



# WEST NILE PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROMOTION CENTRE LTD (WENIPS)

Promoting the Private Sector for Sustainable Development

## GENDER, EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (GEDI) POLICY

2024



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## MESSAGE FROM CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to endorse the organization's commitment to promoting gender equity, diversity, and inclusion (GEDI) through our newly developed GEDI policy.



This policy reflects our organization's values and commitment to creating a workplace culture that is inclusive, respectful, and equitable for all staff members. The policy provides a framework for promoting GEDI in all aspects of our work, from recruitment and hiring to professional development and community engagement.

### **Strategic Direction**

As the Board of Directors, we will provide strategic guidance and oversight to ensure that the GEDI policy is implemented and effective. We will monitor progress, identify areas for improvement, and make adjustments as needed to ensure that our organization remains a place where everyone can thrive.

### **Board's Commitment**

The Board of Directors is committed to:

- Providing strategic guidance and oversight
- Ensuring accountability for GEDI policy implementation
- Reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the policy

By endorsing the GEDI policy, we demonstrate our commitment to creating a workplace culture that values diversity, promotes equity, and supports the growth and well-being of all staff members.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Dr. Anthony Okwir (MSC).**

*Chairperson Board of Directors*

## MESSAGE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

As we embark on the journey of operationalizing our Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (GEDI) policy, I want to emphasize the importance of creating a work environment that values and promotes inclusivity, respect, and equity for all staff members.



Our GEDI policy is not just a document; it is a commitment to creating a culture that supports the growth and well-being of every individual. As we move forward, I encourage all staff members to familiarize themselves with the policy and its provisions.

### **Our Commitment**

We are committed to:

- Providing training and resources to support the implementation of the GEDI policy
- Encouraging open and respectful communication
- Holding ourselves accountable for promoting GEDI in all aspects of our work

### **Your Role**

As staff members, you play a critical role in operationalizing our GEDI policy. I encourage you to:

- Familiarize yourself with the policy and its provisions
- Embed GEDI principles in your daily work
- Speak up and report any incidents of harassment or discrimination

### **Let's Work Together**

I am confident that together, we can create a work environment that is inclusive, respectful, and equitable for all. Let's work together to operationalize our GEDI policy and make a positive impact on our organization and beyond.

Thank you for your commitment to GEDI.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mr. Jenaro Puringi Onegi (MBA)**

**Chief Executive Officer/WENIPS**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

4th July 2024

## 1.0. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. WENIPS History

WENIPS was initiated on December 8, 1997, as the Nebbi District Private Sector Development Promotion Centre, a project supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Uganda (GOU) under the Country Cooperation Framework (CCF) I&II, which spanned from 1998 to 2004.

Over time, the organization evolved and was formally registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee without Share Capital on April 8, 2004, under the name West Nile Private Sector Development Promotion Center Ltd (WENIPS), with registration number 73373/80010002658314.

Further solidifying its foundation, WENIPS was registered as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) on November 28, 2019, in accordance with the Non-Governmental Organization Act 2016, with registration number 4204 and operational permit number 1485. This registration marked a significant milestone in WENIPS' growth and commitment to its mission.

### 1.2. Our Guiding Principles

#### 1.2.1. Vision

Empowered, Healthy, and Prosperous Communities in Uganda

#### 1.2.2. Mission

Working together with communities to promote private sector development, improve livelihoods, conserve the environment, promote human rights, and enhance overall well-being.

#### 1.2.3. Thematic Areas

Our focus areas include:

1. Economic Empowerment: Fostering economic growth and development through sustainable initiatives.
2. Agriculture and Agribusiness: Supporting sustainable agricultural practices and promoting agribusiness development to enhance food security, improve livelihoods, and increase economic opportunities for farmers and rural communities.
3. Environmental Education and Conservation: Promoting environmental stewardship and sustainable practices.
4. Health and Wellness: Enhancing health outcomes through community-driven health promotion, education, and linkage to healthcare services.
5. Human Rights Promotion: Promoting Human Rights and Dignity for All, with a focus on Economic Rights, Children's Rights, Women's Rights, and rights of Refugees, PWDs and other Vulnerable Groups

6. Community-Based Education Initiatives: Empowering children, women and youth while engaging men to promote learning, personal growth, and community development.

#### 1.2.4. Core Values

We're driven by these core values:

- Concern for the Poor: We prioritize the marginalized and the vulnerable
- Teamwork: We collaborate to unleash the best in everyone
- Integrity and Honesty: We act with transparency and accountability
- Pursuit of Excellence: Delivering high-quality results and continuous improvement
- Diversity and Respect: We value diverse perspectives and mutual respect
- Creativity and Innovation: We adapt and innovate to meet new challenges

## 2.0. GENDER, EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

### 2.1. Introduction

WENIPS is committed to fostering a work environment that values and promotes Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (GEDI) in all its forms. This policy outlines our dedication to ensuring that all individuals are treated with respect and fairness.

### 2.2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for promoting GEDI within WENIPS. This policy applies to all staff members, including employees, interns, volunteers, and contractors.

### 2.3. Our Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of WENIPS' GEDI Policy are designed to promote a culture of inclusivity, respect, and equity. These principles serve as a foundation for our organization's commitment to fostering a work environment where every individual is valued and has equal opportunities for growth and advancement.

1. *Inclusivity:* We strive to create an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute.
2. *Respect and Dignity:* We treat all individuals with respect and dignity, regardless of their background, identity, or perspective.
3. *Equity and Fairness:* We promote equity and fairness in all policies, practices, and procedures.
4. *Diversity and Representation:* We celebrate and value diversity in all its forms and strive for diverse representation in all aspects of our work.
5. *Zero-Tolerance for Harassment and Discrimination:* We maintain a zero-tolerance policy for any form of harassment or discrimination.
6. *Accountability and Transparency:* We hold ourselves accountable for promoting and upholding GEDI principles and strive for transparency in all our actions.

### 2.4. Key Commitments

WENIPS is committed to creating a work environment that values and promotes gender equity, diversity, and inclusion (GEDI) in all its forms. Our key commitments include:

#### 1. *Commitment to Gender Equity and Inclusion*

We are dedicated to creating a work environment where every individual, regardless of gender, is valued and has equal opportunities for growth and advancement. To achieve this, we:

- Use inclusive language in all our communication
- Ensure diverse representation in leadership and decision-making bodies and organs of the organisation

## ***2. Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination:***

We maintain a zero-tolerance policy for any form of harassment or discrimination, including:

- Sexual harassment
- Bullying
- Retaliation
- Verbal or physical conduct
- Online harassment
- Discrimination based on Gender, Age, Disability, Sexual orientation, Gender identity, Race, Ethnicity, National origin, Religion and any other protected characteristic

We maintain a zero-tolerance policy for any form of harassment or discrimination. We:

- Provide training and workshops on GEDI topics, including unconscious bias and inclusive language
- Ensure that all staff members understand their roles and responsibilities in maintaining a respectful work environment
- Investigate all reports of harassment or discrimination promptly and thoroughly
- Take disciplinary action when necessary

## ***3. Recruitment and Equal Opportunity***

Our recruitment policy is designed to attract and employ highly qualified staff from diverse backgrounds. To achieve this, we:

- Use inclusive job descriptions that encourage diverse applicants
- Ensure diverse interview panels
- Consider blind hiring practices to reduce unconscious bias
- Utilize diverse recruitment channels to reach a broader pool of candidates
- Provide training for hiring managers on unconscious bias and inclusive hiring practices
- Set diversity and inclusion goals for recruitment and track progress
- Ensure that job requirements and qualifications are necessary for the role and do not inadvertently exclude diverse candidates

## ***4. Support for Working Parents***

We provide comprehensive leave benefits and flexible work arrangements to support working parents. We:

- Offer parental leave benefits that are inclusive of all parents, regardless of gender or family structure
- Provide resources and support to help working parents balance work and family responsibilities

- Ensure that working parents have access to employee assistance programs (EAPs) for support with work-life balance and family issues
- Foster a culture that supports and values working parents, and encourages open communication about work-life balance needs

### ***5. Professional Development and Equal Access***

We encourage all staff to pursue professional development opportunities and ensure equal access to training and career advancement resources. We:

- Provide mentorship programs for underrepresented groups
- Ensure equal access to career advancement opportunities

### ***6. Data Collection and Analysis***

We collect and analyze data disaggregated by gender, age, disability, and other relevant factors. We:

- Use inclusive research methods that include diverse populations
- Ensure that data is used to inform decision-making and promote GEDI
- Frequently include special extended modules of questions on gender equity and women's empowerment

### ***7. Community Engagement***

We partner with organizations that serve diverse communities and engage in community outreach and development initiatives. We:

- Prioritize partnerships with organizations that promote GEDI and support marginalized communities
- Engage in community outreach initiatives that promote social responsibility, community engagement, and GEDI awareness
- Support local community projects and initiatives that advance GEDI goals and objectives
- Develop and implement community programs that address specific GEDI needs and issues
- Collaborate with community partners to identify and address GEDI-related social needs and issues

### ***8. Policy Development***

We involve diverse stakeholders in policy development and conduct impact assessments to ensure policies promote GEDI. We:

- Ensure that policies are inclusive and equitable
- Conduct regular reviews and updates of policies to ensure they remain relevant and effective
- Consider the potential impact of policies on diverse groups and communities
- Incorporations of GEDI principles into policy development and review processes
- Provide training and support for staff on policy development and implementation

- Ensure that policies are accessible and communicated to all staff
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policies in promoting GEDI

By committing to these principles, WENIPS aims to create a work environment that is inclusive, respectful, and equitable for all staff members.

## **2.5. Non-Compliance and Addressing Concerns**

Non-compliance with this policy is taken seriously. If anyone feels discriminated against or believes that diversity or inclusion standards have been breached, they are encouraged to report their concerns through established channels elaborated in the WENIPS HR Policy

## **2.6. Implementation, Monitoring, and Review**

WENIPS commits to regular monitoring and review of this policy to ensure its effectiveness. All staff members are encouraged to actively contribute to a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace.

- **Regular Review:** This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure its effectiveness.
- **Staff Engagement:** All staff members are encouraged to contribute to a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace.
- **Reporting and Response:** WENIPS provides a safe and confidential environment for reporting any misconduct, and all reports will be thoroughly investigated and addressed.

## **2.7. Responsibilities**

- **Human Resources:** The Human Resources department is responsible for implementing and monitoring this policy.
- **Supervisors:** Supervisors at all levels are responsible for ensuring that their direct reports are aware of and comply with this policy.

## **2.8. Reporting and Responding to Incidents**

- **Reporting Mechanism:** WENIPS has a clear reporting mechanism for incidents of harassment or discrimination as detailed in WENIPS HR policy
- **Investigation and Response:** All reports will be thoroughly investigated and addressed in a timely and confidential manner as detailed in WENIPS HR policy

## **3. Review and Revision**

This policy will be reviewed and revised as necessary to ensure its effectiveness in promoting GEDI within WENIPS.

By implementing this GEDI policy, WENIPS aims to create a work environment that values and promotes equity, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring a supportive and empowering environment for all staff members.