

GENDER AND INCLUSION POLICY

ARK DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

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1.0. BASIC INFORMATION

Name of Organization: Ark Development Organization

Acronym: ADO

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Year of Establishment: 2001

Year of Registration: 2004

Place of Establishment: Nsawam

Legal status:

<i>Registration</i>	<i>Registration Number</i>	<i>Year</i>
<i>Registrar General's Dept.</i>	<i>G-13, 601</i>	<i>2004</i>
	<i>CG179742015</i>	<i>2017</i>
<i>Department of Social Welfare</i>	<i>3343</i>	<i>2004</i>

1.1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Ark Development Organization (ADO) is a Non-Governmental Organization which emerged through the efforts of four (4) young Ghanaians and one Canadian who saw the need to offer social service and health education to rural communities. This vision came about when they realized on their regular visit to rural communities that most rural folks needed information about health related and environment issues such as HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, malaria, good hygiene and sanitation practices. The pioneers of ADO related the situation to high rate of illiteracy and poverty, hence the decision to render community development services to the rural folks.

Since its establishment in 2001, ADO has undertaken several community-based interventions and social development initiatives in its working communities. These covered public health education, good sanitation campaigns, civic engagements on education improvement and protection of the environment including water bodies, capacity building and empowerment, and public interest advocacy.

1.2. VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

Vision: “Creating a world of equal opportunities”.

Mission Statement:

Ark Development Organization is a **health, education, governance** and **environmentally** focused organization committed to improving the lives of deprived women, **children** and the **disabled** through **capacity building**, evidence-based **advocacy** and **participatory** innovative programmes.

1.3. OBJECTIVES

1. To educate the women, children and disabled on public and reproductive health and rights.
2. To promote the development initiatives of children, the youth and women in deprived communities.
3. To provide a platform for the voiceless and the marginalized in society on good governance.
4. To promote education on environment and climate change, water and sanitation issues that directly and indirectly affect the health and livelihoods of the people.
5. To develop organizational capacity for effective community service delivery.
6. To facilitate networking with partners and civil society organizations which share common vision for mutual support.

1.4. CORE VALUES

The following core operating values influence the culture and public image of Ark Development Organization as an effective community-based organization serving a wide variety of individuals and families.

- **Diversity** – Ark Development Organization understands that deprived and marginalized people are part of society but when given the necessary platform they can perform and sometimes even perform better; we seek to assist as many people as our financial Developments support.
- **Partnerships** – Ark Development Organization works with a wide variety of partners and advocates for quality service by all partners.
- **Empowerment**
ADO believes in increasing the spiritual, political, social, educational, gender or economic strengths of individuals and communities by helping deprived individuals to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions. Again, we believe that every individual has certain number of capabilities and when exposed to them can make a change in his/her life.
- **Accountability**
ADO believes in acknowledging and assuming responsibility for our finances, actions, decisions, and policies including the administration and implementation within the scope of our work. We believe that accountability cannot exist without proper accounting practices; in other words, an absence of accounting system.
- **Transparency**
ADO believes in operating in such a way that it is easy for others to see what actions are performed in the organization. All draft documents, all arguments for and against

a proposal, all final decisions, and the decision-making process of the organization are made public and remain publicly archived where necessary.

▪ **Participation**

The activities of the organization the organization takes part in all activities geared towards improving the lives of rural dwellers.

2.0. WHY GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

To ensure that all our programmes are child and gender-focused and tasked stakeholders to be properly guided by issues relating to women and children. The policy shall also have a bearing on all staff, volunteers and beneficiary communities. The policy document covers the under-listed areas: -

- To promote the welfare of women and children, their survival, development and protection.
- The formulation of this policy on gender and children is to inform the implementation of programmes and activities that should be derived from the mission of ADO.
- Monitoring and evaluation are key to achieving the aim of making gender and children concern an integral part of the work we do.

The Gender and Children Policy comes at a time when there is a demand for such a framework and in line with government gender policy to regulate the conduct of all and sundry in their dealings with women and children at institutional, community and individual levels.

3.0 IMMEDIATE STAKEHOLDERS

Women and children are the immediate beneficiaries of this policy.

3.1 Institutional Stakeholders

The institutional stakeholders are as follows:

- Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)
- Law Enforcement Agencies (e.g. Police)
- Ghana AIDS Commission
- National Population Council
- Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG)
- Religious Bodies
- Traditional Authorities
- Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU)
- Women and Child-Focused NGO's
- Other Civil Rights Institutions
- Social welfare
- District assemblies and its decentralized agencies
- Media
- Partners

4.0. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY.

ADO must always have a Gender Desk Officer (GDO)/Focal person or any recognise body to implement gender programmes especially women's rights to social, education, economic, political and health.

The implementation of a Gender and Children Policy requires a well-defined framework that will facilitate efficient linkages to translate the goals and objectives into programmes at all levels to improve the living conditions of women and children.

5.0 POLICY GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

The overall goal of this Policy Framework is to mainstream gender concerns in the national development process in order to improve the social, legal/civic, economic and cultural conditions of the people of Ghana, particularly women and children.

5.1. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To redress imbalances which arise from existing gender inequalities through policy review, advocacy for legal reforms and enforcement of existing legislation.
- To provide institutional framework from which policies are derived internally.
- To implement activities designed to strengthen women's role in the economic development.
- To implement activities designed to promote children's development and protection.
- To promote Women's equal access to, opportunities, and control over economically significant Developments and benefits.

6.0. PRINCIPLES

The Gender Policy is an integral part of the National development process and reinforces the overall development objectives in the country. It emphasizes CSOs commitment to gender responsive development.

7.0. STRATEGIES

The policy document proposes a wide range of strategies for the improvement of living standards of children and women and also mainstream gender concerns. The policy objectives shall be achieved through the following strategies.

7.1. GENDER CONCERNS

- Ensuring women responsive development planning at all levels- National, Regional, Districts, Area Council, and Unit Committees.
- Sensitization on gender issues at all levels.
- Promoting a Gender and Development (GAD) approach that is based on the understanding of gender roles and social relations of women and men as well as the Women in Development (WID) approach which focuses on women specifically.
- Ensuring the dissemination, translation, and implementation of the gender policy in all sections of the Ghanaian society.

- Promoting appropriate education, sensitization and creation of awareness on the responsibility of all concerned parties in each sector to address the specific gender concerns within the sector. This should entail consultation with both women and men in specific areas of relevance to identification of gender concerns.
- Promoting and carrying out research into gender related concerns.
- Advocating for gender equality at all levels.
- Promoting a gender sensitive approach to technical co-operation among the various actors in the development arena.
- Establishing effective mechanisms to monitor and evaluate gender issues.

7.2 CHILD-RELATED ISSUES

- Ensuring child development planning at all levels.
- Provision of appropriate policy guidelines to improve the quality of life of children.
- Sensitization on children's issues at all levels to ensure survival, protection and development of children.
- Promoting and carrying out research into child-related concerns.
- Establishing gender and children responsive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for development.
- Establishing effective mechanisms to monitor and evaluate child issues.
- Advocate for the consideration of the best interest of the child in all issues affecting the child.
- Strengthening the capacities of personnel who work in child related areas in an integrated manner to handle child-related issues efficiently.

8.0 ROLES OF DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES

The District Assembly is the main machinery for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of action plans at the district and community levels. They are mandated to see to the protection of women and children and other people who find themselves in extremely difficult circumstances. In line with this policy, the District Assemblies shall:

- Gather, collate, analyse and disseminate gender desegregated information at the district level.
- Identify relevant and pertinent gender issues for incorporation into annual district, sector and national plans.
- Initiate policies and legislation to promote gender equity and mainstream gender concerns at the district level.
- Monitor and ensure implementation of the gender and children policy through the Decentralised Departments, Community Based Organisations (CBO), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) and development partners.

The District Assemblies have the responsibility of managing and implementing specific programmes aimed at reducing poverty and ensuring the appropriate development and protection of the rights and welfare of the women/children. Critical areas of concern are;

- a. Agriculture
- b. Environment
- c. Human Settlements
- d. Community Development
- e. Income Generation

- f. Women and Children's Development
- g. Local Institutional Capacity Building
- h. Education and Training
- i. Health
- j. Water and Sanitation
- k. Micro-Financing

9.0. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

This policy has implications for capacity building, which will require the involvement of research and training institutions. Capacity will be required by implementing GDOs in;

- a. Gender analysis of development policies and programmes
- b. Gender planning, monitoring and evaluation of development processes and
- c. Information-gathering and dissemination.

10.0. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Strengthening and enhancing child and gender planning skills at sectoral level.
- Placing high-level officers within the GDO to co-ordinate gender and child friendly planning.
- Requiring each such officer to ensure that gender and children sensitivity is reflected in policy development and implementation.