



www.dewbd.org

**DEVELOPMENT WHEEL (DEW)**



# **Gender and Safeguard Policy for Development Wheel (DEW) and DEW Crafts**

**December, 2023**



## **Development Wheel (DEW) and DEW Crafts**

13-A/4-A, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Babar Road, Block –B,  
Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh

Telephone: 9101226, 01715120140

Email: [dewsalam@gmail.com](mailto:dewsalam@gmail.com)

Web: [dew.org.bd](http://dew.org.bd) and [dewcrafts.com](http://dewcrafts.com)

## Table of Contents

<b>PREFACE</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction:</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Rationale of Gender and Safeguard Policy:</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Statement and Objectives of the Gender and Safeguard Policy:</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Guiding Principles and Values of the Gender and Safeguard Policy:</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Core Values:.....	6
Standards of Behavior: .....	6
Employees and associated personnel of DEW and DEW Crafts must not: .....	7
<b>Gender and Safeguard Policy Components:</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Code of Conduct.....	7
<b>Recruitment, Leave, Promotion, Posting, Transfer, Termination, and Dismissal:</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Recruitment.....	8
Financial and Other Material Benefits: .....	8
Staff Development: .....	8
Gender Sensitization for DEW Staff:.....	8
Leave Policies:.....	8
Maternity Leave:.....	8
Paternity Leave: .....	9
Sick Leave: .....	9
Breastfeeding and Childcare: .....	9
<b>Performance Evaluation and Wage Promotion:</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Infrastructural and Special Benefits:</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Menstruation Needs:</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Safety and Security:</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Women’s Personal Safety:.....	10
<b>Measures to Address Specific Issues Faced by Female Staff</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Dismissal Policy:.....	10
Definition of Sexual Harassment:.....	10
<b>Sexual Harassment Guidelines:</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Action Points for Sexual Assault Cases: .....	11
Information Flow: .....	11
<b>Affirmative Actions:</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Access to Social Institutions:.....	11
Gender-Sensitive Community Environment:.....	11

Women in Community .....	11
Women in Decision-Making:.....	11
Women and Climate Change:.....	12
<b><i>Mentoring and Evaluation:</i></b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b><i>Policy Implementation Principles:</i></b> .....	<b>12</b>
Policy Implementation Strategies: .....	12
Budget: .....	12
Change/updating the Policy.....	12
Monitoring mechanism of daily behavior and practice:.....	12
DEW Will NOT: .....	13
DEW Will:.....	13
<b><i>Measures for the employees:</i></b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b><i>Gender glossary</i></b> .....	<b>14</b>

## PREFACE

### Preface

Development Wheel (DEW) and DEW Crafts is very pleased to implement the Project “Gender Equity Awareness Project for Mid-level Managers of Fair-Trade Enterprises in Bangladesh” for its member organizations. This project is the first of its kind in the subcontinent for Fair Trade organizations that will help ensure gender equality among Fair Trade organizations. DEW is pleased to prepare the Gender and Safeguard Policy for the Fair-Trade Enterprises in Bangladesh and there was always the effort to make this policy as an international standard so that the Fair-Trade networks of the country or other regional networks can utilize this gender and safeguard policy.

I would like to thank the donor organizations of this project, Christian Aid UK and Bangladesh, and People Tree Foundation UK and Japan for their continued cooperation and support. I thank Nuzhat Jabin, Country Director of Christian Aid Bangladesh Country Office; Anjum Nahed Chowdhury, Program Manager, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, Christian Aid Bangladesh; Naoko Tanemori, Kate Wakeling, Christine Gent, Ruth Valiant from People Tree Foundation for their guidance and tireless effort along with Mr. Swapan Kumar Das, the Chairman of Ecota Fair Trade Ltd. Special thanks to Prof. Ainoon Naher PhD for her consultation and developing the policies for the project partners..



Shah Abdus Salam  
Executive Director  
Development Wheel (DEW) and DEW Crafts

## Introduction:

Development Wheel (DEW) is a nonprofit organization established in 1996 by a group of development professionals and researchers aiming to support self-help poverty alleviation initiatives among the poorest households in Bangladesh. The organization primarily focuses on advancing the Arts and Crafts & agriculture sector by aiding the growth of small enterprises. This effort aims to create sustainable self-employment opportunities for underprivileged populations in both rural and urban areas. DEW is actively engaged in various areas such as climate change, livelihood security, agricultural promotion, sustainable livelihoods, human rights, gender equality, women empowerment and good governance through collaborations with national and international organizations.

DEW envisions a society where every individual enjoys equal rights, equitable access to employment, necessary resources for livelihoods, and lives with dignity. Its mission is to enhance the livelihood security of Bangladesh's impoverished segments by increasing their participation, particularly women, in small-scale economic activities. DEW prioritizes women's empowerment, recognizing their disproportionate disadvantage within existing socio-cultural structures. The organization acknowledges gender discrimination across all classes, races, and religions, extending its support beyond just women to all individuals facing discrimination based on gender identity. In line with this, DEW has revised its gender policy to ensure a fair working environment, emphasizing safeguarding and critical aspects of gender institutionalization within the organization.

## Rationale of Gender and Safeguard Policy:

DEW aims to uplift the socio-economic status of the most disadvantaged communities, particularly distressed, resource-poor women, children, producers, artisans and adolescent girls in its project areas. To achieve this, DEW dedicates efforts to improving livelihood security by enabling greater participation, especially of women, in small-scale economic activities through the provision of business and life skills. Additionally, DEW undertakes programs focused on promoting human rights and good governance for women at the grassroots level. Recognizing violence against women as a key barrier, DEW intervenes to address such acts of humiliation through various initiatives, considering the prevalence of such violence in Bangladesh. The organization acknowledges differing gender needs among women and men, advocating for their equal treatment in all programs to promote gender equality. DEW Crafts is a sister concern of Development Wheel which is a Certified Guaranteed Fair Trade Social Enterprise, this policy is also applicable for Development Wheel and DEW Crafts. DEW is revising its gender policy in January 2024 to make concerted efforts to reduce discrimination against women and other vulnerable groups within society.

## Statement and Objectives of the Gender and Safeguard Policy:

The Gender and Safeguard Policy serves as an institutional guideline aimed at establishing gender equality within an organization. It encompasses a code of conduct, values, future action plans, human resource management, and operational guidelines addressing equality and gender-related issues in day-to-day work.

DEW and DEW Crafts believes in fostering a fair environment where everyone bears the responsibility to care for and respect others, including colleagues, stakeholders, producers and beneficiaries. The organization also acknowledges the duty to identify groups at higher risk of abuse among employees

and stakeholders, striving to mitigate these risks. Therefore, the primary objectives of the gender and safeguard policy are:

- Creating a favorable, friendly, and fair working environment for both women and men.
- Promoting gender equality within the organization and among participants and producer groups.
- Developing programs to enhance gender awareness among staff, partners, and stakeholders.
- Integrating a sustainable development approach in all policies and ensuring gender-equitable outcomes.
- Establishing an enabling environment for women and men to work on equal terms.
- Mainstreaming gender equality within the organization and fostering an organizational culture that promotes equitable participation and power distribution between men and women in decision-making bodies.
- Creating a fear-free working environment for all and promoting Fair trade principals.

### Guiding Principles and Values of the Gender and Safeguard Policy:

Non-discrimination and equality serve as fundamental principles of the policy. Its goal is to promote equality among men, women, and other vulnerable individuals with differing gender identities and shield them from any form of violence. The policy incorporates fundamental principles and rights at work to ensure a just and friendly working environment for staff and stakeholders. Effective implementation of the gender and safeguard policy is expected to curtail disparities within the organization and among its beneficiaries, contributing to DEW's development goals and following Fair trade principals.

Moreover, by implementing the policy, DEW aims to ensure equity and justice for all stakeholders/beneficiaries/producers while actively working to challenge discriminatory social values and attitudes, thus promoting a more equitable society.

### Core Values:

- Recognition and mutual respect for gender diversity.
- Inclusion/Consolidation.
- Compassion, Collaboration, Partnership, Sisterhood practices.
- Empathy.
- Transparency, accountability.
- Zero tolerance for sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- Equal respect for religion, caste, gender, and all.
- Job assignments based solely on qualifications, without gender bias.
- Avoidance of traditional practices.
- Non-Communal thinking and observance.

### Standards of Behavior:

Based on guiding principles and values, DEW has established the following standards of behavior to prevent abuse, including sexual harassment, intimidation, violence, bullying, humiliation, discrimination, neglect, and exploitation.

## Employees and associated personnel of DEW and DEW Crafts must not:

- Violate the DEW Code of Conduct.
- Discriminate based on religion, gender, sexual orientation, race, skin color, age, ethnicity, or caste.
- Physically assault anyone.
- Bully or humiliate anyone.
- Sexually harass or assault anyone.
- Engage in any sexual interaction with children, adolescents below the age of consent, or adults with special needs.
- Engage in sexual interactions with women (or men) who are participants in DEW's programs or fellow employees in exchange for favors, money, or coercion.
- Neglect or exploit entrusted individuals.
- Place individuals in situations where they could be abused or exploited by third parties.

## Gender and Safeguard Policy Components:

### Code of Conduct

- Any insults or words that damage one's self-esteem are considered unforgivable crimes toward men, women, or individuals of any gender.
- Mandatory adherence to gender-sensitive behavior.
- Prohibition of indecent remarks, comments, and behavior toward women or individuals of other gender identities, including displaying inappropriate images.
- Disciplinary actions against employees/producers engaging in illegal sexual activities or harassment.
- Disciplinary actions for misconduct within or outside the organization/enterprise.
- Prohibition of any sexual behavior or intimidation affecting an employee's/producers salary/wages, employment conditions, promotion, or career.
- Strict prohibition against sexually explicit remarks, jokes, or gestures.
- No unwanted physical contact or advances.
- No repercussions for rejecting sexual advances.
- Prohibition of sexually abusive comments about one's body or clothing.
- Display or storage of offensive, scary, or sexually suggestive materials in the workplace is not allowed.
- Sending sexually explicit texts, recordings, or electronic messages, including pornography, is prohibited.
- Prohibition of verbal or behavioral acts that constitute sexual harassment.

## Recruitment, Leave, Promotion, Posting, Transfer, Termination, and Dismissal:

Existing recruitment policies apply equally to male and female staff. However, affirmative actions have been taken to increase the number of female staff:

## Recruitment

- Gradual increase in the number of female staff across all management levels.
- Positive discrimination in the recruitment process to achieve gender balance, potentially relaxing educational qualifications and experience criteria based on project types and locations.
- Exclusive invitations for female applicants to increase female staff numbers.
- Women to hold at least one of the top two positions within the organization.
- 30% of accounting personnel and policy-level/program management to be women.
- Eventually, 30% of the total staff will be women.

All recruitment staff should maintain a gender-sensitive approach in the selection process.

## Financial and Other Material Benefits:

- No gender disparity in benefits.
- Equal enjoyment of benefits for women and men.

## Staff Development:

For staff development, DEW and DEW Crafts sends its members to various institutions for skill enhancement and provides opportunities for participation in training courses, seminars, and workshops, both domestically and internationally.

- Priority will be given to appropriate and qualified female staff/producers in the selection process for capacity-building training across all aspects.

## Gender Sensitization for DEW Staff:

- Gender sensitization through training, workshops, seminars, meetings, etc., will be provided to all staff to introduce the gender and safeguard policy and ensure a clear understanding of the included issues.
- Gender training will be integrated into organizational sessions for new staff/producers (both male and female) joining or starting a new project.

## Leave Policies:

The provision of annual leave, sick leave, and casual leave remains the same for all employees. However, specific provisions for maternity and paternity leave are outlined as follows:

## Maternity Leave:

- Female staffs and producers are entitled to six months of full-pay leave during childbirth. The organization will hire part-time workers during this period, allocating their salary allowance to their respective projects. For mothers with more than two children, unpaid leave may be taken.
- If a staff/producer takes on the responsibility of raising the child, they will also be entitled to maternity leave per the organization's conventional policy.



### Paternity Leave:

- The organization provides seven days of paternity leave to male staff during childbirth to offer emotional support and assist in the primary care of the child and mother. This rule applies for up to two children.

### Sick Leave:

- Both women and men are entitled to a maximum of 20 days of leave for acute physical problems.

### Breastfeeding and Childcare:

- Female staff are allowed extra time during working hours for breastfeeding their babies for the first six months after childbirth. This entails a 5-6 hour workday, allowing a 1-2 hour lunch break for breastfeeding, if needed.

### Performance Evaluation and Wage Promotion:

- Promotion, where applicable, will prioritize female staff.
- All staff must be informed by DEW's management team about internal promotion opportunities, encouraging all qualified individuals to apply.
- Transparent and equal performance evaluations will be conducted for all staff, irrespective of gender, to assess performance fairly.
- Equal wages for equal work will be ensured for both male and female staff/producers within the same designation.
- Equal opportunities for claiming additional compensation for work done beyond normal duties will be provided to all staff.
- Female staff will not be transferred from their workplace during pregnancy, from the first month until the fifth month after childbirth.
- Gender responsive indicator must include in the performance assessment as Including gender-responsive indicators in performance assessments is crucial for evaluating and promoting gender equality within an organization. These indicators help measure the impact of policies and practices on both men and women, ensuring that performance assessments consider gender-specific outcomes. This approach fosters accountability and transparency, contributing to a workplace environment that values and supports the equitable treatment of all individuals, irrespective of gender.

### Infrastructural and Special Benefits:

Certain infrastructural and special facilities offered by the organization to female staff include:

- Separate toilets designated for female staff.
- Provision of sanitary pads and disposal bins for used sanitary pads in women's bathrooms.

### Menstruation Needs:

DEW will ensure that sanitary pads and disposal bins are available in all women's bathrooms. Line managers and supervisors will be sensitized to the fact that during menstruation, some individuals may need to take sick leave.

## Safety and Security:

DEW is responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure the safety and security of all staff during their work, addressing gender-specific issues only.

## Women's Personal Safety:

- Institutional safety and security will be ensured for DEW staff and producer groups.
- If necessary, the organization will provide support for female staff to return home at night and travel to other districts by public transport on official assignments.
- Official decorum and decency will be maintained in communication and conversation among male and female colleagues, producer group members, and participants.

## Measures to Address Specific Issues Faced by Female Staff

A committee will be established to ensure gender equality within the organization. Its main functions will include identifying problems faced by female staff, taking necessary steps to address them, and forwarding recommendations to management.

## Dismissal Policy:

Employees, regardless of gender identity, may be dismissed from the company for specific reasons as per organizational policy. Additional reasons for dismissal include instances of sexual harassment or sexual violence. While most cases involve men as perpetrators in Bangladesh, the organization will thoroughly investigate and make appropriate arrangements. Exceptional cases involving women or individuals of other genders will also be examined.

## Definition of Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment includes unwanted sexual behaviors (verbal or physical), attempts at sexual relations using professional power, bullying, displaying pornography, making sexually explicit comments or gestures, using obscene language, coercion for sexual opportunities, capturing images for blackmail, or hindering participation in activities due to harassment.

## Sexual Harassment Guidelines:

- The organization will adhere to the government's sexual harassment policy.
- Clear distinctions between different forms of misconduct will be made.
- Judgments regarding sexual harassment will be based on behavioral patterns, monitoring, substantial references, and witnesses.
- Gender equality and sensitivity will be integral to these judgments.
- Victims will have the right to file cases with legal bodies.

### Action Points for Sexual Assault Cases:

- Immediate reporting of sexual assault to organization management by supervisors or line managers.
- Suspension without pay for the accused during the investigation; reimbursement if found innocent.
- Formation of a 4-member investigation team (2 male & 2 female staff) responsible for producing an unbiased report within a month.
- Opportunity for the accused to review the report and provide a defense; final decision rests with management.

### Information Flow:

A gender committee will collect information at all organizational levels to address incidents involving men and women.

### Affirmative Actions:

- All projects and programs will prioritize gender-friendly approaches.
- Gender elements will be included in project planning stages.
- Emphasis on specific issues concerning social institution capacity in project activities.
- Gender perspective screening for all new programs and projects.
- Gender-friendly tools and materials will be used

### Access to Social Institutions:

- Encouragement of women's participation and leadership in public and social institutions.
- Support for women's active participation through capacity building in literacy, human rights, and leadership.

### Gender-Sensitive Community Environment:

- Formation of a committee with civil society to combat violence against women and girls.
- Support for increased decision-making rights for women at the family and community levels.
- Efforts to reduce restrictions on women's movement, especially in remote areas.

### Women in Community

- Identify and eliminate obstacles faced by women in local communities.
- Encourage women's participation in political and voluntary organizations.

### Women in Decision-Making:

- Ensure female representation in organizational councils and committees.
- Promote equal distribution of responsibilities between men and women.
- Women's Participation in Programs:
- Ensure at least 40% female participation in project planning and implementation.
- Provide incentives for participation and empower marginalized women.

### Women and Climate Change:

- Raise awareness of climate change's impact and vulnerability on women.
- Advocate for women's rights in climate change issues.
- Promote and support adaptation methods to overcome the new challenges.

### Mentoring and Evaluation:

- DEW will mentor staff/producer group members for maintaining gender equality.
- Guidance from a gender expert and the Executive Committee/board of directors to ensure gender-sensitive practices.
- Support for activities combating all kind violence against women.

### Policy Implementation Principles:

- Safeguarding responsibilities extend to management and boards.
- Everyone within the organization is responsible for safeguarding employees and community members.

### Policy Implementation Strategies:

- The organization will have a Gender Focal Person.
- Under his leadership, an action plan will be prepared for the implementation of gender policy and its related functions which will be approved by the leadership of the organization.

### Budget:

- Necessary budget will be allocated for various projects / programs for implementation of gender and safeguard policy.

### Change/updating the Policy.

The policy is a living document, therefore, the contents may be changed/updated based on the needs and context.

### Monitoring mechanism of daily behavior and practice:

- Keep a complaint box in the organization.
- There will be an investigation committee consisting of 3 (three) members to monitor the monitoring of daily code of conduct.

- Once a month, the investigation committee will look into the allegations and take action in accordance with the Gender Policy and Human Resource Management Policy.
- Everyone will sit together at least once a month and create a conducive work-friendly environment through the exchange of views.
- Counseling.

#### DEW Will NOT:

- Undertake programs that undermine women's roles or status.
- Employ individuals who do not value gender equality.
- Silence women's voices or engage in positive discrimination at the expense of work quality.
- Consider women and children as critical to project success.

#### DEW Will:

- Aim for gender equity and empowerment in all programs.
- Support women entrepreneurs through capacity building, financial schemes, marketing support and training.
- Help women acquire assets and facilitate income-generating activities.
- Introduce low-cost technologies to reduce women's workload.

#### Measures for the employees:

DEW must follow its organizational commitment to create a fair free working environments for all by implementing its HR, gender and safeguard policy and other related policies without any discrimination.

Therefore, Management of DEW will ensure that the organization has a focal person to implement the policy, the management will also be obliged in addressing gender equality issues through their program and daily practices.

## Gender glossary

1. **Gender:** Gender is the Socio-cultural definition or identity of men and women given by the society. Gender is the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity. Depending on the context, these characteristics may include biological sex, sex-based social structures, or gender identity.
2. **Sex:** In general terms, “sex” refers to the biological differences between males and females, such as the genitalia and genetic differences. Sometimes, a person’s genetically assigned sex does not line up with their gender identity. These individuals might refer to themselves as transgender, non-binary, or gender non-conforming.
3. **Gender Equality and Equity:** Equity and equality are two strategies we can use to produce fairness. Equity is giving everyone what they need to be successful. Equality is treating everyone the same. Equality aims to promote fairness, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same help. Equity implies giving as much advantage, consideration, or latitude to one party as it is given to another. Along with economy, effectiveness, and efficiency, Equity is essential for ensuring that extent and costs of funds, goods and services are fairly divided among their recipients.
4. **Gender Sensitive:** Gender sensitivity" is the way service providers treat male or female clients in service delivery facilities and thus affects client willingness to seek services, continue to use services, and carry out the health behaviors advocated by the services.
5. **Gender fluid:** Gender fluid people often express a desire to remain flexible about their gender identity rather than committing to a single definition.
6. **Gender Mainstreaming:** Gender mainstreaming is the public policy concept of assessing the different implications for people of different genders of any planned policy action, including legislation and programmes, in all areas and level.
7. **Gender Awareness:** Gender is an awareness of the differences in roles and relations between women and men? It recognizes that the life experiences, expectations, and needs of women and men are different.
8. **Gender-Sensitive Approach:** Effective philanthropy understands that the needs of women and men are different and that in order to treat them equally, their distinct circumstances must be addressed.
9. **Gender diversity:** Gender diversity is equitable or fair representation of people of different genders. It most commonly refers to an equitable ratio of men and women, but also includes people of non-binary genders.
10. **Gender discrimination:** It’s also known as sexual discrimination, is any action that specifically denies opportunities, privileges, or rewards to a person (or a group) because of gender.