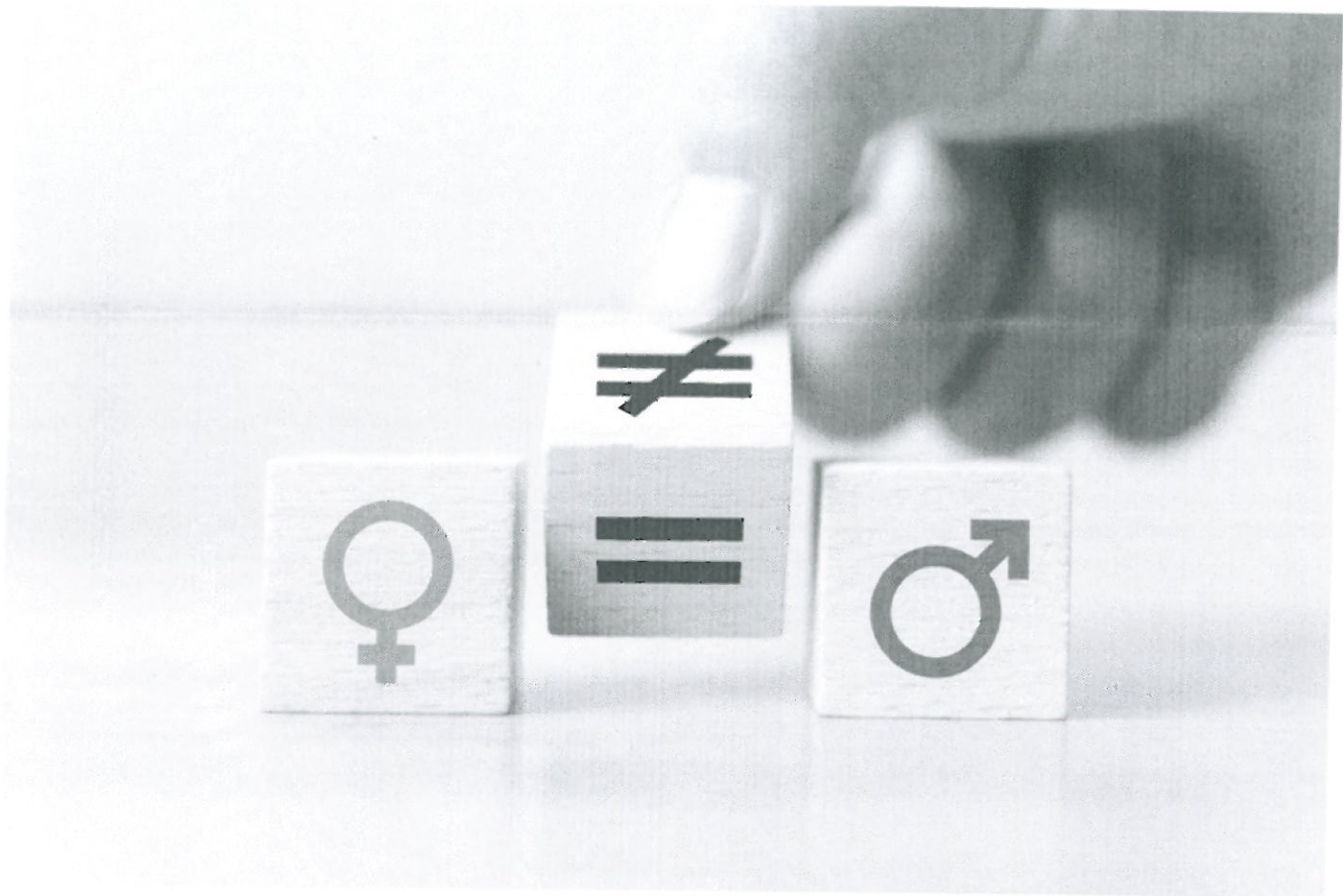




GENDER EQUITY & INCLUSION POLICY

GAZA SOCIETY FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT (SAFE) – October 2025

Handwritten signatures and names in Arabic script, likely representing the signatories of the policy document.

GENDER EQUITY & INCLUSION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

SAFE recognizes that gender equality is both a fundamental human right and a key driver of organizational performance, innovation, and social justice. Under Palestinian law and international labour standards, women and men are entitled to equal treatment at work—yet in Gaza, women’s workforce participation remains among the lowest globally, exacerbated by conflict and social norms. By adopting this policy, SAFE reaffirms its dedication to dismantling gender-based barriers and fostering an environment in which all employees can contribute fully and advance on the basis of merit alone.

2. OBJECTIVES

This policy aims to:

- **Guarantee Equal Opportunities** by ensuring recruitment, promotions, training, and compensation decisions are based on skills and performance, not gender.
- **Remove Structural Barriers** such as inflexible hours and caregiving burdens that disproportionately affect women’s ability to join and remain in the workforce.
- **Advance Gender Parity in Leadership** by setting aspirational targets for women’s representation in decision-making roles and tracking progress toward at least 40 % female leadership by 2027.
- **Ensure Gender Pay Equity** through regular pay audits and transparent salary bands that close the gap for work of equal value.
- **Support Work–Life Integration** via parental leave, flexible working, and childcare support to enable both women and men to balance professional and family responsibilities.
- **Foster Inclusive Dialogue** by providing safe channels for employees to discuss gender-related issues and contribute to policy improvements.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

SAFE’s efforts are anchored in these core principles:

- **Dignity & Respect:** Every individual deserves a workplace free from bias and harassment.

- **Zero Tolerance:** Any form of gender discrimination or harassment is unacceptable and will prompt swift, fair disciplinary action.
- **Transparency:** Policies, decisions, and gender-disaggregated data on outcomes will be openly shared with staff.
- **Participation:** Employees at all levels are invited to shape and review gender equality measures through surveys, focus groups, and representation on advisory committees.
- **Accountability:** Leaders are responsible for meeting gender targets and will report progress annually to the Board.
- **Confidentiality:** Complaints and personal data are handled with strict confidentiality to protect complainants and maintain trust.

4. DEFINITIONS

- **Gender Equality:** Equal access to opportunities, resources, and decision-making for all genders, removing discriminatory barriers.
- **Gender Equity:** Fairness in treatment and provision of support that accounts for different needs and historical disadvantages.
- **Gender Pay Gap:** The difference in average earnings between women and men, measured for equivalent roles and responsibilities.
- **Affirmative Action:** Targeted measures to correct under-representation and promote balanced participation in the workforce.
- **Harassment:** Unwanted conduct related to gender that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

5. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

A. Recruitment & Selection

- Use gender-neutral job descriptions and avoid non-essential criteria (e.g., marital status, parental status) to broaden the candidate pool.
- Ensure recruitment panels include diverse representation to mitigate unconscious bias and ensure balanced decision-making.

- Advertise vacancies through networks that reach women's groups, disabled persons' organizations, and community associations to encourage female applicants.

B. Performance Appraisal & Promotion

- Rely on standardized, objective performance criteria, with adjustments for employees who have caregiving responsibilities to prevent penalization.
- Provide managers with training on recognizing and counteracting gender biases in feedback and promotion decisions.

C. Affirmative Action

- Implement targeted leadership fellowships and mentorship programs for women to develop networks and leadership skills in areas of persistent imbalance.
- Where male and female candidates are equally qualified, prioritize promotion or hiring decisions in favor of female candidates to accelerate parity.

D. Family-Friendly Workplace Practices

- Offer at least 14 weeks paid maternity leave and two weeks paid paternity leave, exceeding local legal minimums, to support shared caregiving.
- Provide flexible working options—including remote work, flex-time, and part-time schedules—to accommodate family responsibilities.
- Explore partnerships with local providers to offer on-site childcare or childcare subsidies, reducing care burdens on working parents.

E. Equal Pay Audits

- Conduct annual, gender-disaggregated salary reviews, publish high-level findings, and implement corrective action plans to close identified pay gaps.

F. Awareness & Capacity Building

- Deliver mandatory, context-tailored training on gender sensitivity, unconscious bias, and inclusive leadership practices to all staff each year.
- Host community dialogues with beneficiaries to foster understanding of workplace gender policies and gather feedback on organizational culture.

G. Prevention of Gender-Based Harassment & Discrimination

- Define prohibited behaviours clearly in staff handbooks, providing real-world examples of harassment and discrimination.
- Establish a confidential reporting system with anonymity options and multiple access points (e.g., hotline, online form, HR liaison).
- Set clear service-level agreements for investigations (initial response within 48 hours; resolution within 30 days) and ensure fair disciplinary processes.

H. Gender-Inclusive Decision-Making

- Ensure leadership committees and working groups achieve at least 50 % female representation, fostering diverse perspectives in strategic and operational decisions.
- Regularly consult both women and men during policy reviews, programme design, and workplace initiatives to ensure all voices are heard.

6. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Executive Director & Board:** Champion gender equality goals, allocate necessary resources, and review progress against targets at least annually.
- **HR & Gender Equality Focal Point:** Oversee implementation, collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data, manage training programs, and handle grievances confidentially.
- **Managers & Supervisors:** Model inclusive behaviour, identify and remove barriers for team members, support flexible arrangements, and address incidents of bias or harassment promptly.
- **All Employees:** Participate in mandatory training, uphold principles of respect and equality, and report any incidents or suggestions for improvement without fear of retaliation.

7. MONITORING, EVALUATION & REVIEW

- **Data-Driven Tracking:** Maintain a centralized HR dashboard with key indicators—gender ratios in hiring and promotion, pay gap metrics, and incidents of harassment.
- **Annual Gender Equality Report:** Summarize achievements, challenges, and planned actions, and share internally with all staff.

- **Stakeholder Feedback:** Conduct employee surveys and focus groups to gather input on policy effectiveness and emerging needs, using this feedback to refine measures and drive continuous improvement.