micro level component of the society. Because of the differences, women, teenage girl and people of third gender are deprived of access to resources, education, health facilities, training, financial services, assets, livelihood and other essential services. In recognition of these issues and for elimination of such discrimination against women, the historic Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979. While ratifying the Convention – CEDAW, the state parties obligated themselves to ensure the equal rights of men and women to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. As per the obligation of the CEDAW, the Bangladesh government developed and approved the National Women Development Policy, which guides the national interventions on the promotion of gender equality.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989. This is one of the most comprehensive international treaties that ensure children's rights, including girls' rights, to survival, development, protection, and participation. It prohibits discrimination against children based on gender and emphasizes their right to education, healthcare, and protection from abuse.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2015-2030 The SDGs, particularly Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 4 (Quality Education), emphasize the need for equal rights and opportunities for girls, aiming to end child marriage, gender-based violence, and discrimination.

The constitution of Bangladesh is an engendering constitution, where men women are treated equally. In Article 28 proclaims that the state shall not discriminate against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth - that women, young and adult shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of the state and public life, and that nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making special provisions

in favor of women. The United Nations calls for gender equality in the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, not as a fundamental human rights, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable community.

In line with these normative frameworks, ImpactX Foundation is presented with a unique opportunity to develop this policy to promote gender equality at the organizational and program level; and also to create a gender sensitive working and child friendly environment because we think we have to establish a place where teenagers are equally comfortable.

Equality inclusive gender policy sets the relationship between people with different sex identity; and their roles, responsibilities, attitudes and expected behaviors. It is necessary to have a well-structured management tool, to form the base for operating organization's activities, projects and program to promote gender equality. This policy document will enable to direct and control the journey towards achieving gender equality in the organization. The Gender Policy of ImpactX Foundation will play a supportive role to integrating gender equality issues during designing and implementing its project and programs.

3. Guiding Principles

Empowerment of all members, all student is the focus of this gender policy, giving priority on the elimination of discrimination against women, girl and people of third gender. ImpactX Foundation refers gender equality **'as a system where people of all gender can function as a single unit within the organization and enjoy equal rights and respects.'**

Gender needs varies as per sex identities and traditionally women are more engaged in reproductive role. This difference has been taken in to consideration while developing the gender policy. Specific attention will has been given to empower and increase participation of women, teenage girl and people of third gender.

3.1. Policy Principles:

ImpactX Foundation is fully committed to the aspirations and principals of the constitution, CEDAW, SDG, and the national women development policies. Keeping those in mind Chayatal Bangladesh will adhere to the following principals in this policy:

- 3.1.1. Every human being is entitled to equal rights, including women and people of third gender;
- 3.1.2. Equality through equity for people of all gender with specific attention to women and people of third gender;
- 3.1.3. Gender sensitive accessible working environment for empowerment;
- 3.1.4. Practice non-discrimination in all ImpactX Foundation interventions and reasonable accommodation as per the demand of specific situation.

4. Strategy:

- 4.1. Establish gender equality at all levels of the organization for creating a gender friendly culture and environment as well as educational facilities without disturbance.
- 4.2. Promote gender balance in members recruitment with giving preference to women candidates at all levels of the organization;

- 4.3. Give preference to women and then men while recruiting members;
- 4.4. Take conscious effort to recruit competent candidates, who identify themselves as third gender;
- 4.5. Take effective measures through positive discrimination in favor of girl child, women and people of third gender by identifying differences, particularly biological difference and their marginalized position in order to achieve the gender equality in all ImpactX Foundation interventions.

5. Goal:

To establish gender equality and equity at the institutional and program levels of ImpactX Foundation by bringing about positive changes.

6. Objectives:

- 6.1. To create an enabling environment for women, and also third gender in ImpactX Foundation for their free and equal participation through affirmative action, where essential;
- 6.2. To give priority on the practices of equality;
- 6.3. To create a gender friendly working environment where people of all gender will be equally respected;
- 6.4. To ensure planning and implementation of development activities in order to achieve gender equality;
- 6.5. To create necessary infrastructural and other facilities by developing gender sensitive budget;
- 6.6. To take necessary steps to establish representation and authority of women at all levels of ImpactX Foundation;
- 6.7. To ensure analysis, monitoring and evaluation of all programs of ImpactX Foundation through the gender lens;
- 6.8. Lead a process for empowerment of disadvantaged people, such as- marginalized women, men, third gender etc... to promote gender equality.

7. Scope:

This policy will be applicable to all workforce members, board members, volunteers, contracted personnel, and beneficiaries of ImpactX Foundation. Areas considered in the policy includes:

1. Employment, workforce member and the member relation;
2. Volunteer development;
3. Working conditions, Safety and security.
4. Sexual harassment;
5. Gender policy in Program;
6. Values and code of conduct;
7. Gender policy operation and management;
8. Implementation of the Gender Policy;
9. Monitoring;
10. Review.

7.1. Employment, member, Student, Volunteer and the workforce member relation: Areas of positive steps for the volunteers:

- 7.1.1. **Values, behavior, and culture:** All the member of ImpactX Foundation will maintain an environment within the organization that will play a facilitative role in achieving gender equality in all the activities of ImpactX Foundation.
- 7.1.2. All ImpactX Foundation personnel will believe that all men, women including girls student and people of third gender are equal human beings and this belief will be reflected in their activities;
- 7.1.3. All ImpactX Foundation personnel will be living in equality for all irrespective of their gender, disability, religion, ethnicity and other identities;
- 7.1.4. Organizing awareness programs to ensure the safety of girls and adolescents student.
- 7.1.5. Respect will be shown to women's including girls role in every sphere of the organization and society;
- 7.1.6. Gender sensitive language must be used for organizational communication using any media;
- 7.1.7. Rules and regulations will be made in a way that all facilities are provided on the basis of justice;
- 7.1.8. Management of ImpactX Foundation should remain alert that men are not deprived in the name of gender equality;
- 7.1.9. Special motivational activities will be carried out among the members to ensure their support for the implementation of the gender policy;
- 7.1.10. Discussion meeting will be organized from time to time to discuss on gender issue so that the volunteers properly understand the issue. This will also be an open forum to discuss problems at personal and organizational levels and find out solutions jointly;
- 7.1.11. Priority will be given on gender issues during the purchase, procurement or collection of publications (books, magazines, journals, periodicals etc...)
- 7.1.12. Experience sharing events will be arranged with organizations specialized in the promotion of gender equality;
- 7.1.13. Volunteer will be facilitated to take part in national and international training, workshop and meeting on the promotion of gender equality.
- 7.1.14. **Recruitment, promotion, and leave**
- 7.1.15. Recruitment section of HR Management Manual will be revised if and when required to provide clear direction to address gender equality recruitment;
- 7.1.16. Women will be first priority for recruitment followed by women, men and people of third gender and then men.
- 7.1.17. Affirmative action will be considered by ImpactX Foundation management to create opportunity for developing volunteer of women, men and people of third gender;
- 7.1.18. Programs will be taken focusing the reduction of women's marginalization, increasing security and promoting reproductive rights in order to achieve gender equality;
- 7.1.19. Efforts will be given to ensure that at least one third of the recruitment committee members are women.

7.1.20. Vacancy Announcement and recruitment process:

- 7.1.21. The sentence “Women, especially women and people of third gender are encouraged to apply for becoming volunteer” will be mentioned in vacancy announcements/job circulars;
- 7.1.22. Specific facilities for female volunteer that are ensured by the organization will be mentioned in the vacancy announcement/job circulars;
- 7.1.23. ImpactX Foundation management will consider that vacancy announcements and recruitment process are accessible for candidates of all gender.

7.1.24. Application sorting and selection procedure:

- 7.1.25. In addition to other qualifications and experiences of the candidate, gender awareness issue will be considered;
- 7.1.26. Names of Parent’s or legal guardian of all candidates and in case of married candidates spouse’s name have to be mentioned in the CV and in other personal documents as well;
- 7.1.27. Women candidates especially women with disabilities will be prioritized while sorting the applications following a pre-set selection criteria.

7.1.28. Promotion

- 7.1.28.1. In case of volunteer with similar qualifications, competencies and performance women volunteer and people of third gender will be given priority for promotion.

7.1.29. Leave

- 7.1.29.1.1. In case of earned leave, casual leave, medical leave, sick leave etc... same rule will be applicable for all volunteer, volunteer will be entitled special leave for the following causes:
- 7.1.29.1.2. Female volunteer will be entitled 4 months of maternal leave with salary on maximum two occasions.
- 7.1.29.1.3. Male volunteer will get in total seven working days of paternal leave for taking care of the wife and new born baby.

7.2. Volunteer development:

- 7.2.1. Training for capacity development of volunteer will be arranged inside and outside the organization. Special training will be arranged for female volunteer to ensure their increased performance and participation at all levels of the organization. In case of equally deserving candidates, priority will be given to volunteer and people of third gender.
- 7.2.2. In volunteer development plan through attending higher education courses, training, workshop, seminar etc... both within the country and abroad, appropriate ratio of gender representation should be maintained.
- 7.2.3. All relevant curriculum and modules of training developed by ImpactX Foundation should be gradually modified to incorporate gender concepts and sensitivities wherever necessary;

- 7.2.4. Gender issues should be incorporated in all the training program and workshops (where applicable) offered by ImpactX Foundation Bangladesh;
- 7.2.5. Specific and need-based human resource development training courses should be undertaken for upgrading the relevant skills of the female and third gender employees wherever feasible.

7.3. **Working conditions, safety and security:**

- 7.3.1. ImpactX Foundation office at HQ and in the fields shall have separate toilet and other facilities as appropriate to female volunteer and lactating mothers by incorporating universal design guideline and reasonable accommodation.

7.3.2. **Transport and communication facilities**

- 7.3.3. Female volunteers (with specific emphasis to women and men and third gender) of ImpactX Foundation HQ and its project offices will get preference in the provision of transport facilities to attend office and to go back home as and when necessary and is subject to availability of vehicles and financial resources;
- 7.3.4. While ImpactX Foundation provides vehicles during field visits, priority will be given to women volunteer (with specific emphasis to women and men);
- 7.3.5. In case of late stay in the office and it becomes dark, ImpactX Foundation may arrange transport to enable women volunteer to reach home safely with due attention to the women volunteer.
- 7.3.6. In case of emergency and to avoid risks, authority will decide on suitable measures as deem fit with due attention to the women and men and women volunteer.

7.3.7. **Other facilities:**

- 7.3.8. Long journey during pregnancy and menstrual period will be relaxed;
- 7.3.9. Administrative and legal measures will be taken at all levels of the organization against any kind of sexual abuse and harassment as per ImpactX Foundation's service and discipline rules.
- 7.3.10. If any members is assaulted by any outsider, organization will extend all possible supports to the concerned volunteer.

7.4. **Sexual harassment and protection:**

- 7.4.1. **Zero Tolerance Policy for Sexual harassment:** A 'Zero Tolerance Policy' for any kind of '*sexual harassment*' would be introduced both for organization and for program level. The policy would also include the incidents of mental harassment, incest or sex abuses and as per the High Court directive on Sexual Harassment-2010. Punitive measures should be taken against the employee subject to proper investigation as per ImpactX Foundation's service and discipline rules.

- 7.4.2. **Show cause, suspension and termination:** If any volunteer or beneficiary or members of another organization is harassed or bullied by any volunteer of ImpactX Foundation, the concerned volunteer can be terminated according to the 'Discipline Rule of the HR Management Manual of ImpactX Foundation, after a proper investigation.

7.5. Gender policy in program:

- 7.5.1. Affirmative action should be taken to increase the number of women training participants to achieve equality in the men and women ratio of training participants. Men and women will be encouraged to attend ImpactX Foundation's training courses.
- 7.5.2. The partner selection policy and criteria should reflect gender equality of potential partner NGOs.
- 7.5.3. The gender perspective should be included in ImpactX Foundation's monitoring and follow up documents.
- 7.5.4. Training materials and contents should be made gender sensitive.
- 7.5.5. A specific gender awareness-training module should be incorporated in the existing training programs where applicable.
- 7.5.6. All program policies should reflect the relevant guidelines as mentioned above e.g. Training center management policy.
- 7.5.7. In designing projects and program, gender analysis will be considered and where it is necessary to give priorities of women led programming and their participation shall be done.
- 7.5.8. ImpactX Foundation's project will be focused on changing the status of children, women and third gender rather than condition by giving emphasis on the strategic gender needs.

7.6. Values and code of conduct

- 7.6.1. Gender equity is one of the core values of the organization.
- 7.6.2. There will be no gender division for working in ImpactX Foundation, opportunity to participate in all works/assignments/tasks remains equally open irrespective of gender.
- 7.6.3. Any comment, made directly or indirectly by any volunteer, which may cause humiliation to any volunteer especially to the female volunteer is considered as a punishable offence.
- 7.6.4. To create a congenial working atmosphere for both male and female volunteer, ImpactX Foundation's code of conduct shall be followed.
- 7.6.5. Both men and women will show gender sensitive behavior to others.
- 7.6.6. Every volunteer will use decent and gender sensitive language in working environment as well as in working area.

7.7. Gender policy operation and management:

- 7.7.1. Gender focal person and Responsibilities: A senior women volunteer member of Chayatal Bangladesh will be designated as the Gender Focal Person (GFP). The main responsibility of the GFPs is to address the gender issues at the organizational level. The responsibilities will include:
- 7.7.2. Follow –up implementation of the Gender Policy.
- 7.7.3. Promote gender sensitization in areas under its jurisdiction.
- 7.7.4. Make a list of indicators and areas of information required on Gender issues for ImpactX Foundation’s and partner’s programs.
- 7.7.5. Design and regularly update orientation sessions for ImpactX Foundation volunteer members on Gender Issues and ImpactX Foundation’s Gender Policy. Different sessions should be considered depending on different target groups.
- 7.7.6. Organize orientation sessions on Gender Issues and ImpactX Foundation’s Gender Policy for ImpactX Foundation’s volunteer. All new volunteer recruited should be oriented by the GFP.
- 7.7.7. Be available to colleagues to discuss issues related to gender in the workplace and elsewhere.
- 7.7.8. Gender Focal point will be responsible to oversee the sexual harassment or gender discrimination cases within the organization and would take the necessary initiatives.
- 7.7.9. GFP will inform the ImpactX Foundation management about any form of sexual harassment and would assist the management for appropriate inquiry of the case to take decision.
- 7.7.10. Attend and contribute to gender related training workshops and meetings as and when required. Other volunteer members will also attend such events that will give them opportunities for capacity development and also prepare them to take the role of the GFP, if and when required;
- 7.7.11. Encourage open discussion to remove any understanding barriers or complicity on gender issues and Zero Tolerance policy.
- 7.7.12. The ImpactX Foundation management from time to time may review the responsibilities of the GFP and make changes where is necessary.
- 7.7.13. The ImpactX Foundation management will designate Gender Focal Representatives for the project offices of project locations outside the vHQ to facilitate the implementation of the Gender Policy as and when required.
- 7.7.14. The GFP will ensure that she is updated and informed about developments on Gender issues at national and international level with special emphasis on issues related to women with disabilities.
- 7.7.15. For long-term leave or absence of GFP, ImpactX Foundation management will deputize a senior female colleague for the period of absence of the GFP.

8. Implementation of the Gender Policy

- 8.1.1. ImpactX Foundation management will have the primary responsibility for the implementation of the Gender Policy through GFP.
- 8.1.2. Senior management, managers and supervisors at all levels will be accountable for supporting the implementation of the Gender Policy;
- 8.1.3. GFP will ensure the implementation of gender policy at the organization level. The GFP will generally be for two years. The ImpactX Foundation management may change / replace or allow the GFP to continue beyond two years, if necessary.
- 8.1.4. The ImpactX Foundation management will explore ways and means both internally and externally including contact with the prospective donors from time to time, for finding the resources required for implementation of the policy. This will be an integral part of all projects of ImpactX Foundation.
- 8.1.5. ImpactX Foundation management will take initiative to gender Audit annually to oversee the advancement of gender policy. Survey will explore about gender friendly working environment also. ImpactX Foundation management may involve outside resource persons to conduct such audit.
- 8.1.6. The policy will be available for all volunteer in hard and soft copy.
- 8.1.7. A 'Complaint Box' will be in place to report any form of gender based harassment, bullying and discrimination within the organization and program level.
- 8.1.8. During the exit interview of volunteer leaving the organization, HR representative will address the relevant issues.

9. Monitoring

- 9.1. ImpactX Foundation management will prepare appropriate monitoring methods and tools to monitor the progress of the implementation of the Gender Policy.
- 9.2. For undertaking research to validate some proposition or to collect specialized data, or for documentation of some learning, the GFP will work in close cooperation with the Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Division of ImpactX Foundation to identify facts and figures.
- 9.3. ImpactX Foundation monitoring mechanism will collect disaggregate data at project and organization level

10. Review:

The Executive Council of ImpactX Foundation is the holder of this policy who approves and, if necessary, can modify ImpactX Foundation will take necessary initiative to review this policy paper on a regular basis to ensure its relevancy according to the current trend. This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or it will be amended if and when necessary. The policy may also be amended if there is any change in relevant laws or in relevant national level policies.