

GENDER EQUALITY MAINSTREAMING POLICY

FOR THE

ORGANISATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES SECRETARIAT

THIS POLICY WAS DEVELOPED THROUGH THE OECSSC INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING PROJECT (ISP) – OPERATING UNDER THE GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT OF THE FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT UNIT (FCPMU) WITH FUNDING FROM THE CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (CIDA)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The OECS Secretariat (OECSSSEC), the administrative headquarters of the nine-member Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), is committed to being a “Centre of Excellence”ⁱ and a “Champion of Ideas”ⁱⁱ. To this end the OECS Secretariat has been engaged in a process of institutional strengthening designed to improve its capability to effectively support the developmental objectives of the OECS Member States. The need for institutional strengthening has become even more urgent with the expansion of the mandate of the Secretariat under the provisions of the Revised Treaty of Basseterre which established the OECS Economic Union. An essential component of the institutional enhancement of the OECSSSEC should be comprehensive Gender Equality Mainstreaming (GEM) into the programme portfolio and daily management of the OECSSSEC.

Gender refers to the status – rights, responsibility, and privileges - that society attaches to human beings based on their biological sex. In most societies males have higher status than females and this leads to differences in the way men and women are valued in various aspects of daily life. The premise of unequal value and status operates in social relations and institutions to distribute national resources and benefits unevenly on the basis of biological sex, race, class, age, disability, rural/urban residence, religion, and other identities. Sometimes, several of these inequalities combine to the disadvantage of individual, or groups of, women and men. Generations of women and men rejecting the pervasive ill effects of the practice in the Caribbean region, have exerted themselves to remove inequalities, especially of race, class and gender from national development. Laudable achievements in these areas have encouraged continued efforts in this millennium to remove the remaining vestiges of unequal social and economic status based on gender.

OECS Member States have therefore infused gender equality commitments at Articles 22.2, 22.4, 22.5 and 23.1 of the “Protocol of OECS Economic Union” of the Revised Treaty of Basseterre. Although articulated specifically with regards to Education, and to Human and Social Development, due to the cross-cutting nature of gender, and the implications of the Revised Treaty for the human rights of women, men, boys and girls throughout the OECS, these gender priorities are linked in varying degrees to all other articles of the Treaty. The gender pledges contained in the Protocol are consistent with the obligations ratified under international conventions on women’s rights and gender equality, and are carried over from the OECS Development Strategy 2000, the OECS Development Charter 2002, and the initial gender analysis contained in the OECS Human Development Report 2002.

In consequence of the above, a formal OECSSEC Gender Equality Mainstreaming Policy and Action Plan (GEM Policy) provide the framework through which gender analysis and planning will be integrated in a coherent manner at all levels of the institution’s programming to support the developmental goals for the people (men and women, and boys and girls) of the OECS Region. The GEM Policy and Action Plan also provide the mandate for the OECSSEC to manage its staff and daily operations with even greater attention to gender equality.

The Gender Equality Mainstreaming Policy and Action Plan empower the OECS Secretariat to build on the previous gender equality achievements. The GEM Policy requires staff of all Units and Divisions of the OECSSEC to systematically and explicitly use a gender equality approach in the design and implementation of regional programmes. These planned actions - institutional and programmatic - are a natural progression on the several preparatory gender initiativesⁱⁱⁱ previously undertaken as part of the institutional strengthening of the OECSSEC.

1.1 RATIONALE

The OECSSEC has periodically upgraded its technical capacity by adopting developmental best practices. For example, the integrated planning approach^{iv} adopted several years ago has been more recently elevated to the Results Based Management Framework^v. As part of this continuous skills enhancement, the OECSSEC accepts that a gender sensitive approach

to programmes and operations could also augment its ability to provide the best strategic intelligence to OECS Member States in support of sustainable economic growth and balanced human and social development in the OECS Economic Union.

This conviction stems from the experience of integrating a gender perspective into some social programmes of the OECSSEC, observable successful practice of several development partners of the OECSSEC, and global evidence of the efficiency gains that derive from gender mainstreaming^{vi}. The OECSSEC is therefore articulating and adopting a formal Gender Equality Mainstreaming Policy and Action Plan to guide systematic, transparent, and rational engagement of gender issues at the level of the institution - in its daily operations and management of staff, and at the level of its programmes - which all target the total development of the women and men, boys and girls, of the OECS Economic Union.

The policy on Gender Equality Mainstreaming gives staff across the institution, a clear directive to consistently and methodically infuse gender analysis and planning into their daily work. The policy also makes provision for staff to acquire the requisite technical capacity to carry out this function, and for gender awareness to become a feature of all aspects of the work of the institution. Additionally, the policy propels a gender-sensitive approach to administration of Secretariat.

1.2 PURPOSE

The OECSSEC GEM Policy and Action Plan formalise the mandate for gender mainstreaming in the institution's daily operations, administration, management, and programming. The GEM Policy sets out the Secretariat's gender equality goals and commits the OECSSEC to continuous and conscious efforts to achieve equitable developmental results between genders. The Action Plan details the strategies and interventions for operationalising the policy, and makes the OECSSEC accountable for implementation of gender equality mainstreaming.

1.3 GOAL

To position the OECSSEC as a model gender-sensitive Organisation in its development practice by promoting the achievement of gender equality and equity in the allocation of resources, rights, status and responsibilities between women and men, boys and girls in the OECS Economic Union.

1.4 OBJECTIVES

1. To provide the mandate, implementation systems and capabilities, resources, and mechanisms of accountability at all levels of the OECSSEC in order to integrate gender analysis and planning into policies and programmes.
2. To create a visible institutional culture of gender equality and equity mainstreaming in the daily management of the human resources of the OECSSEC.
3. To support the capacity of OECS Member States to examine and address gender issues in the course of formulating growth and development policies in the political, social, cultural and economic spheres of the OECS Economic Union.
4. To promote equal participation of men and women, boys and girls in realising the vision, taking advantage of opportunities, and benefiting from the implementation of the OECS Economic Union.
5. To support values that lead to the attainment of a culture of gendered justice, mutual care, peace and harmony between women, men, boys and girls within households, communities, and institutions in the Member States of the OECS Economic Union.

1.5 CORE COMMITMENTS

1. Establish a formal institutional mandate on gender mainstreaming and maintain a formal advisory mechanism in order to promote the integration of gender into all areas of work of the OECSSEC.
2. Develop gender sensitivity of all staff and the capacity of technical staff to undertake gender analysis, gender planning and gender related research in professional fields.
3. Provide equal opportunity for the professional and personal growth of male and female staff as well as, equity in conditions of work, benefits, promotion and leadership.
4. Create a respectful, safe, secure and gender sensitive workplace for female and male staff, free from discrimination, sexual harassment or pressures that are rooted in power relations.
5. Make all Human Resource systems and policies gender sensitive, and fully integrate gender indicators into staff performance appraisal.
6. Promote gender concerns and support gender initiatives in the work of partner organisations.

1.6 PRINCIPLES

Human Rights: Respect for human rights is the foundation of the gender equality policy.

Partnership: Gender equality can only be achieved if women and men work together for its realisation.

Equity: Elimination of inequalities that affect men, women, girls, and boys in the OECS Economic Union requires “Special Measures”.

Participation: Participation of women and men, both as agents and beneficiaries, in programmes and projects will be ensured, while being cognizant that some circumstances will require women and men to be engaged in specific and different ways.

Accountability and Transparency: Gender Equality Mainstreaming must become evident in the operations of all the Divisions and Units of the OECSSEC. Therefore all staff will be responsible for implementation of the gender policy.

Cooperation: Achievement of the objectives of gender equality mainstreaming depends on collaboration across all Divisions and Units of the OECSSEC, and with policy makers and technocrats of Member States.

1.7 GENDER POLICY STATEMENT

Gender equity and equality is the process of being fair to both women and men by creating conditions and opportunities that enable them to enjoy the same status, entitlements, rewards, and resources. Despite stalwart developmental policies and investments across the OECS during the past half-century, data indicates the persistence of gender inequalities and inequities in several areas, including demography, employment, socio-economic status, participation and governance. For example, boys and men are affected by age and class disparities inclusive of low educational performance, social deviance, and numerical prevalence in the criminal justice system. Whereas for women and girls, evidence points to greater disadvantages for them in relation to gender-based violence, and discrepancies between their educational attainment and labour market participation.

The OECSSEC Policy on Gender Equality Mainstreaming advocates for short, medium, and long-term measures designed to bring about fundamental transformative solutions to these and other identified gender issues. The policy values gender equality as a best practice of human rights, and recognises that gender inequality undermines development in the same extent that skewed development reinforces gender inequality. The policy advises gender-positive definitions of masculinity and femininity; supports equitable expansion of economic opportunities between women and men; the provision of adequate and affordable essential services, and social protection for boys, girls, women, and men in both rural and urban areas; and recommends the practice of gender-inclusive governance in the development of the OECS Economic Union.

This statement is consistent with the obligations of OECS Member States as Parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention of Balem do Pora [on violence against women], the Beijing Platform for Action, Article II of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man^{vii}, and Article 23 of the American Convention [on women's political participation and leadership in public spheres], the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality.

1.8 PRIORITY GENDER THEMES

The Gender Equality Mainstreaming priorities^{viii} for the OECSSEC are:

- Conditions and relationships that directly impact staff
- Programmes operationalising the objectives of the OECS Economic Union Protocol

Gender analysis of these themes will be treated in detail in the Action Plan, which will also include recommended actions, mechanisms, systems, structures, indicators for monitoring and evaluation, and time frames for implementation of the GEM Policy.

Conditions and relationships that directly impact staff within the OECSSEC working environment:

In addition to its current gender-positive features, the OECSSEC will strive for progress towards the creation of a workplace which can attract, recruit, retain and promote gender-sensitive women and men on its staff. Such a workplace would be diverse - having facilities that are appropriate to women and to men, including those having special needs. The Human Resources Management process would be sensitive to the family responsibilities of female and male staff; performance appraisal measures will include gender-sensitive indicators; and, special measures for encouraging career development and professional mobility of administrative staff will be considered. All levels of staff will increasingly participate in the governance of the OECSSEC.

Programmes Operationalising the Objectives of the OECS Economic Union Protocol:

Gender Equality Mainstreaming in the programmes of the OECSSEC means that staff will always consider the implications of planned activities on the access of women, men, boys and girls in the OECS Economic Union. Staff will consider tangible and intangible resources required for wholesome personal development, as well as for a high standard and quality of life. The implications of programme activities for the gender division of labour between women and men within households, communities and institutions of the OECS Economic Union will be taken into account. Programme planners will acknowledge that men usually have primary responsibility for income-generating work, while women often have responsibilities that are either low, or non-, income generating work. GEM also means that careful attention will be given to how programme activities and outcomes may impact the sexual and reproductive health and rights of men and women. The GEM will also ensure equitable participation of women and men in various levels of decision-making within governance processes and organs of the OECS Economic Union.

The regional priorities of the OECS Economic Union Protocol^{ix} are defined in five Strategic Objectives of the Secretariat (2012-2015). These objectives form the basis of the programme activities that the Divisions and Units of the OECSSEC will undertake within that period. The gender equality issues inherent in these objectives and related programme activities will be identified and integrated over time into the operations of the OECSSEC. Staff will be afforded the necessary support in order for gender equality mainstreaming to contribute to achieving equitable outcomes for all citizens in the OECS Economic Union.

2. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The expected outcomes gained by applying gender equality mainstreaming to the OECSSEC relate to the five objectives and six core commitments of this policy. As a result of progressive implementation of the GEM Policy, it is expected that in the medium to long-term, the OECSSEC will have:

- Institutional capacity for GEM
- Accountability mechanisms for GEM at all levels
- Visibility of GEM in documents, images, utterances, and practices
- Work environment and relationships that are sensitive to gender
- Technical partnerships with GEM national machineries in the OECS Economic Union

The expected outcomes of GEM in the OECS can be further identified at three distinct levels: OECSSEC, OECS Economic Union, and societies within OECS Member States. For the OECSSEC, the expected outcome of the GEM Policy and Action Plan is that the Secretariat will have the ability to incorporate gender into all of its priority activities. In addition, gender analysis will subsequently be included in all strategic intelligence provided to the OECS Authority. At the level of OECS Economic Union, it is expected that there will be increased capacity of government machineries, in the OECS Member States, to approach development from a gender perspective and to work collaboratively with other stakeholders for the realisation of gender equality. At the level of OECS society, women and men, boys and girls will gradually come to enjoy equity and equality in the assurance of their human right entitlements.

The implementation details of the GEM Policy are contained in the Action Plan.

ANNEX 1: KEY TERMS

DEVELOPMENT

The OECS defines development^x as a process of “the empowerment of people” which entails the assurance of their continual access to material, emotional and spiritual comfort such that women and men, boys and girls are enabled to realise their full potential, build self-confidence and lead lives of dignity. OECS Member States are committed to equitable and sustainable development wherein economic growth is consistent with social development objectives.^{xi}

GENDER

Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being female and male and the relations between men and women, boys and girls, as well as relationships between women and relationships between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialisation processes. They are context- and time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a man or women in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in terms of the responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities.

GENDER EQUITY

Gender Equity means fair and impartial treatment of both women and men. To ensure fairness, measures must often be put in place to compensate for, or adjust, historical disadvantages that prevent women and men from operating on a level playing field. Equity may lead to equality.

GENDER EQUALITY

Gender Equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of boys, girls, men, and women. Equality does not mean the females and males will become the same; it means that the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of girls and boys, women and men will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of women, men, boys and girls are taken into consideration, recognising the diversity of different groups of men, women, girls and boys. Gender equality concerns and engages women, men, girls and boys. Equality between women and men is a human rights issue, as well as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Gender Mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality. Gender mainstreaming means: identifying gaps in gender equality through gender analysis of sex-disaggregated data, raising awareness about the gaps, building support for change, developing strategies to close those gaps, monitoring implementation, and holding individuals and households accountable for results.

GENDER ANALYSIS

Gender analysis is a key instrument in mainstreaming gender. Quantitative gender analysis examines sex disaggregated data to reveal the differential impacts of development policies on women and men, and the effects that gender roles have on the processes and

interventions of development. Qualitative gender analysis clarifies the gender norms, roles and responsibilities that affect men's and women's access to and control over resources. It takes account of how some of the biological and social needs of women and men change with various stages of their life cycles, and identifies the relations between women and men which define their behaviours. Gender analysis is a systematic attempt to apply this understanding of sexual differences to the cultural, economic, environmental, political, and social contexts in which men and women live.

GENDER PLANNING

Gender Planning is the application of the results of gender analysis at various levels and stages of the central planning process to address inequality identified between men and women. Gender planning includes taking appropriate action during project design to bring marginalised groups up to an equal footing with others.

GENDER SENSITIVE INDICATORS

Gender Sensitive Indicators are indicators disaggregated by sex, age and socio-economic background. The indicators are a tool to assess the progress of a particular development intervention towards achieving gender equality objectives by measuring changes in the status of women and men with regard to particular issues over a period of time. For example, sex-disaggregated data demonstrates whether both rural women and men are included in the programme or project as staff, and as beneficiaries at all levels. The Gender Sensitive Indicators (GSI) are designed to demonstrate changes in relations between women and men in a given society over a period of time. The GSI approach allows for effective monitoring and evaluation.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Annex1 Summary of Strategic Priorities and Expected Results [2012 -2013]:2,4

ⁱⁱ [OECSSEC] Gender Capacity Assessment 2005:21

ⁱⁱⁱ Gender Capacity Assessment of the OECS Secretariat June 2005 prepared by A. Diane Cummins and Jason Jackson; Towards a more effective integration of a gender perspective in the OECS's Trade and Development Programmes April 25, 2006 [prepared by] Mariama Williams; Gender Audit of the OECSSEC April 2009 [by] Cecilia Babb, OECS Draft Gender Policy March 2010 [prepared by] S. T. Harris; Capacity Building in Gender Equality Awareness Final Report submitted August 2011, and Capacity Building Training Plan November 2011, [both] prepared by Jason Jackson;

^{iv} [OECSSEC] Gender Capacity Assessment 2005:20

^v OECS Work Programme 2012 – 2013 Strategic Overview p.1

^{vi} World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development

^{vii} All persons are equal before the law and have the rights and duties established in this Declaration, without distinction as to race, sex, language, creed or any other factor [Organization of American States (OAS)] 1948

^{viii} The following are examples of the major themes that were chosen by the countries listed below:

Belize (2002): Health, Wealth and Employment Generation, Violence Producing Conditions, Education and Skills Training, Power and Decision Making

Commonwealth of Dominica (2006): Gender and the Economy, Stereotypes and Practices, Political Decision Making, Education and Human Resources Development, Health and Medicine, Family Sexuality and Gender Based Violence.

Trinidad and Tobago (2009 draft): Macro-Economy and Trade, Labour and Employment, Leadership and Governance, Poverty Alleviation, Agriculture and Natural Resource Development, Unwaged Economic Activities, Domestic and Family Life, Gender Based Violence, Education and Human Capital Development, Health and Wellbeing, Masculinity and Manhood, Special Interest Groups

Jamaica (2010): Legislation and Human Rights, Labour and Economic Empowerment, Education and Culture, Governance and Decision Making, Empowerment of Vulnerable Women, Reproductive Health, Rights & HIV/AIDS

^{ix} Article 2 of the Protocol of the Revised Treaty of Basseterre

^x Development Strategy 2000:5

^{xi} OECS Development Charter 2002:8