



MILLENNIUM CHILD SUPPORT GROUP

Gender Equality and Inclusion Policy

**Revised
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MILLENNIUM CHILD SUPPORT GROUP

"Save the child, Save the future, Save the world"

Millennium Child Support Group (MCSG)

Gender Equality and Inclusion Policy

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Millennium Child Support Group (MCSG) extends its sincere gratitude to the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission, the Spanish Cooperation, the Africa Soccer Stars Network, UN Women, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**, and all our esteemed stakeholders for their unwavering support, commitment, and invaluable collaboration in advancing our shared vision of a **healthier, child rights-centered, women-empowered, and inclusive, violence-free world in Africa.**

Your steadfast partnership has been instrumental in strengthening our programs—particularly in the areas of school feeding, gender equality, women’s health, and child protection. Through these strategic collaborations, we have been able to reach and positively impact countless children, women, and families living in underserved communities in **Ghana and Nigeria.** Together, we are promoting sustainable development and delivering hope and opportunity to those who need it most.

As we continue to work toward equity, justice, and empowerment for all, we reaffirm our dedication to the collective values and goals that unite us. We look forward to building on our shared successes and deepening our collaboration to drive lasting, transformative change across the region.

Thank you for standing with us.

Together, we are building a future where every woman and child can thrive.

Millennium Child Support Group

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1. Executive Summary

The Millennium Child Support Group (MCSG) is committed to advancing gender equality and social inclusion in all aspects of its operations and programmatic work. This Gender Equality and Inclusion Policy is a strategic document that outlines the organization’s approach to ensuring that everyone, regardless of gender identity, age, disability, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, has equitable access to opportunities and services. The policy aligns with MCSG’s broader mission to eradicate child poverty, promote human dignity, and contribute to sustainable development. It reflects national and international frameworks including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 10 on reduced inequalities, and SDG 8.7 on ending modern slavery.

Through this policy, MCSG seeks to foster a work environment and service delivery model that is inclusive, equitable, and empowering. By embedding gender equality and inclusion into its institutional DNA, MCSG ensures that marginalized voices are heard, systemic inequalities are addressed, and human rights are upheld.

2. Introduction

2.1 Contextual Background

Despite global advances, gender inequality and exclusion persist in various forms. Women and girls continue to face disproportionate challenges in access to education, healthcare, employment, and participation in decision-making. Other marginalized groups—including persons with disabilities, people living in poverty, and gender-diverse individuals—also face systemic barriers to inclusion. In the context of West Africa, traditional norms, economic disparities, and limited institutional capacity exacerbate these challenges.

MCSG operates in communities where child poverty, gender inequality, and exclusion intersect. As such, addressing these issues is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic necessity for impactful programming and sustainable outcomes.

2.2 Alignment with Organizational Vision

This policy is anchored in MCSG’s vision of a world where every child thrives in a just, inclusive, and equitable society. It seeks to institutionalize inclusive practices within the organization’s culture, operations, and external engagements, ensuring that gender equality and inclusion are not peripheral but central to our mission.

3. Purpose and Objectives

The overarching purpose of this policy is to provide a comprehensive framework that guides MCSG's commitment to gender equality and social inclusion. It outlines how the organization will identify, address, and transform inequalities and barriers across its internal structures and external programs.

Objectives:

- Integrate gender equality and inclusion in all organizational policies, systems, and procedures.
- Promote equitable participation and leadership opportunities for women, men, and non-binary individuals.
- Ensure inclusive access to MCSG's services, resources, and benefits for all stakeholders.
- Strengthen institutional accountability for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Prevent and respond to all forms of discrimination, exclusion, and gender-based violence.

4. Scope of Application

This policy applies to:

- All employees, board members, volunteers, consultants, interns, and trainees associated with MCSG.
- All partners, vendors, and implementing organizations working with or on behalf of MCSG.
- All operational areas, projects, programs, and advocacy work led or supported by MCSG.

It also complements MCSG's Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy, Human Resources Manual, and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. The policy is applicable across all geographical locations and thematic areas where MCSG operates.

5. Key Definitions

To ensure clarity and consistency in understanding and application, this policy defines key terms as follows:

- **Gender Equality:** The state in which individuals of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities in all spheres of life.
- **Inclusion:** The practice of creating environments in which every individual feels welcomed, respected, and able to fully participate and contribute.

- **Intersectionality:** The recognition that individuals have multiple, overlapping identities (such as gender, race, class, disability, and age) that shape their experiences and opportunities.
- **Marginalized Groups:** Communities or individuals that experience systemic disadvantage or exclusion due to identity, socioeconomic status, or structural barriers.
- **Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** Any harmful act directed at individuals based on their gender, including physical, sexual, psychological, or economic abuse.
- **Gender Mainstreaming:** A strategy for making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs.
- **Disaggregated Data:** Information that is separated by categories such as gender, age, disability, and geographic location to identify and address disparities.
- **Equity:** Fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while striving to identify and eliminate barriers that prevent the full participation of some groups.

(Additional definitions are provided in Annex A.)

6. Guiding Principles

MCSG's Gender Equality and Inclusion Policy is grounded in the following principles:

6.1 Human Rights-Based Approach

All individuals are entitled to fundamental human rights without discrimination. MCSG upholds the rights and dignity of every person regardless of their background.

6.2 Do No Harm

Programs and policies are designed to minimize risks of harm, including unintended negative consequences, especially for vulnerable groups.

6.3 Non-Discrimination and Equity

All MCSG operations will avoid any form of direct or indirect discrimination. Efforts will be made to redress historical and structural inequities.

6.4 Participation and Voice

Stakeholders, including marginalized communities, have the right to meaningfully participate in decisions that affect their lives. MCSG actively engages women, youth, and persons with disabilities in planning and evaluation.

6.5 Accountability and Transparency

MCSG is committed to transparent processes and clear mechanisms for accountability, including feedback and redress systems.

6.6 Evidence-Based Practice

Decisions will be based on disaggregated data and gender analysis, allowing for more targeted and effective interventions.

6.7 Sustainability

Inclusion and gender equality will be embedded into long-term planning and institutional culture to ensure lasting impact.

7. Legal and Institutional Frameworks

MCSG aligns its Gender Equality and Inclusion Policy with the following national, regional, and international legal frameworks:

7.1 National Legal Instruments

- Ghana's Constitution (1992), particularly provisions on equality and non-discrimination.
- Domestic Violence Act (2007), Labour Act (2003), Persons with Disability Act (2006).
- Ghana Gender Policy (2015).

7.2 Regional Commitments

- **ECOWAS Gender Policy** and related regional protocols.
- **African Union Agenda 2063** and the **Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)**.

7.3 International Treaties and Frameworks

- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**.
- **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly Goals 1, 5, 8, and 10.
- **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**.
- **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**.

These frameworks shape MCSG's policy commitments and are used as benchmarks to monitor progress.

8. Policy Commitments and Strategic Areas

8.1 Inclusive Leadership and Governance

MCSG will ensure that its leadership structures at all levels reflect gender balance and social diversity. This includes setting targets for female and marginalized group representation in senior roles and governing bodies.

- Promote gender parity in the Board of Directors and Executive Team.
- Ensure participatory decision-making that includes voices of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and minority groups.
- Provide leadership training and mentorship for underrepresented groups.

8.2 Gender-Responsive Programming

All programs will be designed, implemented, and evaluated through a gender lens.

- Conduct gender and power analyses before program design.
- Include gender-sensitive indicators in monitoring frameworks.
- Ensure access and participation in programs by marginalized and excluded groups.

8.3 Inclusive Human Resources and Organizational Development

MCSG will build a diverse and inclusive workforce by embedding equity into HR practices.

- Develop inclusive recruitment, retention, and promotion strategies.
- Implement flexible work arrangements and parental leave policies.
- Provide training on unconscious bias, gender sensitivity, and disability inclusion.

8.4 Intersectional Approaches

MCSG recognizes that multiple factors intersect to create unique experiences of exclusion.

- Integrate intersectionality into needs assessments, planning, and evaluation.
- Address specific vulnerabilities of individuals facing multiple and overlapping forms of discrimination.

8.5 Inclusive Communications and Representation

MCSG will ensure its communications uphold inclusive values and promote diverse representation.

- Use inclusive language and imagery in all publications.

- Provide accessible communication formats (e.g., braille, sign language, translations).
- Avoid reinforcing stereotypes or stigmatizing portrayals.

8.6 Community Engagement and Participation

Inclusive community engagement is essential to ensure responsive programming.

- Establish community advisory groups with diverse representation.
- Promote dialogue platforms where marginalized voices are heard.
- Support community-driven solutions and leadership.

8.7 Safeguarding and Gender-Based Violence Prevention

MCSG commits to creating safe spaces and preventing all forms of abuse and exploitation.

- Enforce a robust safeguarding policy aligned with global standards.
- Establish confidential reporting and referral systems.
- Train staff and partners in GBV prevention, response, and survivor-centered approaches.

9. Operational Framework

To embed gender equality and inclusion into MCSG's day-to-day work, the organization will adopt a structured operational framework that supports implementation across all levels.

9.1 Gender and Inclusion Mainstreaming Tools

- Integration of gender and inclusion checklists into program design.
- Use of gender-sensitive indicators and tools for project monitoring.
- Implementation of gender and inclusion analysis at all stages of the project cycle.

9.2 Institutional Mechanisms

- Establishment of a Gender and Inclusion Focal Team.
- Regular coordination meetings to review progress.
- Dedicated budget lines for gender equality and inclusion activities.

9.3 Partnerships and Alliances

- Collaborate with local and international organizations with shared commitments.
- Promote learning exchanges with gender and inclusion networks.
- Build relationships with gender and disability rights institutions.

9.4 Community-Level Implementation

- Engage community leaders in inclusion dialogue.
- Use participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques to capture marginalized voices.
- Design context-specific outreach strategies.

10. Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL)

MCSG's MEL system will support the integration of gender equality and inclusion by:

- Collecting and analyzing sex-, age-, and disability-disaggregated data.
- Incorporating gender-sensitive indicators into monitoring frameworks.
- Evaluating how programs affect women, men, and marginalized groups differently.
- Facilitating periodic learning reviews and reflective learning spaces.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

11.1 Board of Directors

- Provide strategic oversight and accountability for policy implementation.

11.2 Executive Director

- Ensure the integration of gender and inclusion into organizational planning.

11.3 Gender and Inclusion Focal Team

- Coordinate policy implementation, training, and monitoring.

11.4 Program Staff and Partners

- Apply gender and inclusion principles in project design and delivery.

12. Accountability and Reporting

MCSG will ensure accountability through:

- Inclusion of gender and inclusion performance in staff appraisals.
- Public reporting on progress and gaps in annual reports.
- Independent audits and spot checks to assess compliance.

13. Grievance Redress and Safeguarding

13.1 Grievance Redress

- A transparent, accessible mechanism for individuals to report exclusion, discrimination, or abuse.
- Confidential handling of complaints and follow-up procedures.

13.2 Safeguarding

- Alignment with MCSG's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Regular safeguarding reviews and survivor-centered responses.

14. Capacity Strengthening

MCSG is committed to building institutional and community capacity through:

- Ongoing training on gender equality, disability inclusion, and unconscious bias.
- Capacity building for local partners and grassroots actors.
- Integration of gender equality modules into staff onboarding and induction.

15. Policy Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed every two years or as needed to:

- Respond to emerging needs and changing contexts.
- Integrate new international standards and national laws.
- Reflect internal learning and good practices.

16. Case Examples and Good Practices

- **School Feeding Programs:** Increased participation of women-led farmer groups.
- **Anti-Slavery Campaigns:** Integration of survivor voices in design and evaluation.
- **Youth Empowerment Projects:** Inclusion of girls and youth with disabilities in leadership roles.

17. Annexes

Annex A: Key Definitions (Extended)

Annex B: Gender and Inclusion Analysis Checklist

Annex C: Sample Gender Action Plan Template

Annex D: Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form

Annex E: National and International Legal References

Annex F: Resources and Tools