



Glorious United For
Rural Development

8/3/2025

Gender Policy

GURD Rwanda, Nyamashe District



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Glorious United for Rural Development (GURD) Gender Policy

Introduction

Glorious United for Rural Development (GURD) is a dedicated non-profit organization based in Nyamasheke District, Rwanda, with a mission to empower the most vulnerable members of our society—especially women and girls. In a region where cultural norms often limit opportunities for young women, GURD is at the forefront of a transformative movement aimed at promoting gender equality and fostering sustainable development.

Recognizing that gender disparities are deeply rooted in societal structures, GURD works tirelessly to address critical issues such as teenage pregnancies, school dropouts among girls, and pervasive gender-based violence (GBV). Our multifaceted approach combines education, economic empowerment, and community engagement to create an environment where every individual has the opportunity to thrive.

Through innovative programs like the **Icyezere Program**, which supports young mothers with educational and vocational training, and the **Girls Lead Club Program**, which nurtures leadership skills and advocates for sexual and reproductive health rights, GURD is committed to breaking down barriers that hinder progress.

Our vision is clear: a future where women and girls in Nyamasheke District are empowered to take charge of their lives, contribute to their communities, and pursue their aspirations without the constraints of gender inequality. We believe that by investing in the potential of women and girls, we are not only enhancing individual lives but also fostering a stronger, more equitable community for everyone.

In alignment with national policies and global frameworks, GURD is dedicated to creating a supportive environment that champions gender equality and transforms lives. Join us on this important journey toward a brighter, more inclusive future for all.

Purpose

The purpose of this Gender Policy is to provide a framework for promoting gender equality across all levels of GURD's operations and programs. This policy outlines clear guidelines for addressing gender-based discrimination, fostering inclusive participation, and ensuring that GURD's interventions are gender-sensitive and responsive to the needs of the communities we serve, especially adolescent girls and children of teen mothers. The policy aims to:

- Integrate gender equality into all of GURD's policies, projects, and programs.
- Promote equal participation and leadership opportunities for women and girls by sharing responsibilities, ensuring open access for all, and fostering equality among genders.
- Ensure that GURD's internal operations are gender-sensitive, from staff recruitment to decision-making processes.
- Address and combat gender-based violence (GBV) and gender discrimination within the communities GURD serves.

Scope

This Gender Policy applies to all aspects of GURD's work, including:

- Programs and activities aimed at empowering vulnerable populations, particularly adolescent girls and teen mothers.
- Internal organizational operations, including staff recruitment, training, and management.
- Partnerships with local authorities, communities, and international organizations.
- External collaborations, ensuring that all partners adhere to gender equality principles.

Background and Rationale

Nyamasheke District faces significant gender challenges, including high rates of teenage pregnancies, school dropouts among girls, and widespread gender-based violence (GBV). These challenges are exacerbated by deep-rooted cultural norms that marginalize women and girls, limiting their access to education, economic resources, and leadership opportunities.

The importance of this Gender Policy in Nyamasheke cannot be overstated. The district's socio-economic development is directly hindered by the persistence of gender inequalities, which perpetuate cycles of poverty, disempowerment, and limited opportunity for women and girls. Without deliberate interventions, these disparities will continue to hold back not only individual women and girls but also the entire community's potential for growth and progress.

This Gender Policy is critical for:

- **Combating GBV and Teenage Pregnancy:** Addressing high prevalence rates of GBV and teenage pregnancies that drastically limit the futures of young girls.
- **Improving Educational Access:** Prioritizing initiatives to keep girls in school and giving them the skills to succeed in their education and beyond.
- **Empowering Women Economically:** Providing vocational training, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship opportunities to help women achieve financial independence.

Since its inception in 2020, GURD has focused on addressing these challenges through key initiatives, including the **Icyezere Program** and the **Girls Lead Club Program**. However, persistent gender inequality and cultural barriers have highlighted the need for a formal gender policy that goes beyond programmatic interventions.

This policy is aligned with Rwanda's national priorities, as emphasized by the **Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF)**, **Gender Monitoring Office (GMO)**,

and **National Child Development Agency (NCDA)**, as well as global frameworks like the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly **SDG 5** on gender equality.

By implementing this policy, GURD aims to create a supportive environment where girls and women in Nyamasheke District can thrive. This policy provides the foundation for effectively combating gender disparities and promoting equality at every level—from community engagement to leadership development.

Key Principles

- **Gender Equality:** GURD is committed to promoting gender equality in all programs and activities, ensuring equal opportunities for women, girls, boys, and men to access resources, participate in decision-making, and benefit from socio-economic opportunities.
- **Non-discrimination:** All individuals, regardless of gender, are entitled to equal treatment and respect. GURD actively combats any form of discrimination, ensuring that no individual is excluded based on their gender identity or gender expression.
- **Empowerment of Women and Girls:** Recognizing the unique challenges faced by women and girls in rural communities, GURD focuses on empowering them through education, vocational training, and leadership development programs. We aim to reduce barriers to their participation in social, economic, and political life.
- **Gender-sensitive Programming:** GURD ensures that all programs are designed and implemented in a way that responds to the different needs of men and women. This includes integrating gender analysis into project planning, monitoring, and evaluation, and ensuring that gender-disaggregated data is collected and used to inform decision-making.
- **Zero Tolerance for Gender-based Violence (GBV):** GURD maintains a zero-tolerance approach toward GBV in any form. This includes addressing GBV

within the communities we serve and ensuring that our staff, partners, and stakeholders are aware of and adhere to this standard.

Gender Integration and Implementation

GURD's commitment to gender equality is central to its mission of empowering adolescent girls, children of teen mothers, and other vulnerable groups in Nyamasheke District. The Gender Policy will be implemented through a systematic process called **Gender Integration**, where gender perspectives are included at every stage of program planning, execution, and evaluation across all GURD programs. This approach ensures that our programs do not perpetuate gender inequalities but instead actively work to dismantle them.

Key Steps for Gender Integration

1. **Program Design:**

All GURD programs, including the Icyezere Program and Girls Lead Club Program, will be reviewed and designed with a gender lens. This includes:

- **Needs Assessment:** Conducting gender-sensitive needs assessments to identify the specific challenges faced by girls, teen mothers, and women.
- **Program Objectives:** Setting goals that explicitly address gender disparities, such as reducing GBV and providing economic empowerment for young mothers.
- **Resource Allocation:** Ensuring equitable resource distribution so that girls and women benefit fully from vocational training, mentorship, and educational opportunities.

2. **Capacity Building and Training:**

GURD will build the capacity of its staff, volunteers, and partners to effectively implement gender-sensitive programs. This includes:

- Conducting regular gender sensitivity training for staff to help them identify and address gender-based discrimination and violence.

- Organizing community-based workshops to engage parents, local leaders, and school staff in promoting gender equality.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):

Gender-sensitive indicators will be integrated into GURD's M&E framework to measure the impact of its programs on gender equality. This includes:

- Tracking progress on key outcomes such as the reduction of GBV, increased school retention rates among girls, and improved economic opportunities for women.
- Analyzing gender-disaggregated data to ensure that the specific needs of boys, girls, and women are met effectively.

4. Collaboration with Local Authorities and Partners:

GURD will work closely with MIGEPROF, GMO, NCDA, and other authorities to align its gender integration efforts with national policies. This includes:

- Developing joint action plans with local authorities to address critical issues like GBV, teenage pregnancy, and gender disparities in education.
- Collaborating with international partners to access resources, training, and best practices for gender equality implementation.

5. Community Engagement and Advocacy:

GURD will engage local communities to advocate for gender equality and challenge societal norms. This includes:

- Running advocacy campaigns focused on GBV prevention, the importance of girls' education, and promoting positive male role models.
- Hosting forums for girls, boys, and parents to discuss gender issues and promote an equitable environment.

Role of GURD in Promoting Gender Equality

In this policy, GURD takes an active and leading role in promoting gender equality, which is foundational to the success of all its programs. GURD will ensure that:

1. Empowerment of Women and Girls

GURD is dedicated to empowering women and girls by providing them with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to navigate their lives successfully. Through targeted programs like the Icyezere Program and Girls Lead Club Program, GURD focuses on:

- **Education:** Offering educational support, scholarships, and vocational training to ensure that girls and young mothers have access to quality education and the skills necessary for economic independence.
- **Leadership Development:** Encouraging young women to take on leadership roles and actively participate in community decision-making, thereby challenging traditional gender norms and stereotypes.

2. Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

GURD plays a crucial role in combating GBV within the community. The organization works to:

- **Raise Awareness:** Conduct community outreach and awareness campaigns to educate individuals about the harmful effects of GBV and promote healthy relationships.
- **Provide Support Services:** Establish safe spaces for survivors of GBV, offering counseling, legal support, and referral services to healthcare and social services.

3. Advocacy and Community Engagement

GURD actively advocates for gender equality at both the local and national levels. This involves:

- **Collaborating with Local Authorities:** Working closely with organizations such as the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) and the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) to align initiatives with national policies and frameworks.
- **Community Mobilization:** Engaging community leaders, parents, and youth in discussions about gender issues to foster an inclusive dialogue that challenges discriminatory practices and promotes equality.

4. Capacity Building

Recognizing that sustainable change requires well-informed and skilled individuals, GURD invests in:

- **Training Programs:** Providing gender sensitivity training for staff, volunteers, and community members to build awareness and understanding of gender issues and promote inclusive practices.
- **Skills Development:** Offering vocational training and entrepreneurship workshops to equip women and girls with practical skills that enhance their economic opportunities.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

GURD is committed to assessing the effectiveness of its programs through:

- **Data Collection and Analysis:** Implementing gender-sensitive indicators and collecting disaggregated data to track progress and identify areas for improvement.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establishing channels for beneficiaries to provide input on programs, ensuring that the services offered are responsive to the needs of the community.

6. Building Strategic Partnerships

GURD actively seeks to form partnerships with local and international organizations, ensuring a collaborative approach to gender equality:

- **Leveraging Resources:** Collaborating with NGOs, governmental bodies, and the private sector to access additional resources, expertise, and networks that can enhance GURD's initiatives.
- **Sharing Best Practices:** Engaging with other organizations to exchange knowledge and experiences in implementing effective gender-sensitive programs.

Through these roles, GURD Rwanda is positioned as a vital agent of change in Nyamasheke District, actively working to dismantle the barriers to gender equality and empower the most vulnerable populations.

Call to Action

GURD invites all stakeholders, including community members, local authorities, partners, and organizations, to join in the collective effort to promote gender equality in Nyamasheke District. This policy is not only a guiding framework for GURD but also a call to action for all community members to:

- **Engage Actively:** Participate in community discussions, workshops, and advocacy campaigns focused on gender equality and empowerment.
- **Support Local Initiatives:** Collaborate with GURD and other organizations to support initiatives aimed at reducing gender-based violence, promoting girls' education, and empowering women economically.
- **Advocate for Change:** Use your voice to advocate for policies and practices that advance gender equality and challenge harmful cultural norms that perpetuate discrimination.
- **Hold Each Other Accountable:** Foster a culture of accountability by supporting one another in adhering to the principles of this Gender Policy and ensuring that we collectively work towards a gender-equal community.

Recommendations

To effectively implement the Gender Policy and achieve the objectives outlined, GURD recommends the following actions:

- **Resource Allocation:** Allocate sufficient resources to support the initiatives outlined in this policy, including training programs, community workshops, and M&E activities.
- **Regular Training:** Establish a schedule for ongoing gender sensitivity training for all staff and volunteers to keep gender equality at the forefront of GURD's work.
- **Strengthening Partnerships:** Forge stronger partnerships with local authorities, international organizations, and the private sector to enhance support for gender-sensitive initiatives and programs.
- **Monitoring and Reporting:** Develop a robust M&E framework that includes regular reporting on gender-related outcomes and progress towards achieving gender equality goals.
- **Community Engagement:** Continue to engage the community in discussions about gender issues, ensuring that voices from all segments of society are heard and respected.

Conclusion

The GURD Rwanda Gender Policy stands as a pivotal commitment to fostering gender equality and empowering women and girls in Nyamasheke District. This policy not only reflects GURD's dedication to addressing the systemic barriers that perpetuate gender disparities but also serves as a call to action for the entire community to join in this crucial endeavor.

By implementing this policy, GURD aims to create a transformative environment where every individual regardless of gender can realize their full potential and contribute to the socio-economic development of their community. Through strategic partnerships with local authorities, international organizations, and community stakeholders, we will

actively work to dismantle the cultural and structural obstacles that hinder the progress of women and girls.

We recognize that achieving gender equality is a collective responsibility that requires ongoing dialogue, education, and advocacy. Together, we can cultivate a culture that values and uplifts all members of society, ensuring that girls, women, and marginalized groups have equal opportunities to thrive.

This policy will be a living document, responsive to the evolving needs of the community, and will guide GURD's actions as we strive toward a future where gender equality is not just an aspiration but a reality for all in Nyamasheke District and beyond.

Let us commit to this journey together, fostering a community where every girl and woman can dream, lead, and achieve, contributing to a brighter and more equitable future for all.

Approved by:

TUYISHIME Fidèle

Legal Representative



NTAKIYIMANA Elie

Secretary



UMUHIRE Maria Glorioso

Deputy Legal Representative

